

In the Scriptures come glaring inconsistencies and flat contradictions, and how can it be the Word of God if this be the case?" It is true that so long as man is an imperfect creature we may expect differences of opinion to exist, and it is impossible to put a stop to those apparent contradictions which spring from human weakness. The smallest of God's works is shrouded in mystery, and is it to be fancied that we can adequately grapple with that which is high "beyond a seraph's thought." There are, it must be confessed, some small seeming inaccuracies with respect to figures, e.g. the length of some of the king's reigns, but these can easily be ascribed to the carelessness of copyists in the ancient times. In Hebrew numbers are represented by letters of the alphabet, and many of these letters are so exceedingly alike, that one might readily be mistaken for another, especially if not well executed, which it is not to be expected they always were, when all copies of Scripture had to be made with the pen. It would have required a standing miracle, and the inspiration of every copyist guiding his eye, his hand, and his pen, to have avoided this. Even in our own day, with all the aids at our command for making books, errors will creep into them after they have left the author; but because of the omission of a word here, or the addition of a cipher there, are we to throw a book away as not being the production of the individual whose name it bears? If any one were to act upon this principle his library would soon be sadly reduced, for there are very few books that are altogether correct in their typography. Yet it is only such paltry errors as these which have been dragged up of late, and paraded before the world by those who ought to know better, as grave inconsistencies in the Bible, while the unity and grand scope of the whole has been overlooked.

But the inquiry may be here suggested: If it be admitted that there is even one error or mis-written word in the Bible, is this not letting in the wedge which virtually destroys our faith in revelation altogether; for if there be even one error or miswriting in the Bible, why not more, and where are we to stop? Why, we are just to stop where these errors stop, and they are scarcely worthy of notice. For the truth is, that there is not an ancient classic author which has come down to us from antiquity so pure and unadulterated as the Bible. Homer and Virgil, and even the more modern Shakespeare, have such a variety of readings that the author's meaning has frequently to be guessed at. But all the various readings that have ever been found in the MSS. of the inspired volume, do not alter a single doctrine therein contained.

But there still remains another question. In what sense are we to regard the Bible as inspired? Does its inspiration extend merely to the sentiments expressed, or to the very words in which they are couched? In answering this question it is necessary to discriminate between the different parts of Scripture. The Bible contains a great deal of historical matter, much of which is professedly taken from the common sources of history, viz., from "personal knowledge, authentic information, private documents, genealogies, official lists, family traditions, and public records." The genealogies of Christ, as given by Matthew and Luke, would have been no argument to a Jew to prove the Messiahship of Jesus, unless they had been derived from the public recognized registers of the land.\* Such historical passages as these, although not dictated by the Spirit of God, had that Spirit guiding their authors in their selection; and because of their incorporation with Scrip-

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\* See Pye Smith on the Messiahship of Christ