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## Verbal Inspiration- a Stumbling-Block to the Jews and Foolishness to the Greeks

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## **Verbal Inspiration — a Stumbling-Block to the Jews and Foolishness to the Greeks**

*(Continued)*

"The objections to the verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture do not manifest great ingenuity or mental acumen, but the very opposite: they serve as a shining example of how God inflicts His just punishment upon all critics of His Word — they lose their common sense and become utterly unreasonable and illogical." (F. Pieper, *What Is Christianity?* p. 243.) Will any one, after studying the preceding article, still think that Dr. Pieper's judgment is too harsh? If so, here is further material. The black-list enumerating the fatuities and puerilities, sophistries and logical absurdities, evasions and misstatements, with which the critics operate is a long one. We shall have to restrict ourselves to reviewing twenty-three additional ones, more than enough to make you subscribe to Pieper's statement "None of us, even though he were a doctor in all four faculties, can deny the inspiration of Holy Scripture without suffering an impairment of his natural mental powers. . . . All opposition to the divine truth, and that includes the opposition to the *satisfactio vicaria* and to the inspiration of Scripture (verbal inspiration), is, as can be clearly shown, irrational." (*Chr. Dogmatik*, I, pp. 280, 614.)

Assertion No. 1: Holy Scripture was written by divine inspiration; yet this same Holy Scripture contains many errors. The conservatives among the moderns make this assertion. The liberals refuse to utter such nonsense. The liberals assert: The Scriptures are purely human writings and contain many errors. That is a logical assertion; the second statement does not contradict the first one. But the conservative critics are not employing their reason when they declare that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and still find room in the inspired writings for a host of errors. "The



many explicit passages teach, if language can teach anything, that the Bible, 'all Scripture,' is the Word of God, true, trustworthy, and of divine authority. . . . Nor has the most perverse ingenuity been able to show anything else, far less to favor, or leave room for, the direct opposite. I say the *direct* opposite — the logical contradictory. For when the propositions are 'All Scripture is true and trustworthy' and 'Scripture is untrue and untrustworthy in an indefinite number of things,' then the opposition is direct, the propositions are contradictory; and therefore, according to the inexorable logic of the square of opposition, if the one is true, the other must be false." (H. McIntosh, *Is Christ Infallible and the Bible True?* p. 596 f.) If the conservatives want to be recognized as logical thinkers, they must openly declare, with the liberals, that 2 Tim. 3:16 is not true and that Christ made a mistake when He asserted that "the Scripture cannot be broken," John 10:35. As long as they remain in the half-way station, they involve themselves in hopeless self-contradictions.

The *Baltimore Declaration* of the U. L. C. A. asserts: "We believe that the whole body of the Scriptures is inspired by God. . . . We accept the inspiration of the Scriptures as a fact of which our faith in God, through Christ, assures us, and this assurance is supported by words of Scripture in which the fact of inspiration is asserted or implied, 1 Cor. 2:12; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21." (*Minutes of the 1938 Convention*, p. 474.) But that does not mean, says the interpreter, Dr. A. J. Traver, that the Bible does not contain errors. He asks: "Does not modern science contradict the Scriptures?" He answers: Yes, indeed; but remember: "God did not inspire the writers of Scripture to know all truth. . . . Bible writers wrote with the background of their age and its scientific beliefs. . . . The Bible is not a text for biology or for chemistry." (*The Lutheran*, Feb. 22 and May 10, 1939.) Dr. Traver interpreted the *Baltimore Declaration* correctly, for the commission responsible for the *Declaration* "was unable to accept the statement of the Missouri Synod that the Scriptures are the infallible truth 'also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters'" (*Minutes, etc.*, p. 468). A man does not have to take a course in logic to see that if one asserts that all Scripture is inspired, he cannot make the second assertion that Scripture is not reliable in all of its statements. A layman wrote a letter to *The Lutheran* of January 18, 1939, and declared: "It would appear to this writer that this position" (the Scriptures contain some erroneous statements) "is contradicted in Section 6, where it is asserted: 'Therefore we believe that the whole body of Scripture in all its parts is the Word of God.'" This layman is faulting his theological leaders for using inexact



language, for committing a logical absurdity. He knows that a false statement cannot be called a word of God.<sup>75)</sup>

If the statement "We believe that the whole body of the Scriptures in all its parts is the Word of God" means what the words imply, we have the self-contradiction just discussed. If it refers to the *Schriftganze*, the "whole of Scripture" (which we are loathe to believe), it would be dealing with the monstrous conception — a conception which no logical mind can grasp — that the whole differs from its parts, that many of the parts are objectionable, but the "whole" is fine.

Furthermore, those who make assertion No. 1 are not only contradicting themselves, but they are virtually making Scripture contradict itself. Rather, they are putting a lie into the mouth of Scripture. It comes to this: "Since the writers so repeatedly claimed inspiration, it is evident that they were either inspired or that they acted with fanatical presumption. We are shut up to the conclusion that the Bible is the Word of God or that it is a lie." (L. Boettner, *The Inspiration of the Scriptures*, p. 22.)

Assertion No. 2: "There is no assertion in Scripture that its writers were kept from error." Thus the notorious *Auburn Affirmation*. See page 263 f. above, where a number of similar assertions are listed. They are filling the world with the cry: "The Bible itself makes no claim to be infallible, save in one passage, whose meaning is open to dispute." (G. A. Buttrick, president of the Federal Council for 1940. See *CONC. THEOL. MTHLY.*, current volume, p. 222 f.) They do not like the dilemma: The Bible is either inspired and infallible, or, setting up this claim, it is a lying book. They seek to evade it by asserting that the Bible makes no such claim. We cannot conceive how the Auburn affirmationists and their friends in other circles can make this assertion in the face of 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21; John 10:35, and the great number of parallel passages. *Hier steht einem der Verstand still*. If these men said that the statements "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" and "The Scripture cannot be broken" are not true, since in fact Scripture in many places must be broken and stamped as false, our mind could follow their line of

75) Further details are given in *CONC. THEOL. MTHLY.*, X, pp. 386, 581. — Did the Omaha convention of the U. L. C. (1940) revise the illogical, self-contradictory *Baltimore Declaration* by accepting the *Pittsburgh Agreement*? Dr. H. C. Alleman fought the *Pittsburgh Agreement* because one of its authors stated that "this explanation concerning the Scripture goes beyond the *Baltimore Declaration*"; he denounced "the doctrine of verbal inspiration as a carry-over from the old heathen conception of inspiration." (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1940, pp. 348, 352.) What happened at Omaha? A correspondent of *The Lutheran*, March 5, 1941, asserts: "There was one thing on which both the majority and the minority agreed: they both were certain that they were not voting for any changes in the positions or practices of the U. L. C. A."



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argument. But our logical mind refuses to function when they tell us that these passages are true, but do not claim divine inspiration and infallibility for all Scripture statements. "The Bible itself makes no claim to be infallible, save in one passage, whose meaning is open to dispute"? Is Dr. Buttrick referring to John 10:35? If Jesus wanted to claim infallibility for Scripture, could He have used more simple and direct language than by saying that not a single passage of Scripture is subject to correction? The *Lutheran World* called it "an amazing statement that the Scriptures themselves teach that 'every word' contained in them is inspired by the Holy Ghost. We submit that an assertion so sweeping should have been backed by definite and unambiguous quotations." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1904, p. 39.) If any man says that the statement "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" is an indefinite and ambiguous statement, our mind cannot follow the workings of his mind, and there is no use of further arguing the matter. There would be sense in arguing the matter with the extreme liberal who denies the truth of 2 Tim. 3:16; John 10:35; etc. We are ready to argue with Richard Rothe, who admits that the apostles certainly taught Verbal Inspiration but declares that "his exegetical conscience forbids him to be bound by the teaching of the apostles on this point." (See Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 320. Meusel, *Handlexikon*, III, p. 459.) We might not convince him that it is wicked to refuse to be bound by the teaching of the apostles, but we could at least conduct an intelligent conversation. But if men say that the words "All Scripture is given by inspiration" are ambiguous, we cannot any longer argue with them.

But we can do this much: we can let them present their reasons for finding in 2 Tim. 3:16 and the related passages a sense different from what the words express. These reasons prove that their thesis — Scripture does not claim inspiration and infallibility for all its parts — is untenable. They are reasons inspired and dictated by despair. They say: (a) "2 Tim. 3:16 leaves open the question whether inspired Scripture is infallible. That it is profitable no one would deny." (C. H. Dodd, *The Authority of the Bible*, p. 15.) The argument seems to be: A Scripture can be inspired and still be either true or false; and since Paul does not qualify "inspired" by "true," the question is undecided. That means that when God speaks through a prophet and does not expressly say that He is speaking the truth, we may take it or leave it. (The point that a false statement may be profitable, will be discussed later, as Assertion No. 7.)<sup>76)</sup>

76) N. R. Best puts the argument thus: "Paul dallied with no such negative and speculative claims as 'The Scriptures contain no mistakes.' He struck for something far more positive and far more vital: 'Every



They say: (b) that "a moment's study of the text (2 Tim. 3:16) shows that the writer could have had in mind at best only the Old Testament." (H. L. Willett, *The Bible through the Centuries*, p. 282.) The argument is: The verbalists cannot prove with 2 Tim. 3:16 that "the Bible claims its own inspiration" (p. 280); all that they could prove from this text would be that the Bible claims the inspiration of the Old Testament. — We are perfectly satisfied with this concession. Just familiarize yourself with the idea that St. Paul insisted on the inspiration and absolute inerrancy of the Old Testament. If a man once accepts that, we'll have no trouble with him as to the New Testament. We have never yet met a critic who attached greater importance to the Old Testament than to the New. So we are going to harp on 2 Tim. 3:16, force him to admit that according to the Bible the Old Testament is inspired, and then he will not balk at conceding the same to the rest of the Bible.<sup>77)</sup>

Let us assume that 2 Tim. 3:16 has no bearing on the books of the New Testament.<sup>78)</sup> We lose nothing thereby. There are many texts which very distinctly assert the inspiration and inerrancy of the books of the New Testament. 1 Cor. 2:13: the words of the apostle are the words of the Holy Ghost. John 8:31 f.: the prin-

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Scripture inspired of God is profitable.' . . . 'No errors'—a man could wrestle with that proposition for a century and not prove it; every logician indeed would warn him beforehand that a universal negative is unprovable. But 'profitable'—that he could prove at every Christian hearthstone, at every Christian altar." (*Inspiration*, p. 80.) Dr. Best is ignorant of the true situation. We do not need to prove, and we do not ask the apostle to prove, that no errors are contained in Holy Scripture. The bare statement of Scripture to that effect is sufficient.

77) Quoting Mark 7:13, where "our Lord calls the Pentateuch 'the Word of God' in so many words," and Matt. 5:18, R. A. Torrey remarks: "Now of course, these two passages refer primarily only to the Pentateuch. But if you can accept the Pentateuch, you will not have much trouble with the rest of the Bible. This is the very part of the Bible where the hottest fight has always been waged between those who believe the Bible to be the inerrant Word of God and those who think that much of it is only fable or 'folk-lore.'" (*Is the Bible the Inerrant Word of God?* P. 16.) Quoting Matt. 1:22; John 10:35; 2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16, and similar passages, James M. Gray remarks: "Let us reflect that the inspiration of the Old Testament being assured as it is, why should similar evidence be required for the New? Whoever is competent to speak as a Bible authority knows that the unity of the Old and New Testaments is the strongest demonstration of their common source. They are seen to be not two books but only two parts of one book." (*The Fundamentals*, III, p. 19.)

78) We need not assume that. "In 2 Tim. 3:16: 'all Scripture' may include a Gospel like Luke's (cf. 1 Tim. 5:18) or even Paul's own epistles (cf. 2 Pet. 3:15)." (James Orr, *Revelation and Inspiration*, p. 161.) "Nothing in the text indicates that Paul restricts the term 'inspired Scripture' to the holy books known to Timothy from his childhood. Rather the contrary." (Wohlenberg, in *Zahn's Commentary*.) Additional references are given in CONC. THEOL. MTHLY., I, p. 113. There the proofs offered by Dodd for his thesis "The Bible itself does not make any claim to infallible authority for all its parts" are examined.



ciple that Scripture cannot be broken applies to the words of Jesus, which are "the truth," and according to John 17:14 and 17 to the words of the apostles. 1 Pet. 1:10-12: the words of the apostles are placed on a level with the words of the prophets. Again, 2 Pet. 3:2: The "words of the holy prophets" and "the commandments of us, the apostles of the Lord," are of equal authority. It follows that, if Paul ascribes inerrancy and absolute authority to the Old Testament, he must assert the same of the New Testament. 2 Cor. 13:3: Paul presents his writings to us as the words of Christ, and, again, 1 Cor. 14:37: "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." Is the New Testament of equal authority, equally inspired and equally inerrant, with the Old Testament? And there is 2 Pet. 3:16! The "epistles" of Paul are put in the class of "the Scriptures." (See G. Stoeckhardt, *Lehre und Wehre*, 1886, p. 254.) "All Scripture is given by inspiration," says Paul, and, says Peter, the epistles of Paul are "Scripture." The critics will have a hard time to show that these passages are ambiguous.<sup>79)</sup>

Some of the critics commit the puerility of saying (c): "The sixty-six books of the Bible certainly do not all claim for themselves to be given by inspiration of God. Very few of them do." (J. M. Gibson, *The Inspiration of Holy Scripture*, p. 24.) — The prophets of the Old Testament spoke and wrote by inspiration of God (Luke 1:70: "as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets"; Acts 3: 18, 21: "by the mouth of all his prophets since the world began"); so also the apostles (Matt. 10:19 f.). But, says Gibson, unless a book written by a prophet or apostle says on its title-page: "Written by inspiration," the writer does not claim inspiration for this book. What about Ezra's writings? "We know him as 'Ezra the scribe.' Yet there is no mention of any commission to take in hand either the recording or the editing. The same applies to Nehemiah." (*Op. cit.*, p. 84.) The same applies to Second Timothy and Second Peter, says Dodd: "Neither passage (2 Tim. 3:16 and 2 Pet. 1:21) claims the rank of inspired Scripture for the writing in which it occurs." (*Op. cit.*, p. 15.) Sure enough; we do not find the statement on the title-page: "This epistle is inspired." But Dodd conveniently overlooks the word "apostle" in 2 Tim. 1:1 and 2 Pet. 1:1 and 2 Pet. 3:2. He also leaves out of consideration John 17:14; 1 Cor. 2:13; 1 Thess.

79) One sample to show how hard they try to divest the passages claiming inerrancy for the Bible, including the New Testament, of their force: "In 2 Pet. 3:16 St. Paul's epistles appear" (?) "to be alluded to as 'Scriptures'; but if we deal candidly with the evidence, it would appear that this one book of the New Testament is not by the writer in whose name it is written." (Charles Gore, *The Doctrine of the Infallible Book*, p. 33.) There must be some force in St. Peter's statement; else Bishop Gore would not resort to the desperate expedient of denying its clarity and appealing to the question of the authenticity of the book.



2:13. No, Ezra did not say: "This book is inspired"; but 2 Tim. 3:16 writes it on the title-page of Ezra's writing, and the passages quoted in the preceding section do the same for all the books of the New Testament. Gibson again: "Luke does not say, These other teachers to whom you have been listening are not infallible, but I am. . . . Is there anything about Luke being specially appointed to give an *ex-cathedra* utterance? Not a word of it. Here are the claims he makes on his own behalf: that he has given much attention to the subject and that he has been careful to be accurate in verifying his facts. . . . He does not say: 'The Spirit moved me to write this to you.' He simply says, 'It seemed good to me also.'" (*Op. cit.*, p. 133 f.) Even Charles Gore uses this argument. "The evangelist St. Luke in his preface appears to make no claim to inspiration but only to accuracy." (*The Doctrine of the Infallible Book*, p. 45.) Here the puerility is buttressed with a fallacy. The fact that St. Luke claimed accuracy has no bearing on the question whether he claimed inspiration. The logicians call this the fallacy of the irrelevant conclusion or the *ignoratio elenchi*. Gibson once more: "The prophets had sometimes special directions to write, as when Jeremiah prepared the roll which Jehoiakim destroyed and again, by divine direction, prepared a second roll; but we have no evidence of any special call or commission to record the prophecies for the sake of the ages to come." (*Op. cit.*, p. 84.) For us the evidence of Rom. 15:4 ("Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning") is conclusive. Furthermore, if prophecies relate future events, — do they not? — what was in the mind of the prophets in writing them down if they did not "record them for the sake of the ages to come"?

S. P. Cadman employs (d) plain sophistry in support of the thesis under discussion. In his *Answers to Everyday Questions* he says on page 253: "Nowhere does the Book itself claim for the entire content of its literature what you assert in its behalf. . . . It is a baseless assumption that every word of Holy Scripture must be regarded as practically infallible." For instance: "Not everything that Genesis, Jonah, and Daniel contain is literally and factually true." (P. 274.) We naturally ask: How can the Bible claim to be God's Word, God's truth, if it actually tells factual untruths? Here is the sophistry: "We have to distinguish between factual truth and moral or religious truth. To say that the Bible is true does not imply that everything it states is fact. It conveys many of its sublimest truths by fiction, poetry, rhapsody, and dream. If you dispute the assertion, read the parables of Jesus, . . . and the Genesis document. . . . Not everything that Genesis, Jonah, and Daniel contain is literally and factually true." It is sophistry to conclude from the fact that Jesus conveyed a spiritual truth by means, for ex-



ample, of the story of the Ten Virgins,—it being immaterial whether these events actually took place,—that the holy writers had the right to tell the story of the Fall or of Jonah's experience as facts, knowing that these things did not occur. You will get the full import of the equivocation if you read the question which Dr. Cadman is answering. "Question: Why do ecclesiastics ask us to accept the Bible as the Word of God and then tell us that the account of creation is not historic or Jonah's experiences a 'fish story'? . . . How can you blame men if they conclude that the Book is full of errors and that consequently its author or authors are fallible?"

The easiest way to evade the force of 2 Tim. 3:16 is (e) to give the term "inspiration" a new meaning. First say with Dodd that "inspired Scripture" is not the same as "infallible Scripture" (see above) and with Gore: "The New Testament certainly does not warrant our identifying inspiration with infallibility on all subjects." (*Op. cit.*, p. 46.) And then, when the simple Christian objects that what is God-breathed, what the holy writers expressed in words which God gave them, cannot be fallible; that, if "the holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21), they could not have spoken error and untruth, tell him that he has the wrong conception of "inspiration," tell him that "the inspiration of the Bible is the total spirit and power it reveals. . . . The proof that the book is inspired is its power to inspire." (H. L. Willett, *op. cit.*, p. 288.) Or: "All Scripture is because of the inspiration of God. That does not mean that everything that was written was inspired. It means that men wrote because they were under the inspiration of some divinely given truth." (E. Lewis, *A Philosophy of the Christian Revelation*, p. 260.) Or: "Inspiration does not carry inerrancy. 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." (C. H. Dodd, *op. cit.*, p. 129.) Or, in the simple language of the vulgar rationalists: Inspiration is "die andaechtige Gemuetsverfassung" (Semler; see Hoenecke, *Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik*, I, p. 352). The trouble with this *quid-pro-quo* operation is that it puts too great a strain upon the credulity of the simple Christian. The words of the apostle cannot bear this alleged meaning. Since "all Scripture" is the subject of which "given by inspiration of God" is predicated, don't begin to talk of a "devout state of mind." Your hearers will not know what to make of the devout state of mind of the Scriptures. And was the apostle really such a bungler that, when he said that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," he actually wanted to say that their teaching was the product of their "capacity to explore independently the regions of the spirit"? — These samples should be sufficient to show that



indeed the critics of God's Word lose their common sense and become utterly unreasonable and illogical. But, say the critics, hear our further proofs for the thesis that Scripture does not claim infallibility for all its parts; these additional proofs are irrefutable. We shall hear them and, to give them the prominence which the critics attach to them, we shall treat them as special Assertions.

Assertion No. 3: Christ Himself corrected the Scriptures. The argument is: If Christ, the great Teacher (and we add: Christ, the Author of Scripture) found it necessary to revise and amend Scripture, to point out the mistakes and false teachings in the Old Testament, you can no longer hold that the Bible claims infallibility for all its parts. Of the various mechanisms employed in the war against Verbal Inspiration some moderns consider this to be the most effective one. They drill their students in its use. A graduate of Union Theological Seminary told his examining board: "The men who wrote our Scriptures were inspired by God, but they mixed some of their own errors in with God's truth. Jesus said: 'It hath been said of old . . . ; but I say unto you.' There were some parts of Scripture which Jesus Himself did not accept as God's truth, at least not the whole truth of God." (*The Presbyterian*, Nov. 26, 1936.) It is drilled into the students at Gettysburg, too. Their professor, Dr. H. C. Alleman, declared in his manifesto against Verbal Inspiration: "If Christ can be quoted as saying in John 10:35 (as the verbal inspirationists hold) that 'Scripture cannot be broken,' and if that means that it is without error or contradiction, how are we to square this statement with those instances, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount, in which He deliberately breaks Scripture? For example, does not Matt. 5:39 abrogate Ex. 21:24, and does not Mark 7:19 repeal Lev. 11?" (See p. 257 above.) His colleague Dr. J. Aberly makes the same assertion. And there are many others.<sup>80</sup>

The assertion that Christ corrected the Scriptures does not reveal great mental acumen. It means (a) that Christ contradicted

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80) Aberly: "In this total view we must have the Spirit of Jesus to differentiate between what is temporary and what is permanent—this attitude will be found to be that of the New Testament writers and even of Jesus Himself towards that unique revelation of God which we have in the Old Testament. . . . This view of the total purport of the Old Testament determined the corrections made of such teachings as were at variance with it. Illustrations of this will be found in the corrections of the law of retaliation, among others in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5:17-48. (*The Luth. Church Quart.*, April, 1935, p. 119.) Others: *The Expositor's Greek Testament* on Matt. 5:21-26: "Christ's position as fulfiller entitled Him to point out defects of the Law itself." Johannes Haemel: "Die Gegenueberstellung des Zitats und der Erwiderng Jesus' laesst nicht im geringsten den Gedanken aufkommen, dass Jesus nur ein Missverstaendnis der Erklaerer beheben will. . . . Gegen die Schriftworte selbst wendet sich Jesus." (*Der Schriftbegriff Jesus'*, p. 180 ff.) Etc.



Himself. At one place He says that "the Scripture cannot be broken," and at another place He is engaged in breaking Scripture, revising, censoring, correcting it. In the Sermon on the Mount He solemnly declares that not "one jot or tittle shall pass from the Law" (Matt. 5:18), and three verses later, from v. 21 on, He strikes out whole sentences, passages, and sections. Drs. Alleman and Haenel and the others are asking us to believe that God is reversing, correcting, and contradicting Himself.<sup>81)</sup>

Nor (b) do we have to exert great acumen to show that the text will not bear Dr. Alleman's interpretation. When Jesus quoted the provision of the Law "Thou shalt not kill" (Matt. 5:21) and then adds: "But I say unto you, . . ." is He revoking the Law? Where do you see in the text the words on which your whole argument hinges: "But I say unto you, You may kill"? Our contradictionists have not mastered the logical law of the contradiction. Jesus indeed says: "Whosoever is angry," etc. But the prohibition of sinful anger, etc., is not a substitution for the Mosaic prohibition of murder. It is not even an addition to it. Ex. 20:13 forbids anger as well as murder. The "but" of Jesus is not directed against Moses but against those who found in Moses nothing but the prohibition of the gross act of murder. In the words of Dr. Lenski: "You have heard" means: from your teachers, the scribes and Pharisees, on whom you were entirely dependent for your instruction. They told you that 'it was said,' of course by Moses, 'to the ancients,' to whom he first brought the Law: 'Thou shalt not murder.' . . . But this was all that you heard — nothing but a civil law, to be applied to an actual murderer, by a civil court. . . . Not a word about God and what He by this commandment requires of the heart. Not a word about the lusts and the passions that lead to actual murder and, though they produce no murder, are just as wicked as murder. . . . What the disciples now hear from Jesus is vastly different from what in the past they heard from the scribes and Pharisees. The opposition is not to 'it was said.' Jesus is not contradicting or cor-

81) H. M'Intosh: "Those utterances of our Lord — mainly those in the Sermon on the Mount opening with 'Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time,' on which they have sought to found their unwarrantable assertions — are directed not against the teaching of Scripture, which would have been a divine contradiction of Himself. For it was God who 'in times past spoke unto the fathers by the prophets'; and it was the same God who 'in these last times hath spoken unto us by His Son.' It was the Son who Himself declared, as if to answer by anticipation this very objection, 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle. . . .' (Matt. 5:17, 18; Luke 16:17.) With this He prefaced all His utterances about the teaching of the ancients. So that He could not have directed them against the Scriptures, which were His own Word, but against those misapprehensions, perversions, and misapplications of it with which an unspiritual religiosity and soulless literalism had associated and overcrusted it." (*Op. cit.*, p. 295.)



recting Moses." (On Matt. 5:21, 22.) Jesus does not revoke Ex. 20:13. He leaves it in full force. He does not strike out one jot or tittle. And these moderns are telling us: Jesus is here plainly breaking Scripture!<sup>82)</sup>

"Does not Matt. 5:39 abrogate Ex. 21:24?" Jesus was *not* a revolutionary; He was not a parlor-communist. He did not ask the civil courts to cease exacting the just punishment from the criminal. "Here again Jesus does not abrogate or change the penal laws as too harsh, as not humanitarian enough, or as needing reform in other respects. . . . But the very God who placed that law and its execution where it belongs, in the hands of the government, places another law and its execution, the law of love, into the hearts of Christ's disciples." (Lenski.)<sup>83)</sup> — "And does not Mark 7:19 repeal Lev. 11?" Certainly not! The teaching that it is not food but the evil thoughts of the heart that defile man does not say that there is anything wrong about the Levitical law concerning clean and unclean beasts, but simply corrects the misapprehension and misapplication of Lev. 11, as though Levitical purity in itself constituted moral and spiritual purity. And if anybody should insist that the abrogation of the Ceremonial Law constituted a breaking of Scripture, Jewry, orthodox Jewry, would side with him but not the Christian theologians.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Charles F. Schaeffer, professor at Gettysburg, wrote in *The Lutheran Commentary* (1895): "The Lord does not mean the teaching of Moses himself but the erroneous mode of interpreting his words." More interesting that in the *New Testament Commentary*, edited by Dr. H. C. Alleman, Dr. Henry Offermann writes (p. 169): "When the scribes interpreted the commandment, they used to read the words of the commandment and then pointed out to their hearers the punishment for the transgressor. That was all. They had no further comment to make.

82) See also G. Stoeckhardt, *Die biblische Geschichte des Neuen Testaments*, p. 92: "Christus setzt das Gesetz Moses nicht ausser Kraft und Geltung. Christus bestaetigt vielmehr das Gesetz, 'streicht es recht heraus und zeigt den rechten Kern und Verstand, dass sie lernen, was das Gesetz ist und haben will' (Luther)." Also Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary*: "Christ confirms and expounds the Law. . . . The Lord now proceeds to prove His condemning statement by expounding a few of the commandments according to their full spiritual significance."

83) Dr. Graebner's answer to the Alleman-manifesto: "If the Jews of His time justified a passionate and revengeful spirit, Jesus now carries out more fully the spirit and design of the Law by urging the readiness of a true disciple to forgive, to win, to restore. And who is not able to see the difference established between public and official vengeance and the private relationship of men to men?" (*CONC. THEOL. MTHLY.*, XI, p. 885.)



They were satisfied with the letter of the Law, but made no attempt to penetrate into its spirit. There is nothing in the text to indicate that Jesus objected either to the commandment or to the words attached to it. What He objected to was that the traditional interpretation did not go beyond the act itself." And there are liberal theologians who would not endorse this part of Dr. Alleman's manifesto. *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture*, edited by Bishop Charles Gore and others, says: "'Ye have heard that it was said by them of old times' is a traditional scribal phrase, with the sense of 'you have understood this to mean.' But our Lord emphasized the divine mind behind this prohibition of murder and teaches that both the harboring of anger and the use of abusive language are included within its scope." And here is the ultra-liberal H. L. Willett, who says: "Furthermore it must be remembered that Jesus was bringing no indictment against the Hebrew Scriptures, which He held in the highest reverence. He wished, however, to carry out their spirit to its legitimate ends." (In *The Christian Century*, Oct. 21, 1936.)

Assertion No. 4a: Christ erred in endorsing the whole of the Old Testament. — When we answer assertion No. 3 by pointing out that Christ endorsed the whole of the Old Testament, critics reply: Christ certainly did that, but He was wrong in doing that. They are off on a different tack; but they are still sailing on the sea of unreason. It is an unchristian assertion, as we have shown in the third article (see p. 420 ff. above); but it is also unreasonable. To ask us to say that Christ endorsed all of the Old Testament, the authenticity of the Pentateuch and the story of Jonah and the whale, because "He knew no better" is asking too much of a Christian; but it is also asking too much of a thinking man. Oh, yes, it is reasonable enough for Voltaire to declare that Christ's testimony on these points is not absolutely trustworthy, for Voltaire insisted that Christ was a mere man. But a theologian who believes that Christ is true God and still insists that He made "exegetical mistakes" and false statements is not using his reasoning powers. And we shall go a step farther. Let Jesus be a mere man. But was He a good man, an honest man? The critics, not only the conservatives but also the liberals, insist on that. Only the scoffers, the infidels, may deny it. However, you cannot teach that Jesus was a good, honest man and still claim that He was mistaken on various points, on the point, for instance, of the inerrancy of the Bible. For He claimed to be a teacher sent from God who spoke the very words of God. It is impossible for a mere man to claim absolute infallibility and remain an honest man. Use your thinking powers! When you assert that Jesus was wrong in endorsing the Old Testament, this Jesus, who claimed to speak the Word of God in all His state-



ments, you are proclaiming Jesus as a fraud. Are you ready to do that?<sup>84)</sup>

The critics do not want to do that. And so they are driven to employ various clumsy subterfuges. (Assertion No. 4b.) We have mentioned some on page 421 above. For instance: "Jesus condescended not to know." Here are some more. Jesus did not endorse the story of Jonah in the belly of the fish; Luke 11:29 f. does not mention this part of the story; so Jesus never vouched for the truth of it; the account of Matt. 12:40 is not trustworthy.<sup>85)</sup> The meaning of this is: You cannot say that we are charging Jesus with an error for endorsing this story, for He never endorsed it! Another subterfuge: "It is said that the language of our Lord about the Old Testament requires us to accept the account of the Flood and the story of Jonah as literally true. . . . However, it seems to me to be even preposterous to suggest that He binds us by His allusion to the Flood (Luke 17:26 ff.) to suppose that it occurred as it is described in Genesis. We should, I think, feel the same way about His allusion to Jonah's resurrection out of the whale's belly, if it were authentic." (Charles Gore, *op. cit.*, pp. 19, 25.) The meaning of this is as above. But where is the proof for this idea? Bishop Gore "thinks" it. Can he make me think it? And why, we ask, did Jesus refer to these incidents if they were not facts? That is easy to answer, say the critics. Christ used these incidents as parables, and so they need not actually have happened. Prof. J. W. Horine: "The book (Jonah)

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84) R. A. Torrey: "Jesus Christ claimed to be a teacher sent from God who spoke the very words of God. He claimed this over and over again, and if He was mistaken about the origin and character of this Book, concerning which He has so much to say, He was a fraud, an unmitigated fraud. If these people are right who tell us that these incidents in the Book of Genesis, for example, which our Lord has so plainly endorsed, are simply 'folk-lore' or inaccurate and unreliable traditions of the day, then, beyond a question, Jesus Christ was a fraud, an unmitigated fraud." (*Op. cit.*, p. 20.) *Proceedings, Iowa District, 1891*, p. 31: "If the Bible were not inspired and consequently infallible, it would not be a good book but a lying book, for it claims divine inspiration for itself; then, too, Jesus would not be good but a deceiver, for He endorses the Bible as a divine book."

85) H. L. Willett: "It would seem that the reference to Jonah's stay in the belly of the sea-monster was no part of the narrative as used by Jesus. There is no reference to this portion of the account in the record of the Gospel of Luke (11:30-32). . . . It seems strange that so important an incident as that of the miraculous deliverance of the prophet should have been omitted from the gospel of Luke if it were an authentic part of the gospel-story." (*The Chr. Century*, Dec. 9, 1936.) See also Gore's statement: ". . . if it were authentic." Willett and Gore could quote D. F. Strauss as their authority. "The continuance of Jonah in the belly of the whale does not seem to have been brought in as a parallel case until later, subsequently, that is, to the time when the morning of Sunday had been fixed upon for the resurrection of Jesus." (*A New Life of Jesus*, I, p. 439. *Das Leben Jesu*, I, p. 403.)



is considered to be not literal history but parable or allegory. . . . Our Lord's reference to this event [Jonah being disgorged from the mouth of the great fish] does not contradict this view. He is simply using it as an illustration. 'Just as we refer to the prodigal son or the good Samaritan in precisely the same terms we should use were their adventures historical facts, so may Christ have done here.'" (*The Lutheran*, March 18, 1937.) The meaning of this subterfuge is: Christ knew that this incident never occurred; and so our charge that the critics actually ascribe fallibility to Jesus is groundless. But we ask again: How will Professor Horine prove that Jesus did not consider the history of Jonah literal history?<sup>86)</sup> Do not ask us to accept your Assertions No. 4 b, by which you seek to escape the dilemma into which your Assertion No. 4 a places you, on your mere *dictum*.

Better say at once — Assertion No. 5 — that "Christ never offers a word of Scripture as a final reason for belief," and have done with it. Dr. John Oman (Cambridge) makes this assertion in *Vision and Authority*, page 188: "The method of citing texts is only a second-hand dealing in truth. . . . Christ encourages His disciples to rise above the rule of authorities and investigate till each is his own authority. . . . Christ appeals to the testimony of Scripture but never offers a word of it as a final reason for belief. His final appeal is always to the heart by God." Oman naturally takes this position, for, "whatever the authority of Scripture may be, it is not of the infallibility of verbal inspiration" (p. 94). Oman, of course, makes no serious attempt to prove his assertion by Scripture. "Citing texts is only a second-hand dealing in truth." The proof which he offers in this connection is: "'All ye are brethren,' He says, 'and one is your teacher,'" and he deduces from this — by what laws of reason we know not —: "Even Christ Himself is not our Rabbi." . . . We are anxious to know what he makes of the passage John 5:39. Or of John 8:31. Or John 10:35. Or Matt. 4:4. And Matt. 4:7 and Matt. 4:10. Whatever Satan's answer might be, though he might have answered: "It is written? Why, everybody knows that Scripture is not infallible," Christ declares, first and last: "It is written." (See further *Proceedings, Iowa District, 1891*,

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86) A writer in *The Living Church*, April 26, 1930, puts it this way: "St. Matt. 12:40 need not carry with it an acceptance by our Lord of the literal and complete historicity of the Book of Jonah, unless one is prepared to assert one's own acceptance of the literal and complete historicity of every parabolic story used by Him to drive home by forceful illustration His teachings. Is your correspondent willing so to accept, for example, the teaching of the Rich Man and Lazarus?" Here is confusion worse confounded. The story is a true story. "There was a certain rich man. . . . And there was a certain beggar." We even know his name: "Lazarus."



pp. 29—31: "Mit der Schrift bewies Christus seine Worte und Lehre.")

Assertion No. 6: Inspiration and infallibility must be restricted to the Gospel-message in the Bible or, to stretch a point, to the religious and moral teaching of the Bible. — But is that not the same as Assertions 1 and 2? It is, essentially. But the critics — the great majority of them — prefer Form 6 to 1 and 2, because that form has greater appeal. They delude themselves with the idea that nothing is lost if only the infallibility of the great Gospel-message is saved.<sup>87</sup> Assertion 6 has a more specious form than the others and is therefore more widely used. For that reason we shall treat it separately, even though we shall have to repeat ourselves somewhat. We shall be adding, however, some new material.

J. M. Gibson takes issue with those "who insist on every part of the Bible being equally inspired"; it is "unfaithfulness to the sacred Scriptures" not to reserve full, real inspiration for "the Gospel, the central theme of the Bible" (*op. cit.*, p. 101). James Orr is satisfied "with a Scripture supernaturally inspired to be an infallible guide in the great matters for which it was given — the knowledge of the will of God for their salvation in Christ Jesus, instruction in the way of holiness and the hope of eternal life" (*Revelation and Inspiration*, p. 217). The *Baltimore Declaration*: "We accept the Scriptures as the infallible truth of God in all matters that pertain to His revelation and our salvation." (*Minutes of the 1938 Convention of the U. L. C. A.*, p. 471.) Dr. A. J. Traver, in his exposition of the *Baltimore Declaration*: "The Holy Scriptures are the infallible truth 'in all matters that pertain to His revelation and our salvation,' not in secular matters, for 'Bible writers wrote with the background of their age and its scientific beliefs'" (*The Lutheran*, Feb. 22, 1939). And in *The Lutheran* of Jan. 23, 1936, Dr. Traver says distinctly: "Inspiration includes only the knowledge essential for knowing God and His plan for man."<sup>88</sup>

87) Discussing a similar case of juggling the *Proceedings of the Iowa District* say: "Die Leugner der Inspiration fuehren, wenn man ueber ihre greuliche Lehre erstaunt und entruestet ist, immer solche Reden im Munde: 'Wir wollen euch ja nichts von eurem Glauben rauben; denn wenn auch Moses und Jesajas, Matthaues und Markus, Paulus und Petrus sich geirrt haben, so bleibt uns doch Christus, von dem allein unser Heil abhaengt.' Das sind eitel *Taschenspielerkuenste*."

88) "S. Episcopius († 1643), Arminian-Reformed, had already limited inspiration to the so-called essentials." (Guericke, *Symbolik*, p. 172.) So also the Lutheran G. Calixt († 1656. — See Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 322.) J. T. Beck († 1878), conservative: "Auf die goettlichen Reichsgeheimnisse erstreckt die Theopneustie sich; auf das Aeusserliche und Menschliche nur, soweit es mit Ersteren in wesentlichem Zusammenhang steht." (See *Proc., Syn. Conf.*, 1886, p. 22.) Pastor Matschoss of the "Ev. Lutheran Church in Prussia" (Breslau; "Altlutheraner"): "Scripture,



## 576 Verbal Inspiration — a Stumbling-Block to Jews, Etc.

When the liberals of the extreme left divide the Bible into more-inspired, less-inspired, and non-inspired portions, their reasoning is clear and consistent. They treat the Bible as a purely human writing and their concept of inspiration is different from that of the conservatives. Their "inspiration," being an activity of the human mind, does not connote infallibility. With them the more-inspired portions, too, are fallible, as Willett plainly tells us: "No error has ever resulted in greater discredit to the Scriptures or injury to Christianity than that of attributing to the Bible such a miraculous origin and nature as to make it an infallible standard of morals and religion." (*Loc. cit.*) But when the conservatives acknowledge the divine origin and authority of Scripture and then confine its inspiration to the Gospel-message, they involve themselves in a self-contradiction and are forced either to make the Bible set up extravagant, yes, false, claims or to deny the plain, every-day meaning of common human words.

Nowhere does the Bible say that only certain portions of it are inspired and infallibly true. If any one wants to believe in partial inspiration, he will have to believe it on the authority of the

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being inspired, is the infallible and reliable Word of God in matters that pertain to our salvation. . . . There may be mistakes in non-essential matters." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1909, p. 280.) Prof. J. O. Evjen: "To the Reformer (Luther) Scripture was binding to the extent that it proclaimed Christ, the Gospel, or pointed to Christ. Many historical matters in the Bible did not concern Christian life." (*Luth. Church Quart.*, April, 1940, p. 149.) Synod of Maryland (U. L. C. A.): "Article III of the Pittsburgh Agreement adds to the Baltimore Declaration because it countenances, or seems to countenance, verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures and makes the Bible the infallible rule in matters other than faith and practice." (*The Lutheran*, June 12, 1940.) The pronouncement of the Baltimore Declaration, by the way, does not constitute an advance from the teaching of the General Council. The *Lutheran Church Review* wrote in 1904: "According to H. E. Jacobs 'the Holy Scriptures are the infallible and inerrant record of God's revelation of His saving grace to men.' . . . The holy writers were not inspired, however, to be 'teachers of astronomy or geology or physics,' and no number of contradictions in this sphere would 'shake our confidence in the absolute reliability of Holy Scripture as the infallible test of theological truth, an inerrant guide in all matters of faith and practice.'" The writer is Dr. Joseph Stump. (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1904, p. 85 f.) Dr. Stump expresses the same view in his *The Christian Faith*, pp. 318, 320. — H. L. Willett: "The finality and authority of the Bible do not reside in all of its utterances, but in those great characters and messages which are easily discerned as the mountain peaks of its contents. Such portions are worthy to be called the Word of God to man." (*Op. cit.*, p. 289.) Let these samples suffice. Many more could be adduced in support of our statement that the great majority, liberals and conservatives, subscribes to Assertion No. 6.



critics. He cannot quote a single passage of Holy Scripture in support of it.<sup>89)</sup>

But everywhere the Bible declares that all of it is God's Word, absolutely true. And so the moderns are compelled to twist and torture these passages, divest them of their meaning, and then try to convince us that we have been misreading them. They do not display great theological skill and acumen in their treatment of these passages. The best they can do is to affix footnotes to the text, saying that the text does not mean what it says. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Footnote: That does not mean that all of Scripture is inspired, but only its religious teaching. N. R. Best: "Here, then, in 2 Tim. 3:16, is the Bible's standard description of its own qualities, and here surely, if from the Bible viewpoint a preternatural exactness was essential to inspired literature, there would have been some tangible hint of that characteristic. Instead the outlook of the apostle—himself an undoubted agent of divine inspiration—was entirely in another direction. Paul had his eyes on the moral dynamic of the book—its spiritual vitality." (*Inspiration*, p. 97.)<sup>90)</sup> J. A. W. Haas: "It is this combination of various witnesses, all tending to the unity of the *saving Gospel* through the illuminating and guiding control of the Spirit, which constitutes inspiration. Therefore every true Scripture is God-breathed and 'is profitable for doctrine,' etc., 2 Tim. 3:16. . . . We must not identify the Word absolutely with the Bible as a book." (*New Testament Commentary*, p. 122.)

John 10:35: "The Scripture cannot be broken." Footnote: What Scripture says concerning the Gospel is absolutely infallible; what it says on other matters can be broken. Our footnote to this astounding perversion of the text: Would you classify "the scripture" which calls the rulers "gods" as a Gospel-message? Second footnote: Jesus cannot be made to say here: Some Scripture may be broken.—Rom. 15:4: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." Footnote: *Some* of those things that were written

89) "Wir fragen dagegen: Woher stammt diese Unterscheidung von heilswichtigen, minder wichtigen und unwichtigen Aussagen der Schrift? Oder genauer: Wo macht die Schrift diese Unterscheidung? Und zwar: Wo bringt die Schrift diese Unterscheidung in Verbindung mit der Inspiration, so dass sie diese bei den genannten Nebendingen ganz aussetzt oder doch so stark zuruecktreten liesse, dass den heiligen Schreibern wohl einmal ein Fehler mit unterlaufen konnte, was bei den das Heil direkt beruhenden Stuecken eben durch die Wirkung der Inspiration ausgeschlossen war?" (*Theologische Quartalschrift*, July, 1931, p. 182.)

90) Our own footnote: Why, then, did Paul say: "All Scripture"? If Paul found room in the Scriptures for "the ordinary misunderstandings and blunders of humanity," as Best declares on the same page, why did Paul not make Best's restriction?



afortime were written for our learning. — Acts 24:14: "I believe all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets." Foot-note: Paul made a mistake in taking everything written in Scripture to be true.<sup>91)</sup>

It does not require great intelligence, no more than that of a child, to understand the force of the universals "all," "whatsoever," of the all-inclusive "the Scripture cannot be broken." If men were not obsessed with the idea that miracles do not occur (liberals) or that science has found mistakes in Scripture (conservatives), average human intelligence would keep them from making Assertion No. 6 and basing the assertion on Scripture. These men have not sufficient acumen and ingenuity to convince us that Paul said "all" and must have meant "some."

Furthermore, do they not see that they are destroying the Christian's trust in his Bible? Are they not intelligent enough to know that, unless they can give the Christian a safe criterion for distinguishing between the reliable and the unreliable parts of the Bible, they are rendering the Bible to a great extent useless to the Christians? For such a criterion does not exist. The Bible has no index giving that information. And the critics know of no such criterion. They tell us so themselves. *Hasting's Encyclopedia*, VII, p. 346: "There is in reality no clear dividing line between what is and what is not worthy of a place in Scripture." (See Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 362.) Dr. Fosdick thinks he has a sure criterion. There eternal truth is speaking "where the deeps of the Book call to the deeps of the human heart" (*The Modern Use of the Bible*, p. 61). Your own heart will tell you what belongs to religious truth and what is human error. But it seems this criterion does not satisfy his brother critics. They confess that there is no certain rule to be applied. For instance, R. F. Grau: "Die Grenzen des Goettlichen und Menschlichen in der Schrift koennen ueberhaupt nicht mechanisch und quantitativ bestimmt werden, so wenig wie in der Person Christi." (See *Proc., Syn. Conf.*, 1886, p. 28.) K. Girgensohn: "Die Schrift enthaelt auch fuer den einzelnen das Wort Gottes in keiner feststellbaren Abgrenzung." (*Die Inspiration der Heiligen Schrift.*) Here is what happens in every case where men try to apply Fosdick's formula of finding the deeps of the Book calling to the deeps of the human heart: "Immer wieder beunruhigte mich die Frage: Was ist Kern, was ist Schale? Wo 'treibt die Schrift Chri-

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91) J. M. Gibson's attempt to prove Assertion No. 6 is herewith submitted as an outstanding curiosity. In support of his statement from which we just quoted he argues: "On the principle of all parts of Scripture being equally inspired one might preach on the Bible for fifty years and never once bring the Gospel in." He certainly has a low opinion of the intelligence of the Christian preachers.



stum,' wo nicht? Wo beginnt die Bibelkritik, wo hoert sie auf? Das waren Fragen, auf die mir weder mein Verstand noch theologische 'Wissenschaft' eine klare, befriedigende Antwort geben konnte. Was nuetzt mir die bekannte Kompromissformel 'Die Bibel enthaelt Gottes Wort,' wenn mir niemand mit Sicherheit sagen kann, was nun in der Heiligen Schrift Gottes Wort ist und was nicht? Diese Formel gestattet schrankenlosen Subjektivismus, der nur relative Wahrheit kennt und darum das Herz nicht wahrhaft fest machen kann." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1923, p. 302.) The theory of Assertion No. 6 makes sport of the Christian. He is told to separate the true from the false in Scripture and to wait till some secret voice — deep calling unto deep — tells him how to do it.<sup>92)</sup>

These men know little of Scripture. Our Bible is a wonderful, a divine book, able to make us wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15) and achieving this end by means of everything therein written. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." To be sure, the Gospel is the chief part of the Bible. The Bible stresses the great truth that Christ Crucified is the Center of the Bible, the all-important thing. But everything in the Bible bears on the one theme. The least important thing subserves the one important thing. Rom. 15:4. "So then the entire Scripture is throughout nothing but Christ, God's and Mary's Son; all has to do with this Son, that we might know Him." (Luther, III:1959.) "Er ist das Mittelpuenktlein im Zirkel, und alle Historien in der Heiligen Schrift, so sie recht angesehen werden, gehen auf Christum." (VII:1929.)<sup>93)</sup> These men have only a smattering of the Bible.

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92) "I now ask my new instructors to tell me what are the things in Scripture that do affect faith and life—to speak definitely, not in vague generality—and to set forth in completeness and with unerring certitude, not partially or dubiously, what in Scripture is infallible and of divine authority and what is not. But I find they cannot or do not tell me, nor do they show me how I can surely ascertain this for myself; and thus my whole faith becomes unsettled. . . . Sometimes I may be told the Bible is infallible and authoritative in all that affects faith and life; and when I ask what affects faith and life, I am answered that in which it is infallible; and I thus feel that my intellect is insulted and my soul trifled with by a vicious logic and an impotent evasiveness. At other times certain leading religious and ethical principles are set forth as unquestionably matters of faith and life. But when I inquire how and on what principle these were separated from the rest, . . . I am told that by general consent they are received because men's consciousness witnesses to their truth. By this the painful and perplexing fact is forced upon me that even for these no divine or Scriptural, but only a human foundation is given; that these are regarded as authoritative not because they are revealed in the Word of God but because they accord with the consciousness of man. . . ." (M'Intosh, *op. cit.*, p. 606 f.)

93) L. S. Keyser: "How marvelous is the reasoning of these rationalists! . . . We leave it to any one who will use his reason logically whether the first chapters of our Bible separate the *religious* teaching from the sciences with which it is connected. Does this part of the Bible set off religion by itself, as if it were something isolated and



And they know little of the psychology of the Christian. They dare to tell him that great portions of his Bible are unprofitable. They tell him that the comfort he was wont to find in the story of Jonah is based on a fable. They warn him against accepting great portions of the Bible as true. And when the Christian asks them how he may know what is true and what is false, lest he lose what is profitable to him, they leave him at sea. We do not say that they are deliberately making sport of the troubled Christian. But Satan is making sport of him. And have they so little understanding that they do not realize that Assertion No. 6 inevitably arouses the holy indignation of the Christian, who feels that not only he himself is being played with but Scripture itself made a thing to be laughed at—a conglomeration of truth and error, a guide-book which is unclear, indefinite, and hazy in its instructions.<sup>94)</sup>

Now comes another group of critics who will not subscribe to the thesis that great portions of Scripture are unprofitable. They subscribe whole-heartedly to the thesis that the Bible is full of errors but see the folly committed by their brethren of Class 6. However, since they are minded to uphold the erroneousness of Scripture, they are forced to set up Assertion No. 7—which is as senseless as No. 6—: Everything in the Bible, inclusive of the errors, is profitable; God put these errors into the Bible; the erring

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alone? Is not this rather the real teaching, the full-orbed and comprehensive teaching, of the Bible, that its primary purpose is religion, but religion set vitally and organically in a scientific and historical environment?" (*Contending for the Faith*. See Kretzmann, *The Foundations Must Stand*, p. 59 f.) Dr. Stoeckhardt: "Nun gut, wir sagen auch, dass Christus A und O, Kern und Stern der ganzen Schrift ist. Das lehrt Christus selbst Joh. 5:39. . . . Wenn die Schrift aber gleichwohl auch etwas von der Weltschöpfung . . . aussagt, so nehmen wir auch solche Aussagen als Gottes Wort und Offenbarung hin und finden, wenn wir naeher zusehen, dass dieselben nicht so isoliert dastehen, sondern mit dem Hauptinhalt, der Geschichte des Gnadenbundes, irgendwie zusammenhaengen." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1893, p. 329.)

94) D. J. Burrell disposes of the matter thus: "But what do you propose? A new Bible? Aye, you tell us that under the clear blaze of your erudition the Bible has come to be 'a new Book.' It is indeed a new book; full of errors on all points within the cognizance of the senses, yet heralded by you as a trustworthy guide in matters beyond sight! The thinking world derides you. Is this the edifice you have been so laboriously constructing? A Bible without ground of confidence? . . . But they say: 'We insist on loyalty to Christ. Our whole system is Christocentric. Back to Christ!' But back to what Christ? To the Christ who affixed His authoritative seal to the so-called 'fables' of the Flood, of Lot's wife, and of Jonah in the whale's belly? To the Christ who called the Scriptures 'truth' and never breathed a word or syllable against their absolute inerrancy? . . . Or, in your process of 'construction,' are you giving the world a new Christ, too? One of your leaders recently said from his theological chair: 'The time has come for a restatement of the doctrine of Christ.'" (*Why I Believe the Bible*, p. 180.)



human word is the Word of God.—Prominent theologians, Lutherans and extreme liberals, actually make this assertion. We are not referring to those who insist that these mistakes do not matter much.<sup>95</sup> We are contemplating the phenomenon that sober theologians are saying that God saw fit, in order to make us wise unto salvation, to give us a fallible Bible. R. F. Grau (Koenigsberg): "Gott hat es zugelassen, ja gewollt, dass sich in der Heiligen Schrift auch Fehler finden. Ich wage es, mit dem groessten Schriftforscher unsers Jahrhunderts, mit Hofmann, zu sagen: Die Heilige Schrift ist etwas Besseres als ein fehlerloses Buch." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1893, p. 329.) S. Parkes Cadman: "Not everything related in Holy Scripture (Genesis, Jonah, Daniel) actually happened; nevertheless, actual or imaginative, all was enlisted for the service of its spiritual ideals. . . . For millions of believers the Bible is the more divine because of its human elements." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 247, 253.) O. L. Joseph: "Does not the human element, with its limitations and perchance even errors, exalt the wisdom of God in using such an agency to further His gracious plan?" (*Ringing Realities*, p. 217.) Would you call these Biblical statements which are false God's Word? Surely! Generalsuperintendent Dr. Paul Blau: "Wir haben ganz ehrlich zugegeben, dass die Bibel Menschenwort ist, wir koennen ihr nachweisen, dass ihr alle Unvollkommenheit menschlicher Rede anhaftet. . . . Die Schreiber der Buecher sind fehlsame, irrtumsfaehige Menschen gewesen. . . . Aber es ist alles Gotteswort." (*Die Menschwerdung Gottes*, p. 31 f.) Hans Rust, Ph. D., D. D., professor in Koenigsberg: "Wir muessen das Menschenwort der Heiligen Schrift in seiner ganzen Fehlsamkeit, Armseligkeit, Duerftigkeit und Anfechtbarkeit stehenlassen und es Gott zutrauen, dass er auch durch dieses fehlbare Menschenwort sein unfehlbares Gotteswort bezeugt und immer zu bezeugen imstande sein wird." (*Vom Aergernis des Menschenwortes in der Heiligen Schrift*, p. 553.)<sup>96</sup>

95) J. A. Cottam: "Such minor discrepancies, or errors, are not worth mentioning as compared with the substantial reliability of the whole records; for it is the whole record, and not microscopic infallibility, about which the Christian faith is concerned." (*Know the Truth*, p. 219.) E. Lewis: "The integrity of the revelation does not stand or fall by the wrappings." (*Op. cit.*, p. 37.)

96) We should like to submit a few more similar statements. The more, the better—since they carry their own refutation. To save space, we shall use smaller print. K. Girgensohn: The errors in the Bible are due to the special will of God, since nothing, not the least detail, is due to chance and since such errors, understood "spiritually" or "experienced," can result in good and serve our salvation. (*Op. cit.*, p. 113.) J. M. Gibson: "Though we cannot claim perfection for any of the organs or vehicles of inspiration, the result of the whole may be said to be perfect, as adapted to the accomplishment of its end." "So far from finding fault or suggesting difficulty, we should recognize the



"Was ist das doch fuer ein loses und sinnloses Gerede!" That is Dr. Stoeckhardt's reply to Grau's proposition: "Vicious and foolish twaddle!" To be sure, God overrules the errors of man for good; but that is far from saying that God sanctions and glorifies these errors. No man in his senses will say that the God of Truth and Holiness moved the holy writers to present, for instance, legends and myths as truths.<sup>97</sup> "The thinking world derides you" (Burrell, above) when you claim to be loyal to Christ and still reject as fables what He stamped and sealed as truth; still more will the thinking world deride you when you assert that Christ knew these fables to be fables and still found it profitable to have men deal with them as true. Still more will the thinking world deride Grau when he alleges, in support of his monstrous proposition, that Christ, too, in becoming man, "was made to be sin," was made personally subject to error and sin! "What vicious and foolish twaddle!" (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1893, p. 329.) And when the Barthians declare that the erroneous word of man is in fact the real Word of God, when they refuse to believe that God performed the miracle of giving us by inspiration an infallible Bible but are ready to believe that God daily performs the greater miracle of enabling men to find and see in the fallible word of man the infallible Word of God, the thinking world declares: We cannot think your thoughts; *hier steht einem der Verstand still*.

Assertion No. 8: Miracles do not occur; science does not recognize miracles; therefore the Bible, which relates miracle after miracle, cannot be literally inspired; it cannot be inerrant, for its writers put their mistaken notions about miracles into it. — That is the argument advanced by the extreme liberals among the moderns,

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marvelous grace of God in so lifting up the best legendary literature of the world as to make it a vehicle of high and pure revelation." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 145, 157.) J. De Witt: "We shall learn how important and valuable, if not necessary, the divine sufferance of these blemishes was in the accomplishment of the ruling purpose of revelation." "Even for us they [the enormities in the Bible] have their moral uses, if only by repulsion (*What Is Inspiration*, pp. 72, 181.) Yea, even the false teaching of the Bible serves a good purpose! Wilhelm Heermann (Ritschlian): "The doctrine of a double predestination, which, following Rom. 9—11, Luther" (?) "and Calvin developed even more crudely than Augustine, has no basis in faith. . . . But the fact that the Bible contains such a development of thought as we find preeminently in Rom. 9:20-23 should also *subserve our salvation*, if it brings us to face the question whether we are prepared to follow Scripture even in that which we cannot understand to be a notion rooted in our faith. If we decide to do this, we are treating the Bible as a law-book which requires from us external obedience." (*Systematic Theology*, p. 134.)

97) Dr. Stoeckhardt: "Der Geist Gottes, der Allwissende, so sehr er sich an die Eigenheit der menschlichen Organe akkommodiert hat, kann doch nun und nimmer einen menschlichen Irrtum sanktionieren." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1886, p. 314.)



and they consider it unanswerable. Our answer is that the argument constitutes a flagrant fallacy.<sup>98)</sup>

These liberals are convinced that the miracle-stories of the Bible are myths or old wives' tales, because, said A. Harnack, "miracles, of course, do not occur. That an ass spoke, that the tempest was stilled with one word, we do not believe that." Science forbids it, said R. Seeberg; "the world-view of the Biblical writers was, as we all know, different from ours. They did not possess the exact knowledge of the cosmic laws which we have. In those days it was easy to believe in miracles. Every one feels at once how far we have advanced beyond the naive views of the men of antiquity." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1908, p. 373.) H. E. Fosdick: "We used to think that God created the world by fiat. . . . Our ideas of the method of inspiration have changed." "What happened to the idea of miracle when this onrush of inductive science overtook it is clear." What happened? We do not want to live in "a land of topsyturvy, where axes float, dry sticks change to serpents, bedeviled swine run violently into the sea." No, no, "to be a Bible Christian must we think, as some seem to suppose, that a fish swallowed a man, or that the sun and moon stood still at Joshuah's command, or that God sent she-bears to eat up children who were rude to a prophet, or that saints long dead arose and appeared in Jerusalem when our Lord was crucified?" (*Op. cit.*, pp. 30, 141, 53, 181.) Jonah, says Prof. J. W. Horine, was not swallowed and disgorged by the fish; that "is not literal history but parable or allegory." (*The Lutheran*, March 18, 1937.) The Biblical miracle of Creation did not actually occur, declares Prof. O. F. Nolde; "pupils may later discard the scientific import of the story." (*Luth. Church Quart.*, July, 1939, p. 299.) Evolutionism has discarded that miracle with all the others, said E. H. Delk in the *Luth. Quarterly*. "The belief in organic evolution, including the appearance of man, . . . has become the working theory of science. . . . The Hebrew tradition of how man was made has been modified by later scientific research. . . . As to the *method* and duration of the creative process, the origin of man's sinful nature, . . . modern thought through science, historical criticism, philosophy, and ethics has a modifying and illuminating word to say." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1913, p. 149 ff.) And "Prof. G. B. Foster goes so far as to declare that a man can hardly be intellectually honest who in these days professes to believe in the miracles of the Bible." (See *Fundamentals*, IV, p. 93.)

The pupils of higher criticism and the professors of evolutionism

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98) We are herewith redeeming the promise made in the preceding article: "Their plea that science does not recognize miracles will be answered next month, when we take up the chapter of the fatuity of 'higher' science."



cannot believe in miracles. The miraculous contents of the Bible and of the Christian religion is offensive to them.<sup>99)</sup> On that account they abominate Verbal, Plenary Inspiration. "No miracles" — that is one of the chief articles of the theology of higher criticism.<sup>100)</sup> And the critics are persuaded that the discussion is closed and the debate won when they proclaim: Science has ruled out the miracles.

Not so fast, we say. Science does not rule out miracles. We are speaking of common, honest, every-day science. Real science does not teach that miracles are impossible. We have never found such a statement in any text-book on physics or chemistry or any other science. We have not yet heard that science has discovered a law which kept the Lord from sending such a great number of quails. Good, common, honest science knows better than to make such a statement. For it knows nothing of the miraculous, the supernatural. It sticks to the natural. It is well equipped for that. It is able to observe natural phenomena and it busies itself with studying the natural causes of them. But it has no facilities for studying the supernatural. It has no laboratories for testing creative powers. Its lenses cannot detect what is behind the miracles. "Mit Wundern weiss die Wissenschaft nichts zu machen" (E. Muehe, *Biblische Merkwuerdigkeiten*, p. 90.)<sup>101)</sup> When a common, honest, bona-fide scientist is asked by Harnack and Fosdick: What do you make of the Biblical miracles, he straightway answers: That is beyond my ken and province.

But the "higher scientists" are quick to answer: We know, through science, that miracles cannot occur.—Men who say that do not think logically. They are operating with a crude fallacy. It is known as the *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος*. It consists in applying the principles ruling one realm of science to a different realm of

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99) The miracles belong to "the intellectual stumbling-blocks over which many young people are falling when they read the Bible." (Fosdick, *op. cit.*, p. 59.)

100) "The whole of the modern critical school of Germany is actuated by a fierce hatred of the supernatural. The ruling principle in their criticism is denunciation of the miraculous. Whatever cannot be brought under their scientific canons is to be rejected as mythical or fabulous." (R. A. Redford, *Studies in the Book of Jonah*, p. 6.) — Professor Redford goes on to say: "The critic will not follow us into the innermost sanctuary of Christian faith. Let us, then, remain with him for a while in the outer court of human judgment and reasoning." That is the method we are applying. We have set forth the Christian's attitude in our second and third article. Now we are asking the critics to apply nothing more than human judgment and reasoning.

101) "Human science as such deals only with such things as man can prove by what his five senses observe and experience, only with what his reason can grasp and understand. What is beyond that it treats as an unsolved enigma. . . . Science has no place for miracles."



science. But everybody knows that the rules of geometry do not apply in psychology. And everybody ought to know that what is true in the realm of the natural has no bearing whatever on what is possible and true in the supernatural sphere. Dr. Walther says on this point: "We will have nothing to do with a science which . . . wants to sit in judgment on Scripture and correct it on the basis of science; which, instead of remaining in its sphere, wants to elevate the laws that happen to apply in its domain into universal laws and force them on Scripture. We regard such a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος* both as idolatrous and *unscientific*. We agree fully with Melancthon when he writes: 'As it would be insanity to say that the Christian doctrine could be judged by the rules of the cobbler's trade, so also they err who invest *philosophy* with the right to sit in judgment on Theology.'" (See Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 189.) On this *metabasis*, this incursion into a foreign field, called in German "*Grenzueberschreitung*," a theologian wrote in the *Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, as quoted in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1923, p. 301: "Gewiss ist es wahr, dass die Wissenschaft gewaltige Fortschritte gemacht hat. . . . Gewiss ist es auch wahr, dass Gott dem Menschen den Verstand gegeben hat, damit er ihn gebrauchen soll. Aber die Wahrheiten des christlichen Glaubens liegen jenseits der Grenzen des menschlichen Verstandes, also auch der exakten Wissenschaft. Und darum ist es unmöglich, dass Glaube und Wissenschaft (im Vollsinn des Wortes) jemals in einen unueberbrueckbaren Gegensatz treten koennten. Wo er vorzuliegen scheint, da hat auf der einen oder andern Seite eine *Grenzueberschreitung* stattgefunden, da verwechselt man die Wissenschaft mit Glauben oder den Glauben mit Wissenschaft." Indeed, "we must learn," says the professor of natural history J. A. Thomson, "to render unto science the tribute that is its due, and to God the things that are His." (*Science and Religion*, p. 4.)

Among thinking men it is not permissible to apply the laws which obtain in physical science to divine science which deals with miracles. Thinking men will not permit you to say: Since science knows only natural causes, there is no room left in this world for the operation of supernatural causes. Thinking men will not permit you to depart from the realm of observed facts and pass judgment on things that lie beyond the area of observation. Thinking men subscribe to the statement of *The Presbyterian* (July 12, 1928): "There are two great realms of existence—the natural and the supernatural. Science deals only with the natural. Revelation deals . . . with the supernatural and its manifestation in the natural. *When science minds its own business* and confines its teaching to the natural, there is no conflict between revelation and science. But *when science leaves its own proper field* and tries to rise up into



the supernatural or the origin of the natural, then it always has come in conflict with the revelation and its facts. When men theorize about the origin of natural things and teach evolution, then they leave science and take up *spurious philosophy*, and this means conflict and false teaching." And it means that they are committing a logical crime.

And it is not only the Bible-theologian who stigmatizes this *metabasis* as irrational and illogical.<sup>102)</sup> There are plenty of liberal theologians whose logical mind forbids them to measure the supernatural with the natural. To quote just one of them: "This is in substance what is being pleaded for here. It involves the distinction between something we know and something in which we can only believe. But it also involves that no increase in what we know will ever dispense with that in which we believe or will make it an object of indubitable scientific knowledge. . . . Identify the infinite with the creative, and we have the field into which faith may take us, but which *can never be the object of scientific knowledge*. 'A scientific knowledge of the Creator' is an utter contradiction in terms; indeed it savors of sheer *intellectual arrogance*, to say nothing worse." (Edwin Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 171.) And it does not require Christian knowledge to see the absurdity of the reasoning which rejects miracles on "scientific" grounds. The heathen and the Jew can see it, too. "It is most absurd for one to pretend that he

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102) To quote a few more conservatives. R. A. Torrey says: "It is both amazing and ludicrous the way in which the enemies of the Bible call in as expert witnesses men who have never given any attention whatever to that line of study. They do it in *no other branch of study in the world*. They would be considered fools if they did. But they do it constantly when it comes to questions about God and the Bible. This method is thoroughly unscientific, illogical, and irrational." (*Op. cit.*, p. 42.) W. E. Gladstone: "Finding in the Mosaic story various statements which he deems to be irreconcilable with natural laws, Professor Huxley protests, not against those particular statements, but against the entire relation; and he casts aside without more ado not only the whole tale as it is given in Genesis but the large mass of collateral testimony, from every quarter of the globe, which supports it. Is this a scientific, is it a philosophical, is it altogether a rational method of proceeding?" (*The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, p. 304.) And consider also this: "True science does not start with an *a-priori* hypothesis that certain things are impossible, but simply examines the evidence to find out what has actually occurred. It does not twist its observed facts to make them accord with *a-priori* theories, but seeks to make its theories accord with the facts as observed. To say that miracles are impossible, and that no amount of evidence can prove a miracle, is to be supremely unscientific. . . . The fact of the actual and literal resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead cannot be denied by any man who will study the evidence in the case with a candid desire to find what the fact is, and not merely to support an *a-priori* theory." (*The Fundamentals*, V, p. 105.)



believes in God and in the same breath deny the supernatural belief that God steps in and changes the course of nature."<sup>103</sup> Prof. A. Einstein, who does not believe in God, may think logically when he denies the possibility of miracles. But one who admits the supernatural has no right to deny the miracles, and he reaches the height of absurdity when he denies them because science cannot explain them. Dr. Einstein is our authority for such a statement. He says: "The doctrine of a personal God interfering with natural events could never be refuted in the real sense by science, for this doctrine can always take refuge in those domains in which scientific knowledge has not yet been able to set foot." (See *The Christian Beacon*, Sept. 19, 1940.) Who, then, are the real obscurantists? L. Gaussen: "If your wisdom makes bold to constitute itself the judge of what is found contained in the Bible; if it drags the book of God to the seashore of science, in order to collect in its vessels what it sees in it to be good and to throw out what it finds in it to be bad . . . , then it is necessary that it should be reprov'd; it is guilty of revolt; it judges God. *Here there is no longer science*, there is fascination; there is no longer progress, there is obscurantism." (*Theopneustia*, p. 325.)<sup>104</sup> He is certainly an obscurantist who would make the ignorance to which science confesses the source of knowledge.

But, say the critics, it is not in the name of common, every-day science that we are ruling out the miracles; we are doing it from the higher reaches of science. We are applying "inductive science" (Fosdick), "the processes and the technique of science" (Delk); forsaking "pre-Kantian conceptions" (Kantonen), we operate with "the thought of our time," the present "scientific era" (A. G. Baldwin). (See *CONC. THEOL. MTHLY.*, XII, p. 395.) But these high-sounding names and titles cannot hide the *metabasis* of which

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103) Rabbi Baron told the Milwaukee Council of Churches: "I believe in science and natural laws. Miracles are based on belief in the supernatural, on belief that God steps in and changes the course of nature. I cannot reconcile them with reason. I cannot believe in them." In an open letter Rabbi Sharfman gave this reply: "If a minister, priest, or Rabbi doesn't believe in the Bible-story of the Creation or in miracles, he has no business to be a spiritual leader. It is most absurd, etc. . . . I say, in the language of the Bible: 'Is there anything impossible for the Lord?' . . . Were Moses and all the elders of Israel impostors?" (See *The Northwestern Lutheran*, Feb. 9, 1941.)

104) Dr. Pieper's statement applies here. "One who appeals to natural reason in matters of the Christian religion and would make it, in whole or in part, the source and norm of the Christian doctrine commits a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος* and is enthroning human unreason in place of the Word of God as master and teacher." (*Op. cit.*, p. 238.) It is an absurdity of the first rank to teach that there is an almighty God and then to reject miracles as absurdities.



"higher science" is guilty. In fact, the very name "inductive science" un.masks it. The claim is made that, while common science deals only with observed facts, the philosopher has the right to draw deductions from these observations, and these deductions, they say, rule out miracles. But investigation and induction are different matters.<sup>105</sup> We are ready to listen to you when you present the results of your investigation. And we are willing to hear your inductions—as long as they are logical. But in the present case your inductions are based on a fallacy. We willingly grant you that science deals with nothing but natural causes; but when your "inductive science" infers from this that every effect must have a natural cause, it no longer deserves the name of science; and the philosophy back of it is weak in logic.

We have noted above that the liberals have logic on their side when they refuse to subscribe to the self-contradictory thesis of the moderate critics that the Bible, inspired, contains mistakes. But whatever credit they have earned on this score they lose when they reject the miracles of the Bible for "scientific" reasons. They are breaking one of the fundamental laws of logical thinking. Do you know what this *metabasis* really is? The handbooks of logic list as one of the material fallacies the converse fallacy of accident. And *metabasis* is a species of this common fallacy. The logician will not permit you to say that "a statement which is true when certain conditions are present is true generally." What did you think of the scientists, mentioned in the preceding article, who deduced from the fact that the ants of their locality do not do certain things that the ants of Palestine did not do these things? And now we are being told in the name of "inductive science" that, because science has not discovered and cannot observe supernatural forces, supernatural forces are non-existent.

"Kurzum, es ist so albern, so laecherlich, was die Bibelfeinde ueber solche geringfuegige Verschiedenheit des Berichts sagen, dass es einen anekelt, nur noch mehr darueber zu reden." (*Proc., Western District, 1865, p. 46.*) That applies to all of their arguments. "Anekelt"—it is nauseating. So we had better pause a while. We must not discuss too many of their fatuities at one time.

(To be continued)

TH. ENGELDER

105) "Many a man who is very safe in the department of investigation and perfectly trustworthy so long as he confines himself to the simple results of observation and experiment is as unsafe whenever he ventures into the department of philosophy or logic and attempts to draw inferences from his investigations; his conclusions may be as inaccurate and unsound as his experiments are careful and exact. The fact is, investigation and induction belong to different departments; and we are not always to adopt the inferences of the most accurate investigator." (A. T. Pierson, *Many Infallible Proofs, p. 142.*)