

**THE AUTHORITY OF  
HOLY SCRIPTURE: AN  
INAUGURAL ADDRESS**

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The Authority of Holy Scripture: An Inaugural Address by Charles Augustus Briggs

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THE

AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

AN INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY

CHARLES AUGUSTUS BRIGGS D.D.

EDWARD ROBINSON PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY IN THE UNION THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY, NEW YORK

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ADDITIONAL NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS



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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1891



THE  
AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

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I.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EDWARD  
ROBINSON CHAIR OF BIBLICAL  
THEOLOGY.

AT the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Union Theological Seminary in the city of New York, held November 11, 1890, the following preamble and resolution were adopted by a unanimous vote:

WHEREAS, The Honorable Charles Butler, LL.D., President of the Board of Directors of this Seminary, has made provision for a permanent fund for the purpose of establishing and endowing a Chair in this Seminary, to be called the Edward Robinson Chair of Biblical Theology:

NOW THEREFORE, *Resolved*, That a new professorship shall be and is hereby created, which shall be called the "Edward Robinson Chair of Biblical Theology"; that the income of the endowment of one hundred thousand dollars given to this Seminary by the said Charles Butler in the manner mentioned in his bond, dated April 25, 1890, shall be applied solely to the support of said Chair, according to the provisions of said bond.

The President of the Faculty suggested that the Board, in courtesy, should ask Dr. Butler to express to us freely his wishes with reference to the action just taken.

Thereupon President Butler addressed the Board of Directors as follows:

"The formal establishment by the Board of 'The Edward Robinson Chair of Biblical Theology' fulfils the object desired in the provision which I have made for its endowment. I beg to express my satisfaction and gratitude for this action. It is in accord with the views of the distinguished Christian scholar in whose memory the Chair is founded. In a letter to the Board, dated January 20, 1837, accepting the Professorship of Sacred Literature, he said: 'The Constitution properly requires every Professor to declare that he believes the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. This is placing the Bible in its true position as the only foundation of Christian theology. It follows as a necessary consequence that the study of the Bible, as taught in the department of Biblical Literature, must be the foundation of all right theological education.' This new Chair of Biblical Theology seems to me to realize the sentiment embodied in this quotation, in a form which, if he were now present with us, would receive his benediction. It embalms his memory indissolubly with the life of this Seminary, and will ever be an inspiration to its students in their 'search of the Scriptures.'

"In regard to the incumbent of this Chair, I avail of the courtesy of the Board to express my wish that it may be one who sat as a pupil at the feet of that eminent teacher, and I regard it as a felicity to the Seminary that there is one here who has been trained within its walls, and who, by his ripe scholarship and purity of character in Christian faith and practice, has won the confidence and affection of his associate Professors, of

this Board of Directors, and of the students who have come under his teaching during these years of faithful and devoted service.

"From what I have said, you will anticipate that my wishes will be fully gratified in the appointment of the Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D.D., as eminently qualified to fill this Chair. In this expression of preference, it gives me the greatest pleasure to say that I do but voice the views and wishes of our late revered President of the Faculty, Roswell D. Hitchcock. Dr. Briggs was his choice for this Chair.

"I cannot doubt that the highest interests of this Seminary, and, what is more, those of the Redeemer's kingdom on earth, will be promoted by this realization of the plans of these two Christian scholars, both as regards the foundation of the Chair and the selection of the suggested incumbent."

#### THE APPOINTMENT OF THE INCUMBENT.

At the conclusion of President Butler's address, Henry Day, Esq., offered the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted :

*Resolved*, That Professor Charles A. Briggs, D.D., be transferred from the Davenport Professorship of Hebrew and the Cognate Languages to the Edward Robinson Chair of Biblical Theology.

Professor Briggs, having been duly advised of the action above recorded, addressed a communication to the Board, under date of January 7, 1891, accepting the new Chair to which he had been transferred.