

DISCOURSES

OCCASIONED BY THE

INAUGURATION OF BENJ. B. WARFIELD, D. D.

TO THE CHAIR OF

New Testament Exegesis and Literature,

IN

WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

DELIVERED ON THE EVENING OF

Tuesday, April 20th, 1880,

IN THE

NORTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ALLEGHENY, PA.

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ORDER OF EXERCISES.

H Y M N.

P R A Y E R.

By REV. DR. THOMPSON, Third Church, Pittsburgh.

S T A T E M E N T.

By REV. DR. C. C. BEATTY, President of the Board.

R E A D I N G A N D S I G N I N G O F T H E P L E D G E.

By the Professor Elect.

C H A R G E.

By REV. DR. ELLIOT E. SWIFT, First Church, Allegheny.

H Y M N.

I N A U G U R A L D I S C O U R S E.

By PROF. WARFIELD.

D O X O L O G Y.

B E N E D I C T I O N.

By REV. DR. COOPER, of the U. P. Seminary.

CHARGE

TO

BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD, D. D.

BY

ELLIOT E. SWIFT, D. D.

My Dear Brother :—

The scene which has just been witnessed, is one of the most solemn and impressive, on which an assemblage of Christian people can look. And you, with all your conscious insufficiency for your great work, have been the central figure.

A very high honor has been conferred, in that you have been selected, so early in life, to occupy this position. The Church, through her directors of this institution, is committing to you a very high and sacred trust, and you have just come under the accustomed obligation to be faithful.

This assemblage of interested people, the presence of these alumni, these reverently standing directors, the explicitness and comprehensiveness of the pledge, the breathless stillness of the moment, have added to the impressiveness of the occasion.

With your inauguration, the five professorships in this honored institution, are filled with competent and trusted men.

We know of no great advantage resulting from discussions, as to the relative importance of the several branches in our curriculum. Each appears as necessary to a thorough preparation, as are the several sides which constitute the figure we call a pentagon; and in these later times, we wonder how either the directors, instructors, or students, of thirty years ago, could be content with but three professors.

We all have times, however, when we are impressed with the importance of some one department. It may be that of Sacred Rhetoric. And we are ready to ask, what more necessary to a theological student, than discipline in the composition and delivery of sermons? What will all the precious fruits of three years study avail, if he cannot present them acceptably and impressively to the people?

But, anon, we gravitate toward Systematic Theology as the department of superlative importance. For, in an age like this what will the most graceful and attractive delivery avail, without well arranged and profitable matter? We can only compare it to the elaborate frame, suspended on the wall, with its profusion of gilt, worthy of some painting correspondingly elegant, and yet filled with an unartistic daub, such as are manufactured by dozens, with river and mountain, and castle and cloud, as unfailing elements in the scene.

Your professorship, my dear Brother, is that of New Testament Literature and Exegesis.

We hope that, as directors, we have some adequate sense of the dignity of the office of a theological professor. And next to a sense of its dignity, we desire to have adequate impressions of the importance of your department. And it may not be improper to state some of the grounds on which our estimate is based.

1st. The importance of your work appears from the character of the God, by the inspiration of whose Spirit the Scriptures have been given.

As the happy inheritors of Westminster teachings, we cannot be sufficiently thankful for that inimitable answer in our catechism, "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable; in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." After the test of more than two hundred years, this answer is accepted by increasing multitudes. How comprehensive and yet how concise! What depths of unfathomed mystery in each of its terms! What better prescription for divesting a man of his pride, and reducing

him to the minutest point of conscious insignificance, than to bid him take that answer and meditate upon its attributes consecutively, devoting but a year to each.

God is infinite. Go one thousand million of miles beyond the farthest fixed star, and he is there. He is there by no diffusion of his essence. "The whole Godhead, in his one undivided essence, is present at the same moment, in every point of infinite space."

God is eternal. His existence is without beginning, succession or end. His thoughts, emotions, purposes and acts do not chase each other in the activities of his infinite mind. "They are one and inseparable, without succession ; the same forever." It is the glory of our God that he is no wiser, nor holier, than he was a million of ages before the earth was made.

Well may we exclaim : "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me ; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."

Now, if this God has made a revelation to men of earlier times and other tongues, what nobler office can be assigned to any, than to become the interpreter of it? And the importance of the service is greatly magnified, if there is anything in the character and expression of the revelation, to show that "the things which were written aforetime, were written for our learning." If it were condescension in him to reveal his will, it were exaltation to us to be permitted to become the expositors of it. And though we come not to it, as Daniel did, with breathless haste, at a moment of supreme interest, amid wild excitement and paralyzing fear, the work is the same. It is to be the interpreter of what God has written.

Do not the very appointments of our academies and colleges indicate the importance of this work? If the productions of poets and orators, philosophers and historians of Greece and Rome have been preserved ; if the text of each has been made the matter of critical study ; if class books have been supplied with notes and explanations ; if it be a proud distinction of some professors, that they are perfectly familiar with every section and every verse ; is

nothing due to the communication which the eternal God has made? Shall not the noblest intellect and the richest stores of learning be consecrated to the task of putting in clearest light before the minds of men, the things that God hath said?

2d. The importance of your work appears from the preparation and discipline which it affords for the great missionary enterprise of the church.

There are few things which impress one so much with the progress of the gospel, as to be conducted into the depositories of one of our great national Bible Societies, the British or the American, and into the apartment where specimens of the two hundred and fifty languages into which the Bible has been translated are arranged. And it might not be without some salutary effect if a list of languages into which, in coming years, the Scriptures must be rendered, were also provided. Thus, in a new and curious form, one might have an exhibit of the work accomplished, and the work now waiting for competent and willing hands.

It is not assumed that every one who reads the Scriptures in the original is prepared to be what is technically known as a translator, nor is it probable that every student of this Seminary will be called to such a service. Still, this institution has never been without a measure of the missionary spirit, and we trust it never will. And it is quite certain that some who have sat and will sit under your instructions, will go to heathen lands. Perhaps it will be your privilege, when you have attained to fifty or sixty years, as you hear of this one and that who has accomplished the magnificent work of translating the Bible into some new tongue, to say, with expanding heart, he was a boy of mine. I taught him to see the force and beauty of the Greek. If he has only mastered this new and unpronounceable dialect, as he did the old and familiar Greek, I will guarantee the excellence of his work. Those hungering, perishing tribes have gotten an equivalent for every term by which the Holy Ghost has revealed his mind. And who can estimate the influence of that translation as the ages roll on?

3d. The importance of your work will appear from the relation which it sustains to the department of Systematic Theology.

If we conceive of the system of Christian doctrine as a stately, well-proportioned structure, then your share of the work in its up-building is well defined. It is for you to provide the material. The only source of supply is the word of God. Outside of this, you dare not go. It is the quarry, in the working of which your stones are to be had. It is your mountain of Lebanon, from whose heights your timber is to be secured. And as the noble structure rises, you will often find resting side by side the materials which you have secured from different parts of the Bible. There will be solidly inwrought, in close proximity, statements from its prophecy and its history, from its gospels and its epistles, from the Acts of the Apostles and from the Apocalypse of John. And each of these statements will be giving its support to all the rest.

It is sometimes objected to the teaching of theology in a systematic form, that it is indicative of a presumptuous spirit, and must be offensive to God. It is intimated that He can take no pleasure in such books as our catechism and confession of faith; that if God had desired that these doctrines should be so taught, He would have revealed them in systematic form. It is said that He could have inserted little compends of doctrine in the midst of the books of the Bible, making each exact and sufficient for the dispensation of religion for which it was designed, the last to be the most complete, exhaustive, and satisfactory of all.

But God has not given a revelation, say they, in any such form. And shall men arrogate to themselves superior wisdom? Shall they undertake to improve upon God's plan? Shall not such pretentious efforts be offensive to Him, especially when these books are elevated to a position of superiority to His word?

The answers to this objection are numerous and overwhelming. We do not elevate our books of systematic theology to the dispar-

agement of the Word. We do not place them in positions of co-ordinate importance. The Word of God stands alone, in high supremacy, as our source of doctrine. Your own professorship is an answer to all such mere assertion.

Might not the same objection be urged to any disturbance of the original arrangement of the physical world ?

The hardy pioneers, settling on these very grounds some eighty years ago, found them in all their native wildness. They were just as God had made them and the face of the natural world, we all accept, as a revelation from Him.

Is it not presumptuous in man then, to project towns, cut down trees, grade streets, rear edifices and prepare parks ?

Is it not an ostentatious improvement on God's work, when men bridge the Susquehanna and tunnel the Alleghenies and bind the eastern and western portions of the State by a splendid railway ?

We do not know why God made the Scriptures, to be composed of sixty-six different treatises, by forty different authors. But we do know that you are in the line of duty, even in the judgment of these superficial objectors. You are taking the doctrines directly from the Word.

4th. The importance of this department will appear from the rich and abundant material which it affords in preaching.

We are not now thinking of material, for the frame work of a discourse, by which its masses of beauty and fragrance are to be sustained.

Nor are we thinking of material for expository remark, to which a place is assigned, before announcing the proposition or purpose of the sermon. The discourse must be built upon the text and the latter must sustain the same relation to the former, that a foundation does to the superstructure. Expository remarks are designed to exhibit the breadth and security of the basis. Of course the doctrine or duty must be gotten from the Word.

The thought we wish to emphasize is, that the Scriptures afford the most abundant material for all the details of a sermon. They

afford the richest and best matter for the amplification, illustration and enforcement of the subject.

Doubtless there may be faults in the use of illustrations. They may be too numerous or too humorous. They may occupy space to the exclusion of a direct and adequate statement of the truth. They should be like the gas-lights in our cities. They should be numerous enough to help the hearer in pursuing the avenues of thought, in which you are trying to lead him, and they should not be like the *ignis-fatuus*, which engages the attention and then diverts the traveler from the straight way and the solid track. Nothing is more unfortunate in the handling of the illustration than to allow it to engross the thought of the listener to such an extent that he forgets the truth which it was intended to impress. The effect is quite as though a man should use a spike for the purpose of nailing up a notice on the highway, and in the vigor of his effort in driving his spike, never miss the hand-bill which his awkwardness has torn and the winds have caught and carried away.

Some years ago we had a president in one of our most venerable collegiate institutions whose earlier studies had largely been in classic literature. Nothing could surpass the exquisite elegance and taste with which, from his familiar field, he embellished an address of dismissal to the students of this institution.

But after all what source of illustration like the Bible itself.

How often the preacher going aback of our common version, can see in the original a force and beauty of conception, which the English does not express, and, without disparaging our common version, he can proceed to develop, at length, a thought, which no one word of our translation could fully express.

Perhaps the experience of Albert Barnes will have value in corroborating our position. Some remember how much the Christian world was taken by surprise when he announced the process by which his voluminous "Notes" had been prepared. He had commenced his studies early and had always laid down his pen at nine o'clock in the morning; and after he had accomplished what

many would regard as a good day's work, he commenced the preparation of his sermons. But the point of special interest just now, is his testimony, that his studies in the Scriptures, supplied material so ample that this other service was reduced to a minimum of labor.

One of the most interesting and attractive speakers this institution has ever had among its professors, was in the department which you now fill.

5th. The importance of your work appears from the peculiar opportunities which it affords for promoting the spiritual life of candidates for the ministry.

There can be no question that this Seminary is designed as a place of discipline in quick, accurate, vigorous thought. Its professors aim to secure the largest amount of study from the eight months in which students are with them. This is just as it should be. The curriculum is exhaustive. The departments are in the hands of competent men. The demands of the age are excessive. Young men may be actuated by an ambitious spirit, and time is rapidly passing.

But, the jaded condition of mind and body, to which students may be reduced, with a maximum of study, and a minimum of exercise in the open air, may not be the most favorable for lively devotional feeling. And the serious question in all our seminaries has, therefore, been, how shall the cultivation of the heart be kept in pace with the improvement of the intellect? How can we produce a class of men, of the representative of whom, the fathers and mothers in Israel will say: He is a man of devout spirit and it is his piety which gives strength, beauty and efficiency to all his intellectual stores. Without doubt, he will be useful among us.

A solicitude with regard to this matter is the more necessary, because students may reason thus: My duties as a Christian are completely covered by the employments of my higher character as a student of theology, my whole thought is given to religion.

These are no secularizing studies. These are no writings of heathen poets and sages. These are no works on natural or mental philosophy. We are busied about religion by the month. We have no time for any thing else, even if we had the taste.

All this may be admitted. And yet there have been men who have passed through the Seminary. They have been licensed and ordained by discriminating Presbyteries, and then have preached to large congregations for twenty or thirty years, only to be cast-aways.

Your department affords peculiar opportunities for promoting the spiritual life of the students. If there be any power in the Word, under the operation of the Spirit, you are sure as you traverse the gospels and the epistles, to come upon most suitable and suggestive passages. And your searching remarks, injected in the midst of instruction will not fail of some salutary result.

I solemnly charge you, my dear Brother, ever to give prominence to the thought, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. I charge you to maintain the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. I charge you to be conscientiously honest in your handling of the Word, endeavoring to give the mind of the Spirit, unmodified by any speculations or fancies of men. I charge you to maintain that sacred enthusiasm which you have already discovered in your work and to infuse it, if possible, into your classes. I charge you to find your chief reliance in the profered help of the Holy Ghost, that great Interpreter, who takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us. I charge you to be unflinchingly loyal to our beloved church, venerating her standards and cherishing a becoming respect for all her deliverances; and, finally, I charge you to leave no opportunity unimproved, of promoting among the young men, the spirit of honest and unreserved consecration to the service of Christ.

We are not ignorant of your feeling, as you assume this great responsibility. You are to mold the characters of those who

shall go out, in years to come, to preach the gospel in the growing cities and the unoccupied wastes of our own country ; in Asia and Africa, and the islands of the ocean. Let me assure you of the earnest sympathy of these directors and alumni. They feel an interest in you, because your theological studies and scholarly habits, have given promise of some distinction in this department ; because you have entered upon your work so early in life, and because there flows in your veins, the blood of one of those majestic old characters, of whose name the Presbyterian Church will ever be proud.

Though you have had no long experience in the pastoral work, it has perhaps already occurred to you, that your present position is less satisfying in one regard. There is less to meet the cravings of a social nature. You are without the loving sympathies of a flock, ever ready to notice variations in physical condition, to make financial provision for your comfort, to express their appreciation of your efforts, and to do a dozen other things, which a devoted and loyal people can do.

But should not the Presbyterian people of these cities and of the densely settled country around, be taught to take a deeper interest in this institution. Should they not be taught to remember it in their prayers, to make provision for it in their benefactions, to rejoice in the popularity of its professors, and to glory in the acceptance and favor, with which its graduates are received. They should be taught that this institution is a stronghold of our Zion ; a stronghold to be made still stronger in the completeness of its financial basis, in the intellectual vigor of its teachers, in its hold on the sympathies of the people, in the commanding positions of its alumni and in the increasing gracious favor of the Head of the Church, in whose name it has been founded.

Let us remember the time for devising and doing, will soon be over. Soon we shall have crossed the river, and have been lost to mortal view.

It is not yet fifty-two years since the first inauguration was witnessed in this institution. Jacob L. Janeway was the professor. Elisha P. Swift preached the sermon. Matthew Brown delivered the charge, and John McMillan, the pioneer in Western Pennsylvania one hundred years ago, made the introductory prayer and gave the people the benediction at its close. Perhaps there is no one here, who was present on the evening of October 16, 1828, in the First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh. Our venerable President of this Board, was a member of it then. He was then in the freshness and vigor of his early ministry, and he may have been present.

But all other members have passed away. Yet their work abides, and they are having the ecstatic visions of our exalted Redeemer.

May the Head of the Church make us faithful in preserving, strengthening and transmitting this sacred trust.





INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY

PROF. BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD.

Fathers and Brothers :

It is without doubt a very wise provision by which, in institutions such as this, an inaugural address is made a part of the ceremony of induction into the professorship. Only by the adoption of some such method could it be possible for you, as the guardians of this institution, responsible for the principles here inculcated, to give to each newly-called teacher an opportunity to publicly declare the sense in which he accepts your faith and signs your standards. Eminently desirable at all times, this seems particularly so now, when a certain looseness of belief (inevitable parent of looseness of practice) seems to have invaded portions of the Church of Christ,—not leaving even its ministry unaffected;—when there may be some reason to fear that “enlightened clerical gentlemen may sometimes fail to look upon subscription to creeds as our covenanting forefathers looked upon the act of putting their names to theological documents, and as mercantile gentlemen still look upon endorsement of bills.”* And how much more forcibly can all this be pled when he who appears before you at your call, is young, untried and unknown. I wish, therefore, to declare that I sign these standards not as a necessary form which must be submitted to, but gladly and willingly as the expression of a personal and cherished conviction; and, further, that the system taught in these symbols is the system which will be drawn out of the Scriptures in the prosecution of the teaching

* Peter Bayne in *The Puritan Revolution*.

to which you have called me,—not, indeed, because commencing with that system the Scriptures can be made to teach it, but because commencing with the Scriptures I cannot make them teach anything else.

This much of personal statement I have felt it due both to you and myself to make at the outset; but having done with it, I feel free to turn from all personal concerns.

In casting about for a subject on which I might address you, I have thought I could not do better than to take up one of our precious old doctrines, much attacked of late, and ask the simple question: What seems the result of the attack? The doctrine I have chosen, is that of “Verbal Inspiration.” But for obvious reasons I have been forced to narrow the discussion to a consideration of the inspiration of the New Testament only; and that solely as assaulted in the name of criticism. I wish to ask your attention, then, to a brief attempt to supply an answer to the question:

IS THE CHURCH DOCTRINE OF THE PLENARY INSPIRATION
OF THE NEW TESTAMENT ENDANGERED BY THE ASSURED
RESULTS OF MODERN BIBLICAL CRITICISM?

At the very out-set, that our inquiry may not be a mere beating of the air, we must briefly, indeed, but clearly, state what we mean by the Church Doctrine. For, unhappily, there are almost as many theories of inspiration held by individuals as there are possible stages imaginable between the slightest and the greatest influence God could exercise on man. It is with the traditional doctrine of the Reformed Churches, however, that we are concerned; and that we understand to be simply this:—*Inspiration is that extraordinary, supernatural influence (or, passively, the result of it,) exerted by the Holy Ghost on the writers of our Sacred Books, by which their words were rendered also the words of God, and, therefore, perfectly infallible.* In this definition, it is to be noted: 1st. That this influence is a supernatural one—something different from

the inspiration of the poet or man of genius. Luke's accuracy is not left by it with only the safeguards which "the diligent and accurate Suetonius" had. 2d. That it is an extraordinary influence—something different from the ordinary action of the Spirit in the conversion and sanctifying guidance of believers. Paul had some more prevalent safeguard against false-teaching than Luther or even the saintly Rutherford. 3d. That it is such an influence as makes the words written under its guidance, the words of God; by which is meant to be affirmed an absolute infallibility (as alone fitted to divine words), admitting no degrees whatever—extending to the very word, and to all the words. So that every part of Holy Writ is thus held alike infallibly true in all its statements, of whatever kind.

Fencing around and explaining this definition, it is to be remarked further :

1st. That it purposely declares nothing as to the mode of inspiration. The Reformed Churches admit that this is inscrutable. They content themselves with defining carefully and holding fast the effects of the divine influence, leaving the mode of divine action by which it is brought about draped in mystery.

2d. It is purposely so framed as to distinguish it from revelation;—seeing that it has to do with the communication of truth not its acquirement.

3d. It is by no means to be imagined that it is meant to proclaim a mechanical theory of inspiration. The Reformed Churches have never held such a theory :* though dishonest, careless, ignorant or over-eager controverters of its doctrine have often brought the charge. Even those special theologians in whose teeth such an accusation has been oftenest thrown (*e. g.*, Gaussen) are explicit in teaching that the human element is never absent.† The Reformed

* See Dr. C. Hodge's Systematic Theology, page 157, volume 1.

† Compare GAUSSEN'S THEOPNEUSTY, "New York, 1842; pp. 34, 36, 44 *sq et passim*. In these passages he explicitly declares that the human element is never absent. Yet he has been constantly misunderstood: thus, Van Oostzee (*Dog. i*, p. 202), Dorrer (*Protestant Theol. ii*: 477) and even late English and American writers who, if no others, should have found it impossible to ascribe a mechanical theory to a man who had abhorrently repudiated it in an

Churches hold, indeed, that every word of the Scriptures, without exception, is the word of God; but, alongside of that, they hold equally explicitly that every word is the word of man. And, therefore, though strong and uncompromising in resisting the attribution to the Scriptures of any failure in absolute truth and infallibility, they are before all others in seeking, and finding, and gazing on in loving rapture, the marks of the fervid impetuosity of a Paul—the tender saintliness of a John—the practical genius of a James, in the writings which through them the Holy Ghost has given for our guidance. Though strong and uncompromising in resisting all effort to separate the human and divine, they distance all competitors in giving honor alike to both by proclaiming in one breath that all is divine and all is human. As Gausson so well expresses it, “We all hold that every verse, without exception, is from men, and every verse, without exception, is from God;” “every word of the Bible is as really from man as it is from God.”

4th. Nor is this a mysterious doctrine—except, indeed, in the sense in which everything supernatural is mysterious. We are not dealing in puzzles, but in the plainest facts of spiritual experience. How close, indeed, is the analogy here with all that we know of the Spirit’s action in other spheres! Just as the first act of loving faith by which the regenerated soul flows out of itself to its Saviour, is at once the consciously-chosen act of that soul and the direct work of the Holy Ghost; so, every word indited under the analogous influence of inspiration was at one and the same time the consciously

English journal and in a note prefixed to the subsequent English editions of his work. (See: “It is written,” London: Bagster & Sons, 3d edition, pp. i-iv.) In that notice he declares that he wishes “loudly to disavow” this theory, “that he feels the greatest repugnance to it,” “that it is gratuitously attributed to him,” “that he has never, for a single moment, entertained the idea of keeping it,” &c. Yet so late a writer as President Bartlett, of Dartmouth, (Princeton Review, January, 1880, p. 34,) can still use Gausson as an example of the mechanical theory. Gausson’s book ought never to have been misunderstood; it is plain and simple. The cause of the constant misunderstanding, however, is doubtless to be found in the fact that his one object is to give a proof of the existence of an everywhere present divine element in the Scriptures,—not to give a rounded statement of the doctrine of inspiration. He has, therefore, dwelt on the divinity, and only incidentally adverted to the humanity exhibited in its pages. Gausson may serve us here as sufficient example of the statement in the text. The doctrine stated in the text is the doctrine taught by all the representative theologians in our own church.

self-chosen word of the writer and the divinely-inspired word of the Spirit. I cannot help thinking that it is through failure to note and assimilate this fact, that the doctrine of verbal inspiration is so summarily set aside and so unthinkingly inveighed against by divines otherwise cautious and reverent. Once grasp this idea, and how impossible is it to separate in any measure the human and divine. It is all human—every word, and all divine. The human characteristics are to be noted and exhibited; the divine perfection and infallibility, no less.

This, then, is what we understand by the church doctrine:—a doctrine which claims that by a special, supernatural, extraordinary influence of the Holy Ghost, the sacred writers have been guided in their writing in such a way, as while their humanity was not superseded, it was yet so dominated that their words became at the same time the words of God, and thus, in every case and all alike, absolutely infallible.

I do not purpose now to undertake the proof of this doctrine. I purpose rather to ask whether, assuming it to have been accepted by the Church as apparently the true one, modern biblical criticism has in any of its results reached conclusions which should shake our previously won confidence in it. It is plain, however, that biblical criticism could endanger such a doctrine only by undermining it—by shaking the foundation on which it rests—in other words by attacking the proof which is relied on to establish it. We have, then, so far to deal with the proofs of the doctrine. It is evident, now, that such a doctrine must rest primarily on the claims of the sacred writers. In the very nature of the case, the writers themselves are the prime witnesses of the fact and nature of their inspiration. Nor does this argument run in a vicious circle. We do not assume inspiration in order to prove inspiration. We assume only honesty and sobriety. If a sober and honest writer claims to be inspired by God, then here, at least, is a phenomenon to be accounted for. It follows, however, that besides their claims, there are also secondary bases on which the doctrine of

the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures rests, and by the shaking of which it can be shaken. These are:—first, the allowance of their claims by the contemporaries of the writers,—by those of their contemporaries, that is, who were in a position to judge of the truth of such claims. In the case of the New Testament writers this means the contemporary church, who had the test of truth in its hands: “was God visibly with the Apostles, and did he seal their claims with his blessing on their work?” And, secondly, the absence of all contradictory phenomena in or about the writings themselves. If the New Testament writers, being sober and honest men, claim verbal inspiration, and this claim was allowed by the contemporary church, and their writings in no respect in their character or details negative it, then it seems idle to object to the doctrine of verbal inspiration on any critical grounds.

In order, therefore, to shake this doctrine, biblical criticism must show: either, that the New Testament writers do not claim inspiration; or, that this claim was rejected by the contemporary church; or, that it is palpably negated by the fact that the books containing it are forgeries; or, equally clearly negated by the fact that they contain along with the claim errors of fact or contradictions of statement. The important question before us to-day, then, is: Has biblical criticism proved any one of these positions?

I. Note, then, in the first place, that modern biblical criticism does not in any way weaken the evidence that the New Testament writers claim full, even verbal, inspiration. Quite the contrary. The careful revision of the text of the New Testament and the application to it of scientific principles of historico-grammatical exegesis, place this claim beyond the possibility of a doubt. This is so clearly the case, that even those writers who cannot bring themselves to admit the truth of the doctrines, yet not infrequently begin by admitting that the New Testament writers claim such an inspiration as is in it presupposed. Take, for instance, the twin statements of Richard Rothe: “To wish to main-

tain the inspiration of the subject-matter, without that of the words, is a folly; for everywhere are thoughts and words inseparable," and "It is clear that the orthodox theory of inspiration [by which he means the very strictest] is countenanced by the authors of the New Testament." If we approach the study of the New Testament under the guidance of and in the use of the methods of modern biblical science, more clearly than ever before is it seen that its authors make such a claim. Not only does our Lord promise a supernatural guidance to his Apostles, both at the beginning of their ministry (Matthew x: 19, 20) and at the close of his life (Mark xii: 11; Luke xxi: 12, cf. John xiv and xvi) but the New Testament writers distinctly claim divine authority. With what assurance do they speak—exhibiting the height of delirium, if not the height of authority. The historians betray no shadow of a doubt as to the exact truth of their every word,—a phenomenon hard to parallel elsewhere among accurate and truth-loving historians who commonly betray less and less assurance in proportion as they exhibit more and more painstaking care. The didactic writers claim an absolute authority in their teaching, and betray as little shadow of doubt as to the perfectly binding character of their words (2 Cor. x: 7, 8). If opposed by an angel from heaven, the angel is indubitably wrong and accursed (Gal. i: 7, 8). Therefore, how freely they deal in commands (1 Thes. iv: 2; xi: 12. 2 Thes. iii: 6-14; iv: 2); commands, too, which they hold to be absolutely binding on all; so binding that it is the test of a Spirit-led man to recognize them as the commandments of God (1 Cor. xiv: 37), and no Christian ought to company with those who reject them (2 Thes. iii: 6-14). Nor is it doubtful that this authority is claimed specifically for the written word. In 1 Cor. xiv: 37, it is specifically "the things which I am writing" that must be recognized as the commands of the Lord; and so in 2 Thes. ii: 15; iii: 6-14, it is the teaching transmitted by letter as well as by word of mouth that is to be immediately and unquestionably received.

Now, on what is this immense claim of authority grounded? If a mere human claim, it is most astounding impudence. But that it is not a mere human claim, is specifically witnessed to. Paul claims to be but the transmitter of this teaching (2 Thes. iii: 6; ii: $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}$); it is, indeed, his own (2 Thes. iii: 14, $\gamma\grave{\iota}\mu\omega\tilde{\nu}$), but still, the transmitted word is God's word (1 Thes., ii: 13). He speaks, indeed, and issues commands, but they are not his commands, but Christ's, in virtue of the fact that they are given through him by Christ (1 Thes. iv: 2). The other writers exhibit the same phenomena. Peter distinctly claims that the Gospel was preached in ($\tilde{\epsilon}\nu$) the Holy Spirit (1 Peter, i: 12); and John calls down a curse on those who would in any way alter his writing (Rev. xxii: 18, 19; cf. 1 John, v: 10). These, we submit, are strange phenomena if we are to judge that these writers professed no inspiration.

"But," we are asked, "is this all?" We answer, that we have but just begun. All that we have said is but a cushion for the specific proof to rest easily on. For here we wish to make two remarks:

1. *The inspiration which is implied in these passages, is directly claimed elsewhere.* We will now appeal, however, to but two passages. Look at 1 Cor. vii: 40, where the best and most scientific modern exegesis proves that Paul claimed for his "opinion" expressed in this letter direct divine inspiration, saying, "this is my opinion," and adding, not in modesty, or doubt, but in meiotic irony, "and it seems to me that I have the Spirit of God." If this interpretation be correct, and with the "it seems to me" and the very emphatic "I" staring us in the face, drawing the contrast so sharply between Paul and the impugners of his authority, it seems indubitably so; then it is clear that Paul claims here a direct divine inspiration in the expression of even his "opinion" in his letters. Again look for an instant at 1 Cor. ii: 13: "Which things, also we utter not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit; joining spiritual things

with spiritual things ;” where modern science, more clearly even than ancient faith, sees it stated that both the matter and the manner of this teaching are from the Holy Ghost—both the thoughts and the words—yes, the words themselves. “It is not meet,” says the Apostle, “that the things taught by the Holy Ghost should be expressed in merely human words ; there must be Spirit-given words to clothe the Spirit-given doctrines. Therefore, I utter these things not in the words taught by human wisdom—not even in the most wisely-chosen human words—but in those taught by the Spirit, joining thus with Spirit-given things (as was fit) only Spirit-given words.” It is impossible to deny that here there is clearly taught a *suggestio verborum*. Nor will it do to say that this does not bear on the point at issue, seeing that *λόγος* and not *ρήμα* is the term used. Not only is even this subterfuge useless in the face of what we have still to urge, but it is even meaningless here. No one supposes that the mere grammatical forms separately considered are inspired : the claim concerns words in their ordered sequence—in their living flow in the sentences—and this is just what is expressed by *λόγοι*. This passage thus stands before us distinctly claiming verbal inspiration. The two together seem reconcilable with nothing less far reaching than the church doctrine.

2. But we must turn to our second remark. It is this: *The New Testament writers distinctly place each other's writings in the same lofty category in which they place the writings of the Old Testament ; and as they indubitably hold to the full—even verbal—inspiration of the Old Testament, it follows that they claim the same verbal inspiration for the New.* Is it doubted that the New Testament writers ascribe full inspiration to the Old Testament ? Modern science does not doubt it ; nor can anyone doubt it who will but listen to the words of the New Testament writers in the matter. The whole New Testament is based on the divinity of the Old, and its inspiration is assumed on every page. The full strength of the case, then, cannot be exhibited. It may be called to our

remembrance, however, that not only do the New Testament writers deal with the Old as divine, but that they directly quote it as divine. Those very lofty titles, "Scripture," "The Scriptures," "The Oracles of God," which they give it, and the common formula of quotation, "It is written," by which they cite its words, alone imply their full belief in its inspiration. And this is the more apparent that it is evident that for them to say, "Scripture says," is equivalent to their saying, "God says," (Romans ix : 17; x : 19; Galatians iii : 8.) Consequently, they distinctly declare that its writers wrote in the Spirit (Matthew xxii : 43; cf. Luke xx : 42; and Acts ii : 34); the meaning of which is made clear by their further statement that God speaks their words (Matthew i : 22; ii : 15, &c.), even those not ascribed to God in the Old Testament itself (Acts xiii : 35; Hebrews viii : 8; i : 6, 7, 8; v : 5; Eph. iv : 8), thereby evincing the fact that what the human authors speak God speaks through their mouths (Acts iv : 25). Still more narrowly defining the doctrine, it is specifically stated that it is the Holy Ghost who speaks the written words of Scripture (Hebrews iii : 7)—yea, even in the narrative parts (Hebrews iv : 4). In direct accordance with these statements, the New Testament writers use the very words of the Old Testament as authoritative and "not to be broken." Christ, himself, so deals with a tense in Matthew xxii : 32, and twice elsewhere finds an argument on the words (John x : 34; Matthew xxii : 43); and it is in connection with one of these word arguments that his divine lips declare "the Scriptures cannot be broken." His Apostles follow his example (Galatians iii : 16). Still, further, we have, at least, two didactic statements in the New Testament, directly affirming the inspiration of the Old (2 Timothy iii : 15, and 2 Peter i : 20). In one of these it is declared that every Scripture is God-inspired; in the other, that no prophesy ever came by the will of man, but borne along by the Holy Ghost it was that holy men of God spoke. It is, following the best results of modern critical exegesis, therefore, quite certain that the New Testament writers held the

full verbal inspiration of the Old Testament. Now, they plainly place the New Testament books in the same category. The same Paul, who wrote in 2 Timothy, "Every Scripture is God-inspired," quotes in its twin letter, 1 Timothy, a passage from Luke's Gospel calling it "Scripture" (1 Timothy, v: 18),—nay, more,—parallelizing it as equally Scripture with a passage from the Old Testament. And the same Peter, who gave us our other didactic statements, and in the same letter, does the same for Paul that Paul did for Luke, and that even more broadly, declaring (2 Peter, iii: 16) that all Paul's Epistles are to be considered as occupying the same level as the rest of the Scriptures. It is quite indisputable, then, that the New Testament writers claim full inspiration for the New Testament books.

Now none of these points are weakened in either meaning or reference by the application of the principles of critical exegesis. In every regard they are strengthened. We can be quite bold, therefore, in declaring that modern criticism does not set aside the fact that the New Testament writers claim the very fullest inspiration.

II. We must ask, then, secondly, if modern critical investigation has shown that this claim of inspiration was disallowed by the contemporaries of the New Testament writers. Here again our answer must be in the negative. The New Testament writings themselves bristle with the evidences that they expected and received a docile hearing; parties may have opposed them, but only parties. And again, all the evidence that exists coming down to us from the sub-apostolic church—be it more or less voluminous, yet such as it is admitted to be by the various schools of criticism—points to a very complete reception of the New Testament claims. No church writer of the time can be pointed out who made a distinction derogatory to the New Testament, between it and the Old Testament, the Divine authority of which latter, it is admitted, was fully recognized in the church. On the contrary, all of them treat the New Testament with the greatest

respect, hold its teachings in the highest honor, and run the statement of their theology into its forms of words as if they held even the forms of its statements authoritative. They all know the difference between the authority exercised by the New Testament writers and that which they can lawfully claim. They even call the New Testament books, and that, as is now pretty well admitted, with the fullest meaning, "Scripture." Take a few examples: No result of modern criticism is more sure than that Clement of Rome, himself a pupil of Apostles, wrote a letter to the Corinthians in the latter years of the first century; and that we now possess that letter, its text witnessed to by three independent authorities and therefore to be depended on. That epistle exhibits all the above-mentioned characteristics, except that it does not happen to quote any New Testament text specifically as Scripture. It treats the New Testament with the greatest respect, it teaches for doctrines only for what it teaches, it runs its statements into New Testament forms, it imitates the New Testament style, it draws a broad distinction between the authority with which Paul wrote and that which it can claim, it declares distinctly that Paul wrote "most certainly in a spirit-led way" (*ἐπ' ἀληθείας πνευματικῶς*, c. 47.) Again, even the most sceptical of schools place the Epistle of Barnabas in the first or at the very beginning of the second century, and it again exhibits these same phenomena,— moreover quoting Matthew definitely as Scripture. One of the latest triumphs of a most acute criticism has been the vindication of the genuineness of the seven short Greek letters of Ignatius, which are thus proved to belong to the very first years of the second century and to be the production again of one who knew Apostles. In them again we meet with the same phenomena. Ignatius even knows of a collected New Testament equal in authority to the Divinely inspired Old Testament. But we need not multiply detailed evidence; every piece of Christian writing which is even probably to be assigned to one who knew or might have known the Apostles, bears like testimony. This is absolutely without exception. They

all treat the New Testament books as differentiated from all other writings, and no single voice can be adduced as raised against them. The very heretics bear witness to the same effect; anxious as they are to be rid of the teaching of these writings they yet hold them authoritative and so endeavor to twist their words into conformity with their errors. And if we follow the stream further down its course, the evidence becomes more and more abundant in direct proportion to the increasing abundance of the literary remains and their change from purely practical epistles or addresses to Jews and heathen to controversial treatises between Christian parties. It is exceedingly clear, then, that modern criticism has not proved that the contemporary church resisted the assumption of the New Testament writers or withstood their claim to inspiration. Directly the contrary. Every particle of evidence in the case exhibits the apostolic church, not as disallowing, but as distinctly recognizing the absolute authority of the New Testament writings. In the brief compass of the extant fragments of the Christian literature of the first two decades of the second century we have Matthew and Ephesians distinctly quoted as Scripture, the Acts and Pauline Epistles specifically named as part of the Holy Bible, and the New Testament consisting of evangelic records and apostolic writings clearly made part of one sacred collection of books with the Old Testament.* Let us bear in mind that the belief of the early church in the inspiration of the Old Testament is beyond dispute, and we will see that the meaning of all this is simply this: The apostolic church certainly accepted the New Testament books as inspired by God. Such are the results of critical enquiry into the opinions on this subject of the church writers standing next to the Apostles.

III. If then, the New Testament writers clearly claim verbal inspiration and the apostolic church plainly allowed that claim, any objection to this doctrine must proceed by attempting to undermine the claim itself. From a critical standpoint this can

* See Barn, 4, Poly. 12. Test. xii., Patt. Benj. 10. Ign. Phil. 5, 8, &c.

be done only in two ways: It may be shown that the books making it are not genuine and therefore not authentic, in which case they are certainly not trustworthy and their lofty claims must be set aside as part of the impudence of forgery. Or it may be shown that the books, as a matter of fact, fall into the same errors and contain examples of the same mistakes which uninspired writings are guilty of,—exhibit the same phenomena of inaccuracy and contradiction as they,—and therefore, of course, as being palpably fallible by their very character disprove their claims to infallibility. It is in these two points that the main strength of the opposition to the doctrine of verbal inspiration lies,—the first being urged by unbelievers, who object to any doctrine of inspiration, the second by believers, who object to the doctrine of plenary and universal inspiration. The question is: Has either point been made good?

1. In opposition to the first, then, we risk nothing in declaring that *modern biblical criticism has not disproved the authenticity of a single book of our New Testament*. It is a most assured result of biblical criticism that every one of the twenty-seven books which now constitute our New Testament is assuredly genuine and authentic. There is, indeed, much that arrogates to itself the name of criticism and has that honorable title carelessly accorded to it, which does claim to arrive at such results as set aside the authenticity of even the major part of the New Testament. One school would save five books only from the universal ruin. To this, however, true criticism opposes itself directly, and boldly proclaims every New Testament book authentic. But thus two claimants to the name of criticism appear, and the question arises, before what court can the rival claims be adjudicated? Before the court of simple common sense, it may be quickly answered. Nor is it impossible to settle once for all the whole dispute. By criticism is meant an investigation with three essential characteristics: (1) a fearless, honest mental abandonment, apart from presuppositions, to the facts of the case, (2) a most carefully complete and unprejudiced collection and examination of the facts, and (3) the most

cautious care in founded inferences upon them. The absence of any one of these characteristics throws grave doubts on the results; while the acme of the uncritical is reached when in the place of these critical graces we find guiding the investigation that other trio,—bondage to preconceived opinion,—careless, incomplete or prejudiced collection and examination of the facts,—and rashness of inference. Now, it may well be asked, is that true criticism which starts with the presupposition that the supernatural is impossible, proceeds by a sustained effort to do violence to the facts, and ends by erecting a gigantic historical chimera—overturning all established history—on the appropriate basis of airy nothing? And, is not this a fair picture of the negative criticism of the day? Look at its history,—see its series of wild dreams,—note how each new school has to begin by executing justice on its predecessor. So Paulus goes down before Strauss, Strauss falls before Baur, and Baur before the resistless logic of his own negative successors. Take the grandest of them all,—the acutest critic that ever turned his learning against the Christian Scriptures, and it will require but little searching to discover that Baur has ruthlessly violated every canon of genuine criticism. And if this is true of him, what is to be said of the school of Kuenen which now seems to be in the ascendant? We cannot now follow theories like this into details. But on a basis of a study of those details we can remark without fear of successful contradiction that the history of modern negative criticism is blotted all over and every page stained black with the proofs of work undertaken with its conclusion already foregone and prosecuted in a spirit that was blind to all adverse evidence. * Who does not know, for example

* We hear much of "apologists" undertaking critical study with such preconceived theories as render the conclusion foregone. Perhaps this is sometimes true, but it is not so necessarily. A Theist, believing that there is a personal God, is open to the proof as to whether any particular message claiming to be a revelation is really from him or not, and according to the proof, he decides. A Pantheist or Materialist begins by denying the existence of a personal God, and hence the possibility of the supernatural. If he begins the study of an asserted revelation, his conclusion is necessarily foregone. An honest Theist, thus, is open to evidence either way; an honest Pantheist or Materialist is not open to any evidence for the supernatural. See some fine remarks on this subject by Dr. Westcott, *Contemporary Review* xxx: p. 1070.

of the sustained attempts made to pack the witness box against the Christian Scriptures?—the wild denials of evidence the most undeniable,—the wilder dragging into court of evidence the most palpably manufactured? Who does not remember the remarkable attempt to set aside the evidence arising from Barnabas' quotation of Matthew as Scripture, on the ground that the part of the epistle which contained it was extant only in an otherwise confessedly accurate Latin version; and when Tischendorf dragged an ancient Greek copy out of an Eastern monastery and vindicated the reading, who does not remember the astounding efforts then made to deny that the quotation was from Matthew, or to throw doubt on the early date of the epistle itself? Who does not know the disgraceful attempt made to manufacture,—yes, simply to manufacture,—evidence against John's gospel, persevered in in the face of all manner of refutation until it seems at last to have received its death blow through one stroke of Dr. Lightfoot's trenchant pen on "the silence of Eusebius?"* In every way, then, this criticism evinces itself as false.

But false as it is, its attacks must be tested and the opposition of true criticism to its results exhibited. The attack, then, proceeds on the double ground of internal and external evidence. It is claimed that the books exhibit such contradictions among themselves and errors in historical fact, as evince that they cannot be authentic. It is claimed, moreover, that external evidence such as would prove them to have existed in the Apostolic times is lacking. How does true criticism meet these attacks?

Joining issue first with the latter statement, sober criticism meets it with a categorical denial. It exhibits the fact that every New Testament book, except only the mites Jude, 2 and 3 John, Philemon and possibly 2 Peter, are quoted by the generation of writers immediately succeeding the Apostles, and are thereby proved to have existed in the Apostolic times; and that even these four brief books which are not quoted by those earliest authors in

* Contemporary Review XXV: 169.

the few and brief writings which have come down from them to us, are so authenticated afterwards as to leave no rational ground of doubt as to their authenticity.

It is admitted on all hands that there is less evidence for 2 Peter than for any other of our books. If the early date of 2 Peter then can be made good, the early date of all the rest follows *a fortiore*; and there can be no doubt but that sober criticism fails to find adequate grounds for rejecting 2 Peter from the circle of apostolic writings. It is an outstanding fact that at the beginning of the third century this epistle was well known; it is during the early years of that century that we meet with the first explicit mention of it, and then it is quoted in such a way as to exhibit the facts that it was believed to be Peter's and was at that time most certainly in the canon. What has to be accounted for, then, is how came it in the canon of the early third century? It was certainly not put there by those third century writers; their notices utterly forbid this. Then, it must have been already in it in the second century. But when in that century did it acquire this position? Can we believe that critics like Irenaeus, or Melito, or Dionysius would have allowed it to be foisted before their eyes into a collection they held all-holy? It could not, then, have first attained that entrance during the latter years of the second century; and that it must have been already in the New Testament, received and used by the great writers of the fourth quarter of the second century, seems scarcely open to doubt. Apart from this reasoning, indeed, this seems established; Clement of Alexandria certainly had the book, Irenaeus also in all probability possessed it. If, now, the book formed a part of the canon current in the fourth quarter of the second century, there can be little doubt but that it came from the bosom of the Apostolic circle. One has but to catch from Irenaeus, for instance, the grounds on which he received any book as scripture, to be convinced of this. The one and all-important *sine-qua-non* was that it should have been handed down from the fathers, the pupils of the Apostles, as

the work of the Apostolic circle. And Irenaeus was an adequate judge as to whether this was the case; his immediate predecessor in the Episcopal office at Lyons was Pothinus, whose long life spanned the whole intervening time from the Apostles, and his teacher was Polycarp, who was the pupil of John. That a book formed a part of the New Testament of this period, therefore authenticates it as coming down from those elders who could bear personal witness to its authorship. This is one of the facts of criticism apart from noting which it cannot proceed. The question, then, is not: do we possess independently of this, sufficient evidence of the Petrine authorship of the book to place it in the canon? but: do we possess sufficient evidence against its Petrine authorship, to reject it from the canon of the fourth quarter of the second century authenticated as that canon as a whole is? The answer to the question cannot be doubtful when we remember that we have absolutely no evidence against the book; but, on the contrary, that all the evidence of whatever kind which is in existence goes to establish it. There is some slight reason to believe, for instance, that Clement of Rome had the letter, more that Hermas had it and much that Justin had it. There is also a good probability that the early author of the Testaments of the XII. Patriarchs had and used it. Any one of these references, independently of all the rest, would, if made good, throw the writing of the book back into the first century. Each supports the others, and the sum of the probabilities raised by all, is all in direct support of the inference drawn from the reception of the book by later generations, so that there seems to be really no room for reasonable doubt but that the book rightly retains its position in our New Testament. This conclusion gains greatly in strength when we compare the data on which it rests, with what is deemed sufficient to authenticate any other ancient writing. We find at least two most probable allusions to 2 Peter within a hundred years after its composition, and before the next century passes away we find it possessed by the whole church and that as a book with a secured position

in a collection super-authenticated as a whole. Now, Herodotus, for instance, is but once quoted in the century which followed its composition, but once in the next, not at all in the next, only twice in the next, and not until the fifth century after its composition is it as fully quoted as 2 Peter during its second century. Yet who doubts the genuineness of the histories of Herodotus? Again the first distinct quotation from Thucydides does not occur until quite two centuries after its composition; while Tacitus is first cited nearly a century after his death, by Tertulian. Yet no one can reasonably doubt the genuineness of the histories of either Thucydides or Tacitus.* We hazard nothing then, in declaring that no one can reasonably doubt the authenticity of the better authenticated 2 Peter.

If now such a conclusion is critically tenable in the case of 2 Peter, what is to be said of the rest of the canon? There are some six writings which have come down to us, which were written within twenty years after the death of John; these six brief pieces alone, as we have said, prove the prior existence of the whole New Testament, with the exception of Jude, 2 and 3 John, Philemon and (possibly) 2 Peter, and the writers of the succeeding years vouch for and multiply their evidence. In the face of such contemporary testimony as this, negative criticism cannot possibly deny the authenticity of our books. A strenuous effort has consequently been made to break the force of this testimony. The genuineness of these witnessing documents themselves has been attacked or else an attempt has been made to deny that their quotations are from the New Testament books. Neither the one effort nor the other, however, has been or can be successful. And yet with what energy have they been prosecuted! We have already seen what wild strivings were wasted in an attempt to get rid of Barnabas' quotation of Matthew. That whole question is now given up; it is admitted that the quotation is from Matthew; and it is admitted that Barnabas was written in the immediately sub-apostolic times. But Barnabas quotes not only Mat-

*See Rawlinson's *Hist. Evid.*, p 376.

thew, but 1 Cor. and Eph., and in Keim's opinion witnesses also to the prior existence of John. This may be taken as a type of the whole controversy. The references to the New Testament books in the Apostolic fathers are too plain to be disputed and it is simply the despair of criticism that is exhibited by the invention of elaborate theories of accidental coincidences or of endless series of hypothetical books to which to assign them. The quotations are too numerous, too close, and glide too imperceptibly and regularly from mere adoption of phrases into accurate citations of authorities, to be explained away. They therefore stand, and prove that the authors of these writings already knew the New Testament books and esteemed them authoritative.

Nor has the attempt to deny the early date of these witnessing writers fared any better. The mere necessity of the attempt is indeed fatal to the theory it is meant to support; if to exhibit the unauthenticity of the New Testament books, we must hold all subsequent writings unauthentic too, it seems plain that we are on a false path. And what violence is done in the attempt! For instance, the Epistle of Polycarp witnesses to the prior existence of Matthew, Luke, Acts, eleven Epistles of Paul, 1 Peter and 1 John; and as Polycarp was a pupil of John, his testimony is very strong. It must then be got rid of at all hazards. But Irenaeus was Polycarp's pupil, and Irenaeus explicitly cites this letter and declares it to be Polycarp's genuine production; and no one from his time to ours has found cause to dispute his statement until it has become necessary to be rid of the testimony of the letter to our canon. But if Polycarp's letter be genuine, it sets its own date and witnesses in turn to the letters of Ignatius, which themselves bear internal testimony to their own early date; and these letters of Ignatius testify not only to the prior individual existence of Matthew, John, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and 1 John; but also to the prior existence of an authoritative Divinely-inspired New Testament. This is but a specimen of the 'linked character of

our testimony. Not only is it fairly abundant, but it is so connected by evidently undesigned, indeed, but yet indetachable articulations, that to set aside any one important piece of it usually necessitates such a wholesale attack on the literature of the second century as to amount to a *reductio ad absurdum*. We may, then, boldly formulate as our conclusion that external evidence imperiously forbids the dethronement of any New Testament book from its place in our canon.

What, then, are we to do with the internal evidence that is relied upon by the negative school? What, but set it summarily aside also? It amounts to a two-fold claim: (1.) The sacred writers are hopelessly inconsistent with one another, and (2.) they are at variance with contemporary history. Of course, disharmony between the four gospels, and between Acts and the Epistles is what is mainly relied on under the first point, and it must be admitted that much learning and acuteness has been expended on the effort to make out this disharmony. But it is to be noted: (1.) That even were it admitted up to the full extent claimed, it would be no proof of unauthenticity; it would be no more than that found between secular historians admitted to be authentic, when narrating the same actions from different points of view. And (2.) in no case has it been shown that disharmony must be admitted. No case can be adduced where a natural mode of harmonizing cannot be supplied, and it is a reasonable principle, recognized among critics of secular historians, that two writers must not be held to be contradictory where any natural mode of harmonizing can be imagined. Otherwise it amounts to holding that we know fully and thoroughly all the facts of the case,—better even than eye-witnesses seem ever to know them. In order to gain any force at all, therefore, for this objection, both the extent and degree of the disharmony has been grossly exaggerated. Take an example: It is asserted that the two accounts (in Matthew and Luke) of the events accompanying our Lord's birth are mutually exclusive.

But even a cursory examination will show that there is not a single contradiction between them. How then is the charge of disharmony supported? In two ways: First, by erecting silence into contradiction. Since Matthew does not mention the visit of the shepherds, he is said to contradict Luke who does. Since Luke does not mention the flight into Egypt he is said to contradict Matthew who does. And secondly, by a still more astounding method which proceeds by first confounding two distinct transactions and then finding irreconcilable contradictions between them. Thus Strauss calmly enumerates no less than five discrepancies between Matthew's account of the visit of the angel to Joseph and Luke's account of the visit of the angel to Mary. On the same principle we might prove both Motley's "Dutch Republic" and Kingslake's "Crimean War" to be unbelievable histories by gravely setting ourselves to find "discrepancies" between the account in the one of the brilliant charges of Egmont at St. Quentin and the account in the other of the great charge of the six hundred at Balaclava. This is not an unfair example of the way in which the New Testament is dealt with in order to exhibit its internal disharmony. We are content, however, that it should pass for an extreme case. For it will suffice for our present purpose to be able to say that if the New Testament books are to be proved unauthentic by their internal contradictions, by parity of reasoning the world has never yet seen an authentic writing. In fact so marvelously are our books at one that, leaving the defensive, the harmonist may take the offensive and claim this unwonted harmony as one of the chief evidences of Christianity. Paley has done this for the Acts and Epistles; and it can be done also for the Gospels.

Perhaps we ought to content ourselves with merely repeating this same remark in reference to the charge that the New Testament writers are at variance with contemporary history. So far is this from being true that one of the strongest evidences for Christianity is the utter accord with the minute details of contemporary history

which is exhibited in its records. There has been no lack indeed of "instances" of disaccord confidently put forth; but in every case the charge has recoiled on the head of its maker. Thus, the mention of Lysanias in Luke, iii: 2, was long held the test case of such inaccuracy and sceptics were never weary of dwelling upon it; until it was pointed out that the whole "error" was not Luke's but—the sceptic's. Josephus mentions this Lysanias and in such a way that he should not have been confounded with his older namesake; and inscriptions have been brought to light which explicitly assign him to just Luke's date. And so this stock example vanishes into the air from which it was made. The others have met a like fate. The detailed accuracy of the New Testament writers in historical matters is indeed wonderful, and is more and more evinced by every fresh investigation. Every now and then a monument is dug up, touching on some point adverted to in the New Testament; and in every case only to corroborate the New Testament. Thus not only has Luke long ago been proved accurate in calling the ruler of Cyprus a "proconsul," but Mr. Cesnola has lately brought to light a Cyprian inscription which mentions that same Proconsul Paulus whom Luke represents Paul as finding on the island.—(Cyprus, p. 425.) Let us but consider the unspeakable complication of the political history of those times;—the frequent changes of provinces from senatorial to imperial and *vice versa*,—the many alterations of boundaries and vacillations of relation to the central power at Rome,—which made it the most complicated period the world has ever seen, and renders it the most dangerous ground possible for a forger to enter upon;—and how impossible is it to suppose that a book whose every most incidental notice of historical circumstances is found after most searching criticism to be minutely correct,—which has threaded all this labyrinth with firm and unflinching step,—was the work of unlearned forgers, writing some hundred years after the facts they record. Confessedly accurate Roman historians have not escaped error here; even Tacitus himself has slipped.* To think that a

* Cf. *Annal* xi: 23.

second century forger could have walked scathless among all the pitfalls that gaped around him, is like believing a blind man could thread a row of a hundred cambric needles at a thrust. If we merely apply the doctrine of probabilities to the accuracy of these New Testament writers they are proved to be the work of eye-witnesses and wholly authentic.*

We can, then, at the end, but repeat the statement with which we began : Modern negative criticism neither on internal nor on external grounds has been able to throw any doubt on the authenticity of a single book of our New Testament. Their authenticity, accuracy and honesty are super-vindicated by every new investigation. They are thus proved to be the productions of sober, honest, accurate men ; they claim verbal inspiration ; their claim was allowed by the contemporary church. So far modern criticism has gone step by step with traditional faith. There remains but one critical ground on which the doctrine we are considering can be disputed. Do these books in their internal character negative their claim ? Are the phenomena of the writings in conflict with the claim they put forth ? We must, then, in conclusion consider this last refuge of objection.

2. Much has been already said incidentally which bears on this point ; but something more is needed. An amount of accuracy which will triumphantly prove a book to be genuine and surely authentic, careful and honest, may fall short of proving it to be the very word of God. The question now before us is : granting the books to be in the main accurate, are they found on the application of a searching criticism to bear such a character as will throw destructive objection in the way of the dogma that they are verbally from God ? This inquiry opens a broad—almost illimitable—field, utterly impossible to fully treat here. It may be narrowed somewhat, however, by a few natural observations. (1). It is to be remembered that we are not defending a mechanical theory of inspiration. Every word of the Bible is the word of God

* See this slightly touched on by Dr. Peabody, Princeton Rev., March, 1880.

according to the doctrine we are discussing ; but also and just as truly, every word is the word of a man. This at once sets aside as irrelevant a large number of the objections usually brought from the phenomena of the New Testament against its verbal inspiration. No finding of traces of human influence in the style, wording or forms of statement or argumentation touches the question. The book is throughout the work of human writers and is filled with the signs of their handiwork. This we admit on the threshold ; we ask what is found inconsistent with its absolute accuracy and truth. (2). It is to be remembered, again, that no objection touches the question, that is obtained by pressing the primary sense of phrases or idioms. These are often false ; but they are a necessary part of human speech. And the Holy Ghost in using human speech, used it as He found it. It cannot be argued then that the Holy Spirit could not speak of the sun setting, or call the Roman world "the whole world." The current sense of a phrase is alone to be considered ; and if men so spoke and were understood correctly in so speaking the Holy Ghost, speaking their speech would also so speak. No objection then is in point which turns on a pressure of language. Inspiration is a means to an end and not an end in itself ; if the truth is conveyed accurately to the ear that listens to it, its full end is obtained. (3). And we must remember again that no objection is valid which is gained by overlooking the prime question of the intentions and professions of the writer. Inspiration, securing absolute truth, secures that the writer shall do what he professes to do ; not what he does not profess. If the author does not profess to be quoting the Old Testament *verbatim*,—unless it can be proved that he professes to give the *ipsissima verba*,—then no objection arises against his verbal inspiration from the fact that he does not give the exact words. If an author does not profess to report the exact words of a discourse or a document—if he professes to give, or it is enough for his purposes to give, an abstract or general account of the sense or the wording, as the case may be,—then it is not opposed to his claim

to inspiration that he does not give the exact words. This remark sets aside a vast number of objections brought against verbal inspiration by men who seem to fancy that the doctrine supposes men to be false instead of true to their professed or implied intention. It sets aside, for instance all objection against the verbal inspiration of the Gospels, drawn from the diversity of their accounts of words spoken by Christ or others, written over the cross, &c. It sets aside also all objection raised from the freedom with which the Old Testament is quoted, so long as it cannot be proved that the New Testament writers quote the Old Testament in a different sense from that in which it was written, in cases where the use of the quotation turns on this change of sense. This cannot be proved in a single case.

The great majority of the usual objections brought against the verbal inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures from their phenomena, being thus set aside, the way is open to remarking further, that no single argument can be brought from this source against the church doctrine which does not begin by *proving* an error in statement or contradiction in doctrine or fact to exist in these sacred pages. I say, that does not begin by *proving* this. For if the inaccuracies are apparent only,—if they are not indubitably inaccuracies,—they do not raise the slightest presumption against the full, verbal inspiration of the book. Have such errors been pointed out? That seems the sole question before us now. And any sober criticism must answer categorically to it, No! It is not enough to point to passages *difficult* to harmonize; they cannot militate against verbal inspiration unless it is not only *impossible* for us to harmonize them, but also unless they are of such a character that they are clearly contradictory, so that if one be true the other cannot by any possibility be true. No such case has as yet been pointed out. Why should the New Testament harmonies be dealt with on other principles than those which govern men in dealing with like cases among profane writers? There, it is a first principle of historical science that any solution which affords a possible

method of harmonizing any two statements is preferable to the assumption of inaccuracy or error—whether those statements are found in the same or different writers. To act on any other basis, it is clearly acknowledged, is to assume, not prove, error. We ask only that this recognized principle be applied to the New Testament. Who believes that the historians who record the date of Alexander's death—some giving the 28th, some the 30th of the month—are in contradiction? * And if means can be found to harmonize them, why should not like cases in the New Testament be dealt with on like principles? If the New Testament writers are held to be independent and accurate writers,—as they are by both parties in this part of our argument,—this is the only rational rule to apply to their writings; and the application of it removes every argument against verbal inspiration drawn from assumed disharmony. Not a single case of disharmony can be proved.

The same principle and with the same results, may be applied to the cases wherein it is claimed that the New Testament is in disharmony with the profane writers of the times, or other contemporary historical sources. But it is hardly necessary to do so. At the most, only three cases of even possible errors in this sphere can be now even plausibly claimed: the statements regarding the taxing under Quirinius, the revolt under Theudas, and the lordship of Aretas over Damascus. But Zumpt's proof that Quirinius was twice governor of Syria, the first time just after our Lord's birth, sets the first of these aside; whereas the other two, while not corroborated by distinct statements from other sources, yet are not excluded either. Room is found for the insignificant revolt of this Theudas—who is not to be confounded with his later and more important namesake—in Josephus' statement that at this time there were "ten thousand" revolts not mentioned by him. And the lordship of Aretas over Damascus is rendered very probable by what we know from other sources of the posture of affairs in that region, as well as by the significant absence of Roman-Damascene

* For methods by which these are harmonized, see Lee "Inspiration," page 350.

coinage for just this period. Even were the New Testament writers in direct conflict in these or in other statements, with profane sources, it would still not be proven that the New Testament was in error. There would still be an equal chance, to say the least (much too little as it is), that the other sources were in error. But it is never in such conflict; and, therefore, cannot be charged with having fallen into historical error, unless we are prepared to hold that the New Testament writers are not to be believed in any statement which cannot be independently of it proved true; in other words, unless it be assumed beforehand to be untrustworthy. This, again, is to assume, not prove error. Not a single case of error can be proved.

We cannot stop to even mention the fact that no doctrinal contradictions, or scientific errors can be proved. The case stands or falls confessedly on the one question: Are the New Testament writers contradictory to each other or to other sources of information in their record of historical or geographical facts? This settled, indubitably all is settled. We repeat, then, that all the fierce light of criticism which has so long been beating upon their open pages has not yet been able to settle one indubitable error on the New Testament writers. This being so, no argument against their claim to write under a verbal inspiration from God can be drawn from the phenomena of their writings. No phenomena can be pled against verbal inspiration except errors,—no error can be proved to exist within the sacred pages; that is the argument in a nut-shell. Such being the result of the strife which has raged all along the line for decades of years, it cannot be presumptuous to formulate our conclusion here as boldly as after the former heads of discourse:—Modern criticism has absolutely no valid argument to bring against the church doctrine of verbal inspiration, drawn from the phenomena of Scripture. This seems indubitably true.

It is, indeed, well for Christianity that it is. For, if the phenomena of the writings were such as to negative their distinct claim to full inspiration, we cannot conceal from ourselves that

much more than their verbal inspiration would have to be given up. If the sacred writers were not trustworthy in such a witness-bearing, where would they be trustworthy? If they, by their performance, disproved their own assertions, it is plain that not only would these assertions be thus proven false, but, also, by the same stroke the makers of the assertions convicted of either fanaticism or dishonesty. It seems very evident, then, that there is no standing ground between the two theories of full verbal inspiration and no inspiration at all. Gausson is consistent; Strauss is consistent: but those who try to stand between! It is by a divinely permitted inconsistency that they can stand at all. Let us know our position. If the New Testament, claiming full inspiration, did exhibit such internal characteristics as should set aside this claim, it would not be a trustworthy guide to salvation. But on the contrary, since all the efforts of the enemies of Christianity—eager to discover error by which they might convict the precious word of life of falsehood—have proved utterly vain, the Scriptures stand before us authenticated as from God. They are, then, just what they profess to be; and criticism only secures to them the more firmly the position they claim. Claiming to be verbally inspired, that claim was allowed by the church which received them,—their writers approve themselves sober and honest men, and evince the truth of their claim, by the wonder of their performance. So, then, gathering all that we have attempted to say into one point, we may say that modern biblical criticism has nothing valid to urge against the church doctrine of verbal inspiration, but that on the contrary it puts that doctrine on a new and firmer basis and secures to the church Scriptures which are truly divine. Thus, although nothing has been urged formally as a proof of the doctrine, we have arrived at such results as amount to a proof of it. If the sacred writers clearly claim verbal inspiration and every phenomenon supports that claim, and all critical objections break down by their own weight, how can we escape admitting its truth? What further proof do we need?

With this conclusion I may fitly close. But how can I close without expression of thanks to Him who has so loved us as to give us so pure a record of his will,—God-given in all its parts, even though cast in the forms of human speech,—infallible in all its statements,—divine even to its smallest particle! I am far from contending that without such an inspiration there could be no Christianity. Without any inspiration we could have had Christianity; yea, and men could still have heard the truth, and through it been awakened, and justified, and sanctified and glorified. The verities of our faith would remain historically proven true to us—so bountiful has God been in his fostering care—even had we no Bible; and through those verities, salvation. But to what uncertainties and doubts would we be the prey!—to what errors, constantly begetting worse errors, exposed!—to what refuges, all of them refuges of lies, driven! Look but at those who have lost the knowledge of this infallible guide: see them evincing man's most pressing need by inventing for themselves an infallible church, or even an infallible Pope. Revelation is but half revelation unless it be infallibly communicated; it is but half communicated unless it be infallibly recorded. The heathen in their blindness are our witnesses of what becomes of an unrecorded revelation. Let us bless God, then, for his inspired word! And may he grant that we may always cherish, love and venerate it, and conform all our life and thinking to it! So may we find safety for our feet, and peaceful security for our souls.

Princeton Theological Seminary.

INAUGURATION

OF THE

REV. BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD, D.D.,

AS

PROFESSOR

OF

DIDACTIC AND POLEMIC THEOLOGY.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

The Rev. BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD, D.D., was elected Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology in Princeton Seminary, at a special meeting of the Board of Directors, held in February, 1887. His formal inauguration was postponed at his own request, and took place by appointment, on Tuesday, May 8, 1888, at 11.30 o'clock, in the First Presbyterian Church of Princeton. The order of exercises on this occasion was as follows :

HYMN.

PRAYER, by the Rev. Dr. PHILIP SCHAFF, Professor in Union Theological Seminary, New York.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE PLEDGE TO THE NEW PROFESSOR, by the Rev. Dr. GOSMAN, President of the Board of Directors.

THE CHARGE, by the Rev. Dr. JAMES T. LEFTWICH, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Baltimore.

THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS, by Professor WARFIELD.

BENEDICTION.

The Charge and Inaugural Address are here published by order of the Board of Directors.

THE CHARGE.

BY

THE REV. JAMES T. LEFTWICH, D.D.

CHARGE.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Professorship in this Seminary to which you have been called. In doing so, by a very natural train of associations I am reminded of the illustrious men who have preceded you here in the chair of Theology, who, having finished their labors, have entered into rest. First, in the order of time, was Dr. Archibald Alexander, in the highest sense of the term, not involving inspiration, a Seer, whose swift intuitions so often anticipated the conclusions, which, by rigorous processes of Logic, he subsequently reached only to verify and confirm them. Then came Dr. Charles Hodge, the great scholar as well as thinker, whose vast erudition was digested into stately volumes, which stand on the shelves of our libraries side by side with the ponderous works of Augustine, Calvin, Turretin, and Edwards; of them all, perhaps, the most widely read in our day, at least among English-speaking peoples. It was every way fitting that such a father as he should be succeeded, in his labors and in his honors, by such a son as the late lamented Dr. Archibald Alexander Hodge; a man of brilliant genius, in spirit simple as that little child whom, to illustrate the nature of true greatness, Jesus once set in the midst of His wondering disciples; while in intellect he was a giant in the power with which he grasped and wielded the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. In the power to formulate truth, to draw with unerring accuracy the fine line that at once includes all that belongs to its integrity, and excludes all that is foreign and extraneous, he had no superior, I had almost

said he had no peer in the Church in his day. In his "Outlines of Theology" may be found definitions, of which it is no extravagance to affirm that they have never been surpassed, if, indeed, they have ever been equalled, since the Westminster Divines closed their sessions in Jerusalem Chamber. It is said that as a young rustic, who himself afterwards became a celebrated painter, stood gazing with rapt admiration at one of the splendid creations of Correggio, the artistic spirit which, till then, had slumbered in his nature, suddenly awoke; when, in the joyous consciousness of his new-born powers, he exclaimed: "I, too, shall be Correggio." And I can desire no better fortune for this Seminary, at least in the department of Theology, than that, while preserving entire your personal gifts, you should at the same time so contemplate the examples of the eminent teachers who have preceded you, as to imbibe all that was loftiest in their spirit, and reproduce all that was best in their methods. You will permit me to remind you that the Board of Directors conferred on you no ordinary distinction when, looking abroad over our great Church, they fixed their eyes on you, as of all her sons the fittest, perhaps, to inherit the mantle of these ascended Prophets. I desire to congratulate you; and I desire to congratulate the Directors that, in the very free expression of opinion which your election has elicited, there has been heard, as yet, not so much as a whisper of dissent in any quarter; the entire Church affixing to the wisdom of your appointment the seal of its unqualified sanction. The high scholarship which marked throughout your career as a student in the Seminary, the special studies in which your faculties were disciplined during the entire term of your residence at Allegheny, together with the valuable contributions already made by your pen to our current Theological literature, are construed as so many pledges that, by the blessing of God on your efforts, you will not disappoint the very high expectations which your preferment has excited. And yet so responsible is the office of Professor of Theology in such a

Seminary as Princeton, and so tremendous are the interests which swing pivoted on your faithful discharge of its functions, that the Directors are not at liberty to omit from the ceremony of your induction the Charge that is customary on such occasions.

While it will be your office to teach truth,—and truth, too, of infinite importance,—it will not be your duty to teach all truth. For truth is coextensive with reality itself, of which it is always the faithful exponent. God has not called you, nor indeed has He called any man, to be an expositor of all truth. Even in the domain of Theology, the division of labor which obtains here as it does elsewhere, and which grows more and more minute as the world advances in knowledge, will confine your efforts to a single department,—“The Science of Didactic and Polemic Theology.” I say Science; for if facts, and inferences from facts logically drawn and systematically arranged, constitute Science; and if Science rises in dignity with the value and importance of its object-matter, then indeed must Theology, treating as it does of God, of man, and of their involved relations, be not only a Science, but of all Sciences the Queen.

The source from which you are to draw the materials of your Theology is the Scriptures; constituting, as they do, the only infallible and all-sufficient Rule of faith and practice. While it is true that it has pleased God to make a natural revelation of Himself; partly in the external world around us, partly in the course of history behind us, and partly in these living spirits within us, the Scriptures gather up into themselves all these scattered disclosures and utter them afresh to mankind; completing all and crowning all with a glory that is all their own,—The revelation of saving grace.

While you are to teach the truths of the Bible, you are to teach these truths as they are construed and reduced to system in the Confession and Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly. The outcry against Creeds and Systems of

Theology was never louder, perhaps, than at this very hour. The old indictment still bristles all over with the old counts. It is urged that they impugn the sufficiency of Scripture as the Rule of faith and practice, stifle the spirit of honest inquiry, fetter faculties that should be left free in the pursuit of truth, and impede, if they do not arrest progress in the noblest study on which the mind of man can be exercised. Without stopping to consider these specifications in detail, it is a sufficient reply to the general charge that system in Theology, as in every branch of inquiry, is absolutely necessary to appease one of the profoundest, one of the most importunate cravings of the human soul. Man is never at ease until he has found the one in the many, until he has reduced the multiform in fact to the uniform in idea. His ear, if finely strung, suffers torture until the various sounds, proceeding from the different instruments in a great orchestra, blend in a stream of perfect harmony. As he walks abroad among the scenes of nature, the emotion of beauty refuses to rise to its full height, until he has gathered up into the unity of his complex view the objects dispersed in the landscape before him. The scientific mind of the great Newton could not rest until, rising from the ordinary phenomena transpiring in the world around him, he reached at length on the heights of speculation the sublime generalization which holds in its grasp the material universe. And so, as he goes forth into the field of Revelation, the Theologian cannot be satisfied until he has gathered up the *disjecta membra* of truth that lie strewn around him, and has articulated them into a body of Divinity that, to his eye at least, is harmonious, symmetrical, complete.

It is only through system in Theology that we rise to knowledge in its highest form. A doctrine must be complemented, must be qualified, must be balanced by its correlates, if truth is to appear in its integrity. How beautifully was this illustrated in our Lord's temptation in the wilderness. It is written, as Satan urged, "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; they

shall bear thee up in their hands lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." But it is also written, as our Lord replied, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." It is in the complex produced by combining the two half truths that the truth emerges as a whole.

It is easy to show that Confessions of faith condition the progress in Theology, which it is complained that they impede. The contents of the Bible have been distributed into Theology, Anthropology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology; and Klieforth calls attention to the fact that it has pleased God to assign each of these branches to the Church in that land and in that age, in which it will be best qualified to develop it. Accordingly, Theology fell to the lot of the Greek Church, which embodied the results of its long and painful researches in the Nicene and Athanasian Symbols. After garnering the sheaves reaped from the field of Theology, the reapers were at liberty to enter in their order the fields that remained, as one after another they grew white unto the harvest. If they had failed to do this, it is easy to see that the fruits of the toils of centuries would have been lost to the Church and the world. On such a plan, progress in Theology would have been out of the question. What Macaulay says of the Ancient Philosophy would be equally true of Theology. The "Ancient Philosophy," says he, was a "tread-mill and not a path. It was made up of revolving questions, of controversies that were always returning again. There was no accumulation of truth, no heritage of truth acquired by the labor of one generation and bequeathed to another, to be transmitted again with large additions to a third. Where this Philosophy was in the days of Cicero, there it continued to be in the days of Seneca, and there it continued to be in the days of Faverinus. There was every trace of intellectual cultivation except a harvest. There was plenty of ploughing and harrowing and reaping, but the garners contained nothing but smut and stubble."

As to the sense in which our Articles of Faith are sub-

scribed there are three distinct views. The extreme positions never came into sharper conflict, perhaps, than during the great controversy which, in the year 1741, rent in twain the original Synod of Philadelphia. The Old Side, with extreme strictness, insisted on an *ipsissima verba* subscription; a yoke which neither they nor their fathers before them had been able to bear. The New Side, with extreme laxity, were no less strenuous in maintaining that the Subscription extends only to substance of Doctrine; a phrase, which, like the tent which the fairy presented in a nut-shell to Prince Ahmed, may be easily expanded until it shall include all shades of Theological opinion, from the straitest Augustinianism on the one hand to the baldest Pelagianism on the other. The true view lies at the middle point between these extremes, and requires subscription to our Symbols as containing the System of Doctrine taught in the Scriptures. Subscription in the *ipsissima verba* sense is bondage. Subscription in the "for substance of doctrine" sense is license. Subscription in the Systematic sense is freedom regulated by law, which is the only liberty worthy of the name.

Many present can easily recall the period in our National history when grave Senators attempted to vindicate their conduct in retaining their seats in Congress; and, at the same time, violating their oath to support the Constitution of the United States on the ground that it contained provisions which they could not in conscience observe. And this ethical heresy has crept into the bosom of the Church; where, Ministers of Religion, on precisely the same plea, would fain justify themselves in assailing the very Doctrines they are under vows to defend. Let the supremacy of conscience be acknowledged at all times and in all things. At the same time, no man is at liberty to accept, or accepting, to retain an office, knowing that it will precipitate a conflict between the mandate of his conscience and the fulfillment of his oath. Let the Senator be loyal to his conscience, never faltering for a moment or swerving by a hair, in his allegiance. But let him at the same time resign his seat in

Congress, and so absolve himself from the obligation of his oath. And if in the Providence of God it should ever fall out that you can no longer subscribe, and subscribe *ex animo*, the Doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church; then, at once and on the spot, restore inviolate to the Board of Directors, the trust they have confided to your honor.

In requiring you to subscribe our Confession, I am persuaded that we impose on you no hardship. St. Simon tells us that, like a pendulum in its arc, the world in its progress is ever swinging between periods that are organic and periods that are critical. It is in one of the critical ages that God has cast our lot. It is an age when, in every department of speculation and of action, the New is struggling to supplant the Old. It is an age when the eye is armed with the microscope and the hand with the scalpel. It is an age when multitudes are refusing to listen to the message which the Angel brings to us from the skies, because of their disgust at a few particles of dust which, contracted in his flight, are detected on his wings. It is an age when hand in hand with the Schoolmaster, the Reviser is abroad in the land.

And yet, in this the most critical of the critical ages, the instrument in which the Presbyterian Church confesses her Faith has stood more than a hundred years as unmoved, as unchanged as the rock Gibraltar. Aye, so serenely has the faith of the Church reposed on the bosom of her noble Confession that only recently has been started the question as to the mode in which it may be constitutionally amended. Indeed, in such perplexity is this whole subject involved, that two of our most gifted Divines have entered the arena as the respective champions of the two opposite views between which the Church is divided. And now that, like an indulgent mother, the Church has had compassion on her disconsolate sons; and, Princeton to the contrary notwithstanding, has licensed them to correct the error of their earlier years by marrying the sisters of their deceased wives, is there not good ground for the hope that in the Articles that are left to us, still like the rock Gibraltar,

our venerable Confession will survive unchanged the shocks of at least another century.

Passing to the manner of your teaching, I can touch only a few points which my time will not suffer me to expand.

Let your teaching be pronounced in its Calvinism. The common character of the Reformed Theology in its more than thirty formularies is the Calvinism with which it is pervaded. And the specific difference of Calvinism is the emphasis with which it signalizes grace in all the parts and at all the stages of a sinner's salvation. Am I mistaken when I affirm that the doctrines of grace no longer ring from our pulpits as they once did in the days of our fathers? Am I mistaken when I affirm that, in its reaction from the sharpness with which the Five Points were formerly pressed, the Church has swung to an extreme that is no less hurtful? If it is true that "One swallow does not make a Spring," it is also true that "Straws show how the wind blows." And is there not some significance in the fact that the committee charged with the duty of erecting in our national Capital a suitable memorial to the father of Republicanism, whether in the sphere of the Church or in the sphere of the State, after exercising due diligence, and that too for a considerable period, was compelled to return and report to the Assembly that the temper of the Church would not warrant a further prosecution of its task. It would be invidious to attempt, on an occasion like this, to fix the responsibility for such a state of things. But this I may say, and this I will say, that the needed reform must begin in our Seminaries. For the voices of the people are only the multitudinous reverberations of the voice that issues from the Pulpit; and this, in turn, is only the echo of the voice that issues from the Chair.

Let your teaching be popular in its form. It is hardly necessary to remind you that your pupils will reproduce, and that too in exaggerated forms, all that may be vicious in your methods. If the bones that you serve out to your classes are dry bones, rest assured that the bones which they

in their turn will serve out to the people will be not dry only, but very dry. I do not forget the distinction drawn by Dr. Chalmers between the mode in which Theology should be taught in the Hall, and the mode in which it should be preached in the Pulpit ; at the same time I remember that those lectures delivered to his pupils in the Hall were so profusely and brilliantly illustrated that close thinking was made not possible only, but easy and delightful even to the ordinary hearer. In the power to render popular the abstruse truths of Theology, your late predecessor was without a rival. It was never my fortune to hear him lecture from his Chair ; but the man who could hold, as with a spell, the large and promiscuous audiences that assembled in Philadelphia to hear his discussion of such themes as "Predestination" and "God's Relation to the World," must have been the very Prince of teachers before his classes in the Seminary.

Let your teaching be evangelical in its spirit. As I utter these words, there rises before me the venerable form of the sainted Dr. Skinner. A close student to the last, the atmosphere which he always brought to his classes was more that of the closet than of the study. In those wonderful prayers, in which, lifting us in the arms of his faith, he bore us to the very foot of the throne, how often have I seen him, as in an ecstasy of devotion, his face shone like that of an Angel. When the Scriptures would represent in a single sentence the character of God, they tell us that God is love. Let love for Christ and for souls so burn in your heart, and beam from your features, and speak in your words, and breathe in your spirit, that, as you go in and out before your classes, you shall be, like the Master before you, yourself the incarnation of love.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

BY

THE REV. BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD, D.D.

THE
IDEA OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY
CONSIDERED AS A SCIENCE.

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INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

FATHERS AND BRETHREN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS :

The signature which I have just affixed to the pledge which with great propriety, as I believe, you require of those whom you call to the responsible position of teachers in this Seminary, will have assured you already of the matter of the doctrinal teaching which is still to be expected in this institution. Mourning as you do here to-day, with the renewed grief which is brought back upon us all by the business of the hour, with its teeming memories of those great men of the past who have shed lustre on the whole church from the chair into which you are now inducting a new incumbent, may you not take some comfort in being assured that, with however diminished power, the same theology is still to be taught here that for three-quarters of a century gave to Princeton Seminary a noble name in the world? It was not my lot to know him who was called of God to plant the first seeds in this garden of the Lord. But it was my inestimable privilege to sit at the feet of him who tended it and watered it until its fragrance went out over the whole earth. And I rejoice to testify to you to-day that though the power of Charles Hodge may not be upon me, the theology of Charles Hodge is within me, and that this is the theology which, according to my ability, I have it in my heart to teach to the students of the coming

years. Oh, that the mantle of my Elijah might fall upon my shoulders; at least the message that was given to him is set within my lips.

In casting about for a subject germane to the occasion on which I might address you, I have lighted upon a line of thought which leads me to cast what I have to say into the form of some somewhat desultory remarks directed toward outlining the implications that arise from our regarding systematic theology as a science. I venture to state my subject, then, as

THE IDEA OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY CONSIDERED AS
A SCIENCE.

I am not sure that we always realize how much we have already determined about theology, when we have made the simple assertion concerning it, that it is a science. In this single predicate is implicitly included a whole series of affirmations which, taken together, will give us a rather clear conception not only of what theology is, but also of what it deals with, whence it obtains its material, and for what purpose it exists. It will be my object in this address to make this plain to you.

I. First of all, then, let us observe that to say that theology is a science is to deny that it is a historical discipline, and to affirm that it seeks to discover not what has been or is held to be true, but what is ideally true; in other words, it is to declare that it deals with absolute truth and aims at organizing into a concatenated system all the truth in its sphere. Geology is a science, and on that very account there cannot be two geologies; its matter is all the well-

authenticated facts in its sphere, and its aim is to digest all these facts into one all-comprehending system. There may be rival psychologies, which fill the world with vain jangling; but they do not strive together in order that they may obtain the right to exist side by side in equal validity, but in strenuous effort to supplant and supersede one another.: there can be but one true science of mind. In like manner, just because theology is a science there can be but one theology. This all-embracing system will brook no rival in its sphere, and there can be two theologies only at the cost of one or both of them being imperfect, incomplete, false. It is because theology is often looked upon, in accordance with a somewhat prevalent point of view, as a historical rather than a scientific discipline, that it is so frequently spoken of and defined as if it were but one of many similar schemes of thought. There is no doubt such a thing as Christian theology, as distinguished from Buddhist theology or Mohammedan theology; and men may study it as the theological implication of Christianity considered as one of the world's religions. But when studied from this point of view, it forms a section of a historical discipline and furnishes its share of facts for a history of religions; on the data supplied by which a science or philosophy of religion may in turn be based. We may also, no doubt, speak of the Pelagian and Augustinian theologies, or of the Calvinistic and Arminian theologies; but, again, we are speaking as historians and from a historical point of view. The Pelagian and Augustinian theologies are not two co-ordinate sciences of theology; they are rival theologies. If one is

true, just so far the other is false, and there is but one theology. This we may identify, as an empirical fact, with either or neither; but it is at all events one, inclusive of all theological truth and exclusive of all else as false or not germane to the subject.

In asserting that theology is a science, then, we assert that in its subject-matter, it includes all the facts belonging to that sphere of truth that we call theological; and we deny that it needs or will admit of limitation by a discriminating adjectival definition. We may speak of it as Christian theology just as we may speak of it as true theology, if we mean thereby more fully to describe what, as a matter of fact, theology is found to be; but not, if we mean thereby to discriminate it from some other assumed theology thus erected to a co-ordinate position with it. We may describe our method of procedure in attempting to ascertain and organize the truths that come before us for building into the system, and so speak of logical or inductive, of speculative or organic theology; or we may separate the one body of theology into its members, and, just as we speak of surface and organic geology or of physiological and direct psychology, so speak of the theology of grace and of sin, or of natural and revealed theology. But all these are but designations of methods of procedure in dealing with the one whole, or of the various sections that together constitute the one whole, which in its completeness is the science of theology, and which, as a science, is inclusive of all the truth in its sphere, however ascertained, however presented, however defended.

II. There is much more than this included, how-

ever, in calling theology a science. For the very existence of any science, three things are presupposed: (1) the reality of its subject-matter; (2) the capacity of the human mind to apprehend, receive into itself, and rationalize this subject-matter; and (3) some medium of communication by which the subject-matter is brought before the mind and presented to it for apprehension. There could be no astronomy, for example, if there were no heavenly bodies. And though the heavenly bodies existed, there could still be no science of them were there no mind to apprehend them. Facts do not make a science; even facts as apprehended do not make a science; they must be not only apprehended, but also so far comprehended as to be rationalized and thus combined into a correlated system. The mind brings somewhat to every science which is not included in the facts considered in themselves alone, as isolated data, or even as data perceived in relation to one another. Though they be thus known, science is not yet; and is not born save through the efforts of the mind in subsuming the facts under its own intuitions and forms of thought. No mind is satisfied with a bare cognition of facts: its very constitution forces it on to a restless energy until it succeeds in working these facts not only into a network of correlated relations among themselves, but also into a rational body of thought correlated to itself and its modes of thinking. The condition of science, then, is that the facts which fall within its scope shall be such as stand in relation not only to our faculties, so that they may be apprehended; but also to our mental constitution so that they may be so far understood as to be rationalized and wrought into

a system relative to our thinking. Thus a science of æsthetics presupposes an æsthetic faculty, and a science of morals a moral nature, as truly as a science of logic presupposes a logical apprehension, and a science of mathematics a capacity to comprehend the relations of numbers. But still again, though the facts had real existence, and the mind were furnished with a capacity for their reception and for a sympathetic estimate and embracing of them in their relations, no science could exist were there no media by which the facts should be brought before and communicated to the mind. The transmitter and intermediating wire are as essential for telegraphing as the message and the receiving instrument. Subjectively speaking, sense perception is the essential basis of all science of external things; self-consciousness, of internal things. But objective media are also necessary. For example, there could be no astronomy, were there no trembling ether through whose delicate telegraphy the facts of light and heat are transmitted to us from the suns and systems of the heavens. Subjective and objective conditions of communication must unite, before the facts that constitute the material of a science can be placed before the mind that gives it its form. The sense of sight is essential to astronomy: yet the sense of sight would be useless for forming an astronomy were there no objective ethereal messengers to bring us news from the stars. With these an astronomy becomes possible; but how meagre an astronomy compared with the new possibilities which have opened out with the discovery of a new medium of communication in the telescope, followed by still newer media in the subtile instruments by which our

modern investigators not only weigh the spheres in their courses, but analyze them into their chemical elements, map out the heavens in a chart, and separate the suns into their primary constituents.

Like all other sciences, therefore, theology, for its very existence as a science, presupposes the objective reality of the subject-matter with which it deals; the subjective capacity of the human mind so far to understand this subject-matter as to be able to subsume it under the forms of its thinking and to rationalize it into not only a comprehensive but also a comprehensible whole; and the existence of trustworthy media of communication by which the subject-matter is brought to the mind and presented before it for perception and understanding. That is to say: (1). The affirmation that theology is a science presupposes the affirmation that God is, and that He has relation to His creatures. Were there no God, there could be no theology; nor could there be a theology if, though He existed, He existed out of relation with His creatures. The whole body of philosophical apologetics is, therefore, presupposed in and underlies the structure of scientific theology. (2). The affirmation that theology is a science presupposes the affirmation that man has a religious nature, *i. e.*, a nature capable of understanding not only that God is, but also, to some extent, what He is; not only that He stands in relation with His creatures, but also what those relations are. Had man no religious nature he might, indeed, apprehend certain facts concerning God, but he could not so understand Him in His relations to man as to be able to respond to those facts in a true and sympathetic embrace. The total product of the

great science of religion, which investigates the nature and workings of this element in man's mental constitution, is therefore presupposed in and underlies the structure of scientific theology. (3). The affirmation that theology is a science presupposes the affirmation that there are media of communication by which God and Divine things are brought before the minds of men, that they may perceive them, and in perceiving, understand them. In other words, when we affirm that theology is a science, we affirm not only the reality of God's existence and our capacity so far to understand Him, but we affirm that He has made Himself known to us,—we affirm the objective reality of a revelation. Were there no revelation of God to men, our capacity to understand Him would lie dormant and unawakened; and though He really existed it would be to us as if He were not. There would be a God to be known and a mind to know Him; but theology would be as impossible as if there were neither the one nor the other. Not only, then, philosophical, but also, if there be a written revelation, the whole mass of historical apologetics by which the reality of a written revelation is vindicated, is presupposed in and underlies the structure of scientific theology.

III. In thus developing the implications of calling theology a science, we have already gone far toward determining our exact conception of what theology is. We have in effect, for example, settled our definition of theology. A science is defined from its subject-matter; and the subject-matter of theology is God in His nature and in His relations with His creatures. Theology is therefore that science which treats of

God and of the relations between God and the universe. To this definition most theologians have actually come. And those who define theology as "the science of God," mean the term God in a broad sense as inclusive also of His relations; while others exhibit their sense of the need of this inclusiveness by calling it "the science of God and of Divine things"; while still others speak of it more loosely, as "the science of the supernatural." These definitions fail rather in precision of language than in correctness of conception. Others, however, go astray in the conception itself. Thus theologians of the school of Schleiermacher usually derive their definition from the sources rather than the subject-matter of the science,—and so speak of theology as "the science of faith" or the like; a thoroughly unscientific procedure, even though our view of the sources be complete and unexceptionable, which is certainly not the case with this school. Quite as confusing is it to define theology, as is very currently done and often as an outgrowth of this same subjective tendency, as "the science of religion," or even—pressing the historical conception which as often underlies this type of definition, to its greatest extreme,—as "the science of the Christian religion." Theology and religion are parallel products of the same body of facts in diverse spheres; the one in the sphere of thought and the other in the sphere of life. And the definition of theology as "the science of religion" thus confounds the product of the facts concerning God and His relations with His creatures working through the hearts and lives of men, with those facts themselves; and consequently, whenever strictly understood, bases

theology not on the facts of the divine revelation, but on the facts of the religious life. This leads ultimately to a confusion of the two distinct disciplines of theology, the subject-matter of which is objective, and the science of religion, the subject-matter of which is subjective; with the effect of lowering the data of theology to the level of the aspirations and imaginings of man's own heart. Wherever this definition is found, either a subjective conception of theology which reduces it to a branch of psychology, may be suspected, or else a historical conception of it, a conception of "Christian theology" as one of the many theologies of the world parallel with, even if unspeakably truer than, the others with which it is classed and in conjunction with which it furnishes us with a full account of religion. When so conceived, it is natural to take a step further and permit the methodology of the science, as well as its idea, to be determined by its distinguishing element: thus theology, in contradiction to its very name, becomes Christocentric. No doubt, "Christian theology," as a historical discipline, is Christo-centric; it is by its doctrine of redemption that it is differentiated from all the other theologies that the world has known. But theology as a science is and must be Theo-centric. So soon as we firmly grasp it from the scientific point of view, we see that there can be but one science of God and of His relations to His universe, and we no longer seek a point of discrimination, but rather a centre of development; and we quickly see that there can be but one centre about which so comprehensive a subject-matter can be organized,—the conception of God. He that hath seen Christ, has beyond doubt

seen the Father; but it is one thing to make Him the centre of theology so far as He is one with God, and another thing to organize all theology around Him as the theanthropos and in His specifically theanthropic work.

IV. Not only, however, is our definition of theology thus set for us: we have also determined in advance our conception of its sources. We have already made use of the term "revelation," to designate the medium by which the facts concerning God and His relations to His creatures are brought before men's minds, and so made the subject-matter of a possible science. The word accurately describes the condition of all knowledge of God. If there be a God, it follows by stringent necessity, that He can be known only so far as He reveals Himself. And it is but the converse of this, that if there be no revelation, there can be no knowledge, and, of course, no systematized knowledge or science of God. Our reaching up to Him in thought and inference is possible only because He condescends to make Himself intelligible to us, to speak to us through word or work, to reveal Himself. We hazard nothing, therefore, in saying that, as the condition of all theology is a revealed God, so, without limitation, the sole source of theology is revelation.

In so speaking, however, we have no thought of doubting that God's revelation of Himself is "in divers manners." We have no desire to deny that He has never left man without witness of His eternal power and Godhead, or that He has multiplied the manifestations of Himself in nature and providence and grace, so that every generation has had abiding

and unmistakable evidence that He is, that He is the good God, and that He is a God who marketh iniquity. Under the broad skirts of the term "revelation," every method of manifesting Himself which God uses in communicating knowledge of His being and attributes, may find shelter for itself—whether it be through those visible things of nature whereby His invisible things are clearly seen, or through the constitution of the human mind with its causal judgment indelibly stamped upon it, or through that voice of God that we call conscience, which proclaims His moral law within us, or through His providence in which He makes bare His arm for the government of the nations, or through the exercises of His grace, our experience under the tutelage of the Holy Ghost—or whether it be through the open visions of His prophets, the divinely-breathed pages of His written Word, the divine life of the Word Himself. How God reveals Himself—in what divers manners He makes Himself known to His creatures, is thus the subsequent question by raising which we distribute the one source of theology, revelation, into the various methods of revelation, each of which brings us true knowledge of God, and all of which must be taken account of in building our knowledge into one all-comprehending system. It is the accepted method of theology to infer that the God that made the eye must Himself see; that the God who sovereignly distributes His favors in the secular world may be sovereign too in grace; that the heart that condemns itself but repeats the condemnation of the greater God; that the songs of joy in which the Christian's happy soul voices its sense of God's gratuitous mercy,

are valid evidence that God has really dealt graciously with it. It is with no reserve that we accept all these sources of knowledge of God—nature, providence, Christian experience—as true and valid sources, the well-authenticated data yielded by which are to be received by us as revelations of God, and as such to be placed alongside of the revelations in the written Word and wrought with them into one system. As a matter of fact, theologians have always so dealt with them; and doubtless they always will so deal with them.

But to perceive, as all must perceive, that every method by which God manifests Himself is, so far as this manifestation can be clearly interpreted, a source of knowledge of Him, and must, therefore, be taken account of in framing all our knowledge of Him into one organic whole, is far from allowing that there are no differences among these various manifestations, in the amount of revelation they give, the clearness of their message, the ease and certainty with which they may be interpreted, or the importance of the special truths which they are fitted to convey. Far rather is it *a priori* likely that if there are “divers manners” in which God has revealed Himself, He has not revealed precisely the same message through each; that these “divers manners” correspond also to divers messages of divers degrees of importance, delivered with divers degrees of clearness. And the mere fact that He has included in these “divers manners” a copious revelation in a written Word, delivered with an authenticating accompaniment of signs and miracles, proved by recorded prophecies with their recorded fulfilments, and pressed, with the greatest solemnity,

upon the attention and consciences of men as the very Word of the Living God, who has by it made foolishness all the wisdom of men; nay, proclaimed as containing within itself the formulation of His truth, the proclamation of His law, the discovery of His plan of salvation:—this mere fact, I say, would itself and prior to all comparison, raise an overwhelming presumption that all the others of “the divers manners” of God’s revelation were insufficient for the purposes for which revelation is given, whether on account of defect in the amount of their communication or insufficiency of attestation or uncertainty of interpretation or fatal onesidedness in the character of the revelation they are adapted to give. We need not be surprised, therefore, that on actual examination, all these imperfections are found undeniably to attach to all forms of what we may, for the sake of discrimination, speak of as mere manifestations of God; and that thus the revelation of God in His written Word—in which are included the only authentic records of the revelation of Him through the incarnate Word—is easily shown not only to be incomparably superior to all other manifestations of Him in the fulness, richness, and clearness of its communications, but also to contain the sole discovery of all that it is most important for the soul to know as to its state and destiny, and of all that is most precious in our whole body of theological knowledge. The superior lucidity of this revelation makes it the norm of interpretation for what is revealed so much more darkly through the other methods of manifestation. The glorious character of the discoveries made in it, drives all other manifestations back into comparative insignificance. The amaz-

ing fulness of its disclosures renders the little that they can tell us of small comparative value. And its absolute completeness for the needs of man, taking up and reiteratingly repeating in the clearest of language all that can be, only after much difficulty and with much uncertainty, wrung from their enigmatic indications, and then adding to this a vast body of still more important truth undiscoverable through them, all but supersedes their necessity. With the fullest recognition of the validity of all the knowledge of God and His ways with men, which can be obtained through the manifestations of His power and divinity in nature and history and grace; and the frankest allowance that the written Word is given, not to destroy the manifestations of God, but to fulfill them; the theologian must yet refuse to give these sources of knowledge a place alongside of the written Word, in any other sense than that he gladly admits that they, alike with it, but in unspeakably lower measure, do tell us somewhat of God. And nothing can be a clearer indication of a decadent theology or of a decaying faith, than a tendency to neglect the Word in favor of some one or of all of the lesser sources of theological truth, as fountains from which to draw our knowledge of divine things. This were to prefer the flickering rays of a taper to the blazing light of the sun; to elect to draw our water from a muddy run rather than to dip it from the broad bosom of the pure fountain itself.

Nevertheless, men have often sought to still the cravings of their souls with a purely natural theology; and there are men to-day who prefer to derive their knowledge of what God is and what He will do for man from an analysis of the implications of their own

religious feelings: not staying to consider that nature, "red in tooth and claw with ravin," can but direct our eyes to the God of law, whose deadly letter killeth; or that our feelings must needs point us to the God of our imperfect apprehensions or of our unsanctified desires,—not to the God that is, so much as to the God that we would fain should be. The natural result of resting on the revelations of nature is despair; while the inevitable end of making our appeal to even the Christian heart is to make for ourselves refuges of lies in which there is neither truth nor safety. We may, indeed, admit that it is valid reasoning to infer from the nature of the Christian life what are the modes of God's activities toward His children: to see, for instance, in conviction of sin and the sudden peace of the new-born soul, God's hand in slaying that He may make alive, His almighty power in raising the spiritually dead. But how easy to overstep the limits of valid inference; and, forgetting that it is the body of Christian truth known and consciously assimilated that determines the type of Christian experience, confuse in our inferences what is from man with what is from God, and condition and limit our theology by the undeveloped Christian thought of the man or his times. The interpretation of the data included in what we have learned to call "the Christian consciousness," whether of the individual or of the church at large, is a process so delicate, so liable to error, so inevitably swayed to this side or that by the currents that flow up and down in the soul, that probably few satisfactory inferences could be drawn from it, had we not the norm of Christian experience and its dogmatic impli-

cations recorded for us in the perspicuous pages of the written word. But even were we to suppose that the interpretation was easy and secure, and that we had before us in an infallible formulation, all the implications of the religious experience of all the men who have ever known Christ, we have no reason to believe that the whole body of facts thus obtained, would suffice to give us a complete theology. After all, we know in part and we feel in part; it is only when that which is perfect shall appear that we shall know or experience all that Christ has in store for us. With the fullest acceptance, therefore, of the data of the theology of the feelings, no less than of natural theology, when their results are validly obtained and sufficiently authenticated as trustworthy, as divinely revealed facts which must be wrought into our system, it remains nevertheless true that we should be confined to a meagre and doubtful theology were these data not confirmed, reinforced, and supplemented by the surer and fuller revelations of Scripture; and that the Holy Scriptures are the source of theology in not only a degree, but also a sense in which nothing else is.

There might be a theology without the Scriptures, —a theology of nature, gathered by painful, and slow, and doubtful processes from what man saw around him in external nature and the course of history, and what he saw within him of nature and of grace. In like manner there may be and has been an astronomy of nature, gathered by man in his natural state without help from aught but his naked eyes, as he watched in the fields by night. But what is this astronomy of nature to the astronomy that has become possible

through the wonderful appliances of our observatories? The Word of God is to theology as, but vastly more than, these instruments are to astronomy. It is the instrument which so far increases the possibilities of the science as to revolutionize it and to place it upon a height from which it can never more descend. What would be thought of the deluded man, who, discarding the new methods of research, should insist on acquiring all the astronomy which he would admit, from the unaided observation of his own myopic and astigmatic eyes? Much more deluded is he who, neglecting the instrument of God's word written, would confine his admissions of theological truth to what he could discover from the broken lights that play upon external nature, and the faint gleams of a dying or even a slowly reviving light, which arise in his own sinful soul. Ah, no! the telescope first made a real science of astronomy possible: and the Scriptures form the only sufficing and thoroughly infallible source of theology.

V. Under such a conception of its nature and sources, we are driven to consider the place of systematic theology among the other theological disciplines as well as among the other sciences in general. Without encroaching upon the details of *Theological Encyclopædia*, we may adopt here the usual fourfold distribution of the theological disciplines into the Exegetical, the Historical, the Systematic, and the Practical, with only the correction of prefixing to them a fifth department of Apologetical Theology. The place of Systematic Theology in this distribution is determined by its relation to the preceding disciplines, of which it is

the crown and head. Apologetical theology prepares the way for all theology by establishing its necessary presuppositions without which no theology is possible—the existence and essential nature of God, the religious nature of man which enables him to receive a revelation from God, the possibility of a revelation and its actual realization in the Scriptures. It thus places the Scriptures in our hands for investigation and study. Exegetical theology receives these inspired writings from the hands of apologetics, and investigates their meaning; presenting us with a body of detailed and substantiated results, culminating in a series of organized systems of biblical history, biblical ethics, biblical theology, and the like, which provide material for further use in the more advanced disciplines. Historical theology investigates the progressive realization of Christianity in the lives, hearts, worship, and thought of men, issuing not only in a full account of the history of Christianity, but also in a body of facts which come into use in the more advanced disciplines, especially in the way of the sifted results of the reasoned thinking and deep experience of Christian truth during the whole past, as well as of the manifold experiments that have been made during the ages in Christian organization, worship, living, and creed-building. Systematic theology does not fail to strike its roots deeply into this matter furnished by historical theology; it knows how to profit by the experience of all past generations in their efforts to understand and define, to systematize and defend revealed truth; and it thinks of nothing so little as lightly to discard the conquests of so many hard-fought fields. It therefore gladly utilizes all the ma-

terial that historical theology brings it, accounting it, indeed, the very precipitate of the Christian consciousness of the past; but it does not use it crudely, or at first hand for itself, but accepts it as investigated, explained, and made available by the sister discipline of historical theology which alone can understand it or draw from it its true lessons. It certainly does not find in it its chief or primary source, and its relation to historical theology is, in consequence, far less close than that in which it stands to exegetical theology which is its true and especial handmaid. The independence of exegetical theology is seen in the fact that it does its work wholly without thought or anxiety as to the use that is to be made of its results; and that it furnishes a vastly larger body of data than can be utilized by any one discipline. It provides a body of historical, ethical, liturgic, ecclesiastical facts, as well as a body of theological facts. But so far as its theological facts are concerned, it provides them chiefly that they may be used by systematic theology as material out of which to build its system. This is not to forget the claims of biblical theology. It is rather to emphasize its value, and to afford occasion for explaining its true place in the encyclopædia, and its true relations on the one side to exegetical theology, and on the other to systematics,—a matter which appears to be even yet imperfectly understood in some quarters. Biblical theology is not a section of historical theology, although it must be studied in a historical spirit, and has a historical face; it is rather the ripest fruit of exegetics, and exegetics has not performed its full task until its scattered results in the way of theological data are gathered up into a full and articulated

system of biblical theology. It is to be hoped that the time will come when no commentary will be considered complete until the capstone is placed upon its fabric by closing chapters gathering up into systematized exhibits, the unsystematized results of the continuous exegesis of the text, in the spheres of history, ethics, theology, and the like. The task of biblical theology, in a word, is the task of co-ordinating the scattered results of continuous exegesis into a concatenated whole, whether with reference to a single book of Scripture or to a body of related books or to the whole Scriptural fabric. Its chief object is not to find differences of conception between the various writers, though some recent students of the subject seem to think this is so much their duty, that when they cannot find differences, they make them. It is to reproduce the theological thought of each writer or group of writers in the form in which it lay in their own minds, so that we may be enabled to look at all their theological statements at their angle, and to understand all their deliverances as modified and conditioned by their own point of view. Its exegetical value lies just in this circumstance, that it is only when we have thus concatenated an author's theological statements into a whole, that we can be sure that we understand them as he understood them in detail. A light is inevitably thrown back from biblical theology upon the separate theological deliverances as they occur in the text, such as subtly colors them, and often, for the first time, gives them to us in their true setting, and thus enables us to guard against perverting them when we adapt them to our use. This is a noble function, and could students of biblical theology

only firmly grasp it, once for all, as their task, it would prevent the bringing this important science into contempt through a tendency to exaggerate differences in form of statement into divergences of view, and so to force the deliverances of each book into a strange and unnatural combination, in their effort to vindicate a function for their discipline.

The relation of biblical theology to systematic theology is based on a true view of its function. Systematic theology is not founded on the direct and primary results of the exegetical process; it is founded on the final and complete results of exegesis as exhibited in biblical theology. Not exegesis itself, then, but biblical theology, provides the material for systematics. It is not, then, a rival of systematics; it is not even a parallel product of the same body of facts, provided by exegesis; it is the basis and source of systematics. Systematic theology is not a concatenation of the scattered theological data furnished by the exegetic process; it is the combination of the already concatenated data given to it by biblical theology. It uses the individual data furnished by exegesis, in a word, not crudely, not independently for itself, but only after these data have been worked up into biblical theology and have received from it their final coloring and subtlest shades of meaning—in other words, only in their true sense, and only after exegetics has said its last word upon them. Just as we shall attain our finest and truest conception of the person and work of Christ, not by crudely trying to combine the scattered details of His life and teaching as given in our four gospels into one patchwork life and account of His teaching; but far more rationally

and far more successfully by first catching Matthew's full conception of Jesus, and then Mark's, and then Luke's, and then John's, and combining these four conceptions into one rounded whole:—so we gain our truest systematics not by at once working together the separate dogmatic statements in the Scriptures, but by combining them in their due order and proportion as they stand in the various theologies of the Scriptures. Thus we are enabled to view the future whole not only in its parts, but in the several combinations of the parts, and, looking at it from every side, to obtain a true conception of its solidity and strength, and to avoid all exaggeration or falsification of the details in giving them place in the completed structure. And thus we do not make our theology, according to our own pattern, as a mosaic, out of the fragments of the biblical teaching; but rather look out from ourselves upon it as a great prospect, framed out of the mountains and plains of the theologies of the Scriptures, and strive to attain a point of view from which we can bring the whole landscape into our field of sight. From this point of view, we find no difficulty in understanding the relation in which the several disciplines stand to one another, with respect to their contents. The material that systematics draws from other than biblical sources may be here left out of account, seeing that we are now investigating its relations, considered as a biblical discipline, to its fellow biblical departments. The actual contents of the exegetic process, of biblical theology, and of systematics, with this limitation, may be said to be the same. The immediate work of exegesis may be compared to the work of a recruiting officer: it

draws out from the mass of mankind the men who are to constitute the army. Biblical theology organizes these men into companies and regiments and corps, arranged in marching order and accoutred for service. Systematic theology combines these companies and regiments and corps into an army drawn up in battle array against the enemy of the day. It, too, is composed of men—the same men which were recruited by exegetics; but it is composed of these men, not as individuals merely, but in their due relations to the other men of their companies and regiments and corps. The simile not only illustrates the mutual relations of the disciplines, but also suggests the historical element that attaches to biblical theology, and the polemic or practical element which is inseparable from systematic theology as distinguished from a merely biblical dogmatic. It is just this polemico-practical element, determining the spirit and therefore the methods of systematic theology, which, along with its greater inclusiveness, discriminates it from all forms of biblical theology the spirit of which is purely historical.

VI. The place that theology claims for itself, as the scientific presentation of all the facts that are known concerning God and His relations, within the circle of the sciences, is an equally high one. Whether we consider the topics which it treats, in their dignity, their excellence, their grandeur; or the certainty with which its data can be determined; or the completeness with which its principles have been ascertained and its details classified; or the usefulness and importance of its discoveries: it is as far out of all comparison above all other sciences as the eternal

health and destiny of the soul are of more value than this fleeting life in this world. It is not so above them, however, as not to be also within them. There is no one of them all which is not in some measure touched and affected by it, or, we may even say, which is not in some measure included in it. As all nature, whether mental or material, may be conceived of as only the mode in which God manifests Himself, every science which investigates nature and ascertains its laws, is occupied with the discovery of the modes of the Divine action, and as such might be considered a branch of theology. Its closest relations are, no doubt, with the highest of the other sciences, ethics. Any discussion of our duty to God must rest on a knowledge of our relation to Him; and much of our duty to man is undiscoverable, save through knowledge of our common relation to the one God and Father of all, and one Lord the Redeemer of all, and one Spirit the sanctifier of all,—all of which it is the function of theology to supply. This is not inconsistent with the existence of a natural ethics; but an ethics independent of theological conceptions would be a meagre thing indeed, while the theology of the Scriptural revelation for the first time affords a basis for ethical investigation at once broad enough and sure enough to raise that science to its true dignity. Neither must we on the ground of this intimacy of relation confound the two sciences of theology and ethics. Something like it in kind and approaching it in degree exists between theology and every other science, no one of which is so independent of it as not to touch and be touched by it. Much of theology is presupposed in all metaphysics and

physics alike. It alone can determine the origin of either matter or mind, or of the mystic powers that have been granted to them. It alone can explain the nature of second causes and set the boundaries to their efficiency. It alone is competent to declare the meaning of the ineradicable persuasion of the human mind that its reason is right reason, its processes trustworthy, its intuitions true. All science without God is mutilated science, and no account of a single branch of knowledge can ever be complete until it is pushed back to find its completion and ground in Him. It is as true of sciences as it is of creatures, that in Him they all live and move and have their being. The science of Him and His relations is thus the necessary ground of all science. All speculation takes us back to Him; all inquiry presupposes Him; and every phase of science consciously or unconsciously rests at every step on the science that makes Him known. Theology, thus, both lies at the root of all sciences, and brings to each its capstone and crown. Each could, indeed, exist without it, in a sense and in some degree; but through it alone can any one of them reach its true dignity. Herein we see not only the proof of its greatness, but also the assurance of its permanence. "What so permeates all sections and subjects of human thought, has a deep root in human nature and an immense hold on it. What so possesses man's mind that he cannot think at all without thinking of it, is so bound up with the very being of intelligence that ere it can perish, intellect must cease to be."*

* Principal Fairbairn.

VII. The interpretation of a written document, intended to convey a plain message, is infinitely easier than the interpretation of the teaching embodied in facts themselves. It is therefore that systematic treatises on the several sciences are written. Theology has, therefore, an immense advantage over all other sciences, inasmuch as it is more an inductive study of facts conveyed in a written revelation, than an inductive study of facts as conveyed in life. It was, consequently, the first-born of the sciences. It was the first to reach relative completeness. And it is today in a state far nearer perfection than any other science. This is not, however, to deny that it is a progressive science. In exactly the same sense (though not in equal degree) in which any other science is progressive, this is progressive. It is not meant that new revelations are to be expected, or new discoveries made, of truth which has not been before within the reach of man. There is a vast difference between the progress of a science and increase in its material. All the facts of psychology, for instance, have been in existence so long as mind itself has existed; and the progress of this science has been dependent on the progressive discovery, understanding, and systematization of these facts. All the facts of theology have, in like manner, been within the reach of man for nearly two millenniums; and the progress of theology is dependent on men's progress in gathering, defining, mentally assimilating, and organizing these facts into a correlated system. So long as revelation was not completed, the progressive character of theology was secured by the progress in revelation itself. And since the close of

the canon of Scripture, the intellectual realization and definition of the doctrines revealed in it, in relation to one another, have been, as a mere matter of fact, a slow but ever advancing process. The affirmation that theology has been a progressive science is no more, then, than to assert that it is a science that has had a history,—and a history which can be and should be genetically traced and presented. First, the objective side of Christian truth was developed: pressed on the one side by the crass monotheism of the Jews and on the other by the coarse polytheism of the heathen, and urged on by its own internal need of understanding the sources of its life, Christian theology first searched the Scriptures that it might understand the nature and modes of existence of its God and the person of its divine redeemer. Then, more and more conscious of itself, it more and more fully wrought out from those same Scriptures a guarded expression of the subjective side of its faith; until through throes and conflicts it has built up the system which we all inherit. Thus the body of Christian truth has come down to us in the form of an organic growth; and we can conceive of the completed structure as the ripened fruit of the ages, as truly as we can think of it as the perfected result of the exegetical discipline. As it has come into our possession by this historic process, there is no reason that we can assign why it should not continue to make for itself a history. We do not expect the history of theology to close in our own day. However nearly completed our realization of the body of truth may seem to us to be; however certain it is that the great outlines are already securely laid and most of the details soundly

discovered and arranged; no one will assert that every detail is as yet perfected, and we are all living in the confidence so admirably expressed by old John Robinson, "that God hath more truth yet to break forth from His holy word." Just because God gives us the truth in single threads which we must weave into the reticulated texture, all the threads are always within our reach, but the finished texture is ever and will ever continue to be before us until we dare affirm that there is no truth in the word which we have not perfectly apprehended, and no relation of these truths as revealed which we have not perfectly understood, and no possibility in clearness of presentation which we have not attained.

The conditions of progress in theology are clearly discernible from its nature as a science. The progressive men in any science are the men who stand firmly on the basis of the already ascertained truth. The condition of progress in building the structures of those great cathedrals whose splendid piles glorify the history of art in the middle ages, was that each succeeding generation should build upon the foundations laid by its predecessor. If each architect had begun by destroying what had been accomplished by his forerunners, no cathedral would ever have been raised. The railroad is pushed across the continent by the simple process of laying each rail at the end of the line already laid. The prerequisite of all progress is a clear discrimination which as frankly accepts the limitations set by the truth already discovered, as it rejects the false and bad. Construction is not destruction; neither is it the outcome of destruction. There are abuses no doubt to be re-

formed; errors to correct; falsehoods to cut away. But the history of progress in every science and no less in theology, is a story of impulses given, corrected and assimilated. And when they have been once corrected and assimilated, these truths are to remain accepted. It is then time for another impulse, and the condition of all further progress is to place ourselves in this well-marked line of growth. Astronomy, for example, has had such a history; and there are now some indisputable truths in astronomy, as, for instance, the rotundity of the earth and the central place of the sun in our system. I do not say that these truths are undisputed; probably nothing is any more undisputed in astronomy, or any other science, than in theology. At all events he who wishes, may read the elaborate arguments of the "Zetetic" philosophers, as they love to call themselves, who in this year of grace are striving to prove that the earth is flat and occupies the centre of our system. Quite in the same spirit, there are "Zetetic" theologians who strive with similar zeal and acuteness to overturn the established basal truths of theology,—which, however, can never more be shaken; and we should give about as much ear to them in the one science as in the other. It is utter folly to suppose that progress can be made otherwise than by placing ourselves in the line of progress; and if the temple of God's truth is ever to be completely built, we must not spend our efforts in digging at the foundations which have been securely laid in the distant past, but must rather give our best efforts to rounding the arches, carving the capitals, and fitting in the fretted roof. What if it is not ours to lay foundations? Let

us rejoice that that work has been done! Happy are we if our God will permit us to bring a single capstone into place. This fabric is not a house of cards to be built and blown down again an hundred times a day, as the amusement of our idle hours: it is a miracle of art to which all ages and lands bring their various tribute. The subtle Greek laid the foundations; the law-loving Roman raised high the walls; and all the perspicuity of France and ideality of Germany and systematization of Holland and deep sobriety of Britain have been expended in perfecting the structure; and so it grows. We have heard much in these last days of the phrase, "Progressive orthodoxy," and in somewhat strange connections. Nevertheless, the phrase itself is not an inapt description of the building of this theological house. Let us assert that the history of theology has been and ever must be a progressive orthodoxy. But let us equally loudly assert that progressive orthodoxy and retrogressive heterodoxy can scarcely be convertible terms. Progressive orthodoxy implies that first of all we are orthodox, and secondly that we are progressively orthodox, *i. e.*, that we are ever growing more and more orthodox as more and more truth is being established. This has been and must be the history of the advance of every science, and not less, among them, of the science of theology. Justin Martyr, champion of the orthodoxy of his day, held a theory of the intertrinitarian relationship which became heterodoxy after the Council of Nice; the ever-struggling Christologies of the earlier ages were forever set aside by the Chalcedon fathers; Augustine determined for all time the doctrine of

grace, Anselm the doctrine of the atonement, Luther the doctrine of forensic justification. In any progressive science, the amount of departure from accepted truth which is possible to the sound thinker becomes thus ever less and less, in proportion as investigation and study result in the progressive establishment of an ever increasing number of facts. The physician who would bring back to-day the medicine of Galen would be no more mad than the theologian who would revive the theology of Clement of Alexandria. Both were men of light and leading in their time ; but their time is past, and it is the privilege of the child of to-day to know a sounder physic and a sounder theology than the giants of that far past yesterday could attain. It is of the very essence of our position at the end of the ages that we are ever more and more hedged around with ascertained facts, the discovery and establishment of which constitute the very essence of progress. Progress brings progressive limitation, just because it brings progressive knowledge. And as the orthodox man is he that teaches no other doctrine than that which has been established as true ; the progressively orthodox man is he who is quick to perceive, admit, and condition all his reasoning by all the truth down to the latest, which has been established as true.

VIII. When we speak of progress our eyes are set upon a goal. And in calling theology a progressive science we unavoidably raise the inquiry, what the end and purpose is toward an ever-increasing fitness to secure which it is continually growing. When we consider the surpassing glory of the subject-matter

with which it deals, it would appear that if ever science existed for its own sake, this might surely be true of this science. The truths concerning God and His relations are, above all comparison, in themselves the most worthy of all truths of study and examination. Yet we must vindicate for theology rather that it is an eminently practical science. The contemplation and exhibition of Christianity as truth, is far from the end of the matter. This truth is specially communicated by God for a purpose, for which it is admirably adapted. That purpose is to save and sanctify the soul. And the discovery, study, and systematization of the truth is in order that, firmly grasping it and thoroughly comprehending it in all its reciprocal relations, we may be able to make the most efficient use of it for its holy purpose. Well worth our most laborious study, then, as it is, for its own sake as mere truth; it becomes not only absorbingly interesting, but inexpressibly precious to us when we bear in mind that the truth with which we thus deal constitutes, as a whole, the engrafted Word that is able to save our souls. The task of thoroughly exploring the pages of revelation, soundly gathering from them their treasures of theological teaching and carefully fitting these into their due places in a system whereby they may be preserved from misunderstanding, perversion, and misuse, and given a new power to convince the understanding, move the heart, and quicken the will, becomes thus a holy duty to our own and our brothers' souls as well as our eager pleasure of our intellectual nature. That the knowledge of the truth is an essential prerequisite to the production of those graces and the building up of those elements of a sanctified char-

acter for the production of which each truth is especially adapted, probably no one denies: but surely it is equally true that the clearer, fuller, and more discriminating this knowledge is, the more certainly and richly will it produce its appropriate effect; and in this is found a most complete vindication of the duty of systematizing the separate elements of truth into a single soundly concatenated whole, by which the essential nature of each is made as clear as it can be made to human apprehension. It is not a matter of indifference, then, how we apprehend and systematize this truth. On the contrary, if we misconceive it in its parts or in its relations, not only do our views of truth become confused and erroneous, but also our religious life becomes dwarfed or contorted. The character of our religion is, in a word, determined by the character of our theology: and thus the task of the systematic theologian is to see that the relations in which the separate truths actually stand are rightly conceived, in order that they may exert their rightful influence on the development of the religious life. As no truth is so insignificant as to have no place in the development of our religious life, so no truth is so unimportant that we dare neglect it or deal deceitfully with it in adjusting it into our system. We are smitten with a deadly fear on the one side, lest by fitting them into a system of our own devising, we cut from them just the angles by which they were intended to lay hold of the hearts of men: but on the other side, we are filled with a holy confidence that, by allowing them to frame themselves into their own system as indicated by their own natures,—as the stones in Solomon's temple were cut each for its place,—we shall make each

available for all men, for just the place in the saving process for which it was divinely framed and divinely given.

From this point of view the systematic theologian is pre-eminently a preacher of the Gospel; and the end of his work is not merely the logical arrangement of the truths which come under his hand, but the moving of men through their power to love God with all their hearts, and their neighbors as themselves; to choose their portion with the Saviour of their souls; to find and hold Him precious; and to recognize and yield to the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit whom He has sent. With such truth as this he will not dare to deal in a cold and merely scientific spirit, but will justly and necessarily permit its preciousness and its practical destination to determine the spirit in which he handles it, and to awaken the reverential love with which alone he should investigate its reciprocal relations. For this he needs to be suffused at all times with a sense of the unspeakable worth of the revelation which lies before him as the source of his material, and with the personal bearings of its separate truths on his own heart and life; he needs to have had and to be having a full, rich, and deep religious experience of the great doctrines with which he deals; he needs to be living close to his God, to be resting always on the bosom of his Redeemer, to be filled at all times with the manifest influences of the Holy Spirit. The teacher of systematic theology needs a very sensitive religious nature, a most thoroughly consecrated heart, and an outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon him, such as will fill him with that spiritual discernment, without which all native intellect is

in vain. He needs to be not merely a student, not merely a thinker, not merely a systematizer, not merely a teacher,—he needs to be like the beloved disciple himself in the highest, truest and holiest sense, a divine.

FATHERS AND BRETHREN, as I speak these words, my heart fails me in a deadly anxiety. "Who is sufficient for these things?" it cries to me in a true dismay. We all remember how but a short decade ago one stood in this place where I now stand, who, in the estimation of us all, was richly provided by nature and grace for the great task which now lies before me, but which then lay before him. "Alas! sirs," said he, with a humility which was characteristic of his chastened and noble soul,—“Alas! sirs, when I think of myself, I often cry, ‘Woe is me, that such an one as I, should be called to inherit the responsibilities descending in such a line.’ And when I think of the Church, I cry with a far sorer wonder, ‘What times are these, when such a man as I should be made to stand in such a place?’” With far more reason may I be allowed to echo these words to-day. With far more need may I demand now, as he demanded then, your prayers for me, that in “the service to-day inaugurated, God’s strength may be made perfect in my weakness.”

