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ARTICLE I.

A CALM AND CANDID REVIEW OF SOME SPEECHES  
ON EVOLUTION.

Whether for praise or for blame, it cannot be doubted that the whole agitation all over our Church respecting Columbia Seminary, has had its main origin with two individuals. Has it been, indeed, the unearthing of a dangerous concealed influence, which, brought chiefly by two men into the clear light of day, is being *slaughtered*? Then the Church has these two men to hold in especial honor for this great and useful service. On the other hand, has it been an unnecessary and hurtful excitement about nothing, arousing our fears about dangers imaginary, and stirring up baseless apprehensions through the exaggeration of trifles into real and frightful evils? Then the chief responsibility will still lie at the doors of two men alone. One of them has had an official position—in fact, two official positions—giving him enormous powers of both good and evil. But whether he has been doing our Church great beneficial service, or great damage, in these two official positions, is to be ascribed mainly to the support given him by his truly eminent colleague in all this work. The most popular and best beloved minister in our Synod, distinguished as a scholar and a theologian, eloquent as the golden-mouthed John of Constantinople, gentle and tender and affection-

ate as the John of Patmos, enjoying the confidence of our whole communion in the very highest degree, it was the support of this John, from the beginning to the end, more than any other influence which gave this movement its power; and to him really belongs the commendation or the condemnation that must follow.

This acknowledged leader of the "Anti-Woodrow" debate at Greenville has published his two speeches there. They were not very correctly reported in the papers, but it is possible now to ascertain precisely what he held, and to judge deliberately of the real value of his arguments. We believe that we can fairly estimate it. Bound to each other for long years by peculiar ties, co-laborers in more than one arduous and responsible service for the Church so much loved by us both, sympathising hitherto fully in every sentiment and opinion perhaps of our whole lives, and now divided thoroughly for the first time, the claim is not an extravagant one, on our part, that we can weigh impartially whatever he has uttered on this subject. On page 29 of the "Two Speeches" will be found a paragraph which sets forth the conclusion to which their author came at the late Synod of South Carolina. The paragraph is as follows:

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

There appear to be two main positions of which our eminent friend is the inventor and on which he relies for his justification in the course he has been pursuing. The one, briefly stated, is that the Theological Seminary course of instruction ought to be only dogmatic, so that no unverified hypotheses are admissible there; the other, that there are two senses of Scripture, both

binding on our consciences: the absolute sense, and the sense accepted by the Church, so that what the Church holds, whether true or false, binds our conscience as well as what the word really teaches. We propose a fair and candid examination of both positions. These are the foundations on which rests all our friend has said and done, and influenced so many others to say and do. If these positions are baseless, the whole superstructure falls, and our Church must see what a lamentable operation has been its erection in her name.

First, now: *as to the dogmatism that must characterise theological investigation and instruction.* This precise expression was not used at Greenville and will not be found in the published speeches. Yet the idea was and is distinctly put forth. At top of page 16 are defined the nature and design of a theological school: "It is designed to teach what the Church holds and believes. For it to teach the contrary is to violate its very nature and end." "The great end of a theological seminary, I have urged, is to teach the Church's interpretation of the word of God. For this it exists; this is the law of its being." Accordingly, at close of page 15 we read, "A scientific hypothesis which has not been proved, so as to have become an established theory or law, and which is contrary to our Church's interpretation of the Bible, and to her prevailing and recognised views, ought not to be inculcated and maintained in our Theological Seminaries." And at top of page 17, "Even a proved truth of science ought not to be inculcated in a Theological Seminary when it contradicts our standards as the Church's interpretation of the Scriptures. The only true course, in this case, is for the Church authoritatively to expunge the untrue interpretation and substitute for it that which has been proved to be true. But, until that is done, the standards unchanged are the law by which all official teaching must be regulated. That law cannot be legitimately resisted and violated. The teacher is not the judge; the Church alone is the judge in the premises." Further, on page 19, at the top: "It is our right, it is our duty, to dictate what, as a teacher in his official capacity, a Professor can or cannot teach in a Theological Seminary." On page 22, at the bottom: "I maintain that a Theo-

logical Seminary is not the place, and instruction in its halls not the means, to create sentiments adverse to any objectionable features of our doctrinal standards, or to attempt the inauguration of measures looking to their elimination from them. There are other relations sustained by Theological Professors, and other means accessible to them, through which they may legitimately exert their influence for the attainment of that end. Chiefly, there are the church courts, which alone have the power to alter the standards, and the Professors are members of those courts. There they may put forth their energies to secure emendations of the constitutional law. Theological Professors, as such, are absolutely debarred from opposing by their teachings the standards of the Church." And at middle of the page: "No Professor in a Theological Seminary, as Professor, is at liberty in the class room or in the chapel to inculcate views contrary to the standards of the Church, or to oppose any element of those standards."

Now, the unquestionable meaning of all this would appear to be that theological instruction must wholly consist of dogmatism in the most absolute sense. And our friend in private correspondence did not hesitate to say, "The very genius of a theological school is dogmatic." In the extracts just given he says, the very nature and design of such a school is to teach what our Church holds. Its great end is to teach the Church's interpretation of the word of God; for this it exists, this is the law of its being. The teacher is not the judge of what he should teach—the Church alone is the judge. She dictates what he may or may not teach. Theological Professors are absolutely debarred from teaching anything else. No Professor in the class room or the chapel may oppose any element of the standards. Still, a distinction is drawn between the Professor, as such, and the same Professor as a presbyter in church courts. There is no appreciable difference between the oath of fealty to the standards sworn by the Professor and by the ordained minister, yet it is maintained here that while the Professor at the church court may put forth his energies to bring about emendations of our doctrines, he may not open his lips in the class-room or the chapel on return-

ing from Presbytery, Synod, or Assembly, to explain to the inquiring students anything which they did not comprehend in his utterances there.

The first remark to be submitted touching this statement is, that the position taken is unquestionably right, if the meaning be that the settled doctrines of the Church must not be contravened by the teaching of other and opposite doctrines. This is perfectly manifest and needed no argument at all. A theological school is not endowed and maintained at great expense for the purpose of overturning the creed of the Church that creates it. As evidently, however, that is not the kind of case we are considering. Neither has Dr. Woodrow been *teaching* Evolution; as will appear to all candid minds from the note here appended,<sup>1</sup> nor does the opinion he expressed in his Address contravene any doctrine of Revelation; for, whilst Scripture makes known that God created all, it does not inform us *how* or *of what* he created the body of man. This can easily be made to appear, because it is very questionable what is meant by the word translated *dust* in our English Bible.

But our friend writes, and he spoke, as though he was not addressing Protestants. What he says about teaching what the Church holds and about the Church's dictating what a Professor may or may not teach—these, and other similar expressions, have a disagreeable sound as they fall from his lips. Is it true that we

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<sup>1</sup> Note by Editor SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN to a communication from "Presbyter," published May 28, 1885:

"Presbyter has fallen into an error on this point. The truth is that the Perkins Professor never once from January 1st, 1861, to December 10th, 1884, referred to the doctrine of Evolution, even in its limited application, as probably true. He taught for many years before 1880 that even if true it did not contradict or in any way affect the truth of the Scriptures, yet that in his opinion it probably was not true. But as it does not affect the Scriptures it was a matter of indifference to believers in the Bible whether it is true or not. From 1880 to December, 1884, he taught his students nothing whatever on the subject—it was not referred to in the class-room. But he had been diligently studying, and when he came to form an opinion in preparing the Address delivered last year, the numerous additional facts with which he had become acquainted, convinced him that the doctrine as set forth by him is probably true. [Signed] JAMES WOODROW."

ever do thus set up the Church as the authorised interpreter of God's word? With all the devotion to our standards which ministers and theological professors are required to declare, solemnly engaging not to contravene these doctrines directly or indirectly, is it true, nevertheless, that we regard these standards chiefly in the aspect of their coming from *the Church*? Our standards do not so represent themselves. The Confession says (Chap. I.), "The authority of the Holy Scripture for which it ought to be believed and obeyed dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or Church." If we do not get the Scriptures on the Church's testimony, but "our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts," how can we get the interpretation of them on her testimony and not in the same way? Does any theological Professor bind himself not to contravene the standards, because they come to him from *the Church*, or not rather because he perceives that they come out of the Bible? Does he submit to be brought under an obligation laid on him by *the Church* which he did not previously feel with the fulness of his whole mind and heart? If he were that sort of a man, verily he had no fitness for the position.

In like manner the Larger Catechism says (Q. 4), "The Scriptures manifest themselves to be the word of God;" and it does not represent the Church as the source of our instructions in the meaning of the word. It recounts (Q. 63) the privileges of the visible Church, but to interpret for us the word is not one of them. If it were, there would be an end of that most sacred right amongst us Protestants, the right of private judgment concerning the meaning of the word. The Form of Government sets forth (Chap. II., Sec. 3) the sole functions of the Church, but this is not amongst them. There is but one place in all our Church Books which at all squints at representing the Church as the interpreter of Scripture. It is where our Rules of Discipline define "*Offence*," and refer to the standards as accepted expositions of Scripture. But who is it that accepts them in this character? It is "the Presbyterian Church in the United States," that is, it

is all of us who compose that Church, all especially of the ministers and elders of that Church who, when ordained to office, declare their acceptance. Surely there is nothing here answering to our friend's expressions. His way of speaking about "what the Church holds," and "the Church's interpretation of the word," and the Church "dictating" what may be taught, would set forth the Church as no longer a humble inquirer asking to be taught herself and seeking in a docile spirit to learn, on many points, the meaning of the word. Our Father in his good providence raises up from time to time individuals, not only extraordinary but ordinary men as well, who from our Seminaries, or from their pulpits, or through the press, give forth fresh light, whether on new or old points of doctrine, and it is given to these individuals to lead "the Church" out of the doubts and darkness in which sometimes she becomes greatly involved; but our brother's "Church" would seem to be fully capable of always guiding herself as well as all her sons and of sharply correcting them when they presume to teach anything she has not declared! The thing to be done, therefore, by all teachers in her name, not only (it would seem to us) Professors in the Seminaries, but all the ministers she ordains and pledges to teach her doctrines, is not by any means to try to learn what the word says, but what "the Church" has said. "The Bible, the Bible alone (said Chillingworth) is the religion of Protestants;" but our friend says the religion of Southern Presbyterians, which must be taught by the teachers whom their Church accredits amongst us, is what *that Church holds and what she dictates!*

It is hard to discover any force whatever in the representation that the Seminary Professor is the especial object of the Church's dictation as to his teaching. One other eminent speaker at the Greenville Synod insisted that a theological school had a peculiar character in this particular. It was then we heard a Protestant minister assume courage to confront the world's condemnation of the persecution of Galileo. He declared that Galileo got his just deserts for daring to teach what his Church did not dictate to be taught. But on what ground is the Professor to be hampered any more than the preacher? Both are ordained by the Church to teach;

and both make equally solemn pledges not to contravene the system of doctrines which they have accepted; and unfaithfulness on the part of either would be equally criminal and equally hurtful. If the reader will look over page 16 of these Speeches, it may surprise him to observe how elaborate is the demonstration from the nature and design of a theological school that the Professors must not violate their pledges. The point is plain and the argument very simple, namely, that a theological school is not a secular one, and so nothing contrary to sacred truth is admissible. Of course not; this is all quite patent. But what was needed and should have been forthcoming was another sort of elaborate demonstration not at all like what was furnished, *namely*, that the theological school is in nature and design essentially different from the pulpit. The position taken is that the Professor in a Theological Seminary must teach only what the Church has declared, but it is admitted (p. 23) that in the church court the same Professor may "put forth his energies" to have our standards altered. We cannot see the distinction. And the question immediately arises, What of this Professor's rights when he preaches in the pulpit? Is he less free than other ministers? They do not confine themselves strictly to what the Church has distinctly pronounced. They discuss matters of morals and religion that are not settled definitely yet. But if the Professor is free in the pulpit, what is it that makes him any more the Church's bondman in the theological school? Can this new *theory* prevail, which puts the Professor under an espionage and a control the preachers could not and should not submit to? Absolutely intolerable as any such system of dictation and inspection in human hands must needs be, the consolation which fortifies our souls when that species of ghostly tyranny is, in the most remote way suggested, is its *absolute impracticableness*. But surely if the putting on of such strait-jackets as these, would be both an insupportable and an impracticable measure for our preachers, it must be allowed to be the same for the Professors in our church schools. Yet further: a Theological Seminary that could be governed in this intolerant and inquisitorial spirit would needs be the school only of an infallible Church. Did not



the attempt to govern Columbia Seminary upon this very principle lately cost the institution two of the best Professors it ever possessed?

The more this new theory is considered of a theological Professor's being so much more hampered and restricted in his classroom than the preacher in his pulpit, the more it must manifest itself to be a mere unverified hypothesis. The pulpit strives, and rightly strives, to awaken the spirit of inquiry in the congregation; but according to this theory the Professor must strive to repress that in the theological school. And, moreover, whenever the preacher is wise, he will still strive to teach the people knowledge, and every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, like a man which is an householder, will bring forth out of his treasure things new and old. But the Professor in a theological school must carefully eschew every thing new. That the new thing may be true, is to be for him of no consequence. What he may speak about is only the old and the settled. Unsettled questions, however they may agitate the Church and affect the Bible, he must not handle. If topics that rouse the world and deeply move the Church should somehow penetrate the cloistered recesses where his classes hide their eyes from sunlight, and any of the young monastics whom he has to instruct about what the Church has said, should ask him a question touching these unsettled matters, he should by no means satisfy, but discourage and rebuke this speculative disposition. His business is to teach and his scholars' business is to learn what has been settled, and settled by "the Church"! Is not theological instruction to be simply dogmatic? The fathers of the Presbyterian Church were but men and did not grasp the whole scope of Scripture truth, but what they did not know and have not settled no young theologian should be encouraged to meddle with. The theological Professor himself, at the last church court which he attended, may have "put forth some of his energies to secure emendations of the constitutional law," and the rumor of it may somehow have reached the recluses whom he left behind him in the Seminary, and they may be dying, some of them, to know what the Doctor said at Greenville or at Houston; but no, he must not gratify their curi-

osity nor enlighten their minds by wagging in the slightest degree, on any such occasion, that tongue of his, on which the Church imposes silence there. In the General Assembly he may bawl as loudly as he likes out of his presbyterial mouth regarding any unverified hypothesis, but in the Seminary on no such question shall one whisper escape his professorial lips!

It would seem to be certain that this new theory of the nature and end of theological instruction is erroneous. It will not do to insist in this nineteenth century and in this Protestant country that the genius of the theological school is dogmatic. The spirit of earnest but reverential inquiry must not be banished from the academies of our Church. Take, for example, the two unverified hypotheses concerning the millennium, respecting which our Church has not definitely spoken; is it to be endured that any new restrictive theory shall be devised that shall impose silence on our Professors touching either of these? Where our Church has even uttered her voice distinctly (as she has done respecting the marriage of a wife's sister), shall we have the dogma thrust upon us that while the church court and the pulpit are free to discuss the scripturalness or the unscripturalness of that utterance of our Confession, the theological Professor must refuse to give his classes the benefit of what he may know on that question? The idea is preposterous. It is not Protestant. No merely human work is perfect. Our standards are not infallible and our Professors must not teach their students to regard them as infallible, for that is the surest way to make these young inquirers search to find errors in them. The atmosphere of the Theological Seminary will not be wholesome if it is to stifle free inquiry. The great and chief object of theological instruction is, not to teach *our doctrines as such*, but a far higher one, viz., to teach the truth. If Inquiry should enter the Seminary's doors, let her be fearlessly and frankly and kindly entertained. Far from us be the rule that there be only two alternative uses for what is unproved—what the Church has not yet settled for us: the one, to refute it whether true or false, the other to slam our doors in its face and shut it out from the eye of the theological student.

It can never cease to be a subject of regret with many of our

friend's most devoted and warmest admirers that he should have written and spoken as though our standards were "the Church's interpretation of the Scriptures, of the Bible, of God's word" (see pages 15, 16, 17). David tells us "the law is exceeding broad," and our standards do not cover the whole ground of Scripture. There are very many things in the Bible which no Church on earth has yet fully comprehended. Therefore no Church on earth has the right to restrict her people to the investigation simply of what she has declared. It is to be lamented that our friend should have expressed himself as though he could possibly believe that our English version of the Bible, or any other made by men, were invariably correct, and we for one moment bound to pin our faith to any word which it may possibly have translated erroneously. It is in this way that he has involved himself in the dilemma which, upon page 13, he confesses that he is in: "The Church (he says) must yield, has ever yielded, an interpretation of the Bible contradictory to a settled conclusion of science. We still want a principle, a rule of action, which will help us when the actual conflict is upon us. . . . What ought the Church to do in such cases? Shall she give up her Bible—the Bible as she interprets it—for unverified scientific hypotheses which contradict it? That is the great and practical question, the decision of which is big with momentous consequences." Now, there really appears to be no question here at all. There is just one way for the Church in all such cases, *namely*, to wait patiently in the calm, unruffled confidence of faith until science has come to a settled conclusion, knowing that then we should be ready to determine our way out of the difficulty. Alas, alas, why was not that course pursued in the present case? How much of evil had then been forestalled! Our Perkins Professor was set to inquire into the connexion of science with revelation, and to tell us what he found. As an ingenious dreamer of our own day and Church has stated the case, he found that Revelation was an immovable mountain of rock, which no structure of mere human wisdom or science could possibly overturn, even though some of its discoveries might properly demand the revision of some of our translations of God's word into English. Alas for the wild waves of

excitement that rushed over our Church! Why could we not have confidently bid Science, which is Revelation's handmaid, go fearlessly on and finish her investigations, knowing that God's word and works must harmonise when both are understood?

Secondly: *as to the two senses of Scripture, both binding on our conscience.*

Our friend says respecting the minority report to the Synod at Greenville, which he sustained and perhaps produced, that it "does exonerate Dr. Woodrow from the charge of heresy; but it is altogether incorrect to say that it does not represent his teaching as contradictory to the Scriptures. It draws the distinction, already emphasised in these remarks, between the Bible in its highest and absolute sense—the sense which was intended by God, its author—and the Bible as interpreted by our Church. It maintains that this Synod ought not to decide upon the question whether this view of Evolution is contrary to the Bible in the first of these senses, and that it ought to decide upon the question whether it is contrary to the Bible in the second sense. Further, it asks the Synod to decide that it is contrary to the Bible in the latter of these senses" (Speeches, p. 31).

If we apprehend the meaning here, it is that the Bible has two senses: the one that which God its author intended should be given it, the other that which our Church affixes to it in her attempts at its interpretation; and that these two senses (irrespective of their agreeing or not agreeing) are both binding on our conscience; moreover, that, whether the Church's interpretation be true or false, whatever contradicts that interpretation is contradictory to the Scriptures! If we understand the meaning here it is, also, that a doctrine may be contrary to the Scriptures and yet not be heresy!

Our friend urges the binding force of "our Church's interpretation of the Bible and of her prevailing and recognised views." Let us first consider what, in fact, is thus to be fastened on our conscience, and then we shall be ready to examine by what authority such a yoke is to be laid on us.

The Church's interpretation of the Bible, we are told (p. 24), is the standards. These are "the formal and authoritative inter-

pretation of the Scriptures by our Church." The first question is whether the standards are here held to cover the whole ground of Scripture—do they profess to interpret all that is in the Bible, or only the most manifest and needful and therefore to us most important parts? We all accept our Confession, Catechisms, Form, and Rules, "as standard expositions of the teachings of Scripture in relation to both faith and practice," but then it is only faith *as regards salvation*. Surely it will not do to say that our standards teach all on every subject that the Scriptures teach. But this question rises also: will it do for us to claim that the Bible itself teaches all we might like to know about those most important matters, or about any other matters? The Bible tells us God said, "Let there be light," "Let there be a firmament," "Let the earth bring forth," "Let the waters bring forth," and "Let us make man;" but in no one of these cases are we informed *how* God proceeded to effect his creation of all these works of his hand. And the standards say, "It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning to create, or make of nothing, the world and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days and all very good." But surely nothing is said here or elsewhere in these standards as to the *mode* of the creation, whether it was immediate or only mediate—a "bringing forth" at divine command out of what had been previously created of nothing by his almighty power.

Now it would appear to be insisted on by these Speeches that we are all bound to maintain and uphold "the face meaning of these statements" in our standards (p. 24). Three mortal pages are occupied with a laborious attempt to force this idea upon us. *What the standards mean to teach* is the one string monotonously harped on. And yet, strange to say, in the middle of the argument occur these words: "It does not much matter here whether or not the standards mean by *six days* six literal days of twenty-four hours each." Indeed! So then "the face meaning of the standards" may be abandoned at one point when it is convenient; but if this be done at another point, *the Scriptures will be contradicted!*

But can it be possible that it is really designed to insist that the standards do not teach "creation out of nothing in the first instance only"? "Dr. Woodrow's view that creation out of nothing occurred in absolutely the first instance only, and that the evolution of the earth, of the lower animals, and probably of Adam's body, was by the process of mediate creation" is set forth as inconsistent with the obvious meaning of the standards as to creation. What then? Does our friend really mean to affirm that the Almighty does not create except when he creates immediately and out of nothing? Are we to deny what our Saviour said, that his Father worketh hitherto? Are we to hold that God is not now the Creator of every man that is born into the world? Is it thus we are to understand what our standards interpret the Bible to declare? And does a Professor in the Seminary or a minister in his pulpit violate his vows if he teaches that neither the Bible nor our standards are to be understood as saying that God made all things in those first six days and has been the Creator of nothing since?

In the course of the three pages under examination just now, there is exhibited what must be confessed a somewhat morbid view of the obligations of professors and ministers towards our standards. When Dr. Woodrow was inaugurated he made known to the Synod of Georgia his conviction that the geologic hypothesis of the antiquity of the earth was true, and the Synod allowed him nevertheless to become Professor and inculcate that view. The Synod, it is here maintained, "made a mistake," yet "being fallible" it is graciously admitted "it does not become us to censure them." But "what will the [four] associated Synods do hereafter"? Candidates for ordination will occasionally except to points of doctrine in our standards—what ought Presbyteries to do in such cases? Our friend's reflections have showed him how to solve the difficulty (p. 25): "allow conscientious exceptions, *in points not involving heresy*, so far as the *holding* of them is concerned, but that we cannot allow them so far as the *official, authoritative teaching* of them is concerned. . . One thing leads on to another. If one exception to the standards be allowed in an official teacher, another and another may be. Where shall the line be

drawn? . . . It is the duty of the Synods to avoid the mistake made in the past . . . and to take order against the inculcation of anti-confessional views *in the future.*" Now, did the Synod of Georgia make a mistake in allowing this Professor's exception to the standards? Does our friend admit that he himself ought to be censured, as a minister and a Professor as well, under oath not to teach anything contrary to the standards, when he declared at Greenville and now publishes in these Speeches, that it does not much matter whether the standards mean six literal days or not? "*De minimis non curat lex.*" The minister's pledge when he is ordained is that he "sincerely receives and adopts the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church as containing *the system of doctrine* taught in the Holy Scriptures." The Professor's pledge is that he subscribes the standards "as a *just summary* of the doctrines contained in the Bible," and engages that he will not teach any doctrine contrary thereto. Surely the Synod of Georgia was right to regard the exception of the Professor as quite consistent with his subscribing the standards as a just summary of Scripture doctrine. Surely it is a morbid view of the whole subject which has taken possession of the mind of our friend. Surely the yoke he constructs for himself and all his brethren is one we never agreed to wear. We never accepted the standards as other than a just summary of Scripture truth. We never have acknowledged our Church infallible or her Confession absolutely beyond the imperfection that belongs to everything human. We cannot consent to put it on the same level with the Bible.

Next to the Church's interpretation of the Bible (that is, her standards) which is held to be binding on our conscience in the minutest particulars, there are her "prevailing and recognised views," which, also, are never to be contravened in the slightest degree. But where are these "prevailing and recognised views" of the Church to be found? Our friend explains (p. 26) it is not "mere popular opinions or sentiments, but the statements of representative theologians and the orthodox belief of God's people in the Presbyterian Church. These views of the Church . . . are in their nature interpretations of the statements of the Bible

and of our standards," and the Church's interpretations thus given are binding on our consciences. Our friend proceeds to tell us (p. 28) who are the representative theologians and other exponents of the orthodox belief of God's people in the Presbyterian Church. "I cite, first, the Faculty of Columbia Seminary. . . . I mention, next, the Board of Directors of Columbia Seminary. . . . I would refer, too, to the religious journals of our Church. Of these there are eight. One of them is Dr. Woodrow's own paper and must therefore be thrown out of the account. Of the other seven only one has advocated Dr. Woodrow's view. Here, then, are six of the old, established journals of the Church, which fail to concur in the hypothesis in question. . . . Is it not to be inferred that they represent the opinion of the great majority of the Church?" (P. 28.) And this is actually the whole of it. The conclusion follows in these words: "No, it cannot be denied that the overwhelming mass of the views of our Church—as also of all evangelical Churches—is opposed to the hypothesis of the Perkins Professor." Upon this showing of what is meant by "the Church's prevailing and recognised views," our friend bases the second main ground of all he has spoken, printed, and done in this business of bringing to pass the expulsion of Dr. Woodrow from the Seminary! The Faculty of the Seminary and the Board of Directors and our Church papers in general (he states) do not agree with Dr. Woodrow—and *we will freely add* (out of kindness to our friend), nearly the whole body of our ministry, so far as we know, and also all our particular communion and perhaps the mass of all the Christian people in the world, are unable to accept the theory of Evolution as to Adam's body—and so that theory being contrary to "the prevailing and recognised views of the Church," it was therefore binding on Dr. Woodrow's conscience not to yield, and still more, not to publish, his adherence to it! Well, then, was not Luther, too, altogether wrong in standing alone as he did against the whole Church in his day?

Before passing to the consideration of the soundness of this position, so earnestly maintained, occasion must be taken to protest against the representation made of the hypothesis of Dr.



Woodrow, which is said to contradict the prevalent opinion of the Church in five particulars. To the first no objection is to be made. The prevailing view is that Adam's body was made of dust inorganic; the opinion of Dr. Woodrow is that it was probably made of organised material, that is, of dust organised into some animal form. The remaining four other statements about Dr. Woodrow's hypothesis constitute a travesty of it much more uncandid than was to be expected from our friend. These bring him down, far nearer than it was supposed he could descend, to the level of the low witticisms about "monkey parentage" and "tadpole theology." Dr. Woodrow's theory does not deny that Adam's body resulted from "a sudden, supernatural, constructive act of God"; it does not assert that Adam's body was born of animal parents; it does not maintain that Adam's body ever was an infant and grew to the stature of a man; it does not set forth that Adam's body preceded for years the formation of Eve's body—these are all so many *caricatures*. They are unfriendly and unfair representations of an opponent's idea, unworthy of an honorable antagonist, not to say of a philosopher and a theologian. They are equal to the gross caricatures of Calvinistic theology once commonly shouted so loud, now seldom heard even from the most ignorant denouncers of it. Dr. Woodrow said, in his published speech before Synod, Adam, as to his body, may have been "a lineal descendant of the higher forms of mammalian life" (p. 46). He has said "there would seem to be no ground for attributing a different origin to man's body from that which should be attributed to animals: if the existing animal species were immediately created, so was man; if they were derived from ancestors unlike themselves, so may man have been" (Address, p. 17). He has said, "Just as there is no scientific basis for the belief that the doctrine of derivation or descent can bridge over the chasms which separate the non-existent from the existent, and the inorganic from the organic, so there is no such basis for the belief that this doctrine can bridge over the chasm which separates the mere animal from the exalted being which is made after the image of God. The mineral differs from the animal in kind, not merely in degree; so the animal differs from man in kind;

and while science has traced numberless transitions from degree to degree, it has utterly failed to find any indications of transition from kind to kind in this sense" <sup>1</sup> (Address, p. 18). This is the kind of language Dr. Woodrow employs. Ridicule is not a test

<sup>1</sup> NOTE.—The following is a just and fair statement which has been given of what Dr. Woodrow holds :

"As to Dr. Woodrow's position: After twenty-five years of study, not merely in books, but in all the fields of working naturalists, he finds the Creator carrying out in the various species of animals formed by his hand, one or a few ideas, so that all his works of this sort have been along one continuous line, until he comes to make man. One species seems to have been evolved out of another, always by divine power, from the very beginning down to the time when God said, 'Let us make man.' The anatomical and physiological resemblances between the various successive grades of animals are such as to suggest the idea of descent with modification. But these differences between the higher and lower ranks of brute creation are much more marked than that between the higher brutes and man. Therefore to the naturalist the considerations which suggest evolution up to man, suggest man's evolution also.

"Now Dr. Woodrow, being a Christian theologian as well as a naturalist, turns to his Bible to see whether it contradicts this hypothesis of science. He has always been known as a very firm believer in the plenary or verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. He has often declared that if any statement contradicts the word of God, that statement *ipso facto* must be false. But he does not find the Scripture here, or any where else, in contradiction with what science teaches. He supposes that when God tells Adam, 'Dust thou art,' Adam being not dust but flesh and blood; and when he says the serpent 'shall eat dust,' the serpent not eating that, but flesh and blood, it is clear there must be some defect of translation.

"The word dust, we are compelled to say, does not necessarily mean inorganic dust. It must refer to matter or substance in some other form. Now what that form is Scripture does not enable us to determine. Science, then, being confident that man's body comes under the law of evolution, and the Holy Bible not deciding of what or how God made him, Dr. Woodrow believes the scientific conclusion may probably be correct, so far as relates to the body of our first father, Adam. He does not hold nor did he ever teach this as a doctrine, but has treated it as a hypothesis which may probably be true. Scripture does not, and therefore he does not contradict it.

"Our Presbyterian Synods have nothing but this to allege against Dr. Woodrow. There is nothing else in his now famous Address. But to many of our most intelligent and otherwise excellent ministers and elders, this, whether true or false, is a hateful idea, and it has led to the expulsion of Dr. Woodrow from the Columbia Seminary."

of truth. The inferences which an opponent chooses to draw are not to be ascribed to any man or any doctrine.

We have now seen what it is that, if this new theory of the rule of faith prevails, is to be fastened on our conscience. It is not only the word in the sense "which was intended by God its author," but also the same word in the sense affixed to it by "our Church." The word is one, but it has two senses: the one absolute, the other "relative," whatever that may mean; the one the sense God intended us to give it, the other a different sense, the sense our Church thinks proper to put on it. In all cases where these may agree, they are, of course, not two but one; but, according to the supposition, there are cases where they do not agree and so are not one but two. And in all such cases, of course, the sense adopted by the Church is erroneous; it is false; it is heretical; and yet it is to be accepted as binding because "our Church" imposes it! And if any dare to contradict one of these interpretations which "our Church" chooses to affix to the Bible, he will be found guilty of contradicting the Scriptures. And yet, at the same time, one may thus be guilty of setting forth what is contradictory to the Scriptures without being guilty of heresy!

Now, who has given to "our Church" the right to put a different sense on the word from the one which was "intended by God its author"? And when "our Church" has thus invented a sense of her own for God's word which he did not intend it to have, who gave her the right to insert that into her standards and spread it abroad "in her prevailing and recognised views," and then impose it on the conscience of her ministers, whether preachers or professors? In the minutest particulars what "our Church" has expressed in her standards may never be openly questioned by her teachers; nay, it is her right, it is her duty *to dictate* (see p. 19) what they may and may not teach, and they must teach it even when true only in that second sense which the Church invents! But who gave her that authority? Where does her Master call for "our Church's interpretation of the Bible"? (See p. 24.) One perfect and sufficient rule of faith he gave us,

and our Church cannot assume to give us her interpretation of it as constituting a second and different sense of it equally binding with what God its author intended it to have.

But there is one step more: not in her standards only is this second binding sense of the word to be found, but also in our Church's "prevailing and recognised views" as they are set forth by her "representative theologians": the Faculty of Columbia Seminary, "the Board of Directors," and the editors of "six of the old established journals of the Church"! When all these fail to concur in any hypothesis, "is it not to be inferred that they represent the opinion of the great majority of the Church" (p. 28), and is not that decisive that the hypothesis contradicts that second and different sense of the word, as all these, the Church's representative men, have a right to impose it upon us?

There can be no doubt that the two positions herein fairly and candidly reviewed, constitute the foundation on which our friend built his whole superstructure. There can be as little doubt that his deservedly wide-spread influence and exalted character and reputation throughout our whole communion gave these two ideas, which he set forth with all the enthusiasm of his earnest soul, the mighty power they exerted over the four Synods. Neither of them, as we feel very sure, is sound or safe. Our friend, we are bound to believe, has misled the Church. It is not true that the genius of theology in this nineteenth century is hostile to the freest liberty of thought and investigation, but that is what is involved in saying that the spirit of theological seminary instruction is to be "dogmatic." It is not true that the theological professor is to teach what our Church dictates, nor that he is to get his views of truth from her, but always and only from the Bible; nor that he is to teach his classes formally what our Church says, but simply and solely what Scripture sets forth according to his best understanding of it. Nor, on the other hand, is it true, but a very great and a very dreadful error, that there are two senses of the word, the one *God's intended*, the other the *Church's adopted* sense; nor is it true that any and every difference with our Confession is necessarily a difference with Scripture. Nor

is it true that the views of our representative theologians and of the great majority of our Church are in their nature such interpretations of the Bible as must needs prevent a teacher in a theological school from accepting any unverified hypothesis as probably true, which meets with condemnation in those quarters.

It is to be lamented that upon such slight occasion so much disturbance has been excited and such fearful injury done. Here is a Professor appointed twenty-five years ago by our Church to study and to teach the connexion between science and religion. From January 1, 1861, to December 10, 1884, he never once refers to the doctrine of Evolution, even in its limited application, as probably true. For many years before 1880 he teaches that even if true it would not affect the truth of Scripture, but that in his opinion it was probably not true. From 1880 to December, 1884, he teaches nothing on the subject—it is not referred to at all in the class-room. But he has been diligently studying; and when preparing his Address for the Board, the numerous additional facts he has learned convince him that the doctrine, as set forth by him, is probably true, and so he states to the Board. He had never taught it to his classes. But there had long been unfriendly tongues at work against him, and when his Address is published they charge him openly with infidelity. And this preposterous calumny sets the whole Church aflame. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! What a petty cause for all this excitement and disturbance that the Perkins Professor after twenty-five years should say, not to his classes but the Directors, that a certain scientific hypothesis he believes was probably true! What a pity that upon such a slight occasion the good name—the precious reputation of a brother minister—should be so cruelly assailed and his guaranteed rights be so unnecessarily and unfairly denied him; and then he be so ignominiously ejected from an institution he had so well served and so long adorned. How much to be regretted the effects upon the Seminary—two most valuable, young, enthusiastic, vigorous, accomplished, progressive Professors lost to the Seminary; a part of its oldest and best friends grieved and alienated; and such a shock given to its life as it never before encountered. And then such a stain

upon the honor of our Church—boasting so long and loudly of her peculiar devotion to law and order, and then led to trample both so ruthlessly under her feet. And all this for what? For the mere expression of the opinion that a certain hypothesis of science is probably true, which, if proved to be true, cannot in the slightest degree affect the authority of Scripture. For be it remembered the most zealous, earnest, and efficient opponent of it asserts roundly (p. 31) that he exonerates the deposed Professor from the charge of heresy. All he has to say against him is, that while not contradicting Scripture, understood as God intended it should be, he yet did contradict another interpretation of Scripture invented by “our Church” !!

There was another very effective utterance before the Greenville Synod, based, as we conceive, by its eloquent author upon a misconception. It was represented to the Synod, and no doubt operated strongly on many minds, that the idea of Adam’s body being constructed by the Creator’s plastic hand out of some other organism was derogatory to the honor of our Saviour. The speaker expressed his horror of the thought of the human frame worn by our blessed Lord being in any manner or form identified, however remotely, with any of the lower orders of creation. He could not consent to have such a dreadful humiliation put, and that in our theological school itself, upon our adorable Redeemer. Such an outrageous insult to our Master deserved the strongest reprehension by this ecclesiastical assembly.

Of course it is not intended to signify that this very effective utterance was in these words or like words—all that is attempted is to set forth the substance of what was so impressively delivered with so little basis for its support.

Now it has always been understood, we suppose, that the essence of the humiliation of our Lord was in his being made or counted and treated as a sinner. He had laid on him the iniquities of us all. He was in this way carried down into the deepest possible depths. It was not his assuming our nature and wearing our flesh, but taking our place as sinners, that chiefly

constituted the degradation to which he submitted. So that if it should ever be satisfactorily proved that the first Adam really did wear a body that was made out of some organism of animal life, that fact, so demonstrated, would not add in the slightest degree to our sense of the depth of the humiliation of the *second Adam*.

But it is given to the eloquent tongue to confer power and influence upon thought by the very dress in which it clothes it.

Our adorable Redeemer, who was also our Maker, did not humiliate himself in creating all the various other forms of animal life as well as ours. Who would pretend to say this? But is it not a preposterous idea that for him to make man out of dust or clay was to confer honor upon the human creature, but that to make man out of the frame and flesh of some previously existing animal, which his divine hand had created, was to put shame on his last work? Yet is it not a far more preposterous notion that he, the glorious Redeemer, will be much more degraded and humiliated as our representative and substitute, if it shall ever come to be demonstrated by science that the human nature of which he partakes with us inherits its blood and bones from an animal? Let us not pride ourselves on our mere *humanity*. We are sinners, and the brutes all of them innocent of any transgression of God's law. In that respect we are beneath them.

It is not held to be a degradation of our nature that God has ordained our feeding on the flesh of beasts. From our earliest childhood we are nurtured on fish, flesh, and fowl. The full grown hearty man is, in a very just and true sense, just a well-fattened animal so far as his body is concerned. Nor did our blessed Lord, we may well suppose, refuse to sustain his mortal frame with the flesh of animals. Certainly he ate of the Paschal lamb; and who shall say that the flesh of that animal did not in any way contribute to form the very blood that he shed for our redemption? Even after the resurrection, when he appeared to his disciples in his glorified body, did he not partake of a broiled fish?

But even in his glorified estate our Lord does not refuse to be represented "as a lamb as it had been slain," nor does he object to

fill a throne in the midst of four and twenty elders and four beasts. "And these beasts rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Now, if our friends shall choose to say that this word *beasts* is an incorrect translation, let them cease to find fault with the suggestion that our English word *dust* may also fail to present the real idea of the original.

JNO. B. ADGER.