

Doctrine of Inspiration

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It must have become evident that a correct doctrine of inspiration is of great importance. The doctrine must be of such a nature as to reckon with all the facts involved. Particularly, it must face the vexed question of Errancy or Inerrancy. Furthermore, various theories of inspiration have been offered: these need to be carefully examined. Some of these may sound very acceptable, but may be deceptive in their value: sometimes a plausible name may be deftly shuffled off for what is really another matter.

We cannot of course enter into everything, and must confine ourselves to our main purpose, and examine all that has bearing in this connection upon the principal matter in hand.

In our day the storm-center seems to be largely the question as to whether inspiration is of a so-called “static” or “dynamic” kind. Liberals affix the former designation to the theory of the orthodox, and they themselves glory in the latter name. They just love to use that word “static” as if its mere application will at once and infallibly act as a withering blight on all orthodox pretension. They are very welcome to the use of the word “dynamic” for themselves, but we indignantly disown their characterization of *our* position.

“Static” is a word which applies to something mechanical, unchangeable. Besides, there is an equivocal element in the designation. Conceivably, you may call the Divine Being “static” if you think of Him as unchangeable and as that one “with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning” (James 1:17). However, from another point of view, we must consider Him in the light of Jesus’ saying: “My Father worketh even until now, and I work” (John 6:17). The older theologians very correctly and beautifully spoke of God as “*actus purissimus*”. In like manner we Reformed do not acknowledge the correctness of the designation “static” as applicable to our view of Inspiration, for is not the “word of God living, and active”? (Heb. 4:12). Besides, the composition of the Bible, as our quotations above show, was not mechanical but allowed of all manner of diversity of style and recognized human initiative. Neither do we acknowledge the contents of our theology as being “static”. For while great principles have been found which steadily refuse to capitulate to others; and while the great dogmas have gained a pretty well settled form, nevertheless there will always remain room for further detail, for a more extensive tracing of their correlations amongst themselves and their relations to the endlessly diversified

realities of life: this is not “static”. The truth as it exists in the Divine mind is the most absolutely static of all, whilst at the same time it makes Him most Self-sufficient rejoicing in Himself and in all His works.

But is the Liberal as well off as he thinks when he stands by the characterization of his view of Inspiration as being “dynamic”? It *sounds* well. It looks as if it fits the word of Scripture: “*moved* by the Holy Spirit”. But what does *he* make of this text? Not what we do.

The same question came to the fore in the controversy in which Dr. J. J. Van Oosterzee, of the theological faculty of the University of Utrecht, attacked Dr. A. Kuyper on account of his Rectorial Oration on “Higher Criticism”, to which we have already adverted above. This was in 1882. And Dr. Kuyper replied in part as follows:

Dr. Van Oosterzee makes it appear as if on our part a certain *mechanical* theory of Inspiration were defended, over against which he then places his own as the *dynamic* theory. We protest as well against the distinctions between the two as against the qualification. Every mechanical idea of inspiration we reject, detest and abhor. “Mechanical” is the word which serves to indicate that which is low, ignoble. To apply this to the work of the Lord God would be degradation to the most glorious working of the power of God, ascribing unto Him what is unworthy even with man, and thus to make of the deep mystery of Scripture a representation as if it had come about through magic or mechanics.

Never did even our fathers adhere to such a view; and we protest all the stronger because this is one of those ugly terms with which our opponents dub us. That word “mechanical” is a term of reproach with which highly pretentious circles in Germany sought to undermine the authority of the Scriptures.

Over against the machine whose parts man puts together, stands the organism which is God’s creation. Therefore, we may never think of Scripture other than as an organism. And since the Lord God is not a man who stands antithetically over against the instrument of His revelation, but is an omnipresent, immanent God who upholds His creature, and in whom he lives and moves and has his being, therefore the operation of God in and upon the instrument of His revelation may never be thought of other than as organic.

The antithesis made by Dr. Van Oosterzee does not apply. Any one can see that over against a machine does not stand power, but over against that which has been put together and manufactured stands that which is constituted by natural process, created from a germ. Over against the mechanical therefore stands only the organic.

The word "dynamic" has come from an entirely different quarter: it is of pantheistic origin. It owes its origin to quite a different antinomy than the mechanical as over against the organic.

From of old it was held on Scriptural grounds that in God's works the word was first, and afterwards and out of the word was life. But the Ethical School inverts this; not only that in theology does this, but also that widely extended ethical tendency which as a philosophical school and as a philosophical power has permeated all lands and every domain of thought, and of which the Ethical School in theology is only one of its tempered expressions. This School then declares that instead of the word being first it shall henceforth be life first and out of that the word. This accounts for the fact that you find among these people such aversion to exactitude of definition, accuracy of ideas, firmness of principle; and alongside of this you will always find a retreating to the faith of the heart, to the mysticism of the soul, to the hidden life, to the influence of personality, to the atmosphere which surrounds one, and finally even to the unconscious. All the struggle against the Confessions, against dogmatics, against a definite church polity proceeds from that same source, out of that fatal fountain of pantheism which accepting a process in God and so doing away with the living, personal God, allows the deepest, richest revelations of life to come forth from the soul of man, slowly on of course, and tends to expression. Among these people the term "dynamic" is at home. They mean by it that from God influences only proceed, indefinite, unconscious.

When this view is held among Christians they represent things on this fashion: God causes influences and powers to flow into the one and not into the other; these may be increased; these may be set in motion. But that is all that God does. Thoughts, expectations, impulses, etc. proceed spontaneously: all is a process in man which goes on as naturally as the rising of vapor from a steam boiler, etc.

It is natural therefore that theologians in Germany, who hold this view, correctly located Verbal or conscious Inspiration over against the Dynamic or unconscious. This indicates with incontrovertible accuracy all the breadth of the chasm which yawns between the Word of Scripture and this philosophical school.

God's revelation never was made mechanically, but always organically. Even in His giving of the Law written with His own finger on tables of stone we really have to do with the creative work of God's omnipresent power" (*De Heraut*, No. 230).

Having treated the term "dynamic" as applied to Inspiration, we shall now treat of two other terms both of which belong to the orthodox camp, viz., Plenary and Verbal Inspiration. The former term applies to the completeness of extent, and the latter to the particularity of intent. Against the former perhaps little objection has been raised on general lines; but the latter term has met with strong opposition. Briggs in his "The Bible, the Church, and the Reason" directs the

strongest kind of artillery-fire against this view; he points out numerous cases of error in the Scripture; he cites even Calvin and other orthodox writers as admitting such errors. Likewise Dr. John DeWitt in his "What is Inspiration?" did the very same thing, arguing in favor of Errancy and against what is called Verbal Inspiration. And the orthodox in America have labored hard to defend Verbal Inspiration and Inerrancy; and without being able to make headway against the opposition.

In view of the fact that such theologians as Kuyper and Bavinck of The Netherlands, have occupied the strongest kind of ground on the absolute authority of Scripture, accepting the Scripture in its entirety as the Word of God, holding that it not merely *contains* the Word of God but that it in its entirety *is* the Word of God, nevertheless it will almost shock many to hear that they do not precisely stand for so-called Verbal Inspiration, but they designate their theory as Organic Inspiration, a form in which they trouble themselves little with the ideas of Errancy or Inerrancy.

We can best give an account of the matter by quoting from the Dogmatic Theology of Prof. Dr. Herman Bavinck, late of the *Free University of Amsterdam*, a man of wide learning, and great ability, and among the Reformed circles in The Netherlands a theologian of the highest authority, and advocating in the matter of Inspiration the same view as Dr. Kuyper:

Holy Scripture nowhere furnishes a clearly formulated dogma of inspiration, but it gives the material in all its elements which are necessary for the construction of the doctrine. It teaches the inspiration of Scripture in the same sense and in the same manner as clearly and plain, but also formulated it in abstract generalizations just as little as the dogma of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, of the Atonement, etc. Inspiration is a fact taught by Scripture itself. Jesus and the Apostles gave witness to it. It speaks of itself as such. Does this deserve to be respected? Whoever makes his doctrine of the Scripture dependent upon historical investigation after its origin and structure, begins already to reject the witness of Scripture itself, and hence does not stand in the faith. The facts and phenomena of Scripture, the results of scientific investigation, may serve to throw some light upon the doctrine of the Scripture concerning herself, but they can never nullify the facts as such. While then one party affirms that only such an inspiration is acceptable as agrees with the phenomena of Scripture, the other party proceeds from the principle that the phenomena of Scripture are consistent with the self-witness of Scripture, not as Criticism views them, but as they are as a matter of fact. (I. 339-342).

Scripture sets the pace in regarding the speaking of God through the prophets as organically as possible. There is a difference

between the prophets and the apostles, and again between these amongst themselves. Moses stands at the head of the prophets: God spake with him as a friend with a friend. In the case of Isaiah the impulse of the Spirit exhibits a different character than in the case of Ezechiel; Jeremiah's prophecies are distinguished from those of Zachariah and Daniel for their simplicity and naturalness. In all the prophets of the Old Testament the impulse of the Spirit is more or less transcendent: it comes from above and falls upon them. In the case of the apostles the Holy Spirit dwells immanent in their hearts, leads, enlightens and teaches them. There obtains therefore a great difference also in this organic character of Inspiration. All Scripture obliges us not to think of its inspiration as being mechanical, but organic. . . . In His revelation and inspiration the Spirit shows condescension, and He has adjusted Himself to the peculiarities, even to the weaknesses of human nature. Even as the Logos did not fall upon man but entered into human nature and formed it through the Spirit from whom it was received, so the Spirit of the Lord has also acted in Inspiration. He entered into the prophets themselves and has so taken them into His service and moulded them that they themselves investigated, thought, spoke and wrote. It is He that speaks through them, but at the same time they themselves speak and write. . . . The Holy Spirit did not arbitrarily decide to write at one time thus, and at another time, so; but entering the writers he also entered into their style and language — into their characters and peculiarities which He had Himself prepared and formed. Their personal experiences were thus used for the benefit of the church of God (345-349).

It does not follow that everything is full of divine wisdom, that every jot and tittle has an infinite content. Everything has its meaning, to be sure, but it is in that place and in that connection wherein it occurs. Scripture may not be regarded atomistically as if every word and letter, standing loose by itself and isolated, should as such have been inspired with a meaning of its own, and therefore with divine, infinite content. But Scripture must be taken organically so that that which is least has its place and meaning and still lies much farther from the center than other parts. In the human organism nothing is accidental, neither length of person, color or tint; all stand related to the life-center. Head and heart occupy a much more important place than hand and foot, than nails and hair (352, 353).

Furthermore, this organic view of Inspiration furnishes us the means of meeting many objections which are brought in against the inspiration of Scripture. It is of great significance that the Holy Spirit did not disdain anything human to be the vehicle of the divine. The

revelation of God is not abstractly supernatural, but has made use of the human, of persons and circumstances, of forms and usages, of history and customs. The personality of the writers has not been superseded, but has been maintained and sanctified. Inspiration therefore in no wise requires that we place the literary style and the esthetic taste of an Amos on an equal footing with Isaiah. Secondly, the organic view of revelation and inspiration implies that common and natural life has not been excluded, but has been made subservient to the thought of God. Sin in the best of its saints is mentioned, and error is never condoned. And while the revelation of God in Christ thus taken up in itself unrighteousness as an antithesis, it does not despise the human and weak. That which is Christian does not stand antithetically over against the human: it is the restoration and renewal thereof.

Thirdly, the object and end of Scripture are closely connected with its contents. . . . It serves to make us wise unto salvation. Holy Scripture has an exclusively religious-ethical end in view. It is not a book of science. It has the specific characteristic of being the principium of theology, whence we must read and investigate its contents *theologically*. In all the branches of study which are grouped about Scripture, the saving knowledge of God must determine these studies. For that purpose Scripture furnishes the full data. In that sense it is perfect and complete. Whoever would construct from Scripture a history of Israel, a biography of Jesus, a history of Israelitish or Old-Christian literature will find himself disappointed. Historical Criticism has forgotten this. Therefore, it runs up against contradictions which cannot be solved; it assorts sources and documents without end, etc., with the result of accentuating the confusion. Out of the four Gospels no Life of Jesus can be constructed; out of the Old Testament, no history of Israel. This was not the object of Holy Scripture. Inspiration does not exhibit the precise recording of the notary public. The harmonizing of the Gospels has been a failure” (358-360).

This determines the relation between Scripture and Science. As the book of the knowledge of God Scripture has indeed much to say also to the other sciences. . . . Much of what is mentioned in Scripture is of fundamental signification for various sciences as well. Creation and the fall of man, the unity of the human race, the deluge, the origin of the nations, and languages, etc., are all facts of great importance for scientific research. Science and art constantly come in contact with Scripture since the principia for all life are given in Scripture. But all these facts are not given in Scripture on their own account but for a theological purpose. . . . And furthermore, Scripture describes scientific matters not in the

exact language of the schools but after the first impressions which phenomena make upon man. Hence it speaks of the earth as the center of the universe, and it uses the language of daily experience. Had it used the language of the learned and spoken scientifically exact, it would have stood in the way of its own authority. (360-363).

To resume. The doctrine of inspiration amounts to very little on the Liberal interpretation, which appears more or less correct for all forms, we presume, in the following definition of Charles W. Gilkey: "What then is inspiration? The power of all great utterance of spiritual experience to move upon and call forth kindred response in the souls of men." We ask, Whence this spiritual experience? Its origin is not stated, but all their literature gives the impression that it is really of human origin as it is the "best that is in man."

The orthodox believe in the Divine Being as a Living personality who regards His creatures and is able to communicate with them. As to His method no one can help but feel that deep mystery resides in the manner thereof. But such mystery applies to so many other doctrines of Scripture. The separate elements which enter into them may to a very high degree admit of construction and comprehension, but we get into profound difficulty when the interrelations are to be pointed out. Our definitions may proceed in the right direction, but cannot be completed. This will appear on considering such doctrines as the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement; it troubles us in harmonizing free-will and human responsibility and we find it in seeking to harmonize the divine and the human factor in the doctrine of Inspiration. The Modernist with his naturalistic basis may solve all problems easily and crow over it, not being aware how superficial he is, but he simply ignores the Divine. The Reformed have truly grappled with the problems; they have recognized both elements to the full extent and have heroically proceeded to bring about a measurable solution withal confessing that depths beyond have halted their power of comprehension.

The trouble with us is that we endeavor to explain what ought to be adored as a mystery. You ridicule the mechanical theory of inspiration, but what do you say about the others, which are advanced and defended from time to time? Do they explain the unsearchable agency of the Holy Spirit in the inspiration of the Scripture? I must honestly say that there is no theory which satisfies me. But have I now to give up the fact of inspiration because all the theories fail to explain it? Who desires to sit in darkness because he is unable to explain the nature and origin of the light? Instead of throwing away our treasure and the assurance of its reality, on account of the mystery connected with it, let us try to become more and more acquainted with its rich contents. . . . Do we indulge in Bibliolatry? By no means. We worship our Father in Heaven in Jesus Christ His Son; but it is the Holy Spirit who directs our eyes to the wonderful picture of God in Christ we find in the Bible. . . . The Holy Scriptures are entirely human and at the same time

entirely Divine. Do you comprehend this? I do not, but I believe in the mystery of Inspiration” (Prof. N. M. Steffens, D.D.).

In his “Dictaten Dogmatiek” Dr. Kuyper brings this out in a striking fashion: “Scripture contains a divine and a human factor. This too was the case in the Son of God. Try it out and say: Christ was God in the flesh, but that flesh did not properly belong to the Mediator; separate the two, then you will have to do either of two: to follow the method of Docetism and declare the external form of Jesus negligible; or you must say the Divine was nothing except a human life endowed with high potencies. Suppose that a physician had gone to the Savior and had asked for permission to examine his flesh and blood in order to discover the divine in him. Everybody would have called this absurd. But it is just as absurd for the critic to dissect Scripture, human as its form appears to us, to lay bare the divine. As in an organism, the scalpel of the anatomist cannot indicate the beginning or the location of life.

In that wonderful and beautiful Section 46 of his Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology Dr. Kuyper thus puts the same matter: “Even as in the Mediator the Divine nature was wedded to the human and comes before us in the form and fashion of the latter, thus also the Divine factor in Scripture clothes itself in the garment of our human forms of thought. . . . As a literary product Holy Scripture takes the form of a servant. This confuses the vision. As many a painting of the French School at first shows only daubs and blotches, you must take time to find the right position for beholding its beauties. Even so with the Savior. How many have not been able to see Him! Only then when one stands in the right position, and himself received the light in his spiritual eye, can he see the Divine nature shine forth from the Rabbi of Nazareth. Do not promise yourself the coming of faith from an examination of the external beauties of Scripture. This will rather be a hindrance to faith. Whatever else you may see, you will have to see the *unity of conception* in order to make Holy Scripture to you a Divine reality.”

Since the Liberal places his main reliance for a lax view of Inspiration upon the Errancy of Scripture it becomes very important resolutely to face the matter and to examine in how far he may be right; and if so, in a small degree, how he is to be met and still keep the Reformed principle of authority inviolate. Again, we cannot do better than to listen to the voice of one whose sound and sane judgment must readily commend itself:

The Church has never meant to raise to the dignity of a dogma the *manner of the origination* of the Scriptures. The Church *confesses*; and her confession can therefore extend no further than to the *character* of inspiration in connection with its *result*. How Scripture came into being, and how its different layers were formed, does not concern the believer as such, and is to a large extent a matter of indifference to the Church. The only matter upon which she insists and for which she, contends is that the divine authority, the

infallibility, the absolute guarantee, the certainty stand unshaken. The Church *confesses*; that is, she declares that she *possesses*, that she *knows*, that she must *witness*. Her first need therefore is rocklike, immovable certainty. A certainty for which her martyrs are willing to die. And that certainty can therefore be none other than such as carries an immediate *Divine* guarantee.

Hence, as a believer one cannot with full confidence go along with such as today cry out from every direction: "If only I possess Christ, I have the fulfilment of all my needs!" For, however much of truth there may be in this matter as such, it is, as a ground of certainty, like a cork floating upon the water. For where do you find your Christ? How do you know about him? How will you distinguish between a *true* and a *false* conception of your Savior? Is it not true that this can be done *through the Scriptures*, and through them alone?

I cannot obtain divine certainty than by means of a two-fold work of God the Holy Spirit: 1. that God the Holy Spirit absolutely guarantee the truth of the contents of Scripture; 2. that God the Holy Spirit, aside from all criticism and literary investigation, in an immediate manner work in my heart that assurance that Scripture possesses this divine authority. My own certainty, as a man of learning, must be no better nor other than that of the plainest rustic. Otherwise it would not be religious in its nature. And since a plain child of God knows nothing about Manuscripts, or variants, or interpolations, therefore the certainty which everybody needs to be assured of as before God for his eternal welfare, must rest upon an authority which has nothing to do with all this erudition; and as it obtains altogether outside of the universities it must be instilled in my consciousness by an immediate work of God the Holy Spirit. This is the Testimonium Spiritus Sancti of the Reformation. It is the only certainty which I declare I know. And all ministers who attempt to do something else in order to awaken this testimony of the Holy Spirit, may be smart Christian rabbis, but they are not glad witnesses for a divine assurance with which the Merciful One comforts our souls. (Kuyper, *De Heraut*).

But how shall discrepancies be met to justify such confidence? Dr. Kuyper thus answers a correspondent:

Having been asked how we explain the troublesome fact that the Law of the Ten Commandments which in Ex. XX is recorded as having been directly given from God Himself, can appear once more in Deut. V with considerable variation of wording.

"We shall show that only on our standpoint and with the acceptance of an absolute inspiration this objection loses its pertinence: The objection would have weight if you proceed from a narrow, slavishly literal construction of things which has nothing in common with the free and glorious ways of God in his work of inspiration. Of course,

if you think of the Holy Spirit as a rabbinical precisionist, who produces document after document out of his case of rolls, and then copies with anxious accuracy, you will fare badly with your Scripture. But such a position we reject most emphatically. In the Scriptures you do not hear a rabbinist speaking, who counts every tittle and scrutinizes every jot; and you are also in error if you think you will find some candidates for the notaryship busy at work correcting mistakes in the minutes. Every such conception is without sense and ignores the mighty, personal, dominating work of the Holy Spirit, and it comes into its own when you take careful note of the fact that the same Divine consciousness out of which the Ten Commandments proceeded at Horeb is also the Divine consciousness through which Moses spake at Nebo; and furthermore, it is the same Divine consciousness through whose direction the documentation was controlled of what we read in Ex. XX and Deut. V. Now I ask you whether the author of a document is not perfectly in his right to repeat his own thoughts in another form? Since human language is too imperfect to reflect the fulness of the Divine mind, would you bind the Lord God to a form which would limit His sovereignty? And if this variation in form of expression had had no other object than to prevent deification of the letter, would not that have been a sufficient reason for God's high purpose?

These two redactions of the Law afford us no trouble, but it must rather disconcert our opponents. Judged by their view these variations must stand to the account of fallible human beings, and therefore you can never tell what Gods commandments really are. These fallible redactors can have been mistaken in anything, and with this all religious certainty is at an end. On the other hand, we on our premises and by reason of our glorious and blessed confession of an absolute inspiration, we have no difficulty, and we discover that through these differences of reading our treasure has even been enriched. For to us it is God the Holy Spirit who guarantees us with absolute certainty that we, reading in Ex. XX, have, I do not say a diplomatically exact copy, but a guaranteed reproduction of what in actual fact and to all intents and purposes had been heard on Mt. Sinai. And then, on coming to Deut. V, we once more find the same God, the Holy Spirit who with the same absolute certainty guarantees us that the reproduction of the Law recorded there holds good and furnishes us the Law of God Without need of our being disconcerted about the form.

The same applies to citations from the Old Testament which the Divine Author may vary as He pleases, they being His own; this also applies to differences between the Synoptic Gospels; etc.

Attempt the solution of Gen. 11:26, 32; 12:4 with Acts 7:4. If you do not succeed, do not become discouraged. Inspiration does not require that Stephen narrated

everything in accordance with the exact facts of history, but only that the discourse of Stephen has been truly recorded" (Dict. Dogm. S. S. II. 216).

If you dispense with the absolute inspiration of God the Holy Spirit, all these discrepancies which may be harmonistically potted away, will rise up before you mountain high as stumbling blocks, as rocks upon which your faith in the Scriptures is in danger of shipwreck.

On the other hand, if you accept this absolute inspiration with holy ecstasy, you will be, thank God, done with all these makeshift activities; you will be as free as a fish in the water, and without needing to cover or disguise anything, you will rest in the absolute guarantee vouchsafed by the Holy Spirit that every deviation leaves the matter inviolate and with Divine assurance brings it to your soul with added clearness. (*De Heraut*, No. 229).

While, then, the presence of anything in Scripture is under direct knowledge and supervision of the Holy Spirit who is the Architect of the whole, there are degrees of intensity of application of this superintendence, as there are such degrees of vigilance in an architect in the building for which he is responsible. In "moving the holy men of old" the Holy Spirit must necessarily have done this in an absolute manner (though in a way inscrutable to us) in such cases as in Gen. I and in the prophecies. In narrating simple historical fact, and in copying lists of names from documents at hand, this superintendence was at a minimum. As to matters of indifferent consequence this was left to the natural impression of the writer about which the Holy Spirit did not trouble Himself. A case in point is, as to whether one or two blind men cried out to our Lord near Jericho: "Thou son of David, have mercy on us!" The accounts give several variations; but Organic Inspiration does not require notarial exactness of all the details, but the truth of life, and it guarantees the account. We may therefore be certain that wherever much depends on the language, there the guarantee reaches to every required detail.

As we have already intimated, our orthodox Presbyterian brethren have strongly insisted upon the Inerrancy of Scripture, but probably they also, when certain difficulties are brought to their attention, will acknowledge something of what the Liberal chooses to call Errancy, and to really explain the difficulty the Organic theory of Inspiration will offer the best solution. A case in point is the remark of Dr. C. E. Macartney:

By the inerrancy of the Scriptures is not meant that there can be no discrepancy between the numerals in Kings and Chronicles, of that (although the subject is still discussed by scholars) in the passage where reference is made in Matthew's gospel to what was done with the thirty pieces of silver, the supposed prophecy could not have been referred to Jeremiah instead of Zachariah where it seems properly to belong. That is not what we mean when we speak of the inerrancy of the Scriptures. We mean, for example,

that when the gospels tell us that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin Mary, that he died a sin-offering, that he rose from the grave with the marks of his passion in his body, and that he walked on the sea and stilled the tempest, and fed a multitude of people with a few loaves and fishes, they are telling us what is fact. In this true and proper sense, the inerrancy of the Scriptures is plainly declared, both in the Confession and in the Brief Statement. (*The Presbyterian*, Dec. 20, 1923, pp. 7, 8).

To conclude. We may list the matters which have caused difficulty in accepting the truth and correctness of the accounts in Scripture as follows:

1. Questions of so-called Lower Criticism. These concern the text as such, and bring to light evident errors of copyists; etc. Hardly any difficulty is any more felt in any quarter on this point.
2. Statements which reflect the impressions of ordinary experience; as, the rising of the sun; the earth as the center of the universe; etc.
3. Seeming contradictions; such as, "God is not man that He should repent" as against: "And it repented the Lord." An honest exegesis will easily take care of this, as it takes into account the absolute Divine standpoint as against impressions from the human side.
4. Difficulty as to the accuracy of historical fact; as, the "census that was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria"; so many unexpected archeological discoveries have been made that it is wise to hold every such question in abeyance if there is any real difficulty at present.
5. Quotations from the Septuagint at variance with the original Hebrew text. It must be evident that the Holy Spirit has the right to quote Himself even to the extent of adding another meaning.
6. Actual discrepancies such as we find in the parallel accounts of the Gospels. The Holy Spirit does not anxiously descend to the mechanical level of infinite precision; He does not parade Himself to our view.
7. The difficulties involved in the construction of doctrine. Scripture as the wonder-work of Divine wisdom is not given us in a cut-and-dried fashion, on the level of the child-mind, but in such a manner as to tax the best efforts of man in order that he may trace out and assimilate the marvelous wisdom of God. This makes so-called Dogmatic Theology a study which requires the ripest mental powers and a comprehensive vision of the general field, guided by assured principles and carefully ascertained results of exegesis. Our present times of speed and superficiality in which the newspaper reporter speaks as confidently of theological questions as

the professor of theology, is not favorable to this branch of learning, and we are constantly treated to hearing most bizarre attempts, as, e.g., a defense of the idea that “God grows”!

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