

Scotland or another Scotch church in America, but will, by an independent study of all that is truly valuable in Scottish Presbyterianism, seek to unite the venerable traditions of the Scottish church with the zeal and energy of the once separated parts. Such a church will not enter upon a mean and perilous crusade against new thoughts and new opinions (as the church has almost invariably done hitherto), but it will subject them to the test of inquiry, and hold out some word of encouragement to the rising light and natural curiosity of young people, and utter some words of sympathy with the feelings, wants and difficulties of the coming generation. At such a transition time as ours the Lord Jesus warned men against putting old wine into new bottles or new wine into old bottles. The one method is bad for the wine, and the other worse for the bottles. The more we admire an institution, the more we should repair and improve it. Time will not leave it alone, and we must fight a battle with time for its preservation, and when we are arrested in this work by death, our children must carry it on till the Lord comes.

Experience has shown that when a sceptical movement against received opinions begins among a people, repression is unwise and suppression is impossible. The one attempt is a crime against political and the other against moral liberty. The one is a violation of the social contract, and the other of the personal rights of man. The one expedient can only end in giving an extraneous importance to error, and the other brings a suspicion and reproach upon the truth. And both must end in failure. When Strauss's book appeared nearly forty years ago, attacking the gospel upon grounds which rendered it necessary for the author to tear up by the roots the old irreverent rationalism by which it was preceded, some theologians wished the Prussian Government to interfere with the pains and penalties which are the only weapons which government can employ; and those, who would not wish this, were so afraid of its effect that in England it could not find a respectable publisher for many years. The influence of Neander prevented the employment of such an unjust and unwise method of dealing with error. He pled that a deeper study of the gospels,