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Does the Bible Claim Infallible Authority for All Its Parts?

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"There was no reason, in fact, for prolonging the conference. 'As Luther was of an intractable and imperious disposition,' says even his great apologist Seckendorf, 'he did not cease from calling upon the Swiss to submit simply to his opinion.'"²⁾ Macfinnon urtheilt über Luthers Handlungsweise so: "Although Luther had stoutly denied the right of the Romanists to make of transubstantiation an article of faith, he insisted on their [the Reformed] accepting his own view of the real presence, which was little less irrational, as an essential of the Gospel." W. Köhler verfährt durchaus sachgemäß, nur daß er S. 105 schreibt: „Die nun folgende wichtige Antwort Luthers hat bei Osiander und Anonymus gemeinsam die Versteifung auf die Einsetzungsworte.“ Wir danken Gott, daß Luther sich auf den Text versteift hatte! „Meine allerliebsten Herren, die weil der Text meines Herrn Jesu Christi also steht: Hoc est corpus meum (Matth. 26, 26), so kan ich warlich nitt füruber.“ T. h. Engelder.

(Fortsetzung folgt.)

Does the Bible Claim Infallible Authority for All Its Parts?

It is most heartening to the Bible Christian to see what flimsy arguments modern theology employs to justify its rejection of the Bible as the supreme authority. A paragraph in C. H. Dodd's book *The Authority of the Bible*, p. 15, may serve as an example. This spokesman of modern theology has well served the cause of the Bible by penning these words:—

"The Bible itself does not make any claim to infallible

2) Diese Worte finden sich allerdings in Seckendorf; nur sind es Worte des Jesuiten Maimbourg, dessen Schrift Seckendorf widerlegt. Seine eigenen Worte sind: „Endlich kann Luthern eine unbeugsame und gebieterische Gesinnungskart nicht ohne Verleumdung vorgeworfen werden, wenn man nicht beweist, daß er nicht um des Gewissens und der Wahrheit, sondern um seiner Meinung und seines Ansehens willen einen so großen Vorteil, als man von der Vereinigung hoffte, ausgeschlagen habe.“ (Lutheraner 3, 138.) Dieselbe Verurteilung auf Seckendorf findet sich in Hagenbach I, 319. Hat Christoffel von D'Aubigné abgeschrieben, ohne nachzuprüfen? Und hat D'Aubigné von jemand anders abgeschrieben oder in Seckendorf allzu oberflächlich gelesen? Es geschähe auf diesem Gebiet sonderbare Dinge. Der Methodist Raß, mit dem Walther es hier zu tun hatte, hat nun auch D'Aubigné oberflächlich gelesen. "Luther: All the other Fathers are on our side. Oecolampadius: Name these doctors. Luther: We will not name them to you." Daraus macht nun Raß dieß, daß Luther keinen Kirchenvater hat nennen können. (Lutheraner 3, 138.) D'Aubigné nennt als seinen Gewährsmann Scultetus. Nach W. Köhler (S. 34) hat Luther einen Kirchenvater genannt. Nach dem Gespräch wurde dem Landgrafen eine ganze Liste zugestellt. Allerdings wollte Luther nicht viel Zeit auf die Kirchenväter verwenden. Darüber später mehr.

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authority for all its parts. (Note 1: The most downright claims to infallibility are made by the apocalyptists, as, for example, in the New Testament *Revelation* [see 22, 6. 16. 18. 19], a book which some of the wisest thinkers of the early Church wished to exclude from the canon and which, as a whole, is subchristian in tone and outlook. The oft-quoted passage 2 Tim. 3, 16 is probably to be rendered: 'Every inspired Scripture is also profitable'; . . . but whether this or the Authorized Version's rendering is taken, the passage leaves open the question whether inspired Scripture is infallible. That it is profitable, no one would deny. The other passage commonly quoted in this connection, 2 Pet. 1, 21, does seem to deny the human element in prophecy and so perhaps by implication claims infallibility for it, though not necessarily for the entire canon. Neither passage claims the rank of inspired Scripture for the writing in which it occurs or defines the works to which it attributes inspiration.) On the contrary, some of its greatest writers contemplate the possibility that they may be mistaken or even confess that in some points they have been mistaken. Isaiah corrected his first sweeping predictions of complete disaster in favor of a faithful 'remnant.' (Note 2: Is. 6, 11 [about 740 B. C.], 30, 19; 31, 4—9 [about 702 B. C.].) Jeremiah found his expectations in several points falsified and at one time wondered if he had really been deceived. (Note 3: Jer. 20, 7. He had apparently predicted that the Scythian raid of about 626 B. C. would bring disaster upon Judah [4], and 'it is certain that Jeremiah was left in the end with a considerable margin of unfulfilled predictions on his hands.' [J. Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion*, p. 45.] He also seems to have changed his mind about Josiah's reformation between 11, 1—8 and [the later] 8, 7. 8.) Ezekiel withdrew his forecast of the fall of Tyre. (Note 4: Ezek. 26—28 [586 B. C.], 29, 18 [568 B. C.].) Paul sometimes claims to speak the word of the Lord, but at other times 'gives his opinion' quite tentatively. (Note 5: 1 Cor. 7, 8. 10. 12. 25.) . . ."

The argument consists of twelve statements, each one of them a mere assertion, the two leading assertions being buttressed by a series of other mere assertions. The argument carries weight only with such as are unacquainted with the Bible or are determined to attach weight to such a line of argument.

Statement No. 1: "The Bible itself does not make any claim to infallible authority for all its parts." The point at issue is not what our attitude must be over against this claim, but whether the Bible makes such a claim. It does so in the passages discussed in

Note 1. But these are by no means the only passages. John 10, 35 should also have been noticed: "The Scripture cannot be broken." There can be no more downright claim to infallibility than this declaration of Jesus Himself concerning the Bible. The Bereans based their faith on the teachings of the Bible, Acts 17, 11, and are commended for that by the inspired writer. St. Paul, too, appealed to the Bible as the infallible authority: "according to the Scriptures," 1 Cor. 15, 3, 4. And Satan himself dropped the case when confronted by the unanswerable argument: "It is written," Matt. 4, 4, 7, 10. Nor can this claim to infallible authority be restricted to the Old Testament. The principle laid down by Jesus "The Scripture cannot be broken" applies to the New Testament also. The New Testament is "Scripture," the authoritative Word of God, as well as the Book of Psalms, from which Jesus was quoting. The words of the apostles are placed on a level with the words of the prophets, 1 Pet. 1, 10—12. "The words of the holy prophets" and "the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior," are of equally binding force, 2 Pet. 3, 2. Jesus demands that the principle "The Scripture cannot be broken" be applied to His own words, John 8, 31, and to the words of the apostles. "I have given them Thy Word," John 17, 14. St. Paul presents his writings to us as the words of Jesus, 2 Cor. 13, 3, and claims most downrightly infallible authority for what he spoke and wrote. "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord," 1 Cor. 14, 37. He insists in the most forcible manner on their instant, unqualified acceptance, Gal. 1, 8. But we are wasting time. Professor Dodd readily admits that what must be granted to the prophets must be granted to Paul: "In Paul and the unknown author of the fourth gospel we recognize types of religious genius of the same high order as the prophets themselves" (p. 27). Not to waste any more time, we shall simply refer again to the passages quoted from Peter and to John 17, 14, we shall insist that Scripture does not countenance the distinction made between "Paul and the unknown author of the fourth gospel" and the other sacred writers, and declare that the word spoken by Christ and His apostles shall judge him in the Last Day that receiveth not these words, John 12, 48.

Does the Bible claim infallible authority? Well, does the Bible claim to be the Word of God? If it claims to be the very Word of God, it claims infallible authority. We are agreed on that. Professor Dodd will make no objection to the statement: "God certainly is the Author of truth; if He has spoken, His

Word must possess absolute authority." But the sacred writers present their writings to us as the very Word of God. The prophets declare: "Thus saith the Lord." Therefore the apostle designates their books as "the oracles of God," Rom. 3, 2; and concerning his own words he declares: "When ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God," 1 Thess. 2, 13. Is the Word of God absolutely authoritative? "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord," Jer. 22, 29, 30.

And the Bible claims infallible authority *for all its parts*. In none of the passages just quoted is there a hint that certain exceptions must be noted. Take John 10, 35: "The Scripture cannot be broken." That is a universal statement. The argument there hinges on a single word, "gods." And by applying the principle of the infallible authority of Scripture in this connection, Jesus ascribes infallibility to every single word of the Bible. On the supposition that certain portions of the Bible are unreliable, Jesus would have had to qualify His statement very materially. He could have claimed at the most that a great part of Scripture cannot be broken. Besides, Scripture would be authoritative in none of its parts unless every single statement of the Bible were authoritatively marked as either authoritative or non-authoritative. Otherwise every statement would come under suspicion.

Statement No. 2: "*Revelation* as a whole is subchristian in tone and outlook." This statement is meant to substantiate the leading assertion, No. 1, by refuting our argument that Rev. 22, 18, 19 claims infallibility and authority for itself and for the entire Bible. It does make that claim in no uncertain terms. Professor Dodd does not care to deny that in any way. He asks, however, that this testimony be thrown out of court. For he makes the assertion that *Revelation* as a whole is subchristian in tone and outlook. But that is a mere assertion. We shall content ourselves here with opposing to it the counter-assertion that *Revelation* is most Christian in tone and outlook. For we think that all will subscribe to the principle that the bare assertion of the most obscure writer carries fully as much weight as the bare assertion of the most renowned writer. That is really all the attention assertion No. 2 deserves at this stage.—Attention should also be called to the fact that others besides the "apocalyptists" make the same "most downright claims of infallibility." There is Deut. 4, 2:

"Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it." And Deut. 12, 32. And Prov. 30, 6. And Jesus, Matt. 5, 18, 19. That disposes of whatever force the slur "apocalyptists" is supposed to carry. — We have no fault to find with the further statement "that some of the wisest thinkers of the early Church wished to exclude *Revelation* from the canon." But the implication this statement is meant to convey is intolerably faulty. For *Revelation* was classified an *antilegomenon*, not because of its contents, but solely and simply because it *was* an antilegomenon.

Statement No. 3: "The oft-quoted passage 2 Tim. 3, 16 leaves open the question whether inspired Scripture is infallible." The question is not whether Scripture is inspired of God. That is admitted. Or does Professor Dodd really mean to delete "of God"? He says that the passage is probably to be rendered: "Every inspired Scripture is also profitable. . . ." We can hardly believe that he is accusing the Authorized Version and the Revised Version and James Moffatt's version ("All Scripture is inspired *by God* and profitable for teaching," etc.) of a mistranslation by retaining "God" in rendering *θεόπνευστος*. We shall assume that he inadvertently omitted "God" and meant to say: "Every God-inspired Scripture is also profitable." And we shall, of course, insist on the exact translation. It being, then, admitted that the passage declares that Scripture is inspired of God, the question is whether inspired, God-inspired, Scripture is infallible. And the declaration of the text does not leave that question open. Retaining the unmistakable, native meaning of the word, we have here the statement that the words of Scripture were breathed by God into the minds and mouths of the holy writers, that they received the words which go to make up Scripture from God, that Scripture is of a directly divine origin, that God spoke these words. This God-inspired word *θεόπνευστος* is a fine summary of the numerous passages which declare that the Lord spoke by the prophets, Matt. 1, 22, that "the Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His Word was in my tongue," 2 Sam. 23, 2, and "I have put My words in thy mouth," Is. 51, 16. Since, then, Scripture is, through inspiration, the very Word of God, the matter is settled — it is infallible. The context also demands it. We could not be made wise unto salvation, Scripture would not be profitable for the saving doctrine, unless it were infallible. St. Paul is not minded to stake the salvation of Timothy on "the best religious thought of the age," which may or may not express the divine truth. In

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 the matter of salvation we need an infallible guide. Such a guide is Scripture, which is given by inspiration of God.

The only way to escape the plain meaning of our text is to give the word *θεόπνευστος* a different meaning. Professor Dodd proceeds to do that, as others have done before him. He stands for a species of the *intuition* theory of inspiration. He says on page 36 that there is no sense for us in speaking of these writings, because they are inspired, as "the Word of God." "It is not their *words* that are inspired, it is the *men* who are inspired (p. 30). "He was persuaded of the truth intuitively" (p. 81). Inspiration is the attribute of religious genius (p. 30); "it is the capacity to explore independently the regions of the spirit and to convince others of the reality of that which one has discovered" (p. 129). Most assuredly, if St. Paul had had such a thing in mind, the question whether inspired (better omit "of God") Scripture is infallible would be left wide open. But we refuse to accept such a definition of inspiration. The text itself is too stubborn to submit to such twisting. For one thing, it speaks not of *men*, but of *words*, of Scripture, which consists of words, as being given by inspiration of God. Who ever heard of men being given by inspiration, being God-breathed? If Scriptures may legitimately be subjected to such treatment, it is certainly not infallible, not even profitable. Who gave Professor Dodd the right to interpret Jer. 1, 8. 9: "Then the Lord touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth," in this way: "We may readily suppose that the words and the touch on the lips were actual hallucinations" (p. 79)? He may not suppose that. If he may and if he will, he is no longer letting the Bible speak for itself. But he had promised to do that: "The Bible itself does not make any claim," etc.

No. 4: "2 Pet. 1, 21 does seem to deny the human element in prophecy and so perhaps by implication claims infallibility for it." "Seem" and "perhaps" must be stricken out. The statement of St. Peter is too positive. There is no hint of a "perhaps" in it. The prophets spoke not their own, but God's words, and their writings *are* therefore infallible. Besides, should not the fact that the Bible compels these men to admit that it seems to present the prophecy as the direct Word of God silence the enemies? "I am bound, I cannot escape it. The text stands there too mightily and will not let itself be wrested from the plain sense by argument." (Luther, 15, 2050.)

No. 5. 2 Pet. 1, 21 perhaps claims infallibility for prophecy,

Engelder: Does the Bible Claim Infallible Authority for All Its Parts? "though not necessarily for the entire canon. Neither passage defines the works to which it attributes inspiration." Both passages exactly define and specify what writings are referred to. When St. Peter mentioned "the prophecy," his readers knew that he referred to a certain book, knew as well as the hearers of Stephen what "the Book of the Prophets" (Acts 7, 42) was. They also knew that the term covered the entire Old Testament canon. (See, for instance, Matt. 27, 35.) In fact, St. Peter uses the determinant "prophecy of the Scripture," v. 20. And "Scripture," as used here and 2 Tim. 3, 16, designates not any kind of writing, but that Sacred Volume which in 2 Tim. 3, 15 is specified as "the Holy Scriptures." Timothy knew that this proper noun "Scripture" designated the volume made up of the writings of Moses, of the prophets, and of the psalms, Luke 24, 44. But what of the "entire canon," including the books of the New Testament? That is disposed of. On the strength of Bible statements we put the New Testament on an equal plan with the Old Testament, and Professor Dodd agreed at least in part. In view of this the question is of minor importance whether 2 Tim. 3, 16 does not refer also to New Testament writings. James Orr so holds (*Revelation and Inspiration*, p. 161. See 1 Tim. 5, 18). Also Wohlenberg, also Chemnitz, (see Kretzmann, *Pastoral Letters*), also Fausset, and others. But certainly in 2 Pet. 3, 16 Paul's epistles are brought under the category of "Scripture." (Stoeckhardt, *Lehre und Wehre*, 32, 254. Orr, *Revelation and Inspiration*, 194. Fausset, *Expositor's Greek New Testament*.) And thus γραφή, γραφαί, denotes the writings of the prophets and apostles, and we shall apply to the entire canon the πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος.

No. 6: "Neither passage claims the rank of inspired Scripture for the writing in which it occurs." Right for once, literalistically. The statement is indeed affixed to none of these passages: "This epistle is inspired." But the writings in which these passages occur do claim the rank of inspired Scripture. 2 Pet. 1, 1: "Simon Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ." And compare 1 Pet. 3, 2; then 2 Tim. 1, 1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ." And compare John 17, 14; 1 Thess. 2, 13, etc.

No. 7 is the second leading statement: "On the contrary, some of its greatest writers contemplate the possibility that they may be mistaken or even confess that in some points they have been mistaken." If this assertion can be substantiated, the statement of Jesus in John 10, 35 was much too sweeping, Ps. 119, 160: "Thy

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 Word is true from the beginning" is dealing in hyperbole, Is. 34, 16: "No one of these shall fail" is an inexcusable exaggeration, and Heb. 1, 1: God at sundry times spoke by the prophets," would mean that at sundry times God did not speak by the prophets. Again, what in that case would be the status of Isaiah and Jeremiah in the light of Deut. 18, 22? No, every prediction of a prophet of the Lord must be fulfilled. It is impossible that God would depart from, or permit events to run counter to, the program He has fixed and revealed. "How, then, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" Matt. 26, 54 and related passages. So we know from the start that another statement has been made that cannot be substantiated. But let us hear the supporting assertions.

No. 8: "Isaiah corrected his first sweeping predictions of complete disaster in favor of a faithful 'remnant.'" The passages quoted, Is. 6, 11; 30, 19; 31, 4—9, do not present the slightest difficulty to one who can and will distinguish between Israel as a nation and the spiritual Israel. And the "remnant" is distinctly mentioned and fully described already in connection with the first passage, in the next verse but one, 6, 13. No, Isaiah had no need of writing a book of *Retractationes*.

No. 9. "Jeremiah found his expectations in several points falsified and at one time wondered if he had really been deceived." Jer. 20, 7 is adduced as proof of it. We do not know what to make of this. We are loath to believe that a professor of New Testament Greek and exegesis at Oxford, a lecturer on the Septuagint, "one of the leading New Testament scholars in the English-speaking world" (publishers' note), would offer Jer. 20, 7 as proof that Jeremiah felt that he might have uttered unfulfilled predictions. He knows that, though the Authorized Version reads: "O Lord, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived," the verb הִפְתִּי does not mean deceive, but persuade, entice, and that the Revised Version therefore translates: "Thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded," and Luther and James Moffatt: "Thou didst persuade me, and I let myself be persuaded." Jeremiah is not speaking of unfulfilled predictions, but of the result, to him, of his faithful preaching, the mockery and persecution he is encountering. He had been expecting this when he was called, had hesitated, but the Lord prevailed and persuaded him. So this passage really proves that his expectations were not falsified, but verified. In what way, further, was Jeremiah, according to Professor Dodd, deceived by the Lord? "He had apparently predicted that the Scythian raid of about 626 B. C. would bring disaster upon Judah (IV)." But

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no attempt is made to establish a connection between Jer. 20, 7 and chap. 4. Furthermore, it cannot be established that chap. 4 refers to the Scythians. The "chariots" of v. 13 stand in the way. Most interpreters find the Chaldean terror described. Finally the prediction of chap. 4 has been literally fulfilled: "The whole land is spoiled. The whole land shall be desolate." — The second count: "He also seems to have changed his mind about Josiah's reformation between 11, 1—8 and (the later) 8, 7. 8." Even if Jeremiah had had Josiah's reformation in mind, even if the passages were transposed as demanded, no change of mind is in any way indicated. Please read the passages! The statements of Professor Dodd can impress only those who do not read the Bible or those who want to be deceived. — "It is certain that Jeremiah was left in the end with a considerable margin of unfulfilled prediction on his hands." We presume that the two instances adduced make up the best he has to offer.

No. 10. "Ezekiel withdrew his forecast of the fall of Tyre, Ezek. 26—28 (586 B. C.), 29, 18 (568 B. C.)." The alleged retraction reads: "Nebuchadrezzar caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled; yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it." There is not a hint here that the prophet was mistaken in predicting in chaps. 26—28 the complete downfall of Tyre. In the first place, the prophecy has been fulfilled to the very letter. Tyre did become a place to spread nets upon, etc., 26, 14. The judgment denounced against Tyre was executed by Nebuchadrezzar, Alexander, and later conquerors. The prophecy does not present Nebuchadrezzar as the sole executor, but as inaugurating the execution of the judgment. The fall of Tyre is reviewed, agreeably to the prophetic perspective, as one event, beginning with the conquest by Nebuchadrezzar and ending with its complete ruin, exactly as Jesus views the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world as the execution of one judgment, the destruction of Jerusalem being the beginning of the final Judgment, Matt. 24. In the second place, as to the implication of No. 10 that Nebuchadrezzar's campaign against Tyre was unsuccessful, secular history relates that after his arduous campaign and siege of thirteen years Tyre finally capitulated and acknowledged his suzerainty, even if he did not take New Tyre. And in the sight of God, Nebuchadrezzar was successful. God gave him Egypt as his reward for having accomplished what he was to accomplish against Tyre, 29, 18—20. "He had no wages for

Tyrus" — that certainly does not mean that Tyre withstood him. It simply means that the spoils of Tyre were not commensurate with the labors expended. Perhaps the thirteen years' war had consumed its wealth. That is an every-day occurrence. Perhaps it was granted favorable terms. We do not know. But we do know that Nebuchadrezzar was given Egypt for his labor and that he conquered Tyre.

No. 11. "Paul sometimes claims to speak the Word of the Lord, but at other times 'gives his opinion' quite tentatively, 1 Cor. 7, 8. 10. 12. 25." This statement, offered as proof for statement No. 7, asserts that Paul contemplated the possibility that he might be mistaken. Why? "Because he 'gives his opinion' quite tentatively." "Tentatively" is ambiguous. It may mean that Paul leaves it to the virgin in v. 25 whether she will follow his advice or not. It does mean this. vv. 28. 38. Not a hint here that his advice may not be a good one. On the contrary, "I think also that I have the Spirit of God," v. 40. Or "tentatively" may be used by Professor Dodd in the sense that St. Paul was not sure of his ground, that he did not know whether his advice was good. But see above. (The apostle is simply distinguishing between commands of God, which are binding upon the conscience, and his apostolic opinion, advice, which need not absolutely be accepted. By the way, he is not distinguishing between inspired and non-inspired words. His advice was also inspired of God, but as an advice, not as a command.)

Does the Bible claim infallible authority for itself? In affirmation of this we have repeatedly pointed out that the Bible claims to be the Word of God. See, for instance, 1 Thess. 2, 13; Rom. 3, 2; 1 Pet. 1, 25. How will Professor Dodd meet this argument? He takes cognizance of it in the next paragraph. "It is often claimed that the Bible must be an infallible external authority because it is 'the Word of God.'" Pretty fairly stated. "God certainly is the Author of truth; if He has spoken, His Word must possess absolute authority. Let us hold to that maxim: Authority belongs to God, and what He says, and that alone, infallibly compels assent." That is exactly our argument, finely stated. And how does the Modernist refute it? Assertion No. 12: "But in the expression 'the Word of God' lurks an equivocation. . . . The Eternal has neither breath nor vocal cords; how should He speak words? Clearly enough the term 'Word of God' is a metaphorical expression. . . . Not God, but Paul, is the author of the Epistle to the Romans. . . . God is the Author, not of the Bible, but of the life

of which the authors of the Bible partake and of which they tell us in such imperfect human words as they could command." We have two remarks to offer on this. First: According to this interpretation the sentence above: "Paul sometimes claims to speak the Word of the Lord, but at other times 'gives his opinion' quite tentatively really means: Paul sometimes claims to speak imperfect human words, but at other times speaks imperfect human words. Secondly: Professor Dodd's twelfth assertion absolutely ends the argument. He promised at the outset to let the Bible speak for itself, but now refuses to accept the plain statements of the Bible. He should have declared at the outset that, when the Bible claims infallible authority, it sets up a postepitaphous claim.

TH. ENGELDER.

The Contacts of the Book of Acts with Roman Political Institutions.

When the Christian Church began to spread, its field of expansion was practically prepared in the territorial extent of the Roman Empire. Beginning at Jerusalem, the Church rapidly extended its borders beyond this city; it embraced all Palestine and the neighboring lands of Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt and soon had crossed into Macedonia and Achaia. Jerusalem did not remain the geographical center of the Christian Church very long; this city very soon found itself on the eastern extremity of church territory, just as it was situated near the eastern extremity of the Roman Empire. A map of church territory of the second century A. D. superimposed on a map of the Roman Empire would show that these two were rapidly becoming coextensive.

The Acts of the Apostles is a book of early Christian church history. It shows the Church in its beginnings at Jerusalem, traces its westward march into the central portion of the Roman Empire, and closes with the account of the Apostle Paul's going north on the Via Appia into the great city which ruled the world. The Church had started in a clannish provincial city and was now being planted in the center of world activity.

In this progress through a large part of the empire the missionaries of the Church would be expected to come into contact with various manifestations and institutions of this world-power. We would expect a great traveler like Paul to meet imperial officials, appear before Roman courts, and to use the rights of his Roman citizenship when the need arose. This is precisely what the Book