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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 moderns are bound to make the "sure Word" of Scripture (2 Pet. 1:19) unreliable. They have been telling the anxious Christian that the "mechanical, verbal theory" of inspiration is all wrong; that according to their dynamical canon the words in which the saving truth is revealed are purely human; that nobody knows whether the words of John 3:16 correctly express the divine thought. But they are not yet through with the dismayed Christian. Lest he still be disposed to base his trust on John 3:16 and similar passages of Holy Writ, they now tell him: Forget all about John 3:16; that is an individual statement and individual statements no longer count; it is foolishness to base doctrine and faith on particular passages.

That is the fifth objection of the moderns against Verbal Inspiration. They express their abhorrence of it in the word "atomistic." *The Luth. Church Quart.*, 1937, p. 195, declares: "It is, of course, no secret that Verbal Inspiration is not taught in some of the seminaries of the United Lutheran Church. . . . The purpose [of Professor Kretzmann's *The Foundations Must Stand*] of course is to prove that every word of the Scriptures was inspired directly and immediately. But by thus indiscriminately compiling all passages containing any reference to the word or the words of God and using them as proof texts for Verbal Inspiration, the real Lutheran meaning of the expression Word of God is obscured. What results is a legalistic and an atomistic conception of the Scriptures as the Word of God, far more congenial to Calvinism than to Lutheranism." *The Luth. Church Quart.*, 1939, p. 153, censures "the dogmatists and literalists" and commends those who "broke with the old atomistic method of proof texts." H. E. Fosdick: "Atha-



nasius is typical of the general method of ancient interpretation. 'All parts of the Bible were equally good, in his judgment, as sources of proof texts.' . . . The new approach to the Bible gives us a comprehensive, inclusive view of the Scriptures and enables us to see them not piecemeal but as a whole. . . . It once more integrates the Scriptures, saves us from our piecemeal treatment of them, and restores to us the whole book seen in a unified development." (*The Modern Use of the Bible*, pp. 10, 27.) Atomistic — another one of these great swelling words which are designed to overawe the simple. It is the mark of scientific wisdom to take a comprehensive view of things, is it not? You would not want to study a writing in a piecemeal atomistic fashion, would you? <sup>273)</sup>

Let us see, first, what exactly the moderns mean when they rail against the "atomistic method of proof texts" and, secondly, what this attitude towards the Bible involves.

Dr. J. Bodensieck: "May I mention another misuse of the Bible which the Church has often ignored and even condoned? I have in mind the indiscriminate use of Bible texts as proofs in the Catechism, or even in the science of dogmatics. Sometimes only a very superficial study of the text in its original setting in the Bible would have been sufficient to indicate that it was out of place in the Catechism or in the dogmatical discussion, where it was adduced as proof from Scripture. This use of the Bible has recently been branded as 'atomistic.' The Church should avoid every semblance of such abuse. . . . The 'atomistic' practice gives a distorted picture of the Bible and helps to destroy the proper understanding and appreciation of the Bible." (*The Modern Use of the Bible*, in *The Augsburg Sunday School Teacher*, July, 1938, p. 388 ff.) <sup>274)</sup> Insisting that inspiration is not a piecemeal affair,

273) The following phrases will show the meaning of our term: "atomistic and fragmentary"; "life is not atomistic, it is corporate." *The Luth. Church. Quart.*, 1939, p. 153, says that the old atomistic method of proof texts is out of harmony with "the organic character of the Scriptures." H. F. Rall has the phrase "organicistic or corporate as against atomistic or individualistic." (*A Faith for Today*, p. 127.) The distinction between atomistic and corporate is, of course, good and necessary. Whether the moderns make the right use of this distinction in the matter before us remains to be seen.

274) The following excerpts from the article will show the writer's position with regard to Verbal Inspiration. "We may indeed find it very difficult to free ourselves from this misuse of the Bible as long as we cling to a very mechanical conception of inspiration. If the Bible, as we have it, is the dictation of the Holy Spirit down to the last letter, we will have to deny the existence in the Bible of various levels of religious understanding and spiritual depth. . . . Too often the Bible is reduced to the level of a well-stocked arsenal from which authoritative proof texts may be drawn almost at random. Instead of enlightening the mind and providing it with some understanding of the



the Bible being inspired "as a whole," not in its statements on "details," J. M. Gibson has this to say to the "proof-texters": "A 'text' from one book was exactly the same as a 'text' from another. It could be cut out from its context and set alongside of a number of others cut out in the same way, to be used as 'proofs' of some controverted doctrine. For all the use men's names were, they might have been blotted out and the word 'God' put in instead. . . . The erroneous impression conveyed by the words is due to the old practice, so fruitful in error, of treating the Bible as a mere collection of texts, anyone of which may be taken by itself and treated as if it stood alone." (*The Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture*, pp. 74, 121, 222, 234.) V. Ferm, reading the requiem on Verbal Inspiration: "A literally infallible Bible, an assumption implied throughout the Lutheran symbols, verbally inspired, is a view that has passed by the board for good," declares: "Passages may no longer be wrested from their context and indiscriminately ascribed to 'the word of the Lord.'" (*What Is Lutheranism?* pp. 281 f.); and H. Wheeler Robinson makes the same indictment: "The Protestant appeal to the Scriptures as a text-book of doctrine did frequent violence to exegesis, and much of it reads strangely enough to us today." (*The Chr. Experience of the Holy Spirit*, p. 173.) The moderns take pleasure in reciting cases of such strange exegesis. Georgia Harkness: "As for the Bible, most people, at least most people sufficiently informed to be ministers of the Gospel, recognize the dangers inherent in the proof-text method. It is a truism that one can prove anything one likes from the Bible. In the last Presidential election, there was plastered in every New York subway train as a party slogan the affirmation, 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'" (*The Faith by Which the Church Lives*, p. 56.) O. L. Joseph: "Is not the practice of quoting texts at random, without regard to their context, largely responsible for many vagaries of the religious imagination, such as Christian Science, Theosophy, Spiritualism? It is worth recalling that the dogma of total de-

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Bible, this practice actually obscures it by making it appear that every portion of the Book is authoritative doctrine—perhaps an extremist exegesis of 2 Tim. 3:16f. contributed to this error. The Bible is no collection of doctrinal statements, but a book of life. . . . Those who followed them" [the Protestant fathers] "codified and systematized their thoughts and, in so doing, introduced the deplorable confusion of contents and form and ascribed to each the same divine authority. But if the same unfailing authority is ascribed to all the 'human' elements in the Bible (e. g., categories of thought, the picture of the universe, even the fundamental ideas of ethical living) as to the unquestionably divine truths, then conflicts are inevitable and doubts must arise. . . . This, in my judgment, is the one valuable contribution in Fosdick's book *The Modern Use of the Bible*, viz., his distinction between the Bible's central messages and their temporary expressions."



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pravity taught by St. Augustine was based upon five proof texts, three of which were mistranslations." (*Ringing Realities*, p. 218.) We read in the *Watchman-Examiner* of Dec. 28, 1941: "Communicants of the Apostolic Faith Church of Pittsburgh who were also members of the United Mine Workers were hard put to it, with their literalistic dependence upon the exact words of the English Bible, to determine their duty under the captive mines strike order. Surely enough, the strike was called by their 'higher-up' bosses, and they must be 'subject to the higher powers' (Rom. 13:1). . . . In like manner, the proof-text method of interpreting the Bible has caused great numbers of earnest, sincere people to do all sorts of absurd things." And Prof. J. C. W. Volck (Dorpat) went to the trouble of illustrating the absurdity of the atomistic proof-text method by quoting one half of Ps. 14:1: "There is no God." (See *Proc. Syn. Conf.*, 1886, p. 24.) — And that, say the moderns, is what we mean when we denounce the atomistic proof-text method: it is not permissible to quote texts at random and tear them out of their context.

There is something wrong here. There is nothing wrong about denouncing the *indiscriminate* use of proof texts. But a wrong is committed when this denunciation is coupled with the denunciation of Verbal Inspiration. The moderns have the habit of doing that. J. S. Whale fulminates thus: "The modern man is not impressed by the mere citation of texts; he rightly wants to understand them in their context. His very certainty that the Scriptures are the fount of divine wisdom . . . has set him free from the bondage of the letter, the prison house of verbal infallibility. . . . The Bible is abused when it is used merely as an armory of proof texts for defending some theological scheme (a game at which more than one can play, notoriously enough). We use the Bible rightly only when, to quote Luther, we see that it is the cradle wherein Christ is laid; that is, when we worship the Holy Child and not His crib." (*The Chr. Answer to the Problem of Evil*, p. 77.) The modern man is right in demanding that the text be quoted in its context. But why should Dr. Whale inveigh in this connection against the "prison house of verbal infallibility"? Note, too, that the *Luth. Church Quart.*, in denouncing the indiscriminate compiling of "proof texts," informs us that "Verbal Inspiration is not taught in some of the seminaries of the U. L. C." Note that the *Augsburg Sunday School Teacher* article, while castigating "the indiscriminate use of Bible texts as proofs," disavows "the mechanical conception of inspiration," "the dictation of the Holy Spirit down to the last letter," and speaks of the "'human' elements in the Bible," mistaken notions, etc. Note that Gibson, who will not have "a text cut from its context," takes a fling at the verbal-



inspirationists who declare that *God is the real author of these books*. There is something wrong here. Verbal Inspiration has nothing to do with the illicit quoting of proof texts. The verbal inspirationists insist as strongly as the most liberal modern that when a text is quoted as a proof the literal sense of the text, the scope, and the context must be scrupulously observed. If Augustine based the dogma of total depravity on two proof texts, he won his case; if he based it in three instances on mistranslations, he did not do that because he believed in Verbal Inspiration. There is nothing in the doctrine of Verbal Inspiration that justifies, or even lends itself to, the misuse of the proof-text method. To be sure, verbal-inspirationists occasionally quote a text wrongly. But the same can be said of the anti-verbal-inspirationists. We can easily match every *lapsus* committed in this field by verbal-inspirationists with one committed by the dynamic-inspirationists and the non-inspirationists.<sup>275)</sup> So you can hardly make Verbal Inspiration responsible for the use of misquotations. And when you produce your lists of misquotations for the purpose of discrediting Verbal Inspiration, you are aiming your blows at a straw man.

But in denouncing the "old atomistic method of proof texts" the moderns whom we have quoted and shall quote do not really mean the illicit use of proof texts. If they meant that, there would be no quarrel between us and them. Here we are one with them.<sup>276)</sup>

275) Gibson proves his idea that the texts of Scripture are not binding with the proof text: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (*Op. cit.*, p. 235.) N.R. Best proves that Scripture is subject to reason with the proof text Is. 1:18. (*Inspiration*, p. 118.) Dr. H. C. Alleman (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1940, p. 356) proves that Christ "deliberately breaks Scripture" by quoting Matt. 5:38f., and H. F. Rall quotes the same text to prove that "you cannot accept the supremacy of Christ and hold to the infallibility of the Bible." (*Op. cit.*, p. 224.) Fosdick cites as proof text for his dogma that "at the beginning Hebrew religion had no hope of immortality" Eccl. 9:4-6 and 3:19. (*Op. cit.*, p. 25.) R. F. Horton proves that "the epistle of James disclaims infallibility "with the proof text: "In many things we offend all," Jas. 3:2. (*Revelation and the Bible*, p. 349.) H. W. Robinson proves that the prophets had "beneficent illusions" by quoting Jer. 20:7: "O Lord, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived." (*Op. cit.*, p. 174.) We have seen how the proof text 2 Tim. 3:16 fares at the hands of the moderns. (See, for example, the eighth installment of this series, No. 21.) Sherwood Eddy: "Can we claim that this (the Virgin Birth) is a foremost fundamental if, as we have seen, it has never been mentioned by Jesus or Paul, or in the first or last Gospel?" (See *The Presbyterian*, Dec. 22, 1927.) There are several queer things in this item. — Yes, to employ Whale's phraseology, the moderns, too, can play at the game of wrong proof-texting and they are quite adept at it.

276) Cutting a text out of its context certainly may be called an atomistic use of Scripture. Verbal inspirationists so use the term. Dr. Reu writes: "Even the formation of the word was taught by the Spirit. . . . So 1 Cor. 2:13, while not being the only proof passage for the *suggestio verbi*, is nevertheless an important statement concerning the



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But what the moderns do not like and do not want is any and every use of proof texts for the establishment of doctrine. It will not be hard to establish that point. Let them tell us what they think, not of the illicit use of proof texts, but of their use in general.

Schleiermacher, the Father of modern Protestant Theology, declared: "Quoting individual Bible passages in dogmatics is a most precarious business and cannot at all serve the purpose." (*Glaubenslehre*, I, § 30.) Notice that there is here no restriction. Not only the wresting of the passage out of its context is bad business; quoting individual passages is bad business. That has become an article of faith with the moderns. G. T. Ladd: "Especially was suggestion of the words held to be necessary to the inspiration of the Bible. . . . Especially strong and dominating was the tendency among those who held this dogma to regard the entire Bible as a kind of theological parade ground for proof texts. It was the number of such proof texts which was chiefly regarded." (*What Is the Bible?* P. 56 f.) *The Christian Century*, March 2, 1938: "No issue between the churches can now be settled by the quotation of a Biblical text, as our fathers used to assume. No issue will be settled by reference to an authoritarian standard, whether doctrinal" (our italics) "or ecclesiastical." They express their dissatisfaction with the fathers' way in the word "proof-texting." *The Chr. Century*, Feb. 22, 1939, praises "the inexhaustible resources of beauty and grandeur" in the Bible, but hastens to add: "This does not mean that we shall be saved by a return to proof-texting. Perish the thought!" The fathers are to be pitied, for, says H. F. Rall, "revelation meant to them so many doctrines or commandments handed down or so many words dictated to a writer. . . . When Paul wrote to his little churches here and there, he surely had not the faintest idea that centuries later theologians would be building up their theories on this phrase or that sentence in his letters." (*Op. cit.*, p. 228 f.) The poor fathers! "Luther's slavish dependence on proof texts" is the phrase used by G. Aulén; he adds the further statement: "Biblicism, the application of the theory of verbal inspiration, has laid a heavy hand on Christian theology." (*Das christliche Gottesbild*, p. 251.) No slavish dependence on proof texts for us, the children of the Reformation, declared the theologians gathered at Eisenach in 1917 to celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation. "Restricted, yet free!

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question in hand. . . . We do not see any reason why we should eliminate 1 Cor. 2:13 from our discussion. Still less do we stoop to what some call an 'atomistic use of Scripture' when we refer to this passage, because the whole context speaks exactly of the same matter with which we are dealing here." (*Kirchl. Zeitschrift*, July, 1939, p. 421.) The trouble is, however, that with our moderns the "atomistic use of Scripture" means much more than this.



Restricted to the revelation within the Scriptures as a whole; restricted to the Christ of God whom the Scriptures urge. But free over against particular matters, free to form our opinion on the human garments in which the divine glory of the Scriptures is masked. . . . One service the Scriptures will, of course, no longer be able to render: they cannot by particular statements authenticate particular parts of the Confessions." And "this means," says the *Theol. Mthly.*, V, p. 7, "that under the operation of the slogan 'Restricted, yet free!' such things as proof texts cease to exist." And so it goes on and on. It seems impossible for a modern to write a book or an article on Inspiration without taking occasion to utter his disgust with the old atomistic proof-text method. M. Dods: "The Bible has so persistently been used as a textbook to prove dogma that this came to be considered its main use. . . . Each of its utterances, no matter in what department of truth, was supposed to be final and authoritative. . . . But the Bible must not be thought of as a collection of truths formulated in propositions which God from time to time whispered in the ear to be communicated to the world as the unchanging formulas of thought and life for all time." (*The Bible, Its Origin and Nature*, pp. 66, 97.) E. E. Flack: "No fundamental doctrine rests on a single isolated passage. Nor may several passages strung together in proof-text fashion fix faith. It requires the analogy of Scripture, the whole Scripture corroborating and authenticating its own testimony in the life of the true Church, to establish the truth as it is in Christ Jesus." (*The Lutheran*, Oct. 1, 1936.) W. A. Brown: "What we need in such a textbook is a compendium of simple principles capable of indefinite application and therefore needing continual reinterpretation in the light of expanding experience. We have seen that the Bible lends itself to such uses in a pre-eminent degree. But that is not the way those who are responsible for teaching the Bible have used it. Either (like the theologians) they have made it a dogmatic textbook, searching its pages for proof texts which could be made a test of orthodoxy or. . . ." (*A Creed for Free Men*, p. 230.) Sherwood Eddy expresses the idea of the moderns exactly when he rails at "a literal, orthodox Christianity based on an inerrant, verbally inspired, infallible Book" and declares: "The Bible is not intended as a storehouse of authoritative proof texts or pious mottoes, not as a shibboleth or a fetish or mystic book to be read for merit. It is not a mechanical, external authority to be blindly obeyed." (See *The Presbyterian*, Dec. 22, 1927.) The moderns will not own Luther in his slavish dependence on proof texts as their spiritual father. Let them, then, own themselves as children of the vulgar rationalists, one of whom, Heinrich Stephani, was not ashamed to lay down these principles in his *Winke zur Vervollkommnung des Konfir-*



*mandenunterrichts*: "Only that may be taught which Jesus and His apostles would teach if they lived today. . . . Bible passages must not be used as proof texts." (See *Kirchl. Zeitschr.*, 1939, p. 137.)<sup>277</sup>)

The moderns frown upon and denounce the use of proof texts for the establishing of the Christian doctrine. To illustrate, what does the Bible teach on the Atonement? The proof texts will not help you to find that out, says E. Grubb; the teaching of the Bible on this point is hidden somewhere else. "An actual illustration of

277) We submit a few more pronouncements dictated by the proof-text-method phobia. We do not like to clutter up our pages with such material, but those who still think that, when the moderns reject the proof-text method, they have only the illicit use of proof texts in mind can use it. C. H. Dodd: "The method of reading the Pauline epistles as a set of documentary proofs for a fixed scheme of theology has resulted in giving a quite erroneous idea of Paul's real thought and, still more, in effectually concealing Paul the man behind a theological lay figure." (*The Authority of the Bible*, p. 12.) H. W. Robinson: "The revelation must be sought in that experience in its entirety rather than in particular 'texts' taken from it. . . . The Bible has often been degraded to the level of the *sortes Virgilianae*, a verbal oracle mechanically used." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 170, 175.) Gibson's statement on "treating the Bible as a mere collection of texts" goes on to say: "Some people, indeed, think that it is an end of all controversy to say, 'There it is in black and white.'" G. Wehrung: "Der evangelische Schriftgebrauch ist pneumatischer Art; er sucht nicht Lehrformeln oder Beweisstellen, sondern Leben weckende Zeugnisse; er sucht in und hinter diesen mannigfachen Christusbekennnissen die innere Einheit, das eine Evangelium, das eine Gotteswort in den vielen Worten." (*Geschichte und Glaube*, p. 306.) *The Living Church*, March 9, 1938: "The Report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine states that 'stages of Biblical revelation are to be judged in relation to its historical climax,' the standard being 'the mind of Christ as unfolded in the experience of the Church.' The significance of this section of the report lies chiefly in its bearing upon homiletics. As 'the method of direct appeal to isolated texts' is so evidently liable to error, it is to be expected that preaching from isolated texts will gradually give place to genuine expository preaching in which the Word of God contained" (italics in original) "in the Scripture will be sought, studied in all the light that modern scholarship affords, and then applied to problems of the modern world." The sentence introducing this paragraph reads: "In the report of the Anglican Commission, so-called Fundamentalism receives its *coup de grace*. Explicitly and in forceful terms the Commission states its conviction that 'the tradition of the inerrancy of the Bible cannot be maintained in the light of the knowledge now at our disposal.'" *The Luth. Church Quart.*, 1939, p. 33ff., has this to say on our subject: "There is a spirit of legalism that pervades many of the ranks of Midwestern Lutherans, a kind of approach to the truth of God which insists on 'book, chapter, and verse' for all the 'eye-blinks' of life and must be undergirded by the authority of print on paper for every conscious breath in order to be assured of full salvation. In its last analysis this resolves itself into a conception of the Holy Scriptures as a mechanical work of the Holy Spirit, inerrant in every word and detail in its original form." *The Lutheran* reprinted this Feb. 8, 1939. Prof. R. F. Grau: "Die Heilige Schrift ist uns nicht mehr ein grosser vom Himmel herab gesandter Gesetzeskodex mit seinen einzelnen Paragraphen Beweisstellen" (proof texts) "genannt." (See Baier-Walther, *Compendium*, I, p. 102.)



the appeal to the authority of the Bible may help in making clear what is meant. Suppose we are in doubt about the doctrine of Atonement and we wish to know, either for ourselves or for meeting the doubts of others, what the Bible teaches on the subject. The older method was to quote certain texts from the New Testament, such as those that refer to 'propitiation' and 'the blood of Christ,' and then to show that the doctrine of a blood sacrifice for sin, satisfying the wrath of God, ran through the whole of the Old Testament." That is all wrong. You must first establish "what are the different strains of teaching which the Bible contains" and then find out how much of this teaching "answers the deepest demands of our own reason and conscience. . . . The indiscriminate use of Scripture as a single source of equal value, as a quarry from every part of which stones may be indifferently collected to build up the temple of constructive dogmatics, will, it is hoped, soon pass away never to return." (*The Bible, Its Nature and Inspiration*, p. 240 ff.) May we use proof texts to prove the deity of Jesus? O. J. Baab tells us: "The Gospel of Matthew . . . made a liberal use of quotations from the Old Testament. These are extracted from their context" (our italics) "and made to fit the story of Jesus." Again: "Did Jesus believe that He was the Son of God? We have no uncontaminated first-hand reports of his utterances on the subject of God." "Current concepts as to deity and ideas of the supernatural definitely influenced the writers of the New Testament in their selection and interpretation of available material." So we cannot rely on these particular statements of the holy writers; their sense must be established by other considerations. Dr. Baab is right in concluding: "No wonder the literalistic interpreters of the Bible are stirred to indignant and vehement protest." (*Jesus Christ Our Lord*, pp. 11, 13, 38.) What about the doctrine of the Virgin Birth? E. Brunner: "In earlier days this discussion" (of the theory of the Virgin Birth) "used to be cut short by saying briefly, 'It is written'; that is, with the aid of the doctrine of Verbal Inspiration. Today we can no longer do this, even if we would. There are many indications that, even in this respect, even these early passages of Matthew and Luke once read very differently. Those arguments, however, are not adduced here in order to attack the doctrine itself, for this would be wholly out of keeping with the spirit of the rest of this book. All that is intended here is to show once more that the process of producing arguments and proofs based on Scripture, which is also untenable on general grounds, is here especially unfortunate." (*The Mediator*, p. 323 f.) Are there any *dicta probantia*, any *sedes doctrinae*, for the doctrine of the Church? No, indeed, says the *Luth. Church Quart.*, 1940, p. 20: "The doctrine of the Church does not rest on



specific proof texts, but on the entire Biblical message, the center of which is God's forgiving grace. It rests on the Bible understood and interpreted as an organic unity having its center in the cross, or in justification by faith, or in grace." An introductory statement was: "An atomistic or legalistic attitude results in trying to make specific New Testament words and sayings binding as external forms on the Church." What do the moderns think of the theologian who bases his eschatological teaching on the pertinent Bible texts? F. Holmstroem calls him a slovenly, piddling theologian, calls his exegesis "schlendrianmaessige biblizistische Reproduktion." He reads the proof-text theologian this lesson: "Eine theologisch haltbare Eschatologie muss vielmehr ihre Aussagen organisch aus dem lebendigen Zentrum der biblischen Offenbarung, der 'Christustatsache,' herleiten." (*Das Eschatologische Denken der Gegenwart*, p. 312.) Should we base our teaching on the sin against the Holy Ghost on specific passages, such as Matt. 12:31, 32; Heb. 6:1-8 and 10:26? R. F. Horton examines these passages and ends up with the monstrous proposition: "Here, then, is a case in which, so far from believing that a doctrine must be a divine revelation because it occurs in the New Testament, we are forced to the opinion that, if it occurs in the New Testament, it is not a revelation, but merely a view of the author's, imperfect and limited as the judgments of even inspired men are apt on occasion to be. In other words, the revelation of God as a whole, the revelation in its crowned completeness, must be used as a criterion for determining the value of individual passages in the Scriptures; it can never be admitted that a single passage or even a small group of passages, teaching a special doctrine, may override the truth in its entirety when its full development is reached." (*Revelation and the Bible*, p. 337 f.)

We are at present particularly interested in the doctrine of inspiration. May we use proof texts for this all-important doctrine? *The Luth. Church Quart.* chides us for doing this: using proof texts to establish Verbal Inspiration results in a legalistic and an atomistic conception of the Scriptures, far more congenial to Calvinism than to Lutheranism. (See above.) "Luthardt simply ignores 2 Tim. 3:16, when he treats of the doctrine of inspiration and insists: 'Das Selbstzeugnis der Schrift beruht nicht sowohl auf einzelnen Stellen der Schrift, sondern auf der Schrift selbst, in dem Schriftganzen, und da ist es Aufgabe der Schriftwissenschaft, zu zeigen, in welchem Sinn man sie inspiriert nennen koenne.' It follows that the plowman or factory hand cannot know whether Scripture has been given by divine inspiration, and when he confronts Luthardt with the Scripture: 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God' and says, 'Here it is written,' Luthardt an-



swers: Brother, you cannot say that; it is the whole of Scripture that decides the matter; you must not operate with these individual passages." (Dr. Walther; see *Lehre und Wehre*, 1911, p. 151.)

The moderns abhor the proof-text method and stigmatize it as atomistic. It is not the illicit use of proof texts which they have in mind when they use this word. Sometimes they mention and stress the illicit method, but before long they reveal that it is the proof-text method in general which they abhor. The *Luth. Church Quart.*, 1940, p. 20, comes right into the open and declares that the use of specific proof texts to establish doctrines reveals an atomistic attitude. (See above.) The *Luth. Church Quart.*, 1937, p. 279 is equally clear on this point: "The Bible must never be thought of apart from the living, unitary Word and become a codex. Otherwise we have Bibliolatry and substitute a book for the creative Word. . . . The Fundamentalists make the Bible literalistic and legalistic in a Calvinistic manner, and forget that the letter killeth but the Spirit maketh alive. Out of the legalistic attitude toward the Word of God of the Bible has grown an atomistic conception of the Word, which substitutes words for the Word. The Word is not built up out of inspired words like atoms underlying the universe."<sup>278</sup>) And the others of the moderns who do indeed specify the "indiscriminate use of Bible texts" in condemning the "atomistic" use of Scripture have more in mind than that. Else they would not go on to declare as the *Augsburg S. S. Teacher* article does, that not everything in the Bible is authoritative doctrine, that everything is not of the same divine authority, that here are "human" elements — errors — in the Bible, that the Holy Ghost did not dictate everything "down to the last letter." Notice, too, how they couple "legalistic" with "atomistic." "The indiscriminate use of proof texts" implies "a legalistic and an atomistic conception of the Scriptures" — there is not much sense in calling the illicit use of proof texts legalistic. Legalistic, in the language of the moderns means that the words are binding. Our *Luth. Church Quart.* article did not mean the "indiscriminate" but all use of proof texts. And so the phrase "the old atomistic method

278) Some more statements in this article by Dr. J. A. W. Haas will prove informative: "The older theory made men mere passive receivers of the Word. Their minds were pictured as blank slates on which the Spirit of the Word wrote his messages. . . . The atomistic verbalists err in not valuing the living logic of language. . . . The term 'words' (in 1 Cor. 2:13) is taken to mean every single word down to the minutest 'and.' . . . Out of the minute verbalistic conception grows the problem of the infallibility of the Word. Extreme verbalism demands the completeness of the text in every detail. It posits an original perfect text for all the books of the Bible. . . . It is a mere fiction to uphold an infallibility in every statement and not merely in the essentials of faith."



of proof texts" (see above) means that the method of using proof texts at all is atomistic. The word *atomistic* is there not used restrictively but descriptively. Or will the writer say that, when the fathers used proof texts, they regularly and habitually ignored the literal sense, the scope, and the context?<sup>270</sup> No, the fathers made habitual use of the *legitimate* proof-text method, based the doctrine on the *dicta probantia*, the *sedes doctrinae*, and that is what our moderns stigmatize as the old atomistic method.

And they feel perfectly justified in calling that atomistic. We agreed with them that we would call that an atomistic use of Scripture when a text is quoted out of its context and in a sense not intended by the author. And that, say the moderns, precisely that, lies at the bottom of our argument against the proof-text method. You verbalists are content to quote isolated passages. You fail to take the wider context into consideration. You verbalists may have the literal sense on your side, but insisting on the literal sense, you become literalists. You fail to see the broader sense with which the "Word of God" contained in Scripture or the "whole of Scripture" or this or that or the other thing invests this text.

Let Professor Volck tell us something about this broader context. "Um die Sonderung des Gebietes des Untrüglichen von demjenigen, wo Irrtum moeglich ist, und weiter — die Scheidung vom Wesentlichen und Unwesentlichen in der Bibel vollziehen zu koennen, muss der Ausleger *alles einzelne* ihres Inhalts beurteilen nach seinem *Verhaeltnis zu dem Heil*, welches in der von ihr berichteten Geschichte verwirklicht vorliegt. Er muss zusehen, *ob und in welchem Zusammenhang es mit demselben steht.*" It is not sufficient to consider what common hermeneutics calls the context. You must study the relation of the individual passage to, and connection with, the whole history of salvation, before you can determine whether the passage is true or erroneous. Dr. A. L. Graebner comments: "Volck need not tell us that you must not wrest a text out of its connection. We, too, know that you must always consider the context. But Volck says: Even if I perfectly understand the words of a passage in its connection and context, I know nothing at all about the matter; for I will still have to find out what the

279) Further on in this article (*Luth. Church Quart.*, 1939, p. 153ff.) we read: "It must be maintained in the light of the recent history of theology that the day of compartmentalizing and isolating theology from the rest of human thinking and knowing has long since passed. . . . The business of theology has always been to define what is of faith and what is contrary to faith. But such definitions cannot come to rest in isolation from the total existing body of human knowledge. . . . The *Loci* of the Jena theologian [Gerhard] necessarily retained in many parts the serious limitations of a prescientific heritage both in method and conclusions." More on this anon.



passage means in its relation to the whole of Scripture." (See *Proc. Syn. Conf.*, 1886, p. 23 f.) The hermeneutics of the moderns requires the consideration of the *broader context*. Neglect that, and your exegesis becomes atomistic.

What is this broader context? Some of the moderns make it extremely broad. They insist that the individual passages must be viewed in the light of present-day science. All human knowledge forms an organic whole, and statements of the Bible must not be put in opposition to it. Condemning "the old atomistic method of proof texts," the *Luth. Church Quart.* (1939, p. 156) inveighs against "compartmentalizing and isolating theology from the rest of human thinking and knowing." The definitions of theology must not "come to rest in isolation from the total existing body of human knowledge." Would that mean that a specific text could no longer be used as a proof text since "science" has shown it to be in error? Most assuredly. The Anglican Commission has proclaimed that "the tradition of the inerrancy of the Bible cannot be maintained in the light of the knowledge now at our disposal." They tell the Bible-Christian: Do not be atomistic! Bring your Bible text into harmony with the whole of human knowledge by stripping it of its literal sense and finding the profounder, the prophetic sense intended. The story of the Creation and of the Fall are not to be taken literally; Jonah was not literally swallowed by the great fish; let the theologian find out for you what deeper truths are here hidden. "They are, says *Christendom*, I, p. 492, "poetic expressions of some profounder or larger truth than that which their formulators realized." And that applies to the teachings of the Bible in general. H. E. Fosdick: "It is impossible that a book written two or three thousand years ago should be used in the twentieth century A. D. without having some of its forms of thoughts and speech translated into modern categories." (*Op. cit.*, p. 885.) To retain the literal sense of the teaching concerning resurrection and the deity of Christ would be a piecemeal, atomistic treatment of these proof texts. Consider the wider context furnished by the growth of human knowledge that have set in since the Bible days.

One of the first rules inculcated by the anti-atomistic hermeneutics is: Give up your belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. C. H. Dodd, who condemns "the method of reading the Pauline epistles as a set of documentary proofs," goes on to say: "When the reader has discovered what the writer actually said and meant, he wants to ask further, Is this what I am to believe about God? Is it true? Probably no one who reads this book will think that this question has the self-evident answer, Of course it is true, because it is in the Bible." (*Op. cit.*, p. 297. — Italics in original.) The *Augsburg S. S. Teacher* article, which inveighs against the atomistic



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use of the Bible, speaks of the "human" elements, the erroneous statements, in the Bible and calls Fosdick's statement concerning the "temporary expressions" and "modern categories" a "valuable contribution." Dr. Haas, who does not like the "atomistic verbalists," insists that the theologians must no longer uphold the absolute infallibility of the Bible, its "infallibility in every statement." That is the reason why the Eisenach Convention rejected the indiscriminate use of proof texts: some of them may belong to "the human garments"; you cannot take them at their face value; you must use discrimination. And the Anglican Commission, convinced of the errancy of the Bible, tells the preachers that they must not use a proof text till science, etc., has proved that it is true.

That is rather crude, to let science and the ideology of modernism, etc., shed light on the individual passages. But the moderns have, in addition, something more spiritual to appeal to. That is the "spirit." Georgia Harkness, who recognizes "the dangers inherent in the proof-text method," finds her "authority not in the letter but in the Spirit." The text must not be taken literally. For that she is fighting, and she deplures the fact "that the battle is not yet won. Like the poor, literalism is always with us" (*op. cit.*, p. 57 f.). Dr. Haas complains that these "atomistic verbalists," these "Fundamentalists, make the Bible literalistic and legalistic in a Calvinistic manner and forget that the letter killeth but the Spirit maketh alive" (*loc. cit.*). V. Ferm, who will "no longer have passages wrested from their context," declares: "The authority of the Sacred Writings is no longer found in 'the letter' and sustained by some artificial theory of divine inspiration, but in the appeal of its spiritual content." (*Op. cit.*, p. 279.) That is pretty plain language. Passages must not be wrested from their context, the context in the old narrow sense; but neither must they be wrested from their true setting, taken out of their spiritual setting. It is exactly what the old Rationalists and their children, the Unitarians, contend for, exactly what the Unitarian W. E. Channing contends for: "We feel it our bounden duty to exercise our reason upon the Bible perpetually, to compare, to infer, to look beyond the letter to the spirit . . .; and, in general, to make use of what is known for explaining what is difficult, and for discovering new truths." (*Works of W. E. C.*, p. 368.) Ferm may have a different idea of what the "spirit" as opposed to the "letter" is than Channing has—none of them has ever told us exactly what this "spirit" is—but all of these men are agreed that you cannot use a proof text till its real meaning has been established, not from what the words in themselves say, but from what the "spirit" says they mean, or from what "the mind of Christ" reveals (Anglican Commission).



More definite information about this context in the wider sense. It is the "Word of God" that determines which parts of Scripture are true or what value they have. Scripture itself is not the Word of God. The Word of God is *contained* in Scripture, and everything else therein must be brought into harmony with this Word. The Anglican Commission warns against "preaching from isolated texts" and instructs the preachers first to seek and study "the Word of God *contained* in the Scriptures," then study this Word of God "in all the light that modern scholarship affords" (our italics), and then see what they can do with a given text. The *Luth. Church Quart.*, 1935, pp. 258, 200, 264, tells us something about the nature of this Word of God and its relation to individual passages. "An individual brooding upon some condition of life, meditating upon some truth, communing with that beyond himself to which he gave the name God, and setting what he saw in life into the light of what he perceived through his spiritual insight, became convinced of a great truth. He felt that the truth thus communicated was the will of God for him for a people. 'The word of God came to him.' It was the word of God in the soul of a man. . . . Seekers for authority in Scripture cannot therefore find it in isolated portions and texts of the Bible, a procedure often followed in the effort to prove certain teachings and doctrines. The idea of verbal inspiration and the practice of literal interpretation may destroy the reality of the Bible's message. Its authority is not to be identified with the form of the language which announces the truth of God, but must be found in the light of the experience through which the word of God came to the soul of a man. . . . The teacher of religion speaks with confidence not because he quotes a Scripture but because the word of God has found him." The reality, the value, of a given text does not lie in the words of the text — a literal interpretation may destroy its value — but in its relation to the "Word of God." Dr. Haas, we heard, applies the same hermeneutics. "The Bible and its books are the depository and record of the Living Word. It must never be thought of apart from the living, unitary Word, and become a codex. Otherwise we have Bibliolatry and substitute a book for the creative Word. . . . The Word is not built up out of inspired words." Is John 3:16 inspired? That depends. First place it in the light of "the Word," and it may become a good proof text. Proof texts in themselves cannot prove a doctrine, said Dr. E. E. Flack. "No fundamental doctrine rests on a single isolated passage. Nor may several passages strung together in proof-text fashion fix faith." Then what proves the truth and value of a doctrine? Dr. Flack continues: "The standard by which all dogmas and teachers are to be judged is *not the Scriptures standing alone, but the Word of God attested and authenticated*



in the Spirit-filled life of the early Church and projected through the centuries from faith to faith in the corporate mind of the true Church." (*Loc. cit.*) And Professor Wehrung told us that you must go back of the Biblical statements concerning Christ in order to find the "one Word of God in the many words"; standing alone, they are only words. — In our next installment we shall further examine this hazy concept "Word of God" and the evil use to which the moderns put it.

The method in greatest favor with the moderns, taking the place of the proof-text method that has been thrown to the moles and the bats, is to operate with the *Schriftganze*. The whole of Scripture, Scripture in its entirety, is the great regulative of the individual passages. It was Schleiermacher who got modern theology to substitute for the proof-text method ("quoting individual Bible passages in dogmatics is a most precarious business") the *Schriftganze* method; the doctrine must be based on "Scripture in its entirety," on "the organic whole of Scripture." "Practically all chief representatives of modern theology," says Pieper (*Chr. Dog.*, I, p. 243), "from the extreme left to the extreme right wing, have adopted this method. Ihmels has it; Hofmann had it." Hofmann: "Nicht auf einzelne gottgewirkte Aussprueche oder Buecher in der Schrift beziehen sich Jesus und seine Apostel, sondern auf die Schrift. . . . Also die Gesamtheit der Schrift ist das einige Wort Gottes fuer seine Gemeinde. Als Ganzes ist sie es, und will nichts in ihr unterschieden sein, was nicht dafuer gaelte, und nichts dafuer gelten, was sich ausser ihr faende." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1875, p. 323.) We cannot quite understand the last sentence. It seems to make everything in Scripture God's Word, but that would be in contradiction to the general statement, which is very clear, that Scripture in its totality is God's Word, not in its individual statements, and that, like Jesus and His apostles, we must not operate with particular statements in Scripture.<sup>280</sup> Dr. J. Aberly makes the unassailable statement: "We need the whole Scriptures to give us the whole truth regarding God, man, and salvation," but he continues: "This attitude that we need the total view of Scriptural teaching rather than the fragmentary quotations of isolated passages, and that in this total view we must have the Spirit of Jesus to differentiate between

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280) "Gottgewirkte Aussprueche" — that is a queer phrase. We could not use it. But Hofmann means exactly what the phrase states. He does not believe in verbal inspiration. He teaches that the prophets and apostles spoke and wrote only under a special influence of the Spirit. Kliefoth points that out and declares: "Von einer Eingebung des Inhalts der Heiligen Schrift durch den Geist Gottes ist keine Rede. . . . Hofmann kommt schliesslich doch zu einer Anschauung von der Heiligen Schrift, die sich im wesentlichen von der rationalistischen nicht unterscheidet." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, *loc. cit.*)



what is temporary and what is permanent, this attitude will be found to be that of the New Testament writers and of Jesus Himself toward that unique revelation of God which we have in the Old Testament." (*The Luth. Church Quart.*, 1935, p. 118.) We need not point out that Jesus and the apostles actually did operate with "fragmentary quotations of isolated passages." What we want to point out is that according to the theory of "Scripture as a whole" we need the Holy Spirit to tell us just how much of Scripture is reliable. The moderns are actually teaching that not individual texts but only the *Schriftganze* is reliable.<sup>281</sup> It amounts to the same thing when they appeal from the proof texts to "the Bible understood and interpreted as an *organic unity* having its center in the cross" (see above) or to "the *living center*, the 'Christustatsache'" (Holmstroem), to "the *inner content* of the revelation instead of its literary expression and record" (H. W. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 175), to "the *fundamental principles* of Scriptural teaching," etc. The moderns actually go so far as to proclaim it as their firm conviction that the whole of Scripture is inspired though individual passages are not inspired. J. M. Gibson: "Let it be noticed also that in this historical process of revelation we have not only relief from the most serious difficulties attaching to the view of verbal inspiration equally distributed through all the books, but also a strong and most striking confirmation of our faith in the divine inspiration of the Bible as a whole. . . . Remember, it is no question of details — of flies or lice or frogs. . . . The absolute inerrancy of every word of Scripture" is immaterial; what counts is "the substance or the spirit, the object and effect, of the whole." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 74, 77, 121.) Dr. M. Doerne finds that many portions of Scripture are purely human, erroneous; but nothing is lost as long as Scripture as a whole is recognized as "geistgewirkt": "Die kanonische Geltung der Schrift als dieses unzerreissbare geistgewirkte Ganze." (*Pastoralblaetter*, 1939, p. 233.) — The moderns certainly refuse to be known as atomistic verbalists; they are for the organic whole; they disdain the bondage of the letter.

There is a reason for that. They are convinced that the Bible teems with mistakes and ethical crudities and monstrosities. These

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281) See also statements quoted above. H. E. Fosdick: No piecemeal treatment of the Scriptures, no Athanasian proof-texting, but "the whole book seen as a unified development." E. E. Flack: No stringing together of proof texts, but "the analogy of Scripture, the whole Scripture." The Eisenach Convention: Bound to Scripture as a whole, but free to reject particular statements! *The Luth. Church Quart.*, 1935, p. 260: "Seekers for authority in Scripture cannot find it in isolated portions and texts of the Bible. . . . The Bible, the whole Bible, not an isolated portion of it but its whole content revealing the will of God."



blemishes must be taken care of, and the *Schriftganze* theory admirably serves that purpose. The blemishes are there, but since only the totality of Scripture counts, no one need bother about these little details. See Gibson's statement just quoted. See what use H. L. Willett makes of this theory: "No error has ever resulted in greater discredit to the Scriptures than that of attributing to the Bible such a miraculous origin and nature as to make it an infallible standard of morals and religion. That it contains the Word of God in a sense in which that expression can be used of no other book is true. But its finality and authority 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. . . . So difficult are the narratives of the demons sent into the swine and the cursed fig tree that many who hold without hesitation to the inspiration and authority of the Book wonder if there has not been some error in the record at these points. This makes it evident that the authority which we recognize as truly present in the Biblical record does not inhere in the Book as such, nor in any particular portion of it. But rather it is found in the appeal which the *Scripture as a whole* makes to the moral sense within humanity. . . . One may apply to the *Scripture as a whole* the words of the Master: 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away.'" (*The Bible Through the Centuries*, p. 288 ff.) That was Hofmann's idea. As W. Rohmert puts it: "According to Hofmann the Bible contains, in individual portions, all kinds of errors, which are, however, rendered innocuous by the influence of the Bible itself. Hofmann declares: 'Die Verkuendigung keines einzelnen Apostels ist schlechthin irrtumslos, da vielmehr die Schilderung des Bildes Christi hinter der ganzen vollen Herrlichkeit des Bildes zurueckbleibt; aber die *Gesamtverkuendigung* der Apostel enthaelt vollstaendig die Bedingungen eines schlechthin irrtumslosen Verstaendnisses Christi.'" (*Die Dogmatik der ev.-luth. Kirche*, p. 105.)<sup>282)</sup> — Now we understand why the moderns have no use for

282) A few more citations to show with what relief the moderns hail the Schleiermacher-Hofmann theory. F. Baumgaertel: "The letter (*Wortlaut*) of Scripture we consider of secondary importance. . . . The outstanding features, the *whole*, is what counts, not the details, which are in many instances erroneous and objectionable." (See Moeller, *Um die Inspiration der Bible*, p. 57.) Pfarrer Hoff: "Wir unterscheiden bei aller Ehrfurcht vor der Autoritaet der Heiligen Schrift als Ganzes das, was goetlich darinnen ist, von dem, was menschlich, allzu menschlich, was juedisch ist. . . . Das unterscheidet uns von der starren Orthodoxie, dass wir die sogenannte Verbalinspiration ablehnen. . . . Freilich, alles das fuehrt und muss fuehren auf Christus als vollkommene und hoechste Offenbarung Gottes." (See *Conc. Theol. Mthly*, V, p. 407.) Dr. G. Drach: "The human words of the Word of God are subject to . . . discrepancies of record, because the human authors were sinful human beings. . . .



the atomistic proof-text method of the fathers. The fathers did not find any errors in the Bible. The moderns encounter errors on nearly every page and, naturally, fight shy of individual passages. But Scripture as a whole is God's inspired Word, and their conscience is at ease. Walther described the situation exactly when he said at a meeting of the Synodical Conference: "Sie sagen ausdruecklich: Man darf nicht sagen: 'Der Spruch ist Gottes Wort. Nein, das Ganze ist Gottes Wort, als Ganzes genommen ist es Gottes Wort!' Unter dem Schriftganzen aber verstehen sie das, was sie aus der Schrift mit Weglassen dessen, was sie als irrig und fehlerhaft ansehen, herauskonstruiert haben." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1911, p. 151.)

"Scripture as a whole" accomplishes great things for the moderns. It is the great corrective of the tainted portions of Scripture. It enables the moderns to give these inconvenient passages a proper form and makes it appear that such a treatment is proper and legitimate. Do you not see, said Professor Volck, that the words "There is no God" assume an altogether different meaning when the context is observed? Well, take every passage in its broader context, place it in the focus of the *Schriftganze*, and you will see whether it is true or how much of it, if anything, can retain its literal meaning. Under this treatment many a passage receives its *coup de grace*. We heard R. F. Horton: "The Revelation of God as a whole, the Revelation in its crowned completeness, must be used as a criterion for determining the value of individual passages in Scripture; it can never be admitted that a single passage, or even a small group of passages, teaching a special doctrine, may override the truth in its entirety when its full development is reached." (*Op. cit.*, p. 338.) If a particular passage is in conflict with the *Schriftganze*, it must go. Or it must be put in proper shape — which means the painless administering of the *coup de grace* — the literal meaning must be changed into a deeper meaning. That is how Fosdick and Willett want the proof texts treated which according to their literal meaning teach the old Christian doctrines; translate the old thought forms into modern categories. Hofmann got rid of the plaguing passages in the same way.<sup>283</sup> Why, any possible teaching may be constructed by means of this organic whole of Scripture. For instance, Scripture in

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We repudiate the absolute infallibility of the Apostles. . . . The Bible, then, is the Word of God not because of any theoretical explanation of divine inspiration but because as one connected, harmonious, authentic recorded whole, from beginning to end, the Sacred Scriptures are "they which testify of Christ." (*The Luth. Church Quart.*, 1936, p. 246ff.)

283) "In the case of Hofmann, too, the result [of operating with the "organic whole of Scripture"] was that he denied such fundamental doctrines as the inspiration of Scripture, the *satisfactio vicaria*, original sin, etc." (Pieper, *op. cit.*, I, p. 440.)



itself contains not one word on "conversion in Hades." L. Dahle readily admits that. However, if we "go back to the fundamental principles of Scriptural teaching," we are forced to come to such a conclusion. (See *Theol. Quart.*, 1908, p. 25.) — Proof texts *his*, proof texts *her* — what counts is Scripture as a whole.

Let Dr. H. Martensen conclude this section. "The use of the Scriptures in dogmatics must not consist in a mere appeal to single passages, or in a comparison of single passages; this mode of procedure too often betrays the narrow-minded view that nothing is true which cannot be proved to be literally found in the Bible. We agree rather on this point with Schleiermacher when he says that in our Biblical studies there should be constantly developed a more comprehensive use of the Scriptures, in which stress shall not be laid on single passages taken apart from the context, but in which attention is paid only to the longer and specially fruitful sections, in order thus to penetrate the course of thought of the sacred writers, and find there the same combinations as those on which the results of dogmatic study themselves rest." (*Christian Dogmatics*, p. 53.)

This, then, is the fifth objection: the doctrine of Verbal Inspiration is wrong because it results in an atomistic use of Scripture, permits and calls for the use of the proof-text methods, and will not permit science or the *Schriftganze*, etc., to change the literal meaning of individual passages.<sup>284</sup> What is to be said of this objection? Three things are wrong with it.

284) Recall how *The Luth. Church Quart.* in the first quotation submitted in the present article links the two statements that verbal inspiration is not taught in some of the U. L. C. seminaries and that the employment of the proof-text method indicates an atomistic conception of the Scriptures. Recall Gibson's statement that those who use proof texts do so because they hold that it is really God, not men, who wrote these words. Read the review of Dr. M. Graebner's *The Lord's Prayer and the Christian Life in The Luth. Church Quart.*, 1938, p. 224: "While the clarity and tone of writing are beyond criticism, one may question the adequacy of some of the demonstrations offered. The Bible is used as a source of proof in quite a literal sense. 'The Word of God came to prophets, evangelists, and apostles of old in the form of direct revelation from God on high. God spoke to them directly and gave them messages to transmit. . . . ' (The person who prays the Lord's Prayer sincerely, thoughtfully, and devoutly) will read the Bible with the determination of learning what God desires to teach him, and not with the idea of comparing God's Word with the so-called results of historical criticism or of scientific investigation.'" The latest pronouncement of *The Luth. Church Quart.* (April, 1942, p. 154) on this point: "The first of these two conceptions (of inspiration defined at Omaha in the discussion of the Pittsburgh Agreement) has to do chiefly with the composition of Scripture. The process of inspiration is so far defined that it can be given a descriptive adjective; it is *verbal inspiration*. It means that the words of Scripture stand as they are because the Holy Spirit put them there just as they are. This conception of inspiration is set forth in the *Brief Statement of the Missouri Synod*. It appeals to certain proof texts and interprets them in the light of this conception."



1) There is something wrong with the demand, basic to the whole present discussion, that the Christian doctrine must be derived not from the *sedes doctrinae*, the texts setting forth the doctrine, but from "Scripture as a whole." This demand asks us to perform an intellectual impossibility. We can understand what "the whole of Scripture" and "Scripture as a whole" means, but we cannot understand what "the whole of Scripture" as put into opposition to the component parts of Scripture means. Kliefoth's characterization of this concept has become classical. He calls it "eine unvollziehbare Phrase"—a phrase which cannot be used intelligently, an inconceivable concept.<sup>285</sup> Can the whole differ from the parts? Can you make the whole, which you get by adding the component parts, change these parts into something else? Common intelligence figures that when you have learned what all the single proof texts teach concerning doctrine—or any other subject of which they treat—you know what the whole Scripture teaches. But Schleiermacher and Hofmann and the *Luth. Church Quart.* tell us that the whole of Scripture cancels what the parts of Scripture declare. "The objections to the verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture do not manifest great ingenuity or mental acumen, but the very opposite. . . . The critics of His Word lose their common sense and become utterly unreasonable and illogical." In the course of this study we have dealt with a number of cases in point. The present case seems to be the prize fatuity. These men are asking us to believe that parts of Scripture are not inspired but the whole of Scripture is inspired. Hofmann tells us, keeping a sober face, that the message of not a single apostle is absolutely free of error, but their message as a whole, *die Gesamtverkuendigung*, produces an absolutely true and unerring knowledge of Christ. It passes comprehension. These men could not qualify as teachers of mathematics. They would not be permitted to teach their pupils that while the individual theorems are faulty and erroneous the science of mathematics as a whole is the absolute truth. They would not try to do that, of course, because they are convinced that the single theorems are true. But in theology, they think, a similar absurdity will pass. The whole of Scripture is trustworthy while the component parts of Scripture are faulty and untrustworthy! "There is nothing too

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285) Pieper calls it a "senseless phrase. . . . Kliefoth is right, when, in his criticism of Hofmann's *Schriftbeweis*, he calls this placing of Scripture as a whole and its separate passages into opposition to one another an 'unachievable thought' ('unvollziehbare Phrase'). The fact of the matter is that we can obtain the whole of the Christian doctrine only in this way that we take the several doctrines from those passages—observing of course the context—which treat of the respective doctrines." (*Op. cit.*, p. 243.)



absurd," said H. M'Intosh, "to have been stated or imagined on this question." (*Is Christ Infallible and the Bible True?* p. 274.)<sup>286</sup>

And remember, the impossible *Schriftganze* is the big gun in this particular assault on Verbal Inspiration. Since we dare not be atomistic, the moderns declare, but must deal with Scripture as an organic whole, Verbal Inspiration must go. But viewed closely, this mighty, high-sounding *Schriftganze* turns out to be utter nonsense. Verily, the Lord taketh the wise in their own craftiness. Aiming to be wise, they became fools.<sup>287</sup>

286) Prof. A. Zich, in *The Northwestern Lutheran*, Nov. 10, 1935: "The editor of the *Presbyterian Tribune*, holding that the Bible contains 'inaccuracies, contradictions, outworn views, still says: 'Note also that this which we declare to be "the only infallible rule of faith and practice" is not any particular verse, sentence, or passage, nor all the verses in the Old and New Testaments, taken each by itself. It is "the Word of God" which is "the Scriptures." Clearly that means that our authority in matters of faith and practice is found in the Bible as a whole. Only as we take it all together, interpreting each particular statement in the light of its general purpose, spirit, and meaning, do we find that infallible guidance we need in order to believe and live rightly.' One might here object: How is any man to find out the 'general purpose, meaning, and spirit' of the whole if the particular 'verse, sentence, or passage' cannot be trusted because such verse, sentence, and passage may be inaccurate, self-contradictory, and outworn? If the component parts are unreliable, then how can the whole be 'infallible'? A chain is as weak as its weakest link; is it not? But we must not expect the detractors of Holy Writ to be reasonable. Very evidently the editor of the *Presbyterian Tribune* is trying hard to get away from some very clear teaching of the Bible in numerous single verses, sentences, and passages. . . ."

287) Some minor fatuities. J. Oman: "Doctrines are drawn from Holy Writ like legal decisions from the Statute Book. . . . As soon as it became "Thus saith the Scriptures," controversy entered the large field of differences in interpretation." (*Vision and Authority*, p. 182f.) *The Christian Century*, Feb. 10, 1937: "From Quakers to Roman Catholics, each claims to reflect the mind of Christ for his Church, and if anyone of them is right, Baptists must inevitably be wrong. Moreover, using the proof-text method, which Baptists themselves employ, each could draw a very respectable argument for its contentions from the New Testament." Distinguish between the illicit and the legitimate use of proof texts! It seems such a waste of time to call attention to this sophistry, committed also by other writers quoted above, that, because some abuse the proof-text method, the method itself is wrong. — Another sophistry is committed when these two statements are put in opposition: "The Bible is no collection of doctrinal statements" and "The Bible is a book of life." The Bible is both. — Another sophistry: Not all statements of the Bible are of the same importance, the genealogies are not so important as the Gospel. Nobody said that, and it has absolutely no bearing on the question whether every statement is authoritative. — Do not tell us that we need the whole of the Bible for the whole truth (we know that) when you propose to substitute in the next sentence for "all of the Bible" the fictitious "Scripture as a whole." — Luther helped to free us from the prison house of verbal infallibility? That is a case of ignorance. — The use of proof texts is not Lutheran but Calvinistic? Another case of ignorance. Calvin bowed to the authority of the letter, true. But so did Luther, only more so. — No; it is Catholic, says C. Stange. "Es ist eine Nachwirkung der katholischen Auffassung, wenn der Versuch gemacht wird, die einzelnen dogmatischen Aussagen aus der Schrift abzuleiten." (*Dogmatik*, I, p. 193.) We cannot go on any longer.



2) The refusal to bow to the authority of the letter and to accept every single chapter, section, verse, and sentence of the Bible as it stands — to rail at the proof-text method — is unworthy of the Christian. It does not spring from respect for Holy Scripture. Scripture asks us to treat all the words of Scripture as the very words of God (2 Tim. 3:16), precious beyond expression (Rom. 15:4). It springs from the pride of the carnal heart, which places the findings of human science above the assertions of Scripture and, in addition to that, does not like to have the theologian play the humble role of a catechumen, sitting at the foot of his teacher and simply listening to what he is told. Men do not like to take over what the apostles and prophets handed down to them and pass it on without any addition and elaboration and improvement of their own. It tickles the pride of the flesh to have something to do with constructing the saving doctrine. It makes so great an impression when the learned theologian tells his hearers that the fathers indeed knew no better than to take the doctrine from these simple proof texts, but that now men have arisen who are able to deal with the mysterious *Schriftganze* and shed new light on these old, misunderstood passages.<sup>288</sup> It is the pride of the flesh which is offended at Verbal Inspiration. If the doctrine of verbal inspiration be true, nothing is left for the theologian to do but to take over what he finds in Scripture and repeat it. What, cries out Sherwood Eddy, simply quote proof texts and blindly obey a mechanical, external authority? What, cries out H. W. Robinson, is the "mechanical use of a verbal oracle" our only business? J. M. Gibson knew a better way. "He began," says P. T. Forsyth, "in the old theory of inspiration, in which he would have remained had his been a metallic, inert, or mechanical mind." But he learned the secret of the *Schriftganze!* (Preface to Gibson's book, p. XIV.) This "*schlendrianmaessige Reproduktion*" of Biblical statements, says Holmstroem, does not suit the stature of the modern theologian. It is the pride of the flesh which is scandalized at the demand of Verbal Inspiration to let the text stand as it reads, and refuses to practice "atomistic verbalism." Scripture describes the man who is wise in his own conceit, who will "not consent to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ," as one who "is proud, [puffed up] knowing nothing," 1 Tim. 6:3 f.

May God give us grace to become and remain "atomistic verbalists." That is the genuine Lutheran attitude. In the con-

288) F. Buechsel: "Dies Gesamtzeugnis des Neuen Testaments zu erheben, erfordert ein beträchtliches Mass theologischer Arbeit." (*Die Offenbarung Gottes*, p. 112.) Professor Volck: "Das Befragen der Schrift ist keine so leichte Sache," particularly, of course, the investigation of "Scripture as a whole." (See Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 398.)



troversy on the Lord's Supper Luther employed the proof-text method and said: "The text stands there too mightily." (XV:2050.) Zwingli scoffed at Luther for clinging to "fuenf arme und elende Worte," and the moderns would have told him to look beyond the proof text into the *Schriftganze*, but Luther answers: "They are revealing what kind of spirit is in them and how much they think of God's Word, ridiculing these precious words as five poor, miserable words; they do not believe that they are God's words. For if they believed that they are God's words, they would not call them miserable, poor words, but would prize one tittle and letter more highly than the whole world." (XX:1040.) Rall tells us that "Paul had not the faintest idea that centuries later theologians would be building up their theories on this phrase or that sentence in his letters" (*Op. cit.*, p. 229), but Luther thought that that exactly was Paul's idea: "It is impossible, absolutely impossible, that there is a single letter in Paul which the entire Church should not follow and observe." (XIX:20.) Surely, Luther was an atomistic verbalist: "a single letter, yea, a single tittle, of Scripture counts for more than heaven and earth. (IX:650.) Luther was a humble Christian. He was not ashamed to be a catechumen of the apostles. We are not prophets, he says, but "what we can do and will do, if we, too, are sanctified and have the Holy Spirit, is to boast of being catechumens and pupils of the prophets, who simply repeat and preach what we have heard and learned from the prophets and apostles" (III:1890), and learned it not from the *Schriftganze* but from those poor, miserable words of the proof texts: "Zum andern sollst du . . . die muendliche Rede und buchstabische Worte im Buch immer treiben und treiben" (XIV:435), stick to the words lettered in the Book. Oh, what an atomistic verbalist! "O du demuetiger Luther!" was Walther's comment on this treatise of Luther. And Luther learned his theology from the apostles. The proof-text method is genuinely apostolic. Paul would base his argument on a single word! Gal. 3:16! Christ Himself used the proof-text method. "It is written"! (Matt. 4.) "Have ye not read?" (Matt. 19:4.) Our Lord bases His argument on one single word, John 10:35, and when He adds, "The Scripture cannot be broken," He condemns the *Schriftganze* method, which breaks one Scripture, one proof text, after the other.<sup>289)</sup> And so

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289) B. B. Warfield: "What is the particular thing in Scripture for the confirmation of which the indefectible authority of Scripture is thus (John 10:34f.) invoked? It is one of its most casual clauses—more than that, the very form of its expression in one of its most casual clauses. This means, of course, that in the Savior's view the indefectible authority of Scripture attaches to the very form of expression of its most casual clauses. It belongs to Scripture through and through, down to its most minute particulars, that it is of indefectible authority."



we of the Missouri Synod and our brethren are going to retain the proof-text method. We shall keep on saying with Walther: "It is written—damit ist die Sache abgemacht." (*Walther and the Church*, p. 20.) And: "Wenn Paulus hier (2 Tim. 3:15) sagt: 'die heiligen Buchstaben', and darunter 'alles Geschriebene' im Alten Testament zusammenfasst, so soll damit recht hervorgehoben werden, dass jeder Teil, auch der geringste Teil, jeder Buchstabe so ist, wie man von dieser Schrift aussagt, heilig. Wir sollen glauben: Jeder Buchstabe ist vom Heiligen Geist." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1911, p. 154.) "The Brief Statment of the Missouri Synod appeals to certain proof texts," says the *Luth. Church Quart.*, and we thank the *Quarterly* for spreading that far and wide. Ladd ridicules Calov for saying: "It is impious and profane audacity to change a single point in the Word of God and to substitute a smooth breathing for a rough one, or a rough for a smooth" (*op. cit.*, p. 58); but Calov can appeal to Christ, as Walther in connection with the words just quoted appeals to Christ, who insists on the authority of every jot and tittle (Matt. 5:18).—If it should happen that we misapply a proof text, we are grateful to him who censures us for that. We do not want to be guilty of an "atomistic use of Scripture" in the narrow sense. But when men censure us for using the "old atomistic method of proof texts" and call us "atomistic verbalists," we consider that high praise.

3) The proposal to substitute the *Schriftganze* for the proof-text method is fraught with deadly peril. They offer us "Scripture as a whole" and take away from us the whole Scripture. First they told us that nothing is lost if only the Gospel truths in the Bible are retained. Then they said, when we began to study John 3:16: Take care—the words of John 3:16 are not inspired; you must not rely on the words, for that would be mechanical inspiration. And now they are telling us that it is futile to deal with single texts at all; that would be atomistic; John 3:16 in itself means nothing at all. There is nothing left of the Bible; doctrinal issues can no longer be settled by means of proof texts, as the *Christian Century* informed us; and when the troubled Christian takes up one of his cherished golden passages to comfort his soul, he is told that individual passages no longer count.

(*Revelation and Inspiration*, p. 86).—J. L. Neve: "It is frequently said that the Bible is not first of all a book of proof texts (*dicta probantia*) for statements of dogmatics, because it is preeminently a means of grace. There is truth in this remark, of course; but because theology deals with things pertaining to salvation, a Church with a real appreciation of the Scriptures as a means of grace will always want to have her creed, her teaching, her dogmatics, in harmony with such Scripture. Christ proved from Scripture; the New Testament writers did it; the Church of all time has done it. The practice is inseparable from Lutheranism." (*Churches and Sects of Christendom*, p. 200.)



As Volck in effect said: You must first find out what meaning this passage gets from its relation to Scripture as a whole. "Das heisst aber," says Dr. A. L. Graebner, "einem die Bibel ganz nehmen. That is taking all of the Bible from me. . . . When in my dying hour my senses weaken, the verse 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin' should be sufficient to strengthen and keep my faith. But now they tell me: No; only the organic whole can do that." (*Proc. Syn. Conf.*, 1886 p. 24.)<sup>290</sup>

No, no, say the moderns; we have taken from you only the individual texts but have given you the Bible as a whole.—But we cannot use your *Schriftganzen*. We do not know what it is. And you do not know it. You have never told us by what exact rules you came by it. You have nowhere published a syllabus of it. The thing is too hazy for a man to deal with it. It has less substance than a dream. We try to grasp its message, and it constantly dissolves. There is no certainty of doctrine and of faith where this nebulous thing serves as basis. Says the *Australian Lutheran*: "The interpretation of Scripture operating with 'Scripture is one organic whole,' general scope of Scripture, entirety of Scripture, 'das Schriftganze,' allied with the subjective faith of the theologian as a cojudge of doctrine, sets aside the *sedes doctrinae*, the clear Scripture passages which treat of the particular doctrines, and *destroys all certainty of doctrine*." (See *CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY*, X, p. 886.) Of course there is no certainty in the new method. E. Grubb is frank to declare: "The indiscriminate use of Scripture as a single source of equal value, as a quarry from every part of which stones may be indifferently collected to build up the temple of constructive dogmatics, will, it is hoped, soon pass away never to return. The new view does not, it may be urged, *give the same certainty as the old*." He continues with the cynical observation: "But if the old is becoming incredible, what then? May we not be meant to understand that the desire for infallibility is itself unhealthy?" (*Op. cit.*, p. 240.) There is no certainty about the *Schriftganze* because they have spun it out of

290) We read in *Modern Religious Liberalism*, by J. Horsch, p. 30: "The real difficulty of our time, when we come to probe it, is the de-thronement of the Bible from its position of unquestioned authority. From the earliest period of Christianity, even in the writings of the earliest Fathers, the Sacred Scriptures were held to be the standard and the test of Christian truth: nothing was to be taught as essential except what was contained in them or could be proved by them; and up to the middle of the last century the imposing fortress of the Book remained practically unquestioned and certainly unbreached. A quotation from any part of it carried unquestioned weight, and decisions drawn from its decretals were the settlement of all strife.—[*Liberal*] Protestants have lost their Bible and, in losing it, have lost their religion. How can they shelter in a building which is demolished or which is ever hidden by the scaffolding about it, necessary for perpetual repairs?"



their own heads and because they are not yet through with this spinning operation. The Anglican Commission has told us that Scripture alone does not furnish the standard of doctrine but that this standard is being unfolded "in the experience of the Church," and R. F. Horton told us that, when revelation has reached its crowned completeness, it will serve as a criterion. "Let the devil wait for that," said Luther, "I cannot wait so long." (VIII:100.)

There is no certainty about this "Scripture as a whole." We ask the modern theologian how he knows that his *Schriftganze* — every theologian is at liberty to construct his own — is the right one, and the only answer he can give is that he feels it must be the right one. We cannot follow a leader who forsakes the well-established rules and simply follows his "intuition." We cannot follow a theological leader whose only guarantee for the truth of his teaching is his own word. Luther has warned us against these dreamers: "They speak such things only in order to lead us away from Scripture and make themselves masters over us that we should believe their *dream sermons* (Traumpredigten)" (V:334.) And they refuse to tell us just how to construct the *Schriftganze* and just what it contains. "Boake Carter is writing a book in which he will tell of a 'secret Bible.' 'Research now going on bears out my contention that there are two Bibles,' Carter said. "There is the 'revealed Bible,' which is being used today. Then there is a 'secret Bible' which was written in code and carefully hidden. It has remained secret until this day.' Carter said the 'secret Bible' contains divinely inspired rules for all human conduct. . . ." (See *The Lutheran*, Nov. 4, 1941.) We are not going to base our hope of salvation on Boake Carter's "secret Bible." And we are not going to base our doctrine and faith on the mysterious *Schriftganze*.

Will you base your faith and hope of salvation on the conceit of some theologian? Just that is what they are offering you under the name of the *Schriftganze*. Luther's words, addressed to the *Schwaermer* of his day, fit the *Schwaermerei* under discussion exactly. "Grund und Ursache solches ihres Duenkels ist erstlich, dass man diese Worte 'Das ist mein Leib' [or any other proof text] muesse aus den Augen tun und zuvor durch den Geist die Sachen bedenken. . . . Da hast du eine gewisse Regel, die dich besser leitet in alle Wahrheit, denn der Heilige Geist selber tun kann, naemlich, wo die Heilige Schrift deinen Duenkel irret oder hindert, da tue sie aus den Augen und folge zuerst deinem Duenkel [conceit], so triffst du den rechten Weg gewiss allerdinge fein." (XX:1022.) You may be sure that those who substitute "Scripture as a whole" for the individual statements of Scripture are not pleased with these individual statements, else they would not tell us to do



away with them. And you may be sure that what they are offering us instead is not God's Word and revelation; else God would Himself have set it down in His Book. (The moderns surely are not going to tell us that they are receiving special revelations from heaven!) And since it is not God's Word, it is their own word, their own product, the product of their conceit. Dr. Pieper: "The 'whole of Scripture' or the 'whole of the Christian doctrine' which is constructed without considering the individual passages that treat of the doctrine is purely *man's own product*." (*Op. cit.*, I, p. 244.) Pieper continues: "This inconceivable concept — the whole of Scripture — as opposed to the individual statements is made use of to *put Scripture out of action* in the name of Scripture." Again: "This pretended 'Scripture as a whole' is made to serve as a check on the individual statements for the purpose of putting the quietus on Scripture itself. . . . He who obtains the 'whole' in any other way than through the parts, is fabricating his own Scripture; he is no longer a pupil but a critic of the word of Scripture." (II, p. 131.) The proposal to replace the individual statements of Scripture with "the whole of Scripture" is fraught with deadly peril. He who accepts the proposal is losing all of Scripture and getting in exchange fallible human opinions. True, this mysterious "whole of Scripture" as handled by some theologians leaves some Biblical doctrines intact. But in that case the "whole of Scripture" is guaranteed to give a greater assurance of the truth of the doctrine. And so the Christians are asked, in every case, to trust for their salvation in the vaporings of some poor little human being. The Christians are being solicited to trade in all of their good Bible for a counterfeit "whole."<sup>291</sup>

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291) A similar imposition is practiced when the Christians are told to apply the spurious "analogy of faith" to individual passages of Scripture in order to get their "real" sense, a sense different from the literal sense. Recall the statement of Dr. E. E. Flack: "No fundamental doctrine rests on a single isolated passage. . . . It requires the analogy of Scripture, the whole Scripture, . . . to establish the truth as it is in Christ Jesus." The classical statement on this point is: "The Christian doctrines form for the believer, especially for the theologian, a recognizable, harmonious whole or system, which is constructed out of the perfectly clear passages of Holy Writ. This organic whole is the highest norm for the interpretation of Scripture, more important than parallelism, the comparison of the various passages which treat of a certain doctrine; in other words, it forms the analogy of faith." A full discussion of this analogy-of-faith canon is found in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1904, p. 406ff. The same matter is treated in the article "Schriftauslegung und Analogie des Glaubens," *Lehre und Wehre*, 1907, p. 11ff. It will be noticed that this "analogy of faith" is practically the same as the *Schriftganze*, and instead of "a similar imposition" we might have used the term "the same imposition." It has the same disastrous effect: it cancels any clear passage of Scripture which is declared to be out of harmony with the "harmonious whole" which the theologian has constructed. There is an "analogy of faith." Luther and the fathers "understand by analogy of



We shall not do it. We do not want the counterfeit "whole" because we have the real whole of Scripture. There is nothing atomistic about our treatment of Scripture. To us it is an unbreakable, indivisible whole. "Not only are the various writings, when considered separately, worthy of God, but they together exhibit one complete and harmonious whole, unimpaired by excess

faith the clear Scripture passages that need no explanation but shine in their own light. These passages together are the 'analogy' or the 'rule of faith.' See Apology, *Trigl.*, 441, 60." (Pieper, I, p. 437.) "These clear passages are the *rule*, according to which every faithful teacher must explain dark passages as far as this is possible." (*Loc. cit.*) Operating, however, with the spurious "analogy of faith," theologians claim the right to divest a clear passage of its clear meaning in order to bring it into harmony with some other passage. That is not permissible. Christian theology does not engage in the business of harmonizing. Any teaching, clearly revealed, must stand, even though it seem out of harmony with another teaching, also clearly revealed. The harmonizers, however, feel justified to change any clear teaching, the meaning of any clear passage, in order to establish "a harmonious whole," to save their spurious "analogy of faith." To illustrate. At the time of the controversy on Conversion and Election these statements were made: "This universal comfort of the Gospel can only be preserved if the few texts of Holy Writ, in part not easily understood, which treat of the selection of a few persons, who will unfailingly be saved, are *not interpreted in such a way that the many clear texts of the universal grace of God towards all men are darkened or suppressed, but if, on the contrary, the few dark passages are interpreted by means of the many clear passages.*" (Our italics.) Again: "The author [of a certain book] says it is vain and foolish to deny election because we cannot harmonize it with the teaching that God loves all men. Our reply is this: If a doctrine *cannot be harmonized with John 3:16, it must be contrary to the Word of God and should therefore be dropped.*" There are many clear passages which teach particular election, the election of grace. But in order to harmonize them with other clear passages which teach universal grace, the analogy-of-faith theologians simply stamp the first group of passages "dark passages" and change their meaning. Walther certainly was right in saying: "To correct one doctrine of Scripture by another because reason insists that this passage is obscure and involves a contradiction, to correct it, yes, delete it entirely, on the plea that dark passages must receive their interpretation through the clear passages—dieses ist ein entsetzlicher Frevel." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1891, p. 68.) Luther: "To interpret *clear and certain* passages by means of other passages is making sport of the truth and hiding the light behind clouds. Do you say that all passages must be interpreted by means of other passages? That would be turning Scripture into an endless, rude chaos." (XX:327.) Dr. Pieper's characterization of the spurious "analogy of faith: "Unter 'dem Ganzen der Schrift' versteht man nicht die Schrift selbst, sondern die *menschlich gereimte* Schrift, die Schrift, insofern sie von Menschen, insonderheit von den klugen Theologen, so *zurecht-geschnitten* ist, dass sie mit den *menschlichen* Gedanken von dem Zusammenhang der einzelnen Lehren sich reimt, ein dem Menschen 'erkennbares' harmonisches Ganzes bildet. Das 'Ganze der Schrift,' das diese Leute im Sinne haben, ist ein *menschliches Machwerk*. Und wenn sie nun nach diesem *ihrem* 'Ganzen' die Schrift auslegen, so moegen sie noch so oft versichern, dass sie Schrift *durch* Schrift erklaren: tatsaechlich wandeln sie genau in den Wegen der Papisten, Schwaermer und Rationalisten; sie legen die Schrift *nach* ihren *eigenen* Gedanken aus. Ihre 'Analogie des Glaubens' ist die Analogie *des menschlichen Ich.*" (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1907, p. 13.)



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or defect." (Bengel.) One whole, written by one Author, every word God's word. Ask Dr. C. C. Hein what the whole of Scripture means, and he answers: "To the Lutheran Church the Bible as a whole as well as in all its parts is the pure infallible Word of God. . . . May Lutheranism preserve to the Christian world its own precious Reformation heritage: the Word of God, the whole Word of God and nothing but the Word of God." (*The Second Luth. World Convention*, p. 74 f.) Ask Luther and he answers: "The entire Holy Scriptures are ascribed to the Holy Ghost." (III: 1889.) And the Holy Ghost in Scripture assures us: From Gen. 1:1 to Rev. 22:21 it is My Book, every word My word. We do not treat the Bible atomistically. We do not make of it a chaotic medley, parts contributed by the Holy Spirit, parts by this and that fallible human writer. We leave that to the moderns. Rudelbach tells them to reserve the term "atomistic" for themselves: "Auf Semler fussen wesentlich alle diejenigen unter den Neueren, die die Inspiration der Schrift als eine teilbare Groesse behandeln, nur dass sie, als Bemerkungs-Rhapsoden, noch atomistischer sind." (*Zeitschr. f. d. Gesamte Luth. Theol. u. Kirche*, 1842, zweites Quartalh., p. 10.) Not we but they tear Holy Scripture piecemeal. We treat it as a unity — and we treat it as an organic unity, one organic, harmonious whole. "Scripture," says Luther, and say we, "forms a harmonious whole and all examples and histories, yea, the entire Scripture in all its parts, aims at this, that one should learn Christ." (III:18.) We know that every book, every chapter, every verse, is integrated in this wonderful organism. We may not, in many cases, see the relation. We poor sinners know only in part. But we know that not a single member of this organism is useless or harmful. The poor, supercilious *Schriftganze*-theologians imagine that they know better than the Holy Ghost how to construct a harmonious whole, lay their unholy hands upon the sacred Book, and turn it over to the Church as a disfigured, mangled body. Blessed is he who receives Scripture as God gave it, and retains every verse and every statement in its literal sense. "We must have the whole Christ of the whole Bible if we want to have a whole salvation." (L. Keyser.) As you value your spiritual health, let Scripture stand as it is, with every part of it working towards that one end — the soul's salvation. "Darum heisst's: rund und rein, ganz und alles geglaubt oder nichts geglaubt. Der Heilige Geist laesst sich nicht trennen noch teilen, dass er ein Stueck sollte wahrhaftig und das andere falsch lehren oder glauben lassen." (Luther, XX:1781.)

(To be continued)

TH. ENGELDER

Corrigendum: In the July number, page 503, twentieth line from top, read "dynamical" for "dictation."