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INTRODUCTION

Many of those who oppose the Scripture's claim to infallibility try desperately to retain some measure of authority for the written Word. They hold to some form of "Limited Inspiration" for the books of the Bible. In the latter part of the 19th century several contended that the Holy Spirit's inspiration was limited to all matters of faith and morals but did not extend to the recording of scientific and historical facts. Stress was placed on the infallibility of God's revelation and on the fallibility of the written record of that revelation. This position is the precursor of the position of neo-liberalism and neo-orthodoxy that rejects the identification of God's truth with any formulation given in Scripture while at the same time strongly contending for the possibility of an existential, infallible experience of God's revelation.

The striking similarity between criticisms of Scripture infallibility in the latter part of the 19th century and those of the middle of the 20th century make Warfield's sharp analysis relevant and invaluable for the debate of today. With keen insight he shows the logical outcome of a theory of limited inspiration. The Church cannot yield the surrounding territory to the ravages of the enemy with the hope that they will spare the citadel.

We note with sadness that the lesson of history has not been learned by some within the conservative camp who feel that a theory of limited inspiration will safeguard the authority of and retain the respect for the Scriptures. The history of this theory shows that it destroys not only the authority of Scriptures as a rule for faith and life but the very authority of Christ himself. The authority of human experience becomes the norm and mysticism results — a mysticism that borders close to religious agnosticism. We fear that people, in utter confusion, will flee to the authority of the Roman Catholic Church or to the shallow Christianity of the sects.

The publication of Dr. Warfield's masterly criticism of Dr. A. P. Smith's and Dr. C. A. Briggs' position on the authority of Holy Scripture should give encouragement and ammunition to those who cling to the verbal inspiration of the written Word and, at the same time, manifest the folly of those who would hold to a theory of limited inspiration with the hope of maintaining the authority of Scripture.

J. MARCELLUS KIK

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THE AUTHOR

Dr. Warfield was born near Lexington, Kentucky, November 5, 1851. He graduated from the College of New Jersey — now Princeton University — in 1871 and after a period of study abroad at Edinburgh and Heidelberg entered Princeton Theological Seminary with the class of 1876. Following a year's study at Leipsig, Germany, and a short pastorate in Baltimore he was appointed instructor in New Testament Language and Literature in Western Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh and a year later elected professor. In 1866 he was called to succeed Archibald Alexander Hodge as professor of Systematic Theology in Princeton Theological Seminary — a position which he occupied with great distinction until his death in 1921.

Dr. Warfield won early recognition as a scholar, teacher and author. He received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the College of New Jersey in 1880; that of Doctor of Laws both from the College of New Jersey and Davidson College in 1892; that of Doctor of Letters from Lafayette College in 1911; and that of Sacrae Theologiae Doctor from the University of Utrecht in 1913. He was editor of the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* from 1890 to 1903 and until the time of his death the chief contributor to the *Princeton Theological Review*.

Dr. Warfield was a voluminous writer as well as one of marked distinction. Among his books published during his lifetime may be mentioned: *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*; *The Power of God unto Salvation*; *The Saviour of the World*; *Faith and Life*; *The Lord of Glory*; *Counterfeit Miracles (Miracles: True and False)*; and *The Plan of Salvation*. The last three mentioned are still in print.

After his death many of his more notable articles which had appeared in encyclopedias, theological reviews and other periodicals — sufficient to make ten volumes — were published in book form under the auspices of the Oxford University Press. With the exception of his book reviews and *The Work of the Westminster Assembly*, most of this material has been reprinted by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company in a five volume collection — *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, The Person and Work of Christ, Biblical and Theological Studies, Calvin and Augustine, and Perfectionism*. These works of Dr. Warfield's are in greater demand today than they were at the time of his death, e.g., more than 10,000 copies of *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* are now in print.

Limited Inspiration appeared originally in the January, 1894 issue of the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* under the title, "Professor Henry Preserved Smith, on Inspiration."

LIMITED INSPIRATION

THE action of the General Assembly, sustaining the decision of the Synod of Ohio, which had sustained the finding of the Presbytery of Cincinnati in the case of Professor Henry Preserved Smith, D.D., has brought this notable case at last to an end. The history of the case is, briefly, as follows. The delivery of Dr. C. A. Briggs' Inaugural Address on the *Authority of Holy Scripture* on January 20, 1891, had greatly distressed and excited the Church. Among other Presbyteries, the Presbytery of Cincinnati proposed to overture the General Assembly to take what action seemed best to it to free the Church of responsibility for such utterances. The Rev. Drs. Henry Preserved Smith and Llewellyn J. Evans, Professors, in Lane Theological Seminary, came forward in defense of Dr. Briggs, and thought wise to make their defense of him take the form of an attack upon the doctrine of inspiration as held by the Church and taught in her Standards.* This mode of defense necessarily made the authors of the two addresses, delivered and published in this interest, *participes criminis* with Dr. Briggs; and imposed upon the Presbytery the duty of arraigning them at its bar. Proceedings against Dr. Smith were begun in September, 1892, and the case was issued on December 12 of that year. The verdict was guilty, and the sentence imposed was suspension from the exercise of his ministry. An appeal having been taken to the Synod of Ohio, the action of Presbytery was sustained. A further appeal having been taken to the General Assembly, this action of the Synod has now been sustained by that body. This ends the matter from an ecclesiastical point of view.

Meanwhile, during the course of the case, Dr. Smith has been led to print a good deal of material as to the doctrine of inspiration. We have the original paper on *Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration*, on the basis of which the charges against him were framed; as well as the companion paper by Dr. Evans, which we understand Dr. Smith thoroughly to approve, and even practically to adopt as

* *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 352.

representing his own views. We have, also, the various papers called out by the trial in Presbytery, under the names of Response, Rejoinder and Argument. All this material, so far enumerated, has been collected by Dr. Smith into a considerable volume, with historical and argumentative chapters connecting the several parts.* We have also in a separate pamphlet, the Argument presented to the General Assembly in advocacy of his appeal.†

There has been a feeling of considerable doubt in the public mind as to exactly what is involved, with reference to Inspiration, in the change of attitude towards the Bible which is now proclaimed as rendered necessary by recent advance in critical knowledge. Dr. Smith's voluminous publications on the subject of Inspiration seem to supply an unusually good opportunity to measure the *minimum* effect of the new critical views on this doctrine. We say the *minimum* effect; for, not only does the occasion which has called out these papers render it natural to expect in them no more divergence from the doctrine generally held than has seemed to the author necessitated by the demands of truth; but Dr. Smith is well known to be a moderate man of strong evangelical spirit, who would advance in such a change of attitude only slowly and under compulsion of growing conviction. We have, therefore, felt it worth our while to go through the material he has placed before us, with a view to discovering, from his discussion, the least effect which we may expect the new views to have upon the doctrine of inspiration.

Let us emphasize at the outset that the purpose of this paper is altogether expository. Whatever may enter it in the way of criticism or rejoinder will be purely incidental. We shall consider our task completed when we shall have brought out, as clearly as we can, the opinions which Dr. Smith holds on the great subject which is engaging our attention. We shall not here attempt any refutation of his views, any defense of the Church's doctrine from his attacks or mistaken expositions, or any justification of the verdict of the Church courts in his case. No one of these three things would be difficult to do, did space permit. But our present purpose is simply to ascertain Dr. Smith's thought on Inspiration, and to leave it, without more than incidental remark, to speak for itself.

In the exposition of the teaching of this body of material on Inspiration, we shall include Dr. Evans' paper, of which Dr. Smith speaks uniformly with high admiration and approval; and it will be most convenient to begin with it. Dr. Evans seem to have been

* *Inspiration and Inerrancy*. A History and a Defense. Cincinnati: Robert Clark & Co., 1893.

† *Appeal and Argument*. New York: A. D. F. Randolph & Co., 1894.

a rather more consistent thinker than we shall find Dr. Smith to be, and writes with great rhetorical fervor. We shall now attempt an exposition of his doctrine of Inspiration.

DR. EVANS' DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION.

The theory of inspiration which is presented by Dr. Evans is that form of "Limited Inspiration" which confines it to what is called the religious and practical elements of the Scriptures; and which, therefore, seeks to claim for itself the formula that "the Bible is the infallible rule of faith and practice." We are told that Dr. Evans held this view from the very beginning of his ministerial life,* and was accustomed to say that "he accepted the Scriptures as an infallible *rule* of faith and practice, and not as infallible in their every statement;" and that "when we acknowledge the Scriptures to be an infallible *rule*,† we do not affirm them to be inerrant in their statements of history and science." He supposed that he thus placed the question of inspiration upon a plane above, and therefore in a sphere independent of, questions of historical or scientific, or what he would call, in general, "secular" fact. Inspiration, he tells us, is not to be measured by such "trifles" as errors of fact; the power of the Holy Ghost can and does suffuse the words of His organs, "even when least accurate."‡ Those who conceive of inspiration as securing accuracy in such matters he scoffs at, with rhetorical exaggeration, as tithers of mint, anise and cummin, who neglect the weightier matters of the law—nay, as men who run the risk as charging "upon God the priggish precision which makes as much of a molehill as of a mountain," and of representing Him before men "as an intolerant, if not intolerable, pedant, who insists on His p's and q's with no less vigor and pertinacity than on His Godlike SHEMA—'Hear, O Israel,' or on His everlasting AMEN—'Verily, verily, I say unto you!'" §

* *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 148; Introductory Sketch of Dr. Evans' Life, in *Preaching Christ* (New York, 1893), p. 58.

† If this language was intended to refer to the ordination vow of Presbyterian ministers, it is very inadequate. At their ordination ministers declare much more than that they "believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the infallible rule of faith and practice." They declare that they believe these Scriptures "to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice"—a double phrase not flexible to this minimizing interpretation. The formula declares the Scriptures to be the Word of God, not to include *somewhere in them* the Word of God; and, as becomes the Word of God, to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice, not to be only the rule of faith and practice. So the Confession declares that "all the books of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and practice," not that they were inspired only so far as requisite to make them such a rule.

‡ *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 68.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

Such bursts of rhetoric seem to have been somewhat characteristic of Dr. Evans' style, and sometimes betrayed him into quite inexcusable expressions;* but in the present case we easily forgive it as obviously the product of a zeal, persistent through many difficulties, to preserve the authority of Scripture as a Word from God to the soul. He had discerned, as he believed, that the Bible is not absolutely trustworthy in its statements of historical and scientific fact; that its pages are deformed by errors and contradictions which enter into the very warp and woof of the record.† He sought to console himself with the reflection that these all belong to the "secular" side of the Bible, while inspiration belongs to its religious side only; and he attempted to draw a sharp line between the two and so to preserve the religious and ethical authority of the Bible, while forced to yield its "secular" authority. In effect Dr. Evans' method is thus to begin by admitting a factor of human imperfection and error in the Bible and then to seek to preserve a divine factor in it "In the production of Scripture we are concerned with two coefficients," and "while fully recognizing the Divine supernatural coefficient, the Divine supernatural process and the Divine supernatural result, we must also recognize the lower, finite coefficient as continuing unalterably itself."‡ Under inspiration more is accomplished than could be accomplished by men left to themselves; but in this divine operation, as in all others, the limitations of the instruments employed are respected. And among the limitations of man is his fallibility.

The divine factor comes in first of all by way of revelation.§ The function of inspiration is "to mediate the revelation; to interpret, to record, to apply it; to put us, to put all generations, under the immediate power of these Divine realities; so far as possible to bring us face to face with this incomparable drama of Power and Love Divine, *face to face with God revealing Himself.*"

"There, then," he tells us, "you have the revelation; here the inspiration. There the supernatural history; here the supernatural record. There the fact; here the story. . . . And so the Book becomes the double of the deed. By the divine correlation of energy, the life and power of the one become the life and power of the other. The Facts burn in the Words. The living History throbs in the living Record. And so, to-day, and throughout all time, *in all that makes the Bible the power of God unto salvation*, it is the Voice of God, the Word of God, the supreme, the only, the infallible authority."

* For example, when he calls the joint authors of a tract he did not like by the opprobrious name of "*our par nobile fratrum dogmaticorum*" (p. 57). We cannot believe either that Dr. Evans the scholar did not know, or that Dr. Evans the Christian minister meant to apply to the sainted Dr. Hodge, the implications of this language (*Horatii Sermonum*, Lib. ii, 3, 243). We must think he had simply mounted again his high rhetorical horse, and his charger had run away with him.

† Pp. 32, 51, 56, 58, 61, 83, 86.

‡ P. 37.

§ P. 76 sq.

The function of the Bible being thus "to make us wise unto salvation," and inspiration existing only in order to train and complete the divine life, "how can error in chronology or physical science affect that process?" Inspiration is "pneumatic," not only because the Spirit of God is the primary, the vital, the essential factor, but also because its contents are purely "pneumatic realities," and not secular facts. "Thus regarded," he continues, "I have no hesitation in saying that the Bible is inspired wholly, through and through. The men are inspired, as Prof. Stowe said. The thoughts are inspired, as Prof. Briggs says. The words are inspired, as Prof. Hodge has said."

Exactly what Inspiration is and the exact mode in which it has entered the record remain difficult to trace. "It is a much larger fact," we are told, "than the scholastic notion which reduces it to mere supervision." "It is the note of a supernatural age," we are told,* the conception apparently being that it is a quality which belongs to such an age—"an age in which supernatural forces were at work on an extensive scale"—and which conditions all its activities. "Think you," we are asked, "that in such an age there would be any lack of inspiration for building up the Gospel record?"† According to the inspiration of the Gospels, for example, is not conceived as a divine superintendence accompanying the composition of our present Gospels, making them the authoritative presentation of Jesus in His life and work to the Church; but as a diffused force entering into the whole process of Gospel-building in the early years of Christianity. It is not particularly our Gospels that are inspired, but the sources which lie behind our Gospels; one of which "in its present form is identified with the principal groundwork of our Mark,"‡ and another of which we find in its earliest and most historic form in Luke. "The primary material of these sources" proceeds from "inspired servants of the Word,"§ and is stamped with the authority of inspired witnesses.¶ It was not especially Luke that was inspired; but the "age which furnished Luke with that inimitable story of the Infancy, written nobody knows by whom, perhaps, as Alford suggests, by Mary, the mother of our Lord, but as plenary inspired, before Luke ever got hold of it, as anything that Peter or John ever wrote."¶ It was not especially Mark that was inspired, but the "age which furnished the fragment at the end of Mark, written nobody knows by whom, but attesting itself to the consciousness of the Church to-day as throughout the centuries as the inspired Word of God, as truly and as fully such as all of Mark;" the "age which furnished the pericope of the woman

* P. 71.
§ P. 49.

† P. 72.
¶ P. 51.

‡ P. 49.
¶ P. 71.

taken in adultery, written nobody knows by whom, but as full of Jesus as the diamond is full of the sun;" the "age of inspired Christian hymns, some of which have found their way into the record, sung nobody knows by whom, but sweet and grand as the Apocalyptic melodies of heaven's own Alleluias;" the age so productive in inspired works that "we know not how many inspired records and epistles were written and lost."* So clear is Dr. Evans that it is not our Gospels that are especially inspired, but the materials out of which they grew, that he throws the assertion into the form of a rhetorical question, as one should say, There can be but one answer to that! "Shall we say," he demands,† "that the inspiration of Luke, e. g., is to be sought for not in the material, not in the documents which he confessedly used, but in the editorial compilation and elaboration of the material?"

The question, however, which this query really raises is no other than this: whether the Evangelist Luke was inspired at all, or only some earlier compilers of Gospels from whose works Luke has made his. Such an appeal from our present Gospels to preëxistent materials strikingly illustrates the disintegrating character of the type of criticism which Dr. Evans set himself to defend: and brings us face to face with the main issue with this criticism, viz., whether our Biblical books are God's Word, authoritative to us as such above all other books, or whether they are man's books, standing among other man's books, and authoritative only in proportion to the authority of the material they used. Prof. Evans presses this disintegrating result to its furthest extreme when he tells us that "a recourse to the *ipsissima verba*," in such circumstances as these, "fails us out and out: for the great bulk of the Gospel material there is no original autograph."‡ Before one could write such words as these he must have so accustomed himself to set aside our Gospels in favor of the hypothetical sources out of which he deems them made, that he forgets the very existence of our Gospels as works on their own account. We presume, however, that even though the Gospel of Luke was composed out of preëxistent material, there was an original autograph of that compilation which we call Luke. And we know that it is this compilation called Luke, along with its fellow-compilations, Matthew, Mark and John, and not the materials out of which they were made—by a complex process of evolution subject to "the inevitable accompaniments of human fallibility"—which the Church believes and the *Confession of Faith* declares to have been "given by inspiration of God."

By whatever process they were brought together, however, here

* P. 72.

† P. 66.

‡ P. 54.

are the two elements in the Bible: the divine and the human, the product of two coefficients working together in its origination. How are we to discriminate between them? The answer seems to Dr. Evans to be very easy. The divine element concerns only what "makes wise *unto salvation*;" all that makes wise unto anything else is human.

"The inspiration of the Bible is pneumatic, not psychic, not secular. The infallibility of the Bible is pneumatic, not psychic, not secular. It is the infallibility of practical sufficiency, not the infallibility of absolute ideality. . . . Its infallibility is not a microscopic infinitesimal infallibility, respecting all particular things in the heavens above or in the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth. It is an infallible *rule of faith*; *i. e.*, of Christian faith, of Gospel faith, of the faith which is necessary to salvation." *

Thus viewed, we may account all beside the religious contents of the Bible but the husk and shell; and it is easy for a man of good sense to separate the two.

"The Bible is a pneumatic Book. The ground work, the substance, all that makes the Book what it is, is pneumatic. The warp and woof of it is *pneuma*. Its fringes run off, as was inevitable, into the secular, the material, the psychic. Can we not, as persons of common intelligence even, much more with the internal witness of the Spirit to aid us, discriminate between the fringe and the warp and woof? Do not the 'spiritualities' and the 'heavenlinesses' of Scripture distinguish themselves from all that is lower, as the steady shining of the everlasting stars from the fitful gleaming of earth's fire-flies?" †

When we take the *hwyl* out of this eloquent passage, does it mean anything more than that human reason, in the guise of common sense, is to be depended upon to discriminate within Scripture between the religious and moral elements on the one side, and those on the other that may be classed as "secular"? This is a task of which, we are told, we should not complain; "it is not God's way to do all our thinking for us." The mischief is, however, that not even in Dr. Evans' own hands does the process of dividing between religious and moral teaching, on the one hand, and purely "secular" matters on the other, prove an exact one. Is it, for example, a purely "secular" matter in which Matthew errs, when, as we are told, he "has, by the introduction of a single word, *immediately*, after the tribulation of those days, foreshortened, in a material way, the perspective of the whole prophecy, putting Christ's final coming, in accordance with the expectation of the apostolic age, in the immediate future?" ‡ If this is what happened, most men will think that the infallibility of the rule of faith and practice itself has been invaded.

It is not to call in question the genuineness of Dr. Evans' professed zeal for the supreme authority of the Word of God, § to express

* P. 88.

† P. 81.

‡ Pp. 51 and 52.

§ P. 27.

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our conviction that his method of looking at the Bible destroys its authority as the Word of God. He has assigned inspiration not to the Bible itself, but to the material out of which the Bible is made; and in that material he would find it not in a special superintendence of the Holy Spirit over its production, but in its reflection of the general spirit of a supernatural age. He would sharply limit the authority of the Bible, therefore, to what he would call "the things of God," as if all things were not God's; and he would abandon the whole field of what he calls the "secular" contents of Scripture to the fallibilities of men,* as if in using men as the channels of His communications God needed to take men as he found them, and did not Himself mould and form the human instruments of His revelations according to His will. Such a plan of defense as this may easily become indistinguishable from betrayal. Are we so very sure that the infallibility of our "rule of faith and practice" will abide for this its highest end, when we are forced to confess that it proves on testing infallible for nothing else? Is not the assumption of such a position the confession of weakness? When an army retires into what it deems its central stronghold and leaves the surrounding country to be freely harried by the enemy, it is because it feels that the enemy is stronger than it. This inherent weakness of his position is, indeed, naively acknowledged by Dr. Evans:

"You may be sure," he tells us, "that as long as you tie up faith in the Bible with faith in a secular inspiration, as long as you hang the infallible authority of Scripture as the rule of faith on the infallible accuracy of every particular word and clause in the Book, as long as you exalt the Bible to the same pinnacle of authority in matters respecting which God has given us clearer, fuller, more exact revelations elsewhere, as in matters respecting which the Bible is the only revelation, the irrepressible conflict between faith and science will go on, and the Drapers and Whites will have their new chapters to add to the record."†

This is not the shout of faith; it is the cry of despair. We cannot hold the ground where other claimants appear: let us retire to those fields in which "the Bible is the *only* revelation." But can we trust the Bible where it is "the *only* revelation," after we have assured ourselves that we cannot trust it where God has given us other sources of information? To defend the "supreme authority of the Word of God" by asserting authority for it only where no other authority seeks to intrude, seems more convenient than satisfying "Persons of common intelligence" may be found ready to renounce a Bible which can only be so far defended; and it may not unlikely be found after a while that those who have been so eager to deny its trustworthiness in "secular" matters have but prepared the way for its rejection also as a rule of faith and practice. It is sure to be

* P. 55.

† P. 86.

so, indeed, with men who will hesitate to trust their necks on the *arêtes* and high ice-passes with guides who have stumbled their way heavily over the foothills.

DR. SMITH'S DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION.

We pass into no new atmosphere in passing from Dr. Evans' essay to Dr. Smith's.

Dr. Smith adopts the same general theory of inspiration as Dr. Evans, and announces it with equal emphasis. In his *Response to the Charges* in Presbytery he says: "Now, I suppose it to be generally understood—the Committee certainly have no reason to be ignorant of it—that we stand on the common ground of the infallibility of the Scriptures as the Church's rule of faith and practice. There is no difference between us, therefore, as to *doctrine* or *precept*. The sole question at issue is whether every statement on matters of fact, *outside the sphere* of doctrine and precept, is without error."* He affirms it "to be impossible" to represent the Old Testament to be without error.† He allows freely that this theory of the limitation of inspiration "to those matters which concern faith and morals" has no right to the name of "plenary inspiration;" which belongs rather to the doctrine that "entire truthfulness or accuracy is preserved in every assertion made by the authors of Scripture."‡ But he strenuously contends that this is all that Scripture or Confession binds us to, and that it is all that the facts of Scripture will allow us to assert. The conclusion to which he desires to come, therefore, is that the Scriptures are an infallible rule of faith and practice; and that they are infallible in nothing else.

But in developing his theory, and especially in defending himself against the charges of his Presbytery, Dr. Smith seeks to justify himself primarily by drawing a distinction between the Biblical idea of inspiration and the theological idea.§ It will be necessary for us, in attempting to obtain as clear a conception as possible of his teaching as to inspiration, to begin by noting this distinction. Let us attend to what he has to say as to the two ideas in turn.

1. DR. SMITH'S VIEW OF THE BIBLICAL IDEA OF INSPIRATION.

It is important to note at the outset that the distinction in question is not a distinction between the Biblical and theological usage of the word "Inspiration." As Dr. Smith truly tells us: "The word inspiration occurs nowhere in the Old Testament, and but

* P. 216; compare also pp. 94, 182, 185, 226, 241, 367, etc.

† P. 114.

‡ P. 143.

§ *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, pp. 238, 260, 286, 355; *Appeal and Argument*, p. 52.

once in the New Testament.”* “But,” he adds, “the thing is often described in the Old Testament.” Dr. Smith is, therefore, engaging in investigating the Biblical teaching as to the thing, Inspiration. What, then, according to Prof. Smith, is the Biblical idea of inspiration? Let us hear his answer somewhat at large.

In the passage at present before us he proceeds to tell us that in the Biblical idea, inspiration “is the extraordinary activity of the Holy Ghost fitting men to do certain things.”

“Its commonest function is to fit the organ of revelation for his work. The *prophet* is distinctly the man of the Spirit—the coming of the Spirit upon the prophet was the method by which God put his words into his mouth. The possessor of this inspiration is for the time being the organ of the Divine will. He identifies his utterances with the utterances of God Himself. This I say is the Biblical *idea* of inspiration. It always goes with revelation. . . . Biblical language always associates inspiration and revelation. At least I have called hitherto in vain for a text which connects inspiration with the activity of the scribe as distinguished from the prophet.”†

A fuller statement to the same effect is presented at a later point,‡ as a “bare outline” of the Bible doctrine of inspiration. We give it in full:

“(1) The grand foundation fact is that God has revealed (unveiled) Himself. This and this alone meets our need. And it meets our need in the only adequate way, because it makes use of divinely-chosen men. God reveals Himself *in the Prophets, or through the Prophets.*

“(2) The culmination of the revelation is in His Son. All other revelations are tributary to this, and this is the only one which can claim to be absolutely perfect. He is the shining forth of the Father’s brightness, the impress of His Person.

“(3) Inspiration is the method by which God reveals Himself in His servants. He breathes something of Himself *into them.* When He speaks in them, His hand or His Spirit comes upon them, and they are ‘in the Spirit.’

“(4) Inspiration is exerted in other cases where God commissions men to do a work for Him or for His people. Bezaleel was ‘filled with the Spirit of God’ for the construction of the Tabernacle (Ex. xxxv. 30). ‘The Spirit of Jehovah came mightily’ upon Samson and upon Saul. That it made them inerrant is nowhere affirmed.

“(5) That the writers who composed the books of the Bible were led by inspiration is nowhere affirmed in Scripture itself. The assumption that all the writers were Prophets or Apostles, *i. e.*, that they were men who received the revealing inspiration, is an assumption which is nowhere made in the Bible.”

“This,” adds Prof. Smith, “is all that the Bible itself says on the subject.”

There are several points in this statement which demand remark.

* *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 356. Why Job xxxii. 8 is omitted he had already explained, p. 260. The single Biblical text, 2 Tim. iii. 6, where the word occurs, however, ascribes *inspiration* not to the prophets, but to the *books*. How Dr. Smith deals with this text may be seen, p. 260 *sq.*

† *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 356.

‡ *Appeal and Argument*, p. 52.

One among them, however, is of such immediate interest for our present purpose, that we may permit it to absorb our attention for the moment. Inspiration in its Biblical idea, according to Prof. Smith, is *the method of revelation*: as such it is confined, so far as the communication of truth is concerned, to *the recipients of revelation*: it is nowhere in the Scriptures ascribed to the *writers* who composed the books of the Bible. Now what does Prof. Smith mean by this?

1. The meaning which would seem to lie on the surface of the language is that there is no Biblical ground whatever for believing that "the writers who composed the books of the Bible were led by inspiration." And the full meaning of this is not apprehended until we remind ourselves that Dr. Smith is not studying, in these passages, the usage of the *word*, Inspiration, in the Scriptures, but the Biblical idea of the *thing*. What he actually is presenting is the Biblical teaching as to the activities of the Holy Spirit on men. What the conclusion would seem to mean, then, is that there is no Biblical evidence whatever that the Scriptures were written under the impulse and influence of the Spirit of God, or, to put it in a more specific form, that the Holy Spirit's special activities were at all concerned in the writing of the Scriptures, as distinguished from the giving to the prophets of the revelations which may be recorded in the Scriptures. The astonishing character of such an assertion will appear at once upon recalling the facts that in the only passage where the word Inspiration is used in Scripture, it is ascribed not to the prophet but to Scripture itself: "Every Scripture is inspired of God" (2 Tim. iii. 16); and that it is a common locution in the New Testament by which Scripture is assigned to the Holy Spirit as its responsible author.

What Prof. Smith would say as to these facts, is not altogether clear. He subjects 2 Tim. iii. 16 to a long and detailed exegesis; * but we are not quite sure what is his conclusion as to its meaning. He tells us that we may see at a glance from its composition, that the word *θεόπνευστος*, translated *inspired of God*, means *God-breathed*. But he adds, following Cremer, that it may mean *breathing out God*. And he concludes his discussion as follows:

"But one thing is tolerably certain, that the word is intended to describe a *quality*, not the origin of Scripture. It is similar to our own usage when we speak of an orator as *inspired*. Now the Scriptures possess this quality, they are full of deity, they communicate to us something of God. So far, then, from this being a definite doctrinal statement concerning what we call inspiration, 'the essence of which is superintendence,' it is a panegyric of the saving and enlightening power of the Scriptures, which is due to their containing a revelation

* *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 260 sq.; *Appeal and Argument*, p. 142 sq., also p. 49 sq.

of God, and not to any supposed historical or scientific inerrancy whatever. Its nearest parallel is the declaration of another New Testament writer: 'The Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.' Listen to the whole of our passage and judge: 'But abide thou in the things thou hast learned and been persuaded of, knowing of whom thou didst learn them, and that from a babe thou hast known the Sacred Writings that are able to make thee *wise unto salvation* through faith in Jesus Christ. Every writing breathing the Spirit of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.' Instead of having here the single dogmatic statement concerning an inspiration that superintends, we have a testimony in full harmony with the other passages we have studied, concerning the Word of God in Scripture, the rule of faith and life to the Church, the source of salvation and edification to the individual Christian."

Here certainly we seem to be told that 2 Tim. iii. 16 does not declare that every Scripture of the Old Testament was breathed out by God; but only that there are some parts of the Old Testament—to wit, the Word of God in Scripture—which "breathe the Spirit of God," and so are profitable for teaching and perfecting the man of God. There seems to be a distinct rejection of the exegesis which makes the text teach that the Scriptures are God-breathed, in favor of the exegesis which makes it teach that there are parts of the Scriptures which are God-breathing. But a little later* we find Prof. Smith complaining of misapprehension here, and asserting that both meanings are really contained in the word: "In truth they are one. That which is saturated with an odor gives forth perfume. That which is full of the Spirit of God gives forth a divine influence." According to this, the passage would seem to assert that Scripture—"every Scripture," for the ground of discrimination now fails—is no less God-breathed than God-breathing; or rather is God-breathing only because it is previously God-breathed, giving forth the Spirit of God because full of that Spirit. The confusion is completed, when we read still later † that though the text calls the Scriptures here God-breathed, what it asserts is "the constant value of the Scriptures as the source of life and light:" and especially that "the text means that the Scriptures *are inspired* because they make us wise unto salvation, not that they *were inspired* because they originated in a control of the writers which produced inerrant autographs." We have just been told that the teaching of the text is that Scripture breathes out God because it is inspired; now we are told it is inspired because it breathes out God. Possibly the intention is to recover the ground that was lost, and to suggest again that only such Scriptures are here declared to be inspired as make us wise unto salvation.

Any reading of the passage, however, which seeks to find in it countenance for the notion of an uninspired element in the Bible is

* P. 284.

† *Appeal and Argument*, p. 51.

plainly a wresting of it. To this also Dr. Evans witnesses when speaking of the use which was sought to be made of the revised rendering of the text. "Only the shallowest exegesis can find in it," he tells us, "a limitation of inspiration. An 'uninspired Scripture' would have been to a Jew of the Christian era a phrase no less self-contradictory than an 'uncircumcised Pharisee.' Every Scripture is, *ipso facto*, inspired, God-breathed." * In affirming, as he does affirm repeatedly, that Scripture never "connects inspiration with the activity of the scribe," and that "all the affirmations of the Bible itself" concerning its inspiration, "are concerned with the *revelation* of God in Scripture, rather than with Scripture as a whole," † Prof. Smith will certainly need to take better account than he has done of the declaration of Paul that "every Scripture is inspired of God."

It is perhaps clearer how Prof. Smith will deal with the broad fact that the New Testament writers repeatedly ascribe the Scriptures as such, as cited by them, to the Holy Ghost. But his mode of dealing with it can scarcely be called satisfying. The Committee had quoted certain relative passages; and Prof. Smith considers that he has met the case when he affirms that "on examining the citations of the Committee," he found that when these texts "referred to anything as spoken by God or the Holy Ghost it was a distinct revelation, promise or prophecy so described." ‡ He thus holds that these texts will not forbid him to make a distinction between the revelation of God in Scripture and Scripture as a whole. We must, however, glance at his examination of the texts themselves in order to estimate the value of these results.

After remarking that the texts in which the prophets speak of receiving the Word of the Lord, "need not mean more than that God spoke to the prophets," he continues as follows: §

"So Heb. i. 1: 'God spake to the fathers in the prophets.' The same epistle also quotes Old Testament texts as 'spoken by the Holy Ghost.'

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

"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts' (Jer. xxxi. 33). 'And the Holy Ghost also beareth witness to us: for after he hath said, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law on their hearts, and upon their mind also will I write them' (Heb. x. 15, 16, R. V.).

"But you will notice that this speaking of the Holy Ghost is affirmed not of the Old Testament *as a whole*, but of two passages which are direct revelations from God to His people; one a threat, the other a promise. Now that the Holy Spirit not only spoke in the prophets, but that He still speaks to us in their re-

* *The Presbyterian Review*, Vol. iv (1883), p. 280.

† *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 281.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

§ P. 251.

corded words, is our *common faith*. I know of no Christian who denies it. But the question before us is a different one, namely, whether the Holy Spirit so controlled the *writers* of the Scriptures as to make their every utterance, whether distinctly revealed or not, 'absolutely truthful, *i. e.*, free from error when interpreted in its natural and intended sense.' To prove that this is the teaching of the Scriptures themselves, we have not had a single text. Let me add the following, which are no more conclusive :

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

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

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

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

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

The inadequacy of these remarks for the purpose in hand is evident on the face of things. The point at issue is whether, when the New Testament "refers to anything as spoken by God or the Holy Ghost," it is always "a distinct revelation, promise or prophecy" that is so described; or whether the New Testament writers do not rather refer to the Scriptures as such and as a whole, as spoken by God or the Holy Spirit. The two passages from Heb. iii. 7, 8, and x. 15, 16, which Prof. Smith quotes from the Committee, he represents as supporting the former alternative. He represents them as referring "this speaking of the Holy Ghost" not to "the Old Testament as a whole," but to "two passages" in the Old Testament, "which are direct revelations of God to His people;" and he looks upon them as proving therefore only that the Holy Spirit speaks in and through the *prophets*, as distinguished from the *writers* of Scripture. Unfortunately, however, the first of these passages does not at all fall in with this conclusion. The passage adduced in Heb. iii. 7, 8, from Ps. xcvi. 7, 8, as spoken by the Holy Ghost, is not confined to the divine words recorded by the Psalmist; it includes also the Psalmist's own words, which refer to God in the third person: "To-day if you will hear *His* voice." Nor are these mere introductory words, incidentally quoted only to introduce the "direct revelations from God." As every reader of the passage in Hebrews will perceive at once, the fact that "it is said, To-day," is adduced as a most significant part of the divine message.

Nor can we think that Dr. Smith has adequately weighed the meaning of the subsequent passages which he adduces. The point with reference to Acts iv. 24, 25, is that it adduces words from the second Psalm which are not words of God—"a direct revelation from God"—merely reported by the Psalmist, but

the words of the Psalmist himself which speak of God in the third person, as nevertheless an utterance of God ; and that in language as richly significant as this: "O Lord, thou that didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who by the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David thy servant, didst say." According to this passage, thus, the words of David as distinguished from the words put by David into God's mouth, are themselves the utterances of the Creator of the world, put by His Spirit into David's mouth. So, too, the point with reference to Acts i. 16, is that it ascribes to the Holy Spirit, not words of God reported by the Psalmist, but words of the Psalmist in a prayer to God, addressed in the second person. What Peter thus declares, is that the imprecations of the imprecatory Psalms (Ps. lxxix. 26, cix. 8) are "Scripture which the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of David." * Surely it is inadequate to say of such passages as these that they are found on examination to describe only distinct revelations, promises or prophecies as spoken by God or the Holy Ghost. What they do is in the most natural manner possible, betraying a habitual usage, to refer whatever stands written in Scripture to God the Holy Spirit, whether in the passage itself God speaks, is spoken to, or is spoken of.

Nor can one help wondering why Dr. Smith in such a matter should confine himself to an examination of the texts adduced by the Committee. He can hardly wish to ignore the fact that the texts cited are only samples of a class. Only after an exhaustive examination of the whole body of relevant texts, can it be proper to announce the sweeping theory that "all the affirmations of the Bible itself are concerned with the *revelation* of God in Scripture, rather than with Scripture as a whole." Outside these texts, adduced by the Committee, which Dr. Smith tells us he has examined with the result of finding nothing antagonistic to his theory (though we have seen that was only because he had not examined them closely enough), there are others of similar character which he must also reckon with. When our Lord, for example, declares that David himself said in the Holy Spirit, "The Lord said unto my Lord," etc., the very language, while ascribing the utterance to the Holy Spirit, forbids us to say that David is

* Dr. Smith, *Insp. and Inerr.*, p. 123, considers that "the imprecations" in the Psalms are "enough to prove" that the experience recorded in the Psalms has in it "human weakness," and that the record of it is given to us as a "picture of pious experience in all its stages," not as a model of proper experience. What the Psalms do is to "present us a record of actual experience of believers in the past," which we are "to study and profit by," and which "we can study and profit by all the more that it has in it human weakness." Peter's view was different.

merely repeating a direct Word of God here. The Saviour argues from the precise premise that, "*David himself calleth him Lord*" (Mark xii. 35 sq.; cf. Matt. xxii. 45 sq.). A skillful use of exegetical finessing may possibly be made to seem to explain away such a passage as Acts xiii. 34, 35, where it is declared that He that raised up Jesus from the dead not only "hath spoken in this wise, I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David," but "saith also in another Psalm, Thou wilt not give thy Holy One to see corruption"—words not spoken in the Psalm by God, but by the Psalmist to God.* But what can be done with such a passage as Matt. xix. 5, in which our Lord declares that it is to Him who made man that the words are to be ascribed: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh?" Could Dr. Smith have remembered such a passage as this when he wrote † that Christ chose His appeals to Scripture "invariably from the *Word of God* in Scripture," and made "every one of His citations from a direct command of God Himself," so that "whatever His use of these citations proves, it proves only for the revelation of God in Scripture?" Like Master, like servant. As Christ ascribes this Scripture to God, though the particular words cited were Adam's, not God's, Paul does the like in 1 Cor. vi. 16: ‡ "The twain, saith He, shall become one flesh." The usage of the subjectless "saith" here, with the understood subject, "God," is vocal with its message as to how Scripture was looked upon in the circle from which the New Testament has come down to us; and a similar usage is found just sufficiently often, scattered over the pages of the New Testament, to assure us that it represents the attitude towards Scripture of the whole circle.§ The usage of the Epistle to the Hebrews alone, however, would be enough to determine the question; it repeatedly represents God as the author of Scripture, and that indifferently whether, in the passages cited, God appears in the first person (Heb. i. 5, viii. 8, x. 15, 30), or in the second person (Heb. i. 10), or in the third person (Heb. i. 6, 7, 8, sq., and especially iv. 4; cf. verse 3). When this author tells us that

* The subject of the second clause may by bare possibility be taken as David and not God, but we believe that the reader without ulterior object to subserve will say with Meyer: "The subject is necessarily that of *ἐπιρκεσεν*, ver. 34, and is neither David, nor the Scriptures, but God, although Ps. xvi. 10 contains *David's* words addressed to God."

† P. 245.

‡ "Who it is that says it, is self-evident, namely, *God*; the utterances of Scripture being His Word, even when they may be spoken through another, as Gen. ii. 24 was through Adam."—MEYER.

§ Gal. iii. 16; Eph. iv. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 27; Heb. viii. 5, x. 5; Jas. iv. 6 (cf. Mayor's note); cf. Winer's *Grammar* (Moulton's ed.), p. 656; Buttman's *Grammar* (Thayer's ed.), p. 131.

“God saith, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth” (Heb. i. 10), and that God hath said somewhere of the seventh day on this wise, “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works” (Heb. iv. 4), he leaves us wondering whether, had Prof. Smith carried his examination beyond the citations of the Committee, he could have said that when the Scriptures refer to anything as spoken by God or the Holy Ghost, it is “a distinct revelation, promise or prophecy” which is so described; or indeed, whether Prof. Smith can mean what he seems to say in the words, “That the *writers* who composed the books of the Bible were led by inspiration is nowhere affirmed in Scripture itself.”

2. In these circumstances the suspicion may enter our minds that what Prof. Smith means by these words may be hinted at by the underscoring of the word “*writers*,” and may be more clearly expressed by the other words quoted from him, in which he says he has failed to find a Bible text which “connects inspiration with the activity of the scribe as distinguished from the prophet.”* Can it be that so far from drawing a distinction here between the prophets who received revelations and the authors who composed the Scriptures, Prof. Smith is only distinguishing between the responsible authors of the Biblical books and their scribes or amanuenses who did the manual work of actual *writing*: that he is only denying that there is Biblical proof for the inspiration of the hand that actually wrote the Biblical pages in distinction from the organs of God’s revelation of His will, whether in oral or written form?

There are not lacking some indications that may seem to fall in with such a conjecture. There are, for example, two odd passages, the one in his *Response to the Charges* in Presbytery, and the other in his *Argument* before the Assembly, which we would do well to look at. He is speaking of the writing of Jeremiah’s prophecies in the former passage, and says: †

“Now, here is the way of editing Jeremiah’s book. Jeremiah is commanded to write down his prophecies. He calls his friend Baruch and dictates them, and Baruch writes from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord which he (Jeremiah evidently) had spoken to him. Now, where was the inspiration? Evidently in Jeremiah. But Baruch was the scribe, and we are looking for the inspiration of the scribe. Had it been the mind of God to make it a doctrine of our religion, is it conceivable that he would not in this, the only passage which describes the origin of an Old Testament book, have told us plainly that Baruch was assisted by such a superintendence that he made no mistake in writing down the words of Jeremiah? I cannot think it. . . . But Baruch’s copy was certainly as near the original autograph as we can get. This copy (or rather another copy, for this was burned) the disciple afterwards enlarged, it would seem, by adding later prophecies, and published after his master’s death.

* *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 356.

† *Ibid.*, p. 259.

Have we any evidence that he was supernaturally preserved from error in the later work any more than in the earlier? Certainly not. And what is true of Jeremiah is true of the other books of the Old Testament."

In the other passage, arguing against the charge which affirmed that he teaches "that the Holy Spirit did not so control the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy Scriptures as to make their utterances absolutely truthful, *i. e.*, free from error when interpreted in their natural and intended sense," Prof. Smith says: *

"A second point is that the charge is concerned not with the organs of revelation, but with the writers of Scripture. It is readily seen, of course, that these are sometimes the same. Ezekiel was a prophet and a writer as well. Paul was an apostle and a writer as well. But the recipients of revelation in the proper sense of the term were not always the scribes who put the revelation on record. Some of the *writers* of the Old Testament books do not seem to have received revelations in the proper sense. Jeremiah was a prophet; his revelations were recorded in a book by his friend Baruch. What this Committee affirms as fundamental doctrine is not that Jeremiah proclaimed truth infallibly revealed, but that Baruch in recording the revelation, and in recording also the incidents of Jeremiah's life, the history of the fall of Jerusalem, the names of Nebuchadnezzar's officers and the number of the captive Jews, was throughout controlled by the Holy Spirit, so as to make no mistake. Not only Paul in writing to the Romans received the truth by inspiration, but Tertius, who wrote as his amanuensis, was controlled by the Holy Spirit, even in the salutations at the close of the Epistle, so as to be exempt from error."

The point which at present interests us is the exaggerated prominence which Prof. Smith gives in these passages to the scribes or amanuenses made use of by the Biblical writers. In the first passage he contrasts Jeremiah and Baruch, the scribe, and in the second Paul and "Tertius, who wrote the Epistle;" and, affirming inspiration of Jeremiah and Paul, denies it of Baruch and Tertius. "And what is true of Jeremiah," he adds, "is true of the other books of the Old Testament." By such passages, we say, some color may seem to be lent to the conjecture that Prof. Smith means only to deny that the Scriptures teach that the amanuenses of the sacred writers were inspired, when he declares that there is no Biblical evidence of the inspiration of the *writers* of the Bible.

This hypothesis is shattered, however, the moment we attend closely to what Prof. Smith says in these very passages. It is only too evident that in the former of them he is looking upon "Baruch, the scribe," not as merely Jeremiah's hand in producing a writing which is truly Jeremiah's, but as the responsible author of the text of the book. He speaks, therefore, of "Baruch's copy," and of "Baruch's copy" as "certainly as near the autograph as we can get." The implication is that, so far as the writing of it is concerned, inspiration has nothing to do with Jeremiah's prophecy;

* *Appeal and Argument*, p. 39.

but we are dependent upon Baruch's unsupervised human honesty and accuracy for it. When he adds: "And what is true of Jeremiah is true of the other books of the Old Testament," he seems to deny of the whole Old Testament that we have Scriptural ground for believing that God's inspiration was at all concerned in the writing of any part of it.

Now, it is very evident that this representation does not at all do justice to the account which is given us in the thirty-sixth chapter of Jeremiah—"the only passage which describes the origin of an Old Testament book," Prof. Smith tells us. The impression which Prof. Smith gives us, that Baruch is the responsible author of the written text, is guarded against in this chapter with what seems the most painful care. Here Jeremiah is made the responsible author of the written text, and Baruch but the pen with which he wrote. It was Jeremiah who was commanded to write (ver. 1), and when he called Baruch to his aid it was only as amanuensis—he wrote "from the mouth of Jeremiah" (ver. 4). Accordingly what he professed to read from the book was not his own words, but "the words of Jeremiah" (ver. 10); and we are told that the princes made exact inquisition into their genuineness as such with the most satisfactory results: "And they asked Baruch, saying, Tell us now, how didst thou write all these words at his mouth? Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book" (vers. 17, 18). This book "Baruch's copy," behind which we cannot go to the "original autograph!" Prof. Smith might as well assign his own manuscript to his pen, and speak of his "pen's copy." And the "later work" was of precisely the same character. It was Jeremiah again, not Baruch, who was commanded to write this (ver. 27); and it was Jeremiah who wrote it, through his amanuensis, who again wrote only "from his mouth" (ver. 32). It is, therefore, to Jeremiah, not to Baruch, that the work is to be attributed, unless we are prepared to contend that in the face of such solemn commands Jeremiah neglected to see to it that that was written which he was commanded to write. When now we read Dr. Smith's words: "And what is true of Jeremiah is true of the other books of the Old Testament," we may assent to them. But what Prof. Smith represents as true of Jeremiah is not true of it, or of the other books of the Old Testament. The authors of those books must be presumed to have been as careful supervisors of the copies of their amanuenses as a modern author is of his proof-sheets. Their amanuenses were to them much as Aaron was to Moses; they were the "prophets" of God's prophets, and received their "words" from them, even as the prophets themselves received them from God.

We thus do not need to postulate inspiration of amanuenses. The responsibility for the words written does not rest with them. But possibly there is no need either of denying that they too may have had God "with them," aiding them in the prosecution of their humble share of the work of revealing His will to man. Certainly when God made Aaron Moses' prophet, He promised to be not only with Moses' mouth as he communicated to Aaron the words of the Lord, but also with Aaron's mouth as he communicated Moses' words to the people: "And thou shalt speak unto him and put the words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth *and with his mouth*, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and it shall come to pass that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God" (Ex. iv. 15, 16). Evidently God is not slack in His care for the communication of His message pure to men. There would be nothing absurd therefore in supposing that even Baruch and Tertius, each in his measure, had God "with them" in their work of loving service to His servants. It may prove to be easier to underestimate than to overestimate the reach of God's gracious supervision of men's efforts to serve Him. Is it barely possible, for example, that Tertius may mean something of this kind in writing: "I salute you, I, Tertius who wrote this epistle in the Lord" (Rom. xvi. 22)?* But, however this may be, it is evident that not Tertius and Baruch are the authors of the books which they wrote, but Paul and Jeremiah; and that the question of the inspiration of the books rests on the inspiration of the latter, not of the former.

The second passage which we have quoted from Prof. Smith bears equally decisive evidence that his denial of the existence of Biblical evidence for the inspiration of the scribe, as distinguished from the prophet, means much more than the contention that the Bible does not attribute inspiration to the mere amanuensis. The contrast is drawn here in the first place between "the organs of revelation" and "the writers of Scripture," and this contrast is surely not synonymous with that between "the author" and "the amanuensis." The next sentences, indeed, confusingly introduce what may at first sight look like the latter contrast. Ezekiel was both a prophet and a writer; Paul both an apostle and a writer: while Jeremiah's revelations were recorded by Baruch and the Epis-

* Compare R. V. margin and Wordsworth *in loc.*, who adopts this construction, but not in the sense suggested above: "The work of an amanuensis, as well as of an apostle, may be done and ought to be done ἐν κυρίῳ—it is a labor of love 'in the Lord.'" Origen had said: "*Tertius ad gloriam Dei scribit, et ideo in Domino scribit.*"

tle to the Romans by Tertius. Even here, however, the word "*writer*" is "an undistributed middle" and librates in meaning between "author" and "amanuensis"—unless, indeed, Dr. Smith again wishes to represent Baruch as the responsible author of Jeremaih and Tertius of Romans. And the real meaning comes out immediately in the language: "What this Committee affirm as fundamental doctrine is not that Jeremiah proclaimed truth infallibly revealed, but Baruch in recording this revelation . . . was controlled by the Holy Spirit. Not only Paul in writing to the Romans received the truth by inspiration, but Tertius, who wrote as his amanuensis, was controlled by the Holy Spirit." He does not say that "Jeremiah infallibly proclaimed revealed truth," but that he "proclaimed truth, infallibly revealed." He does not say that Paul "wrote by inspiration the truth received," but that "in writing he received the truth by inspiration." "Inspiration," in this mode of speech, has nothing to do with the writing at all, whether this was done by Baruch and Tertius or by Jeremiah and Paul. Truth was "infallibly revealed" to Jeremiah; and he was left to proclaim it and Baruch to record it, without the aid of this "inspiration." Truth was "received by inspiration" by Paul, and either he or Tertius wrote it down without the aid of this "inspiration." Whether, then, "the organs of revelation" were their own "scribes" or not, makes no difference in the matter concerned.

The real meaning is brought out yet most clearly, however, by observing that the purpose of the paragraph is to pass criticism upon the charge that Prof. Smith denies that "the Holy Spirit . . . controlled the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy Scriptures." Surely this is not a designation of mere amanuenses. It speaks of inspired writers as "composers of the Holy Scriptures." When Prof. Smith criticises it as concerning "not the organs of revelation," but "the writers of Scripture," he must be understood to mean by "writers of Scripture," the writers who "*composed*" the Scriptures. And if the idea of the mere amanuensis seems to come forward in his discussion, it must be only as an attempt to reduce the contention of the Committee to absurdity. His line of reasoning seems to be something like this: "The Committee represent the Holy Spirit as controlling the writers of Scripture, as such; but the writer as such is sometimes nothing more than an amanuensis; the Committee want us to believe, therefore, that mere amanuenses are inspired." Under the color of this factitious absurdity, he desires us to consider untenable not merely his own subintroduced idea that the mere amanuensis is inspired, but the Committee's declaration that the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy Scriptures were controlled by the

Holy Spirit. In place of it, he advocates the doctrine that not "the writers of Scripture" but the "organs of revelation" were inspired: that in a word, in the Biblical sense at least, inspiration is the method of revelation and not the superintendence of the writers of Scripture. Despite these passages we must conclude therefore, that Prof. Smith does not refer to the mere amanuenses when he says broadly that there is no Biblical proof that "the *writers* who composed the books of the Bible were led by inspiration."

3. It may still seem to be possible, however, that by this language he really means to express a view intermediate between the two extreme ones which we have investigated. May he not intend to say that there is no Biblical proof that the writers of the Biblical books, when distinct from the prophets, were led by inspiration; that in effect the Biblical proof extends only to the inspiration of those books which were written by "organs of revelations"—the Book of Ezekiel, say for example, who "was a prophet and a writer as well," or the Epistles of Paul, who "was an apostle and a writer as well?"

There are not wanting some indications which might seem to favor such a conjecture. There are, for example, a number of passages in which stress is laid on the fitting of a recipient of revelation to communicate it. The precise point to be tested by Scripture, we are told, is neither whether the Bible contains a revelation, nor "whether the recipients of that revelation were fitted by inspiration both to receive and communicate it."* Both these are admitted. So, we read † that the two passages, Ex. iv. 14-16, and vii. 1, 2, when taken together, establish the "method of revelation:" "God speaks his message to the prophet, and he delivers it to the people. . . . The prophet is God's herald, and has the divine assistance in his work." Again, we read that when once "the things of God" were in the hearts of His servants, "there was no danger that they would not be spoken;" and it is added: "Such an impulse to communicate the truth is from God Himself. It is enough for us to know that it was effective in giving us the record of God's revelation." ‡ And again we read: §

"So soon as we recognize the fact that the prophets claim inspiration for themselves, but not for those who *write*, we see that all the affirmations of the Bible itself are concerned with the *revelation* of God in Scripture, rather than with Scripture as a whole. . . . There is no instance that I can recall where a writer as distinguished from a prophet makes such a claim. . . . In the books of the prophets we find such expressions in abundance, because the prophet was God's spokesman. He did identify his utterances with God's, and he had

* *Insp. and Inerr.*, p. 236.

† *Appeal and Argument*, p. 121.

† *Ibid.*, p. 247.

§ *Insp. and Inerr.*, p. 281.

a right to. But in the historical portions even of the prophetic books the writer carefully refrains from making such claims."

On reading such language it is difficult not to conclude that it means at least this much: that not only has God given a message to His prophets by inspiration, but that this inspiration has availed also for safeguarding the communication of that message from the prophet to the people. And one may be pardoned if he entertains the hope that it may mean that the safeguard would be as available for the written as for the oral communication of the message. Dr. Smith, indeed, says on one occasion: "The authority of an Apostle was, of course, the same to command by letter as to command by word of mouth."*

Nevertheless, the very passages from which we quote these words forbid such a hope, when they are more narrowly considered. After telling us that Ex. iv and vii represent the "prophet as God's herald and as enjoying the divine assistance in his work," Prof. Smith proceeds at once to say: "There is not a word about a subsequent record even of the revelation, much less about the record of matters not directly revealed."† So at the close of the chief passage which we have quoted, he adds broadly ‡ that "the Scripture was not written under the same kind of inspiration that the prophet enjoyed; the sharp distinction between the two is warranted by the facts." As loath as we may be to do so, we must recognize the fact that Dr. Smith refuses to extend the inspiration which attended the prophet's utterance of his message to the writing of that message, whether by another or by his own hand.

This comes out very plainly in connection with what is possibly the strongest affirmation Dr. Smith has given us of the extension of the prophet's inspiration to his utterance. He is speaking of Balaam's prophecies,§ and he says:

"Here is Biblical inspiration. When God sends a man to deliver His message it is in vain for the man to try to change it. The divine *afflatus* carries him along so that he cannot resist. But this is evidently true only of direct revelations of God's will."

Here there is certainly an assertion of a compelling inspiration of the prophet covering the delivery of his message. One would fain extend it to that delivery in written form. But no; Prof. Smith continues:

"No such inspiration is anywhere intimated concerning the writers of the record. And this passage is the key to 2 Pet. i. 20, 21: 'Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake

* *Insp. and Inerr.*, p. 250.

† Pp. 283, 284.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

§ P. 249 sq.

[or "men spake from God," R. V.] as they were moved by the Holy Ghost' (2 Pet. i. 20, 21). The Committee need not have confined themselves to the two versions, for the Greek is even more expressive: 'Men spake from God *being borne along* by the Holy Ghost.' This affirmation is identical with Balaam's words concerning himself. It describes the Spirit's possession of the organ of revelation. It is besides limited, by express declaration, to the prophetic element in Scripture. The Scriptures are no doubt mentioned, but it is only as containing the prophecy—'no *prophecy* of Scriptures is of private suggestion.' There is nothing about an inspiration of writers, about superintendence or inerrancy."

The reader will no doubt wish to pause here to enter a protest against Dr. Smith's artificial exegesis. Peter is making high affirmations concerning prophecy, and he limits the prophecy of which he makes them to *Scriptural* prophecy, that he may guard his readers against false prophecy. Dr. Smith changes his emphasis and makes him limit his affirmations to the *prophetic element* in Scripture. It is no doubt true that Peter is speaking here only of the prophetic element of Scripture; but this is a purely negative fact and has no such positive significance as Dr. Smith's words may give it in the minds of his readers. Peter's words assert something of Scripture prophecy; but they deny nothing of the rest of Scripture; and it is misleading in the extreme to say that he "limits, by express declaration," what he says "to the prophetic element in Scripture." What he does is to limit by express declaration, what he says, to those prophecies which are contained in *Scripture*. The effect of this is not to lower, in the estimation of his readers, the rest of Scripture in comparison with its prophetic element—which is the effect of Dr. Smith's representation of his meaning. Its effect is rather to exalt Scripture as a whole as the only place where genuinely inspired prophecy may be found. Peter is exalting Scripture as the receptacle within whose bounds is to be sought all genuinely inspired prophecy.

And there is another point here that requires careful noting in this connection. Peter's affirmation is made of the total body of prophetic Scripture: of the total body of prophetic *Scripture*. It is of this prophecy, not as delivered orally, but as *written*, that he is speaking. He sends his readers for genuine prophecy to the Scriptures, and he tells them of the prophecy found *there*—written in the Scriptures—that it is all "not of private interpretation." This is not simply to mention the Scriptures, by the way, as containing the prophecy in question; it is to commend as trustworthy all the prophecy to which Scripture gives expression. And in this, though there be no direct assertion of the inspiration of writers, there is a clear indirect indication of how Peter would have spoken of the trustworthiness of the record had the occasion led him to do so.

But to return to Prof. Smith's statement. It is already apparent that he does not intend the recognition of the influence of the divine *afflatus* on the prophet's communication of his message to extend to the written record. This becomes even clearer as we proceed. He continues:

"There is a passage, however, in which Paul refers to things written, 1 Cor. xix. 37: 'If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.' The Greek is significant here. Paul really says: 'If any man thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual among you, let him *consider* the things that I write unto you, that they are a *commandment* of the Lord.' This language limits his claim to the one thing under consideration—namely, the regulation of spiritual exercises in the Corinthian Church. He was confident that on this he had the divine direction. But he does not speak as though he based any claim upon his inspiration, but emphasizes the internal evidence, saying, in effect: 'If any one claiming to be spiritual among you will examine what I have said, he will recognize in it a revelation from the Lord.' The authority of an Apostle was, of course, the same to command by letter as to command by word of mouth. But he does not even appeal to his authority here, only to the intrinsic reasonableness of what he writes. And the fact that he emphasizes *certain* utterances as a commandment of the Lord demanding special attention shows that he does not make the same claim for *all* he writes. In this very epistle (vii. 40) he gives his judgment in a matter, and adds, in strange contrast to the passage just quoted: '*I think* I have also the Spirit of God.' Strange contrast, I say, because the language is inconceivable if all Paul wrote was given by an inspiration that made it all alike the 'commandment of the Lord.' These passages, therefore, instead of proving what the Committee is trying to establish, argue just the other way."

Now, if this reasoning means anything, it certainly means that the inspiration of Paul, who was "an apostle as well as a writer," an "organ of revelation" as well as a "scribe," did not extend to all he wrote. Indeed, if Dr. Smith is to be taken literally, nothing in Paul's letters is to be considered to be of divine authority, except the "certain utterances" which he emphasizes as commandments of the Lord: the fact that he does emphasize these, throws doubt on the authority of all the rest.

The exegesis by which this is made out is, indeed, strangely fallacious. Paul renouncing his authority in 1 Cor. xiv. 37, and submitting what he says to the judgment of "the spiritual!" Why, Paul is here asserting his authority, and making the recognition of it the test of the real possession of the Spirit by those making claim to possess Him. What he says, "in effect," is, "If there is any one among you who thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritually gifted in any way, then let him prove himself to be such, by his recognizing," etc. This is Meyer's statement,* and he adds: "Not to

* And of course, not Meyer's only. Thus, Godet comments as follows: "The best way for these organs of the Spirit to prove the reality of their inspiration will be, the apostle declares, their perceiving his superior wisdom and apostolic

acknowledge this would show him not to be a prophet or not inspired. . . . Paul is affixing here the seal of *apostolic* authority; and upon that seal we must read *Christ*." To transmute this even severe assertion of his authority, and the subjection of the claims of all the "spiritual" to the test of its recognition, into a submission of his "commandment of Christ" to them for their voucher, is certainly as desperate an exegetical expedient as we have lately met with. Scarcely less desperate, however, is the dealing accorded to 1 Cor. vii. 40. Dr. Smith totally neglects the meiotic irony which is the very essence of the passage, and which comes out in the emphasis on the "my" and "I," which the original forces us to recognize. What the apostle says, is: "This is *my* opinion"—the "my" carrying the emphasis of apostolic self-consciousness—"and as for *me*, it seems to me that *I*, too, have the mind of Christ:" "so that," continues Meyer, "I therefore may expect you to regard my opinion, not as a mere individual judgment, but as arrived at under the influence of the Holy Spirit which is imparted to me also, and hence, as worthy to be received and followed." The irony that burns in both these passages, renders nothing less than absurd, not only Dr. Smith's supposition that Paul was subjecting his opinion to the countersign of his enemies, but also his notion that these strong claims on one occasion throw doubt on Paul's inspiration elsewhere, where it is not expressly asserted. These very passages express Paul's sense of the absurdity of his having to make and vindicate a claim to speak in Christ's name and with Christ's authority. We really cannot get on in the discussion of Scripture, unless we are willing to forego "private interpretations" and to expound it historically.*

The more impossible Prof. Smith's exegesis is, however, the more obviously does his employment of it show that it is his intention to refuse inspiration, in the Scriptural sense, to something more than the non-prophetical parts of Scripture. There is another passage which puts this beyond question.† Prof. Smith proceeds in it by the aid of the same untenable exegesis as in the case just cited.

authority; not criticising his ordinances, but rendering practical homage to their excellence by conforming to them." One would like to know how Prof. Smith would expound the following verse (ver. 38) on his theory: "If any man does not know [that these, my commandments, are the commandments of Christ], let him be left in his ignorance [as a hopeless case]," or even, "he shall not be known [in the day of Judgment by that Christ whose commandments he has ignored]." Possibly we may even translate: "If any man ignores *them*, let *him* be ignored." "There is more than indifference," says Godet truly; "there are severity and threatening in these words."

* Compare Thayer's *The Change of Attitude towards the Bible*, p. 60, as commented on in *THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW*, iii, p. 174.

† *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 345.

He is speaking of the prophets mentioned in the New Testament. He tells us that the same name is given them as to "the organs of the Old Testament revelation;" that "their office is said to be for the edification of the Church;" that they are named "next to the apostles among the officers which God has bestowed upon the Church;" and that "they are expressly said to receive revelations." And yet the New Testament does not assert that they were so divinely assisted in the delivery of these revelations that human error might not intrude into it.

"Rather do we find the contrary implied. Paul, for example (Rom. xii. 6), cautions the possessors of the gift to let it be according to the proportion of faith. He evidently means that this divine inspiration does not itself determine the measure of its expression; but that the recipient of it needs care and judgment not to let the expression go beyond the assurance given him by his faith in Christ. This assumes the possibility of the human error coming into the expression of the supernatural revelation. In another passage the apostle intimates the same possibility when he says: 'Let the prophets speak by two or three and let the others discriminate' (1 Cor. xiv. 29). Here what is said by way of revelation is submitted to the judgment of the others present who are allowed to judge how far it is the work of the Spirit. And Paul seems to put himself on the level with these prophets when he says in the text already discussed (ver. 37): 'If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you that they are a commandment of the Lord.' Confident of the genuineness of his own revelation, he submits it fearlessly to their judgment. Elsewhere he protests that even he has not lordship over their faith (2 Cor. i. 24). Perhaps most significant of all in this connection is the exhortation: 'Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesyings (*but*, many MSS.), prove all things, hold fast that which is good' (1 Thess. v. 20, 21)."

We shall not stop to refute the obviously faulty exegesis by which passages which call on men to judge the claims of men to speak by the Holy Spirit, are deflected into license to them to judge the message itself which is sent them by the Holy Ghost. What it concerns us to note is the strength of the affirmation here made, that Biblical inspiration, "the method of revelation," did not safeguard even the oral delivery of the revelations received, but that there was always a possibility of human error entering "into the expression of the supernatural revelation;" and to the extension of this affirmation to even the greatest apostles like Paul. How this assertion is to be harmonized with previously quoted deliverances of Prof. Smith's—such as, for example, his affirmation that "when God sends a man to deliver His message, it is in vain for the man to try to change it: the divine *afflatus* carries him along so that he cannot resist"*—we cannot say. But at least such a passage as this shows that Prof. Smith does not mean to affirm that when a writer of a Biblical book is also a prophet, his prophetic inspiration safe-

* *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 249

guards the communication of his message. We may understand him now more exactly when immediately after declaring that "the two passages," Ex. iv. 14 *sq.* and vii. 1, 2, "taken together show the method of revelation—God speaks His message to the prophet, and he delivers it to the people; just as Moses spoke to Aaron and Aaron spoke for him to Pharaoh; the prophet is God's herald, and has the divine assistance in his work"—he immediately adds: "There is not a word about a subsequent record, even of the revelation, much less about the record of matters not directly revealed." Prof. Smith clearly wishes to affirm that there is no Biblical evidence of a divine inspiration safeguarding the written communication of a revelation, by whomsoever's hands it was written.

As glad as we would be to believe otherwise, therefore, we are driven to recognize that when Prof. Smith declares that Scripture nowhere affirms that "the *writers* who composed the books of the Bible were led by inspiration," he means neither the amanuenses as distinguished from the responsible authors of the books, nor such writers of Biblical books as were not themselves prophets or apostles, but all the writers of the Biblical books, whether prophets, apostles, scribes or simple men of the people. What he means is to deny that there is any Biblical evidence that the Scriptures as such are "inspired" at all. What he means is what he expresses with perfect sharpness in such words as these: "This activity of the Spirit of God is nowhere connected with the writing of a book—certainly not in the Old Testament. But it is prominent in connection with the prophetic work of receiving a revelation. Old Testament inspiration is the inspiration of the prophet, not of the scribe."* That the same is true of the New Testament he then seeks to show in the exegesis of 2 Tim. iii. 16, to which our attention has already been given. It is purely a matter of supererogation, therefore, when he joins issue later with Dr. McKibbin as to the belief that the writers of the Old Testament books were all "prophets." It is a pity that Dr. Smith was drawn into this discussion; for in it he has escaped neither errors of fact nor self-contradiction,† and after all, what bearing had it on his theories? What if all the Old Testament writers were prophets, if prophetic inspiration does not extend to the writing? Therefore Dr. Smith closes the discussion with the following words: ‡

"And there is another significant fact here. If the writers had the same sort of

* *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 260.

† *e. g.*, he declares that the belief is no older than the fourth century and later allows that Philo held it.

‡ *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 283.

inspiration with the prophets, why should it never be said, 'God *wrote*,' or 'as the Holy Spirit hath written?' For it must be clear to you that these expressions would be just as appropriate as that 'God spoke,' or 'as saith the Holy Spirit.' Were it true that the writers had such a commission to write for God as the prophets had to speak for Him, it would be as proper to say *God wrote* or *the Holy Spirit writes*, as to use the corresponding expressions. Why, then, do we never find these phrases, but simply *it is written*? There can be no explanation except that the Scripture was not written under the same kind of inspiration as the prophets enjoyed."

We are not concerned, again, with Dr. Smith's logic, which infers that he has the right explanation of a phenomenon simply because no other quickly suggests itself to him: or with his acumen, which suggests to him no other explanation of this phenomenon than the far-fetched one which he commends to us. What we are concerned with is the clear intimation which such a passage gives, that, in his mind, it is the prophet in his reception of the revelation, and not the writer, whoever he may be, in his record of it, that is inspired in the Biblical sense.

The upshot of Dr. Smith's discussion of the Biblical idea of inspiration is, then, that there is no Biblical evidence whatever that the Scriptures as such are inspired. He has not spoken of the matter with entire consistency. But this is clearly his fundamental position. Now, one would think that this would settle the matter of the inspiration of the Scriptures as such. If there is no evidence from the Bible that they are inspired, where shall we go for such evidence? Prof. Smith himself says: "It has always been the practice of our Church to derive its doctrine from the Scriptures." * And he has asserted with strong emphasis, and argued with great fullness, that the Scriptures know nothing of an inspiration of the Scriptures as such. Surely by this fact he is prevented from holding any "doctrine" of the inspiration of the Scriptures as such, whatever. This, at all events, is the fundamental fact concerning Dr. Smith's teaching concerning inspiration: viz., that the Bible knows nothing of an inspiration of the Scriptures as such.

Yet, strange to say, Dr. Smith affirms his belief in an inspiration of the Scriptures as such. After investigating the Bible idea of inspiration, with the result which we have seen, he turns to examine the theological idea of inspiration. This he finds to be a doctrine of inspiration of the Scriptures as such, and this, too, he accepts as true. It is time that we should hear him on this second branch of the subject.

* *Insp. and Inerr.*, p. 236.

2. DR. SMITH'S VIEW OF THE THEOLOGICAL IDEA OF INSPIRATION.

Possibly the most satisfactory statement of his views on this branch of his subject is found in his *Argument* before the Assembly, in a passage in which he cites the chief relative passages from his *Argument* before the Presbytery. It is immediately consecutive to the capital passage quoted above upon the Biblical idea of inspiration, and runs as follows: *

“This is all that the Bible itself says on the subject. But Christian theology goes further. It raises the question how the Bible comes to be the Word of God. And it answers by saying: Inspiration is what makes the Bible the Word of God. There can be no objection to this use of the word so long as we remember that the term as applied to the Biblical *writers* is a theological and not a Biblical term. So far from objecting to this use of the word, I have expressly defended it. In my argument before the Presbytery, after discussing the Biblical passages, I went on to say: †

“Now theological usage is different. Theology needs a word to denote another activity of the Holy Spirit. It takes the word inspiration for this purpose. This is what I mean when I say this influence is *technically called* inspiration. When I say that the technical sense of a word is different from the Biblical sense, I do not mean that both senses are not justified by the facts. If we are to discuss the organizing principle of Scripture, we must have a name for it. Inspiration is the name the theologians have chosen. What I am concerned to point out is that there are two senses of the word, and that there is a difference between theological and Biblical usage. In theology, inspiration is the organizing principle of the books. In the Bible itself, inspiration is the activity of the Spirit which fits the organs of *revelation* for their work. If this distinction is clearly grasped, it shows that a member of the court was mistaken in thinking that I confound inspiration and revelation.

‡ “Now up to this point we are all agreed. All parties here acknowledge the following points: (a) The Bible contains a revelation from God; (b) it contains other material not in the proper sense revealed; (c) this material is of importance to us because of its bearing on the history of revelation; (d) this material was chosen and arranged by men acting under a distinct influence of the Holy Spirit, which influence we call technically *inspiration*, and (e) the result is a book which in its totality is the Church's permanent and infallible rule of faith and life. I say all parties agree up to this.”

“The point in which parties differ is the extent of this activity which *in theology* we call inspiration. It is an activity concerned in collecting (in the parts of the Bible now in view) and arranging literary material from all available sources. It led the writers of the books to make the books. It led them to make the books out of this complex material. Now I submit that the extent of this activity, the extent to which it overruled natural bias, may rightly be made the subject of inquiry, and that that inquiry must not proceed on the assumption that the material so used is necessarily corrected from error when incorporated in the Biblical book.”

From this passage we learn very much concerning Dr. Smith's theory of inspiration, and nearly as much from what it does not tell us as from what it does. Let us note clearly what it does tell us. First of all, it explicitly recognizes the reality of such an activity of the Holy Spirit as theologians have agreed to call inspiration: although it sharply distinguishes it as “another activity,” “a distinct influence” from the inspiration which is

* *Appeal and Argument*, p. 52, sq.

† The following paragraphs are taken (with unimportant omissions) from *Inspir. and Inerr.*, pp. 356, 357.

‡ The next paragraph appeared originally in the *Response to the Charges* in Presbytery (*Insp. and Inerr.*, p. 225), whence it is here quoted.

spoken of in the Bible. This clear recognition of the reality of the activity of the Holy Spirit called "inspiration" by the theologians, as distinct from the "inspiration" spoken of by the Bible, is frequently made elsewhere. For example we read : *

"They object to my definition of *Biblical* inspiration [*Response*, p. 55] as if I recognized only this inspiration and no other. They quote and misrepresent my affirmation that something is *technically called* inspiration, as if I meant that technical inspiration is not *real* inspiration. I beg you to notice the difference in the use of the words. The *Biblical* idea of inspiration and the *theological* idea of inspiration are different. Both may be justified as correct, but they are not the same."

Next, it does much towards defining this inspiration for us, by telling us what are its subjects, function and effect. As to its subjects—it applies to the *writers* of the Biblical books as distinguished from the organs of revelation. As to its function—it is "the organizing principle of Scripture," the "organizing principle of the books;" the "literary material from all available sources" was collected, chosen and arranged under its influence; "it led the writers of the books to make the books," and "it led them to make the books out of this complex material." As to result—it gives us "a book which in its totality is the Church's permanent and infallible rule of faith and life." Here then we have inspiration in its theological sense, defined as an activity of the Holy Ghost, distinct from that specific activity of the Spirit which fits the organs of revelation for their work, by which *the writers of the Biblical books* were led to collect, choose and arrange their material, and to make the books out of this complex material, with the effect of making the Bible in its totality the Church's permanent and infallible rule of faith and life.

All these points are elsewhere also affirmed with equal clearness. We are told, for example, that the doctrine of inspiration "endeavors to explain the genesis of Scripture from the divine side," † and that it is called in "to account for the *unity* of that composite book;" ‡ and that it is one of the things not contested by any in this controversy that "the writers of the books were divinely guided in choice of material from whatever source." § We are told that had Dr. A. A. Hodge "contented himself with affirming that the whole Bible was written 'under such an influence as makes it for the Church the infallible rule of faith and practice,' no one could have objected;" ¶ and inspiration is allowed in detail for Chronicles ¶¶ and Psalms, ** for the genealogies †† and apparently the whole historical element ‡‡ of Scripture. Accordingly we have this precise and

* *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 355. † *Ibid.*, p. 142. ‡ P. 225.
 § P. 236. ¶ P. 114. ¶¶ P. 130. ** P. 213. †† P. 138. ‡‡ P. 245.

emphatic *credo*: "I believe that 'inspiration is the organizing principle of Holy Scripture which makes Scripture Holy Scripture,' and that it not only 'attended the whole process of the genesis of Scripture,' but that it inheres in the Scriptures of to-day, making them, with what imperfections they have, 'living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword . . . and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.'"* With this Dr. Smith's other formal definitions agree. "We mean by inspiration the divine influence exerted upon the minds of the writers of the Bible which led them to choose and shape their material so as to make the result the authoritative rule of faith and practice."† "Inspiration, as defined by the theologians, is the activity of the Holy Spirit exerted on the minds of the *writers* of the Bible, which not only led them to commit the revelation to writing, but also led them to select this illustrative material and arrange it in proper shape."‡ Supported by such other passages, we may be sure we have reached Dr. Smith's meaning in our exposition of the main passage.

It has been a great pleasure to draw out these statements of Dr. Smith, outlining a positive doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures as such. It may seem to us utterly inconsistent with his strenuous assertion that the Bible knows nothing of an inspiration of the Scriptures, that he should profess to believe all this; but it is a pleasure to note that, however inconsistently, he does profess to believe it. It is in these positive assertions of belief that the measure of agreement between him and the Church's doctrine is expressed. "Now," says Dr. Smith himself, "up to this point we are all agreed." The "up to this point" is an ominous word, and points already to disagreements to come afterwards. Let us not, however, allow our attention to be drawn at once away from the points of agreement, nor permit ourselves to minimize their importance. Dr. Smith does well to call repeated attention to them. "All parties to this controversy," whether consistently or inconsistently, are found to agree in much. They agree that there was a divine activity that led the sacred writers to write our Biblical books—to collect, choose and arrange the material—and that attended the whole process of the genesis of Scripture; and they agree that the result is a book which in its totality is the Church's infallible rule of faith and practice. They agree, then, that this activity extends to all parts of Scripture and makes the Bible Holy Scripture. This, we say, is to agree in much; and we have no inclination to minimize it. But it is not to agree in all. And it is of equal importance not to minimize the points in which Dr. Smith's

* *Appeal and Argument*, p. 118.

† *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 94.

‡ P. 225.

teaching falls short of the truth. Dr. Smith, probably as a man on trial, seems to us to minimize these. "The point on which" the parties to this controversy differ, he says, "is an inference concerning the *extent* of this activity of the Holy Spirit which we call inspiration."* That is to say, though inspiration extends to all *parts* of Scripture, it does not, in his view, extend to all *elements* in Scripture: though it is not *partial* it is *limited* †—limited to this one element in Scripture, "matters which concern faith and morals." Dr. Smith speaks as if this point of difference were a small matter. We cannot think so. Nor is it the only matter in which his exposition fails to satisfy. We miss, in his exposition, for example, any clear indication of the nature and mode of inspiration, and we miss any clear indication of the proof of inspiration. Neither are these small matters. How little these are small matters, we shall observe if we attempt to gather from Dr. Smith what he would teach as to the nature, extent and proof of the inspiration which he has affirmed.

1. What is the nature, after all, of this divine activity—in the existence of which he professes his belief—that attended the whole process of the genesis of Scripture, and led to the making of the books, and to the making of the books out of the material collected, chosen and arranged under its influence, with the result that the Bible is in its totality the Church's permanent and infallible rule of faith and practice? It is an activity of the Holy Spirit. It is specifically distinct from the inspiring activity of the Holy Ghost by which the organs of revelation were fitted for their work, and of which alone the Bible teaches us. It accounts for the unity of the Bible made out of such heterogeneous material, and is the organizing principle of the Bible. What is it? Is it, for example, specifically distinct from God's providential control? Is it distinctively supernatural in its mode, or does it act according to natural law? Dr. Smith does very little to enlighten us in this matter. He tells us, indeed, in one place that "inspiration as an inner divine process is beyond our definition because beyond our apprehension."‡ But this is not very illuminating. What is an "inner divine process?" Does he mean "inner" to God, or "inner" to man? In the former case, it is nonsense. In the latter case, which we must assume to be the true sense, it merely tells us that the mode of contact and action of the divine Spirit on the human spirit is inscrutable. Beyond this, Dr. Smith does not go by way of definition. He now and then speaks of inspiration as a form of coöperation of the divine and human wills.§ He now and

* *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 226.

† *Ibid.*, p. 243.

‡ *Appeal and Argument*, p. 89. § *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, pp. 341, 349.

then suggests that it is analogous in its action to God's sanctifying grace, or His oversight over the apostles in founding the Church,* or the charismatic gifts† in the early Church; and pleads that as none of these made men perfectly free from error, so neither does inspiration exclude the intrusion of human error into its product. We shall not stop to inquire whether these analogies support the point contended for—whether the completed products of God's sanctifying grace are not completely sanctified, whether the gifts to the apostles and the charismata of the early Church did not perfectly attain the ends in view. We note only that the analogies are not used to show more plainly the nature of inspiration, but to justify the imposing of limits on its extent. Here is indeed where Dr. Smith's interest lies. It is to this that he constantly returns, and it is this that he represents as the one point of difference between him and his accusers.

2. What, then, does Dr. Smith teach as to the extent of the influence of the inspiring activity? The first thing we note about his teaching here is its negative form; he does not appear interested so much in determining to what it does extend as in asseverating to what it does not extend. Dr. Smith is fairly entitled, no doubt, to plead as to this, that "the negative form of some of the assertions made in the address is accounted for by the fact of its being an argument and not a treatise."‡ But we find it difficult to resist the impression that the negative form of these particular statements represents a deeper fact, and means that Dr. Smith is more interested in disproving the doctrine of plenary inspiration than in developing a true doctrine of inspiration. It does not seem to us, however, that one is entitled to attack the established doctrine until he has thought himself through on the subject. At all events, whatever be the explanation of it, Dr. Smith presents the issue between himself and his accusers as to the extent of inspiration usually in a negative form.

Let us try to fix positively what Dr. Smith teaches as to the extent of inspiration. The point on which the parties differ, he tells us, "is an inference concerning the *extent* of this activity of the Holy Spirit which we call inspiration." As the Committee conceive it, "inspiration is such a superintendence over the mind of the writers of the whole Bible as made their every statement free from error." "Others of us hold that the design of God to make the record (in matters outside the sphere of doctrine and morals) absolutely errorless is not affirmed by Scripture itself, and is opposed to the facts as we have them."§ The affirmation as to the extent of inspiration included in this statement of the issue, is, negatively, that it does

* *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 340.

† *Ibid.*, p. 331.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 347.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

not protect the record from all error in matters outside the sphere of doctrine and morals, and, affirmatively, that in matters within the sphere of doctrine and morals, the design of God was to make the record absolutely errorless. We are told again* that the issue is not whether the Bible contains a revelation, nor whether the recipients of the revelation were fitted by inspiration both to receive and to communicate it, nor whether the writers of the books were divinely guided in choice of material from whatever source, but solely the further one of the extent to which this guidance went. "The only issue is the farther one: whether they were also divinely guided to remove from previously existing literary material every error of fact, *no matter how indifferent in its bearing on faith and morals*, and whether in giving their own observation and experience they were so far lifted above the universal liability to error that they never *made a mistake*, even in the sphere of secular science or history." The affirmation as to the extent of inspiration included in this statement of the issue is, negatively, that it does not preserve the record from scientific and historical mistakes, and, positively, that it does preserve it from error in matters of faith and morals. We cannot press its language further than this, and make it teach, negatively, only that inspiration does not preserve the record from minor errors of facts, and positively, that it does preserve it from error not only in matters of faith and practice, but also in all matters of fact in any way bearing on questions of faith and morals. This form of language is chosen simply as expressive of the respondent's sense of the unreasonableness of his opponent's position, not as representative of his own views. He wishes to put the advocates of "inerrancy" on trial and hold them to the extremity of their position; and therefore, in his *Argument*, he refuses to allow "the distinction between supposed *minima* and supposed *maxima*," on the ground that "if there be inerrancy it must extend to the smallest as well as to the largest matters."† He adds with significant bearing on this very point: "It is in fact impossible for us to draw any such line. Who shall say that the chronology of the Old Testament, in which so many conceded discrepancies occur, shall be called a minimum? The only legitimate line is between things essential to the rule of faith and things not essential to the rule of faith. Infallibility in the former is conceded on all hands. Inerrancy in the latter must be judged by a careful induction of the facts." This induction pronounces adversely. The affirmation here is, negatively, that inspiration does not secure freedom from error in either *maxima* or *minima*, of matters not essential to the rule of faith, and positively, that it does secure infallibility in things essential to the rule of faith.

† *Inspir. and Inerr.*, p. 237.

Ibid., p. 357.

From such passages as these, it would seem that what Dr. Smith intends to affirm concerning the extent of inspiration is, that it does secure infallibility in matters of faith and practice, and that it does not secure errorlessness in any other matters. A further study of his views as to the effects of inspiration, however, will soon evince the fact that the negative side of this statement will very inadequately represent them. Take his exposition, for example, of the inspiration of the Chronicler. "His inspiration," he tells us, "which made him a source of religious edification to his contemporaries, and which makes his work still a part of the infallible rule of faith, did not correct his historical point of view any more than it corrected his scientific point of view, which no doubt made the earth the centre of the solar system."* Now, what does Dr. Smith mean by such a statement? What can he mean but this: that inspiration was confined to making the Chronicler a "source of religious edification," and has nothing to do with him as historian or teacher of science? In other words, that the activity of God the Holy Ghost, which we call in theology inspiration, and which attends the whole process of the genesis of Scripture, influencing the collecting, choosing and arranging of the material, and the making of the book out of it, is confined to securing that this material shall be so collected, chosen and arranged that it shall subserve the purpose of religious edification. The scientific point of view of the writer may be absurd. The facts which he gives as natural facts may be of the order of the Oriental cosmogony, which stands the earth on the back of an elephant and the elephant on the back of a tortoise and the tortoise on nothing. Inspiration has nothing to do with this. It only secures that what the writer deems to be facts shall be so collected, chosen and arranged as to edify religiously; and here it secures infallibility. The historical point of view of the writer may be equally deranged. He may be so dominated by the spirit of his own day as to be incapable of reading himself back into a past era or of correctly representing it in history; his own prejudiced point of view may lead him to follow inexact, rather than accurate, predecessors; and thus the statements which he sets down as historical facts may give a totally false view of the past, and may be historically useful to us chiefly as a betrayal of the unhistorical point of view of himself and of his times, so that by reading between the lines we may get from his exaggerated, deflected, falsified (but not *consciously* falsified) statements a vivid picture of the thoughts, aspirations, ideals of his own day and generation. Inspiration has nothing to do with this. It only secures that what such a faulty and, indeed, utterly untrustworthy historian

* *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 130, note.

should collect, choose and arrange as history shall serve the purpose of religious edification; and here it secures infallibility.

It is just this account, indeed, that Dr. Smith gives of the books of Chronicles, the nature and effect of the inspiration of the author of which he is expounding to us in the passage now under discussion. He seeks to save his honesty: he does not accuse him of "intentional falsification of the record,"* "of asserting what he knew to be false or of suppressing what he knew to be true."† But he pronounces him guilty of every other fault and incapacity with which a professed historian could well be stained. His narrative is full of gross errors of fact. He is unable to rid himself of the prejudices of his day, and reads them all back as facts of history into the past. He is valuable to us not for what he says of others, but from what he betrays of himself. And then we are asked, Why should his personal equation be overruled by the inspiring Spirit? ‡ Why should his historical point of view be corrected? § His bias be overruled? ¶ And the individual case of the Chronicler is made merely a particular case under a general rule. Inspiration is defined as not overruling the natural bias of the writer. ¶ Even a philosophy of sacred history is developed to fit the case. "Sacred history cannot be made up of a string of inerrant statements," we are told. "It must show unconsciously and by suggestion the spirit that informs the Church of God and makes it live and grow."** One would almost think, then, that history would be useful in direct proportion to its errancy! Of course, sacred history is something more than a string of statements, however inerrant. It was written for our admonition, and Dr. Smith is in a position to believe that heartily; but unfortunately also to add to his profession of belief of it, that it does not involve that it shall be "absolutely truthful." †† But even "sacred history" certainly is primarily "a string of statements," and it certainly does not cease to be worthy of the name of even "*sacred* history" if these statements are true—if they are certainly true—if they are undeniably true—if they are infallibly true. Yet so clear is Dr. Smith that inspiration does not affect the work of the sacred historians in its factual side, that he is betrayed into making it characteristic of "sacred history" that it is not "a string of inerrant statements" (he should have said it is not merely this), but a revelation "unconsciously and by suggestion" (why not consciously and openly, as in Acts?) of the Spirit of God.

We must modify our statement of Dr. Smith's theory of the extent of inspiration on the negative side, therefore, so far as to under-

* *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 130, note.

† P. 211.

‡ P. 125.

§ P. 180.

¶ P. 211.

¶ Pp. 331, 338.

** P. 130.

†† P. 245.

stand that, in his view, this activity of the Spirit secures nothing else except the infallibility of the Bible in matters of faith and morals; and does not affect the statement of any other matters which enter into the Bible, except so far as to make them subservient to its function as infallible teacher in matters of faith and morals. The Bible is inspired only as a rule of faith and morals. In all other matters, its inspiration only secured that they should be so collected, chosen and arranged as to subserve this its one function, and to preserve its infallibility therein. When these other matters are abstracted from this function, and are looked at in themselves, they have not been affected by inspiration. So considered they are the product of the human authors and represent purely their bias, personal equation or point of view.

There are a couple of very carefully written and unusually comprehensive passages in which Dr. Smith gives us his conception of the Bible which ought to come into view at this point, and which, if we mistake not, will confirm our exposition of his views so far. He says in one of them : *

“The basis of faith common to us all is the idea of *revelation*. And by revelation we mean God’s disclosure of Himself and of His will. True religion, which is the relation between God and man, exists only as God condescends to make Himself known to man. His revelation begins with individual men. Each revelation is made at a particular time and to a particular person. But it is communicable by human language, and is actually transmitted from the first recipients to other men by language either spoken or written. Whether spoken or written, it is the Word of God to whosoever shall receive it. A mother’s message to her son by post is as truly her word as that which she speaks into his ear when they meet face to face.

“The Scriptures contain revelations so clothed in written language. But it requires little knowledge of the Scriptures to discover that they contain more than direct revelations. A considerable part of the contents of these books is derived from the personal observation of the writers or from other sources. . . . It is entirely legitimate, therefore, to distinguish between two elements in Scripture : what was the subject of revelation and what was not the subject of revelation. But it is easy to see further that these two parts have a close connection. What is drawn from tradition, written documents or the observation of the writer has a distinct bearing upon that which is directly revealed. It furnishes a comment upon it, shows the setting, the time and circumstances in which the revelation was given. It shows the progress of revelation, the difficulties it met, the manner in which it was received and the experience of those who received it. These two parts in this way make up a homogeneous book. It consists of revelation with illustrative material, and the latter is, of course, subordinate in importance to the revelation. Precision of language would require us to say the Bible *contains* a revelation. In common language, however, we say not only that it contains a revelation but that it is a *revelation*. This is speaking *à parte potiori*, and not with scientific exactness.

“Now, theology as a philosophic science, is called upon to account for the *unity* of this composite book. Theology asks itself how this book, made up of

* *Inspir. and Inerr.*, p. 223, sq.

such diverse materials, became one homogeneous whole. The answer to this question is given by the word inspiration in its theological sense. Inspiration as defined by the theologians is the activity of the Holy Spirit exerted on the minds of the *writers* of the Bible, which not only led them to commit the revelation to writing but also led them to select this illustrative material and arrange it in proper shape."

And there follows immediately a portion of the capital passage on "theological inspiration," which has been quoted above.* Here we have a very full statement of the nature of the contents of the Bible, whether direct revelations or "illustrative material;" and we are told that both classes of contents have been written in obedience to an impulse from God. But we are told nothing as to the nature or effects of this activity further than that it caused men to write this material down and has secured the production of a homogeneous book. What this homogeneity, or unity, consists in we are not told.

The second passage to which we referred is as follows: †

"The precise point at issue is the coöperation of the human and the divine in Scripture. It was at one time thought necessary to affirm that the divine altogether effaced the human. . . . But this point of view has long been given up. It may now be taken as generally conceded that the writers retained their self-consciousness, their individuality of style and their own mental idiosyncrasies. In fact it is now admitted by the most conservative that the inspired writers drew on the testimony of others, previously existing written documents, their own memories and reasoning powers. . . . It must be evident that these authors make large concessions to the human element in Scripture. The Holy Spirit, in their view, uses the human mind or human powers without removing *many* natural limitations. Why should we suppose that he always overcomes the tendency to mistake? Or rather why should he stop with making the writers correct *inaccuracies* and yet leave *inexact* or *incomplete* statements?"

It is necessary to pause here to note that the form of Dr. Smith's queries is dictated by the language which he quotes from adherents of the doctrine of plenary inspiration, and which had affirmed: "There is a vast difference between *exactness* of statement, which includes an exhaustive rendering of details, an absolute literalness, which the Scriptures never profess, and accuracy, on the other hand, which secures a correct statement of facts and principles intended to be affirmed." It is this truth and general trustworthiness of Scripture statements which Dr. Smith is suggesting was not secured by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But he proceeds to answer his own questions:

"There can be no answer to this except that it pleased Him to do so. But how shall we know how much it pleased Him to do? Evidently we can know this only by an examination of what He has done. . . . It cannot be wrong, therefore, reverently to inquire into what the Holy Spirit actually has done in

* See above, p. 629.

† *Insp. and Inerr.*, p. 332, *sq.*

the matter of inspiration. This is in fact the only way to determine what it is His will to do. . . .

“In an inductive inquiry as to the extent to which the human element is allowed to appear in revelation we must notice that the tendency to mistake in the apprehension and statement of fact is universal. . . . The human authors of Scriptures in themselves considered were, therefore, liable to mistake in the statement of fact as well as in style or grammar.

“Another principle should be noted here : God’s method of working in this world is the method of practical sufficiency, not of absolute ideality. What He proposes to do is the measure of the means by which He does it. Now, the only light He gives us as to His purpose in giving us a Scripture is His declaration that it is to make us *wise unto salvation* (John xx. 30, 31). . . . If it be God’s will to give us by the hands of fallible men a rule of faith and practice we may assume that He will overrule their fallibility so as to make the rule *sufficient* for His purpose. We are not entitled to assume more than this. . . .

“The evidence does not show that I deny this *sufficient* inspiration of *all parts* of Scripture. The question is whether, because I do not go on and affirm more than this, I can be found guilty of a crime against the Scriptures and the Confession. And my first point is : If the *facts* of Scripture are against affirming more than this, it cannot be wrong not to affirm more. Reasoning on the *phenomena* of Scripture is as legitimate as reasoning on their *assertions*. . . . It is not, of course, my intention to give any list of these apparent errors or any discussion of them.” . . .

He then proceeds to give and discuss a number of errors in Scripture, arguing that they show that it was not “the mind of God to *overrule bias*, so as to secure absolute truth in every statement,” even “in passages fundamental to the being of the Church,” or “in the records of those facts most important to our faith.”* He concludes, therefore : † “The evidence of the facts seems to me to justify that inspiration secured a *sufficient* infallibility, *i. e.*, an infallibility such as we need in a rule of faith and practice. More than this we are not authorized to affirm.”

3. This passage not only confirms our reading of Dr. Smith’s theory on the negative side, *viz.*, that he holds that the inspiration which led men in the collection, choice and arrangement of their material and in its recording, affected only the religious and ethical teaching conveyed, and not at all the truth of the history, say ; and, therefore, did not exclude error of fact even in the record of the revelations themselves, and much less in unrevealed material ; but it indicates for us the nature of the proof on which Dr. Smith relies for this negative contention. It is, briefly, induction from what he deems the facts as to the contents of the Scriptures. He finds errors of fact in them, even “in the record of those facts most important to our faith.” And he infers from them that, therefore, God’s inspiration did not exclude error.

No doubt, if the exegesis were infallible by which he establishes the numerous and gross errors which he adduces as existing in

**Insp. and Inerr.*, p. 338.

† P. 341.

Scripture, some of them amounting to undeniable falsification,* their discovery would suffice to show that, as a matter of fact, the Scriptures are not infallible in questions of fact—even “in the record of those facts most important to our faith.” But this would not prove that it was not “the mind of God to overrule bias so as to secure absolute truth.” The question would remain to be asked what God has declared to be His mind in the matter. To prove that the Scriptures are not trustworthy cannot relieve the strain so long as it remains undisproved that the founders of our religion, Christ and His apostles, believed that they are, and commended them to us as such. Dr. Smith says: “My contention is that if the theory of inspiration which is implied in the pamphlet be in accordance with the facts of Scripture, it cannot be contrary to the statements of Scripture.” Taken as a logical statement simply, this reasoning does not, however, seem stringent. Its only possible justification would be a well-grounded conviction that the statements of Scripture are so absolutely true that any true induction from the facts could not but accord with the infallibly true statements of Scripture. In the mouth of one who has just declared his conviction that it was not “the mind of God to secure absolute truth in every statement,” even “in passages fundamental to the being of the Church” or “in the record of those facts most important to our faith,” it seems a meaningless assertion. While in the mouth of one who really believes in the infallibility of Scripture as a teacher of doctrine, it would seem far more appropriate to reverse the statement and declare that the facts of Scripture cannot be contrary to the statements of Scripture.

Its assertion, in the form which Dr. Smith gives it, means nothing but his determination to stand by his own interpretation of the facts of Scripture as over against the declarations of Scripture. Thus he is placed in a very trying dilemma. He must either contend that the facts of Scripture overturn and disprove the declarations of Scripture; or else he must indulge himself in harmonizing expedients in order to twist the declarations of Scripture into conformity with his determination of the facts. He expresses some scorn of “harmonic hypotheses.” But those which he despises are as nothing compared with the dealing with Scripture to which he has committed himself, in declaring that there are no statements of Scripture inconsistent with such a state of things in Scripture as he constructs from his determination of the “facts.” We have already had occasion to see into what sort of exegesis it has betrayed him, in the few words we felt called upon to say as to his dealing with texts quoted by the Committee.† But this is but the beginning of evils.

* *E. g.*, those of the Chronicles, pp. 126, 127.

† See above, p. 612 *sq.*

Dr. Smith must face the real situation. If the facts of Scripture be as he determines them, the statements of Scripture are false—even in such a fundamental doctrine as the inspiration and trustworthiness of Scripture. This is not the place to show that the facts of Scripture are not as he determines them. He challenged his accusers to do so, and no doubt they did so. Certainly they would not have had far to seek to find plausible and satisfactory accounts of all the alleged “errors” of fact in Scripture which he adduces. We have not been able to discover among them any that are new to Biblical scholars: any that have not already repeatedly received their sufficiently likely solution at the hands of expositors of the Word. The matter at present before us is the overweening confidence which Dr. Smith shows in his own exegetical judgment, in a multitude of matters which are at the best disputed points among Biblical students; so that, on that judgment, he pronounces it unnecessary to examine the Scripture statements, and declares that it supplies the fixed point of departure for any theory of inspiration. Dr. Smith must excuse us. We prefer to take the statement of the Lord that “the Scripture cannot be broken,” and of Paul that “every Scripture is inspired by God;” and the confidence shown by our Lord and His apostles in every statement of Scripture; and their assignment of it to God or the Holy Ghost in all sorts of passages as it fell in their way to quote it; and their unflinching reverence for its every word: we prefer to take these things for the fulcrum of our theory, rather than his confident determination of disputed points of detailed and difficult exegesis. Possibly upon his own view of inspiration there may seem to be no more reason for believing in their, than in his infallibility, in such a matter. But we do not find it possible to share his point of view in this.

In attempting to establish the negative side of his theory of inspiration, therefore, Dr. Smith neglects the Scripture statements; or when they are brought to his attention, attempts to explain them away by artificial exegesis: and relies upon an induction from facts as to the Biblical record, as determined by himself. What proof does he offer for the positive side of his theory? On what grounds does he teach the existence and reality of a divine activity which “attended the whole process of the genesis of Scripture,” with the effect of making it an infallible rule of faith and practice? He has told us repeatedly, as we have seen, that the Scriptures know nothing of such an “inspiration.” The only inspiration of which they speak is that specifically distinct other activity of the Spirit, by which the organs of revelation were fitted for their work. Of *this* inspiration, by which the *writers* of Scripture were

influenced and led, the Scriptures are silent. How does Dr. Smith know, then, that it is real? He asserts that it is real. He emphasizes his *knowledge* that the Scriptures are, what it has made them, the infallible rule of faith and practice: "What I know is, that the Scriptures we now have *are* the infallible rule of faith and practice."* He asserts that in matters of doctrine and morals the Scriptures are even "absolutely inerrant."† He asserts that to make them such was "the design of God."‡ We should greatly like to know the grounds on which such assertions can be justified from Dr. Smith's point of view. What *we* know is that Dr. Smith nowhere gives us an indication of whence he would derive the proof that will justify them.

In one passage, indeed, he seems to allow that there is, after all, some Scriptural evidence for even theological inspiration. "Make the clear distinction," he says, "between Biblical inspiration of the prophet and theological inspiration of the scribe, and while you will find one asserted frequently (though not on every page) you will find the other faintly and rarely indicated."§ The "inspiration of the scribe" then *is* taught in Scripture, though faintly and rarely? We would fain catch at even such a straw. But its inconsistency with Dr. Smith's pervasive contention that "it is nowhere affirmed in Scripture itself" "that the *writers* who composed the books of the Bible were led by inspiration,"|| is much too glaring to permit us to pin any faith upon it. Clearly here is only a *lapsus calami*; probably Prof. Smith was thinking of 2 Tim. iii. 16 and his doubtful and wavering explanation of it. But if even this faint and rare Scriptural indication is to be denied us, what proof have we of the "inspiration of the scribe?" We look in vain for an adequate reply. We discover an occasional hint of the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*;¶ but surely upon it no such assurance as is here expressed can be built. And, indeed, he limits its assurance, on one occasion, to certain things which the Holy Spirit sets before us in Scripture—specifically to the articles of sin and law and grace.** On another, he may be not referring to the testimony of the Spirit at all, but only to the natural force of the internal evidences: "The Scriptures have a normative force which the preached Word cannot have," he says, "chiefly because they reveal God in Christ."†† What this means is not very clear; in any case it can hardly supply a safe foundation for the assertions in mind. A

* *Appeal and Argument*, p. 105.

† *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 226.

‡ P. 226.

§ *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 286.

|| *Appeal and Argument*, p. 52.

¶ *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 106; *Appeal and Argument*, pp. 94, 108.

** *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 106.

†† *Appeal and Argument*, p. 108.

third passage is more direct.* He is speaking of the latter chapters of Isaiah, and apparently of the written Word. What he declares is that "the author of these chapters was the possessor" of "supernatural revelation and inspiration"—

"as is evidenced by every sentence that has come down to us from him. Whether he spoke to his brethren and another recorded his discourses, or whether he himself penned his message, the inspiration in the words evidences itself to us, 'the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.'"

Here is a clear appeal to the testimony of the Spirit as evidencing the inspiration of a section of Scripture; but it is a "revealed" section, and there is no indication that it is to the "theological" rather than the "Biblical" inspiration that Prof. Smith would have us apply his words. But if the appeal to the testimony of the Spirit fails at the decisive point, on what ground, we ask again, can Dr. Smith's confident assertions be justified?

There is but a single ground left—induction from the facts; and there is a hint that possibly Dr. Smith might fall back on this.† We may doubt, however, if an induction from the facts is fitted to justify such strong assertions in this sphere; and we may be sure that the sphere of faith and practice is not a sphere in which such an induction may easily find place. How do we know that no error has entered into the description of the Future State, for example; or into the definition of the relations of the persons of the Godhead to one another? This is a sphere in which authority must rule; and into which a stringent test by induction cannot enter—for the simple reason that we have no extra-Biblical criterion of the facts. We will agree with Dr. Smith's declaration, therefore, that "only on the ground of express declarations of Scripture itself can we say that the natural liability to mistake which attends the whole process is so overruled as to secure absolute truthfulness of every statement."‡ And, adopting it, we apply it with increased force to the sphere of faith and morals. No other evidence can justify Dr. Smith's strong assertions of infallibility and inerrancy for the Scriptures in the sphere of faith and morals. He has explained away the Scriptural testimony to serve his own purposes elsewhere. He must abide by the results, and cease to affirm the infallibility of Scripture in this highest sphere of all. The Scriptures are the infallible rule of faith and practice: but Dr. Smith cannot know it and has denied himself the right to affirm it.

We must go one step further and express our doubt whether the assumed facts of error which Dr. Smith has gathered as to the Bible, will not render it impossible for him to affirm, on the basis of induc-

* *Appeal and Argument*, p. 94.

† *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, pp. 336, 342.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

tion from the facts, that God has actually given us in the Scriptures an infallible rule of faith and practice. Possibly the form of statement which we have just quoted from him, which affirms that God has overruled man's fallibility so far as to make the rule *sufficient* for His purpose,* may be due to a subconscious effort to adjust the statement to the facts as ascertained. Certainly some of the facts which Dr. Smith adduces, if they be facts and their meaning and explanation be as he conceives, tread very closely on the heels of infallibility or inerrancy in matters of faith and practice. We are sufficiently struck with the use of what he calls variations in *wording* in parallel reports given by the sacred writers of important divine declarations, like the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the words of institution of the Lord's Supper. He exhausts the power of language to mark the importance of these cases.† The Decalogue, for example, is "the foundation testimony of the Old Covenant; it consists of words spoken by God Himself, and afterward written down on two tables of stone by His own finger; if there ever was a case where diplomatic exactness was important, this is the case. Yet even here the Holy Spirit did not so control the minds of the writers as to make the two copies agree *verbatim*." He will not allow that we may have here anything else than "two copies of the same document," divergent through "human imperfection." From all which we must understand—if it means anything at all—that, in reading the Biblical records, we have less certainty that we have uncorrupted before us the revelations of God expressly given as such, than we have in reading ordinary historians that we have a correct text of important documents quoted. Less care was taken in the former case to secure diplomatic accuracy than is accustomed to be taken in the latter; thus even the "Word of God in Scripture" on which Dr. Smith would have us dwell with most security, is not safely transmitted to us. Our wonder only grows when we discover that Dr. Smith finds in Scripture not only corrupted revelations like this, but also entirely false revelations—prophecies asserted to be such, but which were not real prophecies.‡

When we turn to matters of morals, he seems near to throwing doubt on the usefulness of Scripture as an infallible *rule* to morals when he represents Paul as submitting his prescriptions as to marriage and divorce to the judgment of his readers, rather than imposing them as commandments of Christ; § and even as, by claiming inspiration for *certain* utterances only in regard to conduct, suggesting that the rest which he has given, in the copious pages of his

* *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 335; cf. pp. 336, 337, 341.

† *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 338; *Appeal and Argument*, p. 112.

‡ P. 113.

§ *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 250.

epistles, rest on his personal, uninspired judgment.* And he seems fairly to pass the line when, in face of the Old Testament enactment of laws of conduct with reference to those who had familiar spirits, he declares categorically that "we know there is no such thing as witchcraft." † His idea seems to be that such laws, as well as those regulating divorce, polygamy and slavery, were not due to God and do not furnish us an infallible rule of duty so far as they go; but that they are the product of the imperfections of men, legislating apart from or against divine guidance. When we hear his strong assertion concerning the existence of witchcraft in Old Testament times, we begin to wonder what he would say as to the demoniacs of New Testament times; and we begin to ask ourselves where premises which justify such remarks might lead us, if logically applied, with reference to all supernatural manifestations for the occurrence of which we have nothing but the Biblical text.

It seems at least to be made tolerably clear by such instances, that if we embark on the attempt to determine how much credit we ought to give the Bible by first attempting to settle in detail how much credit it is easy to give it, we may arrive at a harbor very different from that towards which we fancied we were bound. It cannot seem strange that we should find "some things hard to be understood" in such a book as the Bible; an inspired apostle assures us of it—unless such a statement, as a statement of matter of fact and not either of doctrine or of practice, seems to us not to fall under the sphere of his trustworthiness. And surely it is a grave logical mistake to collect these "things hard to be understood," give them the interpretation most unfavorable possible to the credit of the Scriptures, and then make them, so interpreted, the *principlum* of our doctrine of Inspiration. This is, however, substantially what the school of writers, to which Dr. Smith belongs, does. Their starting-point is the assertion of errors in the text of Scripture; errors as determined by them in the use of an exegesis which scorns all "harmonizing expedients"—that is, which refuses to allow to Scripture what every historian feels necessary to allow to his sources. Their ending-point must be either the rejection of all authority for Scripture and the reduction of its credit below that of ordinary history, or else a resort to the very harmonizing which they had scorned.

All this is repeatedly illustrated in Dr. Smith's paper. Take a rather amusing case of it. He is arguing the partition of the Book of Isaiah. His confidence in his conclusions is expressed by such astounding words as these: "Very few facts of ancient history are so well established as the fact that the author of the last twenty-seven

* *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 250.

† *Appeal and Argument*, p. 119.

chapters of the Book of Isaiah was not the Isaiah of the first half.”* This, with reference to a conclusion which stands in the face of every particle of external evidence and external probability alike, and is based on a series of internal arguments no one of which is indisputable and most of which are obviously invalid! One is tempted to say that such an assertion exhibits, with unusual clearness, the strange lack of historical sense and the strange exaggeration of the value of slight internal considerations, which are the dominant characteristics of the modern destructive critics. But see what this conclusion brings Dr. Smith to. “There are, however,” he tells us, “a number of New Testament passages which, in quoting from this second half of the Book of Isaiah, seem to ascribe it to the Isaiah of the first half.” “Would it not be better,” he asks, “to modify the doctrine of inspiration so as to allow a New Testament writer to quote an Old Testament book by the name which it currently bears, even if that name be not scientifically exact?” We are not now concerning ourselves with the question whether the case is such as Dr. Smith imagines, or whether the modification of doctrine which he proposes is possible, in the face of the New Testament evidence for it. The point to be noted is that what Dr. Smith proposes is just those “harmonistic expedients” which he has rejected. He wishes to exercise harmonizing expedients upon the New Testament passages “which seem to ascribe the second half of the Book of Isaiah to the Isaiah of the first half.” He wishes to do this by means of a theory of quotation, applied (with some pressing and difficulty, it must be admitted) to the New Testament passages. It is only an incident of the same order that, after this is done, he must proceed further and apply the same harmonizing processes to the passages in the New Testament which give us our doctrine of inspiration, with a view to modifying it. Surely Dr. Smith is not entitled to scorn “harmonizers.” The difference between him and the Church in this matter does not lie where he fancies it does. It lies here: he has more confidence in his own historical judgments than in Scriptural statements, and prefers to harmonize the Scriptural statements with his opinions. The Church has more confidence in the Scriptural statements than in his historical opinions, and prefers that he shall harmonize his opinions with the Scriptural statements. Dr. Smith says it cannot be done. Well, then, the issue is sharply drawn. And in the last analysis it is simply this: Infallible Scripture *versus* Infallible Science. Dr. Smith says there is a personal equation in Scripture that has deflected its enunciation of fact from truth. The Church knows that there is a personal equation in science at its best, and a very large one in the science of criticism

* *Appeal and Argument*, p. 99.

as applied to the Scriptures by the school to which Dr. Smith has given in his adhesion. Meanwhile there does not seem any proper exit to the situation but that the Church and Prof. Smith should part company, until either it can persuade him to conform his opinions to Scripture, or he can persuade it to conform Scripture to his opinions.

4. One further result of Dr. Smith's views requires mention here. In Dr. Smith's theory, of course, the Scriptures cannot be called, with propriety of language, either the "Word of God" or a "Revelation." He feels this; and explains that the Scriptures are not, in strict propriety of speech, either the Word of God or a Revelation, but can be properly spoken of only as containing the Word of God or as containing a Revelation: they may be called by the former names only in loose, common language, when speaking *à parte potiori*.* It is accordingly, in his view, not the Scriptures as a whole, but "the Word of God *in* the Scriptures" which is the rule of faith and life to the Church. † It is with "the Word of God *in* the Scriptures" ‡ or with "the *revelation* of God in Scripture," § rather than with Scripture as a whole, that all the affirmations of the Bible itself are concerned. That the Scriptures "not only contain but are the Word of God" he represents as an untenable doctrine propounded by his accusers; || while he declares that "the only doctrine he has is the doctrine of the Westminster Assembly, that the Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only infallible *rule of faith and practice*." ¶ The thing to be noted in this statement, just now, is not Prof. Smith's illegitimate use of the second Question of the Shorter Catechism, but the strong asseveration which such words contain that he does not believe that the Scriptures are the Word of God, are a Revelation from God, but only that they contain the Word of God or a Revelation from God. This Word of God, or Revelation, *in* the Scriptures he sometimes seems to identify with its whole religious contents, sometimes with the words formally attributed in the Scriptures to God as the speaker. In either event, it is a denial that he can accept the whole Bible as in a proper sense the Word of God or a Revelation. The contradiction to Confessional teaching in this is obvious.

In the circumstances in which he was placed, Dr. Smith was unfortunately misled into an attempt to show that this position is consistent with the Confession. His adaptation of the language of the Shorter Catechism, which we have just quoted from him, is one of the means he adopts in this attempt. As everybody

* *Insp. and Inerr.*, pp. 225, 228.

† P. 262.

‡ Pp. 241, 245, 256, 257.

§ Pp. 245, 251, 289.

|| P. 280.

¶ Pp. 279, 280.

knows, however, this is an illegitimate use to make of that language. The Shorter Catechism was excluding from the Word of God everything but the Scriptures: as over against the Romanist and the Sectary who found a Word of God equally authoritative with the Scriptures, the one in tradition and the other in the inner light, the Catechism declares that only what is contained in the limits of the Bible is the Word of God, the rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy God. To quote this to justify a discrimination within the limits of Scripture itself of a Word of God from a word not of God, is to deal with the Catechism after a fashion which Dr. Smith would not be slow to characterize rather harshly, if it were accorded to words of his own. In interpreting Creeds, as in interpreting Scripture, we really cannot get on at all unless we are willing to "interpret historically." That the Standards of the Church affirm that the Scriptures are the Word of God and a Revelation, and not merely that they contain the Word of God or a Revelation, is indeed too plain for argument. The former assertion is repeatedly made in them in the most emphatic way; and the latter is made the basis of their whole doctrine of Scripture, in the declaration that the Scriptures are only another way of revelation along with God's open theophanies and visions, adopted as a permanent way, now that "these other ways of revealing His Will unto His people are ceased" (*Conf. of Faith*, i, 1).

Yet Dr. Smith permits himself repeatedly to represent it as the doctrine of the Confession that "the Word of God *in* Scripture is the rule of faith and life."* The Standards say nothing of the kind. What they say is that the Scriptures "are the very Word of God;" that they "are the Word of God written, all which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life;" that they are "the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience." Dr. Smith is vastly mistaken when he says: "It is only necessary, therefore, for me to affirm the main statement of the Confession that the Word of God is the only infallible rule of faith and practice."† So far is this from being "the main statement of the Confession" that it is not a statement of the Confession at all. What Dr. Smith doubtless has in mind is not the Confession, but the ordination formula. But even in it, this is neither the whole nor the main statement. The main statement of the formula is that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament "are the Word of God;" and this, every candidate for ordination is required to affirm first. Having affirmed that he believes that "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God," he is required

**Insp. and Inerr.*, pp. 222, 231, 359, 361.

† *Ibid.*, p. 352.

to go on and affirm that they are also, or, therefore, "the only infallible rule of faith and practice." The formula is in exact accord in this with the Standards, and is as nearly as may be a transcript from the Larger Catechism, which asks, "What is the Word of God?" and answers, not an element in Scripture, but flatly: "The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and obedience." Prof. Smith is willing to adopt this language, on the theory that the Scriptures may be called the Word of God *à parte potiori*; and even argues that this was what the Westminster divines intended!* Surely artificial exegesis could not go further; unhistorical exegesis could not work a greater havoc in the plain meaning of language. Dr. Smith may be congratulated on having fairly outdone Tract No. 90.

It is time, however, to bring this examination of Dr. Smith's views on inspiration to a close. Let us do it by a brief summing up of what we have found. We observe, then, that:

1. Dr. Smith asserts that there is no Biblical evidence for the inspiration of the Scriptures. There is Biblical evidence for the inspiration of the prophets, but none for the inspiration of the Scriptures. If we are to believe, then, that the Scriptures are inspired, it must be on extra-Biblical grounds; and, of course, what we believe concerning this inspiration must be on extra-Biblical grounds. On such a view, it cannot be important to believe that the Scriptures are inspired at all; and much less can it be important what we believe concerning the nature, extent or effects of such an inspiration. All these matters lie in the sphere of non-Biblical human theories. On such a view, the inspiration of the Scriptures cannot even be a Christian doctrine at all. So much as can be proved concerning it will belong to the sphere of private opinion.

2. Dr. Smith has deliberately rejected the doctrine of *plenary* inspiration and adopted a theory of *limited* inspiration. He discards the doctrine that the Scriptures are the Word of God, trustworthy in all their affirmations, which is the doctrine of the Reformed Churches, and, among other Reformed symbols, of the Westminster Standards. In its place, he adopts the theory that the Scriptures only contain the Word of God and are infallible only in matters of faith and practice. The historical origin of this theory was among the Socinians; it was adopted from them by the early Dutch Arminians; † and from them by the Rationalists. It was introduced into England by the translation of Le Clerc's *Letters* in 1690, and owed its vogue there in the eighteenth century to the

* *E. g., Inspiration and Inerrancy*, pp. 228, 229.

† This Dr. Smith knows, p. 296.

straits into which the defense of Christianity was brought by the Deistic attacks.* It has ever since been the peculiar property of such apologetical writers as are more intent on finding the least that must be defended if Christianity is to stand, than on proclaiming the whole truth of God in all its fullness.†

3. Dr. Smith's interest in his theory centres not in its affirmative but in its negative side. He does not seem concerned so much to demonstrate that the Bible is infallible in matters of faith and practice, as that it is not infallible in anything else. His attack upon the doctrine of the inerrancy of the Scriptures is not, therefore, merely that he may escape from the stringency of that doctrine and be relieved from the necessity of defending Scripture against charges brought against its truth, based on petty details and by-passages. It is in order that, under the cover of an attack on "inerrancy," all the barriers may be broken down which stand in the way of freely reconstructing the history of Israel from points of view not those of the Biblical historians. It is everywhere apparent that when he denies that the Scriptures are free from error, he means as much as those words can be made to include, not as little as possible: and that his object is not to leave the way open enough not to be disturbed by "specks in the marble of the Parthenon" or slight blemishes in accuracy of statement; but to leave it open wide enough to reject the authority of this or the other whole section of Bible history or this or the other whole sphere of Bible declaration. In a word, Dr. Smith's object is to clear the way to the affirmation that the Bible is not a divinely safe-guarded authority to us, in anything else than matters of religion and morals. In all else it is a human book and subject to all the faults and failings of other human books.

4. The impulse under which Dr. Smith has acted in this is not a theoretical but a practical one, not merely a general but a personal one. Dr. Smith is not seeking more exactly to define the Biblical doctrine of inspiration, but to adjust the established doctrine of inspiration to certain personal convictions of his own. The pressure towards a reconstructed doctrine is not from within the doctrine itself, and does not exhibit itself as an effort from within seeking a more complete, or more exact, or more perfect statement. It is from without, and appears as a demand upon the established doctrine to make way for certain assumed conclusions derived from another sphere of inquiry. Dr. Smith has been led to the conclusion that the assault upon the trustworthiness of the Bible, in certain broad

* Cf. Johnson's *Cyclopædia*, new ed., Vol. iv, *sub voce* "Inspiration."

† Cf. Principal Cunningham's cautions with regard to the treatment of inspiration by apologetical writers in his *Theological Lectures*, p. 266sq.

spheres of knowledge at least, has been a successful one; and he demands that the Church shall recognize it as successful. "The point of this whole contention is," he says, "that of late years we have learned some things from the critical study of the Scriptures, some things with which we must reckon."* The fact of the errancy of the Scriptures has been established. The belief that their assertions in all spheres of knowledge are trustworthy is "destitute of proof." It is impossible to affirm of the Old Testament that "it was written under such an influence from God as preserved its human authors from all error." † "One is tempted to say that the advocates of inerrancy do not know the facts of the Bible." ‡ In a word, the fixed fact in Dr. Smith's mind is that the Bible is not trustworthy in the sphere of fact, as distinguished from the sphere of doctrine and morals. This is no longer open to discussion. And from this fixed fact the doctrine of inspiration is to be reconstructed.

The arrogance of this claim is nothing new to the experience of the Church. It is an echo of the arrogance of the Deists at the opening of the last century, when the sole problem was declared to be to reconstruct religion on a rational basis, for as to Christianity that was no longer a subject for argument, but among all people of discernment was agreed to be fictitious and fit only to be "a principal subject of mirth and ridicule." But the nature of the claim is what here engages our attention. Dr. Smith's impulse arises not out of faith, but out of despair. He cannot fight the battle of the book on the old lines. He must yield the husk that he may save the kernel. Possibly, if the country around be yielded to the ravages of the enemy, they may spare the citadel; or mayhap the citadel may be defended if the surrounding country be given up; or perhaps, even, it may be removed to shadow-land, where earthly darts cannot reach it. We cannot hold the Bible in the face of modern assault. Let us hold to a shadowy Bible within the Bible, which is removed beyond the reach of scientific tests, and in which we may, therefore, manage to believe *malgré* science—if we any longer wish to believe in it.

5. The radical inconsistency of the conclusions and methods of the prevalent school of Old Testament criticism with any adequate doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible, is renewedly illustrated by Dr. Smith's discussions. We are glad to recognize the obvious fact that Dr. Smith does not stand on the same level with Kuenen § in a matter of this sort. He may triumphantly vindicate his evangelical spirit as opposed to Kuenen's thoroughgoing naturalism. But the evil of which we now speak does not belong to the circum-

* *Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 151.

† P. 344.

‡ P. 114.

§ P. 306.

stantials, but is rooted in the very essence of the general critical attitude common to the critics of the left and those of the right; and it goes wherever it goes. The very existence of these papers proves its existence. For what are they but an assault on the truthfulness of Scripture in the only spheres in which the truthfulness of Scripture can be subjected to scientific tests? It is proved anew by the method of the assault. Take such a passage, for example, as that of the original paper on *Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration*,* in which Dr. Smith himself attempts to show that, in the method of composition which he assumes for the Old Testament books, there is no place for the action of such an inspiring influence as would secure infallibility of statement. He has not stopped to consider whether this thrust will not pierce deeper than he intended, and as seriously wound his own theory of inspiration as that of the Church. This it certainly will do. There is as much, and as little, place in this complicated process for the action of an inspiring activity which would secure infallibility of doctrinal and ethical, as there is for one that would secure infallibility in historical and philosophical statements. But this is not now the question. It is at least made evident that the new critical theories are consciously inconsistent with the old doctrine of inspiration; and, indeed, it is clear that one or the other must go to the wall.

Dr. Smith thinks he knows which it will be. But we have heard the accents of this assured conviction before. Our Old Testament critics have not yet completed their work of destructive reconstruction with the thoroughness with which that of the Tübingen school had been completed for the New Testament twenty years ago, when "a famous critic" announced that the rise of the old Catholic Church could be described "as clearly and distinctly as the growth of a plant." "He who did not believe in the picture as Baur had painted it," no less a critic than Adolf Harnack complains, "was almost sure to be written down as an 'apologist,' a man who attempted to hinder the progress of science." These hard words then broke no bones; possibly their repetition will break no bones now. Neither did they destroy the historical accuracy and trustworthiness of the New Testament, nor the doctrine of inspiration which presupposes these things; we may be pardoned the hope that their repetition in the sphere of the Old Testament will fail equally to do so now. Destructive criticism is great and vigorous; it is learned and acute; it may possibly have just cause for its open contempt for the learning, the acuteness, the argumentative force and literary ability of the defenders of the trustworthiness of the Bible. But it does not reckon sufficiently

* P. 122.

with one fact. It has the Bible itself against it, and the Bible is always with us. When this criticism has been forgotten, the Bible will still be read by men, and will still convey to men its own views of the course of the history by which the true religion has been given by God to man. The critics can never supersede the conception of the history of Israel and of Israel's religion which the Books of Chronicles, say, hold and teach, with a new conception of their own, until they can secure that their writings shall be read by a broader public and with a deeper reverence than the Chronicler's. We are not prophets (except in the sense of the modern critical school, of persons who make more or less shrewd forecasts of the future), and perhaps ought not to affirm that that time will never come. It certainly has not come yet.

PRINCETON.

BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD.

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