

The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

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The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

THE Inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments has been assigned to me by this Synod, as the theme for its annual discourse. In the present state of controversy, and in the midst of so many uncertain theories, no one can speak upon so vital a topic without deep solicitude; the preacher needs the guidance of the same Spirit that inspired the Holy Scriptures. The Protestant position, of the supreme authority of the Bible, stands or falls with the evidence for its infallibility. Our controversy with a rationalistic infidelity centres in the inquiry, whether the Scriptures are the Word of God. The importance of the subject and the character of this assembly equally demand a didactic, rather than a merely popular discussion of this theme, to which our thoughts may be directed by the words of Paul, in

2 TIM. 3 : 16: "ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD."

Though this passage refers most directly to the Scripture of the Old Testament, yet it distinctly declares the nature of all inspiration; it is from God, it is God-breathed, (Theopneustic.) This is the radical import of the term; and it implies, that if a scripture be not from God, it is not inspired; that if it be from God, it is inspired. The text does not assert, as some interpret it, that all inspired Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for such

a construction is contrary to the grammar of the sentence ; but, that each and all of those Scriptures to which the Apostle refers are inspired and profitable.* We are to adduce the evidence that this position holds true of the original, canonical Scriptures, that they are given by a Divine Inspiration, that they are the Word of God, and as such, an infallible and final authority for faith and life.

We assume, in this argument, the proof of the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures ; we start from the position, that these writings have been shown, by adequate evidence, to be canonical, and their authors to be credible witnesses. Standing on this ground, our proposition is, that these Scriptures are inspired ; that they are not merely the words of men, but also the word of God. Here is the living pulse of a divine life ; here is an indwelling divine Spirit ; the words are both human and divine, a divine voice speaks through human language.

Some speculative minds meet us on the very threshold of this hallowed temple, by the assertion of an antecedent impossibility of any such inspiration.† The finite, they tell us, can not receive the Infinite, the sinful can not know the perfect, nor can human language express the thoughts of God ; and, therefore, finite, sinful man can neither grasp nor utter the oracles of Deity. But though the finite can not comprehend the Infinite, yet the Infinite One may condescend to reveal himself to his creatures ; and man, though sinful, does yet ever know the law he always violates. Human language, too, with all its imperfections, if it can convey any real truth, may also impart such knowledge of God and man as is fitted to our needs. Hence the only alternative left, is utter scepticism, or the admission of the possibility of inspiration. To deny this is to limit Omnipotence. And such rationalistic assumptions also run counter to the faith of the race. They declare that that is impossible, which almost all nations have believed to be not

* "The word here translated *scripture*, which properly means simply a *writing*, occurs fifty-one times in the New Testament ; and in all these fifty-one places, it is applied to the writings of the Old and New Testaments, and to no other." (Wordsworth on the Canon, p. 159, American edition.)

† See Strauss, Glaubenslehre, I. 261 ; and the reply by Philippi, Kirchliche Glaubenslehre, I. s. 154 seq.

only possible, but real ; they are in conflict not merely with Jewish and Christian convictions, but with that universal religious instinct, which in Vedas and Korans has welcomed the supposed voice of Divinity. Man's religious wants lead him to long that an Infinite Being may impart himself to the finite, and that the Perfect One may have pity on our very sinfulness.

And if such Inspiration be possible, then, we add, it may be recorded ; it may be given in a writing, a Scripture. Of this, again, there is no antecedent impossibility. Those very sceptics, who have been most earnest in condemning a "book-revelation," have also written books, containing, as they assert, absolute and final truth about human nature and destiny. They believe in a universal inspiration, and in the possibility of recording its utterances. If they may write down perfect verity, why may not others do the same ? Their own pretensions refute their own objection:

Upon this preliminary ground we may advance yet another step, in the position, that if such an inspired record of Divine truth exists, it is found in the Bible, or nowhere. This is the only book which, on the basis of history and general consent, can pretend to hold such an eminent and supreme place. Here is the perfect revelation, or we have none. Here are the words of God, or we have them not in any credible form. No creed, no system, no book, in its probable claims and paramount influence, can be compared with the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

We make only one other statement in the way of anterior presumption ; and that is, that the contents of the Bible, taken as a whole, afford a high probability of its inspiration. It is every way unique and wonderful. Its separate portions were composed by some forty writers, during a period of fifteen hundred years, and yet they all make one book, with one consecutive plan, from Genesis to the final Revelation, more regular, more progressive, more stately, than any epic or drama. All in it centres in one Person—that of the Redeemer ; and has respect to one object—that of the redemption of the race from sin. Its special doctrines, too, bear the marks of super-human truth and grandeur. Nowhere does the Divine Being

appear so majestic and so condescending, so holy and so loving; nowhere is man so truly portrayed in his dignity and humiliation, in both his native and his regenerate estate, and in his immortal hopes and fears. The unity of the race and of the divine government is every where implied and enforced. Central in this marvellous volume, its very centre of unity, is the God-man, our Saviour, our Prophet, Priest and King, the ever-living Head of a divine kingdom, which is never to pass away. Miracles attest his divine commission, and that of his prophets and apostles also; while Prophecy speaks of him in her most exalted strains, proclaiming his advent through thousands of years, and announcing the perpetuity and final victory of his kingdom in those daring promises, which only Omniscience could truly utter, which Omnipotence alone could carry into execution in a manner so indubitable and unexampled. And all this is presented in such a wondrous style and method, that human literature has nothing of stateliness or of simplicity, of poetic inspiration or prosaic fidelity, of that self-forgetfulness in the writers, which is one of the surest tests of genius, of largeness of grasp and accuracy of delineation, of fervid eloquence, touching appeal and concentrated aim, to be compared even in fugitive analogy with these utterances of the seers of Judea and the apostles of Jesus. History and experience too add their testimony; for this Book of Books has had a divine efficacy; its words are spirit and life; penitence still confesses its abasement in the language of David; faith lingers upon the rapt visions of Isaiah; with John we meditate upon the very words of Jesus; with Paul we receive the assurance of redemption in looking unto Christ; with the oldest of the prophets we still anticipate the day when the seed of the woman shall crush all the powers of sin. The human heart knows no depth of spiritual sorrow, no height of spiritual joy, no elevation of faith, no wonder of divine or human love, for which it may not here find fitting speech. And to all the perplexing and final problems of human destiny, this same volume offers a definite, a truly rational, and an authoritative solution. Beyond its revelation no scheme of human wisdom has ever reached. The most arrogant system of pantheistic infidelity only resolves the Christian faith into barren and abstract ideas.

Such is this Book ; and if it be such, if such a work has been written by fallible and sinful men, then we claim that there is an antecedent probability, that it is also from God, and not from man alone ; that it is given by the Inspiration of the Almighty.

Inspiration is possible ; it may be recorded ; if it be recorded, it is only in the Bible ; and the very contents of the Bible are such as to give an antecedent probability that it can not be the work of man, that it may be the Word of God. This antecedent probability, on such grounds, we set over against the sceptical assumption of the impossibility of inspiration, and proceed to consider our subject under four points of view : the Idea, the Proof, the Theory, and the Objections.

I. What is the true Idea of Inspiration ? How is it distinguished from analogous conceptions ? Careful statements are here needed, for much confusion has resulted from an ambiguous use of the word. One of the chief artifices of modern infidelity is seen in an illicit wresting of the term Inspiration from its proper historical and theological import.

Some of our modern transcendental naturalists tell us, that "inspiration is the consequence of the faithful use of our faculties ;" "men may call it miraculous, but nothing is more natural." Another, in unusual English, declares, that "it is the elevation of our intuitional consciousness ;" many aver that it only indicates such a heightening of the faculties as is common in all the productions of genius. But such an inspiration is no matter of debate or of consequence ; it is not only thoroughly unscriptural, but it evades, in a most unphilosophical manner, the whole purport of the inquiry. Such a perversion of terms is simply an easy way of sliding over a difficult question by vague generalities, which seem profound only because they are somewhat uncommon. Almost any one of moderate capacity, after a few easy lessons, can talk glibly in such a style, without any great elevation of "intuitional consciousness." This is, in fact, a heathen rather than a Christian mode of speech ; Cicero long ago said, "In every good man there is a divine afflatus."

Nor is Inspiration merely equivalent to a divine illumination ; it is that, and something more. Illumination is promised to all of God's children ; it belongs to the common work of the Holy

Spirit ; but in prophets and apostles, it is represented as having a specific dignity, as being pure, necessary and final. Divine illumination may be doubtless found in high measure in the symbols or confessions of the Church ; but in these it is not of the last authority, it is not infallible ; in these it has the relation of the stream to the fountain, and that fountain is Inspiration.

A distinction, in this discussion, is also to be made between Inspiration and Revelation. The specific question in respect to the inspiration of the Bible presupposes a revelation as given, and asks whether the *record* of that revelation be inspired ? Many of the current objections to inspiration rest upon the assumption that it is identical with a direct divine revelation, and lose their force when this distinction is clearly drawn out. The usage of the terms is variable, and hence in such a discussion they need to be carefully distinguished.

The term revelation is sometimes employed in a wide sense, as signifying all the manifestations of God, whether by deed or word, whether in the kingdom of nature or of grace. But it is perhaps best restricted to the special and direct communications which God makes to man, equivalent to *ἀποκάλυψις*, which has the definite sense of a revelation of what was before hidden, which could not otherwise be known. The term inspiration, in the discussion respecting the inspiration of the Scriptures, covers a broader sphere of the divine influence ; it has special respect to the Sacred Scriptures ; and it thus embraces much of history, fact and detail, which is not a matter of direct revelation, but which came to the writers from other sources, from personal experience or testimony. All of the divine revelations, which are here recorded, are also inspired ; but all that is the subject of inspiration need not be conceived as directly revealed. Inspiration designates that divine influence, under which prophets or apostles spake or wrote, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Christ is the great Revealer ; the Holy Spirit inspires.*

* This distinction, though long recognized in a general way in our theological discussions, has not been thoroughly applied to the subject, so far as we are aware, by any English writer, excepting Mr. William Lee, in his recent able work, "The Inspiration of Holy Scripture, its Nature and Proof," in eight discourses before the University of Dublin. This is the most learned and complete treatise upon the sub-

God has revealed himself and his will to men in a great variety of ways ; by ministering angels ; in visible signs and tokens ; in voices to the rapt ear ; in visions of the night ; in deep sleep, as to Abraham (Gen. 15 : 12 ;) to Moses, mouth to mouth, as he beheld the similitude of the Lord (Numbers 12 : 8 ;) in pictures of future events, spread out as on a prophetic canvass ; sometimes, even, in such prophetic ecstasy, that the recipient seems conscious of naught else ; in words at the time but indistinctly understood, and again in words felt and known in all their fullness of wisdom and of grace. Such divine revelations, too, are progressive in the sacred annals, given as men were able to bear them, ever advancing with man's need and preparation, and in every stage fitted to his immediate wants, as also to prepare for yet higher manifestations. Three such eras are distinctly marked in Scripture, the legal, the prophetic, and the apostolic, the last centering in the person and words of Christ the Son, by whom He who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us. He is the grand Revealer, described not as receiving but as making a revelation ; he is the crown and centre of these divine works ; in him the revelation is final and complete.

Of Inspiration, now, in distinction from revelation, the proper and Scriptural function is to declare unto the world, through divinely-commissioned prophets and apostles, either orally or by writing, under the specific influence of the Holy Spirit, whatever has been thus revealed, and also all things pertaining to the kingdom of God, which are to be a matter of permanent record and instruction. It is a special divine influence for a special purpose. Its object is the communication of truth in an infallible manner, so that, when rightly interpreted, no error

ject, that has yet been given to the English public. It discusses the leading theories and objections of Coleridge, Morell, Tholuck, Schleiermacher, and others, and shows ample mastery of all the literature, German as well as Anglican. The fourth and fifth chapters are given to an elucidation of the distinction between revelation and inspiration. Nitzsch, *Syst. d. Christlichen Lehre*, § 23, gives the sense of revelation in accordance with Romans 16 : 25. Twisten defines it, as the "manifestation of divine grace for the salvation of fallen man, considered in its primitive influence upon human knowledge." Lee cites Jerome (p. 4) as saying, "that the word revelation is peculiar to the Scriptures, and is not used by any of the wise men of the age among the Greeks. New words are used to express new things."

is conveyed. At times the revelation and inspiration are, doubtless, inseparable ; as when a prophet or apostle at once utters or records what is revealed. This definite usage of the term inspiration is authorized by our text, which declares that all Scripture is inspired, theopneustic—using a word found nowhere else in the Bible, and here applied to written documents. This term was translated “*inspirata*,” in the Vulgate, whence the word, inspired. In 2 Pet. 1 : 21, it is said, that holy men of God *spake* as they were moved (*φερόμενοι*, borne along) by the Holy Ghost, in which the same fact of a specific influence in respect to the Scriptures is clearly implied, as is apparent from the preceding verse.*

The same passage, from the second epistle of Peter, may be used to elucidate another fact as to the nature of Inspiration ; that in all the Sacred Writings, both divine and human elements and knowledge coöperate and concur, the divine being supreme and controlling. “Holy men of God *spake* as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ;” they were *men*, holy men, retaining this character, while influenced by the Spirit. The reverend Scriptures, it has been well said from ancient times, like the adorable person of our Lord, who is their sum, are a union of the divine with the human ; and the chief errors as to the nature of inspiration have been finely compared with the heresies about the person of the Redeemer ; they sprung from insisting upon the one side to the exclusion or suppression of the other. In both cases we have Docetæ and Ebionites, those who demand pure divinity and those who insist upon mere humanity. But all in Scripture is both divine and human ; here, too, “the God shines gracious through the man.” The very word inspiration implies that a divine influence moves men to their utterances ; and it is applied to the books, or the words they utter, considered as the result of such an influence. “We are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost,” says Peter (Acts 5 : 32.) That man can thus be made the medium for the very oracles of God, gives the highest evidence of the possible capacities and dignity of human

* Josephus and Philo both assert a special inspiration for the “sacred writings,” “the holy words” of the Old Testament. See Lee, p. 54, and Appendix ; also, Stuart on the Old Testament Canon, p. 428–30.

nature, and illustrates the doctrine that he was made in the image of his Maker.

That the sacred Scriptures do contain human elements, and in their human integrity, though never separated from the divine, is apparent in their very structure. They are given us in human language, in the languages and idioms of their times—which is necessary to the proof of their authenticity. If we could show, as some uninspired men have tried to do, that the New Testament was written in classic Greek, we should also prove that it could not have been written by the men whose names it bears, nor in their times. Each leading book, too, has the impress of its special author in style and sentiment; if it had not, how could we show that it was genuine? Inspiration does not annul, it elevates individuality. Prophets and apostles, too, *testify* as to what they have heard and seen; they come to us as witnesses; and when they speak as such, the Spirit of all truth could not and would not lead them to say what they had not seen and heard. The writers, too, make faithful use of antecedent documents containing historic facts, and, it may be, the record of more primitive revelations; and these are of value and need even to inspired men. The human elements of Scripture come out most fully in its history and biographies, where neither the errors nor sins of men are withheld or palliated. Bad men speak as well as good; the angel of darkness as well as the angel of light; Peter denies his Lord; Paul rebukes Peter to his face, because he was to be blamed; David lapses into gross sin; the majesty of Solomon is tarnished; Abraham deceives; Adam falls; and of all these facts and sins, we have an inspired record, giving us the truth. And if inspiration did not give us all these things, of what value would it be in respect to history and fact? Even the most trivial personal details may serve an important office, such as inspiration could not neglect, in verifying the authorship, and proving the authenticity of epistles and prophecies. That cloak of Paul, of which it has been said, that it “has come to higher honor than even the mantle of Elijah,” that cloak which has been made the covert of so much scepticism, and the parchments, too, may help to identify the writer to the reader for all times; besides teaching, what is not directly intended, that

we should be careful of clothing and manuscripts. And Paul's dietetic advice to Timothy about the "little wine," he must needs write, as an inspired friend, when and as he wrote. His epistle would be hardly genuine without it; it would lack verisimilitude. Did he, then, need inspiration to write it? The inspiration of Him, who counteth the very hairs of our heads, might extend to this, since it helps to prove the genuineness of the epistle; to say nothing of the capital argument for temperance, incidentally conveyed.

So wonderfully do the divine and human elements commingle in the Scriptures, as do first and second causes also in all the realm of Providence, that it is in vain to try to limit inspiration to doctrine and truth, excluding history from its sphere. The attempt is as unphilosophical as it is unscriptural. No analysis can detect such a line of separation; it is both invisible and not to be spiritually discerned. Historic facts contain as well as enforce truth and doctrine. The fact of the death of Christ contains the truth of the atonement; it is that truth. Genealogies instruct us in the truth of the Messiahship. Such a distinction lacks evidence, coherence, and possibility. The whole divine revelation is an historic matter; Christianity is a body of facts, and not of mere doctrines; Christ is a historic personage, and not a congeries of abstract truths; history and theology are in their inmost nature one.

Nor yet, again, is it possible to draw the line, and satisfy the conditions of the case, by the Arminian and Socinian formula, that the Bible contains a revelation, in distinction from the position that the Bible, as a whole, is an inspired book. The apparent truth in this position is due to the want of discrimination between revelation and inspiration. It is a fact that the Bible contains a revelation; it is also a fact, that all that is in the Bible is not a matter of revelation, in the strict usage of the word. But these points do not help us at all about the real question, unless it be arbitrarily assumed that inspiration extends no farther than revelation, which it is impossible to prove, either on rational or historic grounds.

To the idea of inspiration, then, it belongs that it should be considered as *plenary*—that is, the divine influence, which is its source, extends to and pervades the whole contents of the Scriptures, both historical and doctrinal; it includes the whole

of the strict divine revelations, and also whatever the sacred writers utter as historians and witnesses. Inspiration is the organizing principle of the whole Bible, just as the principle of life is the organizing energy in every bodily frame, extending to all its parts, even those seemingly the most insignificant. It is not confined to new truths, it rehearses the old ; but of both the old and the new it makes one coherent whole. It comprises both the matter and the form of the Bible ; the matter in the form in which it is conveyed and set forth. It extends even to the language, not in the mechanical sense, that each word is dictated by the Holy Spirit, but in the sense that, under divine guidance, each writer spake in his own language, according to the measure of his knowledge, acquired by personal experience, by the testimony of others, or by immediate divine revelation. They spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. And thus is the inspiration plenary, since the Holy Spirit works in all parts of the Scripture, and makes of the many one, of terrestrial dialects a celestial tongue, out of human and divine elements one divine work, God's Book, given by men and for men.

This doctrine of plenary inspiration is not inconsistent with the acknowledged fact, that different parts of the Scripture are of different grades of importance, for our immediate spiritual benefit. The books of the Chronicles are of importance for the history of God's kingdom, and to give us that history is one object of inspiration. Nor does the doctrine prevent us from recognizing the fact, that the ceremonial law has passed into desuetude ; for it was the historic type of Him who fulfilled the law ; and without inspiration it could not have had its accurate prophetic character. Nor does plenary inspiration forbid us to say, that some portions of Scripture are of relatively greater, and others of relatively less moment ; all parts of it are needed as parts of the one whole ; the head can not say to the hand, I have no need of thee, nor the eye to the foot, I have no need of thee ; but yet the head is better than the hand, and the eye is quicker than the foot. There are fundamental truths, and truths not fundamental ; some parts have a majestic dignity, others are lowly and obscure ; but the great and the small, the necessary and the contingent, together make one whole. As it is in the material Kosmos, so is it in the fair

order of the Book of God—one mind working to one end pervades the whole; and the very marvel is, that such innumerable facts and details are wrought together into one plan.

Nor does the doctrine of plenary inspiration demand absolute and final perfection in each writer, or in each individual statement. The whole of revealed truth is to be gathered only from the whole Scriptures: nor is all truth revealed even here, but only what is necessary to the great object of the book—the manifestation of God's redemptive love. The statements of each writer, it is well said, by Dr. Alliott,* “may be partial and imperfect in point of fullness, while complete and perfect in point of truthfulness.” We need all the Gospels to get at the entire Life of our Saviour; each is to be harmonized with the others; the four Gospels combined together, realize that beautiful comparison which of old was made of them, to the cherubim, one living spirit, yet a fourfold form.† The whole doctrine of the New Testament is to be gathered not from Paul alone, nor from John, nor from Peter, nor from James, but from James, Peter, John and Paul together. The harmonizing of different historical statements, and the analogy of faith, are as necessary in the interpretation of the Scriptures as of any other writings; and only a very mechanical and human notion of inspiration has ever led to a different conception.

Much less does plenary inspiration demand, that the sacred Scriptures shall contain all truth on all subjects, or the scientific form of truth on the matters to which it incidentally refers, but about which it does not pretend to teach. Its popular statements in natural science are to be received as popular; they do not claim to be anything more. If we have entire truth on the subjects for which the Scriptures were written, and no error on other incidental matters, it is all that can be needed. And one of the most wonderful indirect testimonies to the Bible is found in the fact, that science has not been able to establish conclusions inconsistent with the narration of the creation, or overthrowing the unity of the race. One of the ablest naturalists of Germany, Wagner, the succes-

* *Psychology and Theology*, by Richard Alliott, D.D. Lond. 1855: p. 317.

† Ezekiel 1: 10. Rev. 4: 7.

sor of Blumenbach, at Göttingen, maintains, as did Blumenbach, "that the latest results of scientific investigation leave the Biblical account of the descent of mankind from one pair wholly unmolested."*

As to the nature of Inspiration, then, we conclude, that it is to be distinguished from direct revelation, that it involves a combination of human and divine elements, with the constant supremacy of the divine, and that it is best described as plenary, extending to all parts of the sacred record, giving us in the whole Scripture all needful truth, in respect to the history and doctrines of the kingdom of God.

II. We pass now to the Proof of the Inspiration of the Bible. Can such inspiration be proved on sufficient evidence, to be a fact in respect to the Holy Scriptures?

Here again we are met by the assertion that this proof cannot be conducted. Dr. Norton,† in a posthumous work, affirms, that such inspiration "supposes a miracle, of which no proof can be afforded through the evidence of ocular witnesses;" but this statement is refuted as soon as a miracle is defined; inspiration, though supernatural, is not strictly miraculous. Strauss‡ is much more acute in his statement of the objection; he says the proof runs in a circle; that we must believe what the writers say because they are inspired, and must believe that they are inspired because they say so. But this circle is simply made out by ingenuity in statement. The real statement is this: we must believe them, because they are credible witnesses; as such credible witnesses, they assert that they are inspired; and we receive their testimony, not because they

* "Menschenschöpfung und Seelensubstanz," p. 17. To this recent testimony of this distinguished naturalist, we may add that of the ablest living geographer, von Ritter, of Berlin, as to the Book of Joshua in its geographical details. "Its accuracy has been fully established in the minutest particulars, even when the examination has been pursued into the most unimportant and trivial local details." (E. g. Joshua 11: 16 sq. 15: 21 sq.) "Most decisive is the rebuke which infidelity has received from this new species of testimony; it has been compelled to confess with shame, that it has imposed on itself and on others by the unfounded doubts which it has raised against the truth of the Scriptures." (Cited in the Christian Review.)

† Internal Evidence of the Genuineness of the Gospels, by Andrews Norton: 1855.

‡ Strauss, Die christliche Glaubenslehre. I. s. 414.

say so, but because they are worthy of credit. And we show that they are worthy of credit, on grounds independent of the supposition of inspiration. The only difficulty here springs from the sceptical assumption which Strauss makes in the immediate connection, that no amount of human testimony can establish a supernatural fact. Take away that assumption, and the circle is resolved into a chain of argument. Prophets and apostles testify, that they speak not the words of men but of God ; by signs and wonders they prove their divine authority. And thus, when we ask, on what ground we receive the Scriptures as the Word of God, the final answer is, on the authority of God himself, speaking to us by the sacred writers, who give credentials of their divine commission. Nor can any circle in reasoning be made out here, unless we assume, that all testimony involves such a circle ; and if it does, then there is no more logical difficulty on this ground, in accepting the testimony of Paul as to his inspiration, than of any other man as to what he may have seen and known. The sophism becomes apparent as soon as we apply it in a general way, and say, that all testimony is reasoning in a circle, since it implies that we must believe a witness because he is credible, and he is credible because he says so. The objection resolves itself into that utter scepticism which is to be refuted on grounds independent of this special subject of inspiration.

The direct proof of the Inspiration of the sacred Scriptures is derived from a variety of sources, and not from a few isolated texts alone : yet it ultimately centres in the credibility of our Saviour, and of his Apostles. He testifies to the authority of the Old Testament as the Word of God, and He promises the Spirit, who was to guide and inspire the Apostles. So that the proof of inspiration stands or falls with the authority of Christ.

Of such Inspiration there may be said to be an anterior probability, on the general ground, which we here take for granted, that God has made a revelation to man. If He would make a revelation, it is natural to infer that He would secure the record of it from error. With the fact of a revelation we naturally connect the idea of an authoritative and final Scripture, valid for all times. He who gave the greater would not withhold the less. He who proposed to redeem mankind would

not leave them without sufficient and authentic witness of his gracious will.

The Scriptures of the Old Testament are pervaded by the most frequent claims of divine authority. The law given by Moses was to be kept by the side of the Ark of the Covenant, (Deut. 31,) within the Holy of Holies: it was to be read before all the people every seven years; it was to be copied by the kings of Israel (Deut. 17:18;) the subsequent writings were added to it; individual writers testify that they had a divine command to write; as Moses (Exod. 34:27; Deut. 31:19;) Isaiah (1:2; 8:1;) Jeremiah (1:2; 36:2;) Daniel says, "The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." In an unbroken tradition these Books have been revered by the Jewish people in all times as the Word of God. Josephus and Philo testify to this fact,* and to the canon of the sacred books at the time of Christ and the Apostles, including in them none of the Apocryphal writings. Remove from the Old Testament its own claims of divine authority, and it becomes a chaotic mass of superstition; concede these claims, and all is light and order. But the chief and crowning proof is from the testimony of Christ and the apostles. They refer to these writings, and to these alone, as having divine origin and authority; they call them *the Scripture*, and apply this term in this sense to naught else. Our Saviour declares, and not as Tholuck maintains, in the way of accommodation alone, that the Scripture cannot be broken; that one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled (Matt. 5:18;) that the writings of Moses are to be believed (John 5:47;) he rebuts Satan by saying, it is written (Matt. 4:4 sq.) beginning at Moses he expounded to his disciples

* Josephus says, "It has been implanted in every Jew, from the hour of his birth, to esteem as the ordinance of God, and to stand fast by these writings, and in defence of them, if need be, cheerfully to die." (Contra Apionem, i. 7, 8.) He calls Isaiah, "a prophet confessedly divine," and declares that all the events of his nation had occurred according to the prediction of the Prophets, (Ant. x. ii. 2.) The words of Moses, he says, are to be regarded as those of God (Ant. iv. viii. 49.) Philo gives a full theory of inspiration, distinguishing between the Prophets and the Interpreters. The Prophets, he says, are Interpreters; God makes use of their organs to manifest his will. Moses possessed "a divinely inspired wisdom;" "Isaiah spake by divine inspiration." See Lee, pp. 54-60, and Appendix F. pp. 466-70.

in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24 : 27;) he views the whole of the Old Testament as fulfilled in his Messiahship, as divinely prophetic and typical of himself, and in his last moments, as has been admirably said, he dies with its sacred words lingering upon his tongue. And his apostles ever refer to these hallowed writings in the same spirit. In the epistle to the Hebrews, God and the Holy Ghost are constantly adduced as the speakers in the citations from the Old Testament; Peter declares (1 Pet. 1 : 11,) that the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets, and that prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. 1 : 21;) and he calls these Scriptures the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4 : 11.) Paul uses the same phrase (Rom. 3 : 2,) and in our text sums up and completes the proof, when he says, that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. So that he who rejects the inspiration of the Old Testament must also reject the authority of Christ and his apostles.

While the apostles thus testify to the inspired authority of the older Scriptures, they also claim that their own writings are the Word of God, and are to be received as having at least an equal divine authority (1 Thess. 2 : 13; 2 Cor. 5 : 20; 13 : 3; Eph. 3 : 3-5.) Apostles are coördinate with the prophets (Eph. 2 : 20.) Thus is the proof of the inspiration of the New Testament linked with the evidence for the inspiration of the Old Testament. In some respects the apostles claim, as throughout the Epistles to the Galatians and Hebrews, that the new is higher than the old. Moses was the servant, but Christ is the Son. While they testify to the inspiration of the Old Testament, they also claim for themselves a new, a higher and a final revelation.

The direct evidence for the inspiration of the New Testament goes back to the testimony and authority of the Saviour; he declares of his own, as of the Old Testament words, that they shall not pass away (Luke 21 : 33;) that the word that he speaks shall judge men at the last day (John 12 : 48;) in his last intercessory prayer he pleads, that he has given to his disciples the words which his Father gave unto him (John 17 : 8.) Four times, during his earthly ministry, he gave a special promise and pledge to his apostles, that in all they said as apostles, the

Spirit should guide them into the truth. The first occasion was when he sent forth the twelve (Matt. 10 : 19, 20,) saying, it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you ; the second is narrated in Luke (12 : 11, 12,) take ye no thought, for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say ; the third is in the week of his passion (Mark 13 : 11 ; and Luke 21 : 14, 15,) to the same import ; the fourth and final pledge is preserved in the Gospel of John, in the full and abundant promises of Christ's parting lessons ; his disciples were to receive the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth (John 14 : 16, 17 ;) He was to teach them all things, and to bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever Christ had said unto them (14 : 25, 26 ;) He was to guide them into all truth, was to shew them things to come (John 16 : 12, 13.) Such were the promises and pledges of the Redeemer, and they were most perfectly fulfilled in the royal Pentecostal gift (Acts 2 : 4 ; 4 : 31,) whereby the disciples received wisdom and boldness which none were able to gainsay or resist. And the promise includes and covers their writings as well as their sayings ; if it did not, it were broken in that which is most important. They themselves say they write as they speak (1 John 1 : 3, 4 ; 2 Thess. 2 : 15 ; Gal. 1 : 8, 12.) And through their writings there is but one strain, one language. Paul begins each of his epistles, excepting that to the Hebrews, with a claim of divine authority and commission, which never deserts him ; he proclaims as under a conscious divine influence, in a lordly strain, the very oracles of God. He declares to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 2 : 11, 12,) that he has received the very Spirit of God, who alone knoweth the things of God ; his words are in demonstration of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2 : 4, and 2 Cor. 2 : 17 ;) he has a revelation of the mystery not made known in other ages (Eph. 3 : 5, and Gal. 1 : 12 ;) the word which he declared to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 2 : 13) was in truth the Word of God ; even the words he speaks are those which the Holy Ghost teacheth (1 Cor. 2 : 13.) It is indeed said, that Paul twice disclaims inspiration ; even if he did in the cases alleged, he by inference claims it elsewhere ; but when he says (1 Cor. 7 : 12,) I speak and not the Lord, and, that he has no commandment (v. 25,) he is not distinguishing between what is inspired and uninspired, but between what is

a matter of direct command and of apostolic advice. That this advice was inspired appears from verse 40, when he adds, I think also that I have the Spirit of God.*

Peter, too, reckons Paul's writings as Scripture (2 Pet. 3 : 15, 16,) and claims like authority for himself; (1 Pet. 1 : 12;) he preaches the word which endureth forever (1 Pet. 1 : 25 and 4 : 11;) he puts his sayings on the same ground as the Old Testament (2 Pet. 3 : 2.) The authority of Mark and Luke is resolved by the universal consent of the Church into that of Peter and Paul. The Apocalypse in its very form is an immediate divine revelation.

Such is the substance of the evidence, which leaves us only the alternative between imposture and inspiration. Self-deception to such an extent with such men is incredible. And these isolated citations give us the bare outline of the proof; the full evidence can only come from reading the Scriptures themselves, and seeing the unequalled majesty and authority with which the prophets and apostles discourse of those high themes upon which the wisest of men lisp and stammer. An air of conscious truth pervades their discourse; they speak as by a divine impulse, and in the name of Him, from whom there is no appeal. Their authority is from Him. The Spirit of Christ was the spirit of prophecy; the Spirit of Christ is the spirit of the apostles.

We rest here upon the authority of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. The argument for the inspiration of both the Old and New Testaments runs back to, and centres in Him, who is the way, and the truth, and the life. The ultimate testimony to inspiration is thus not human but divine.

And to this external evidence is to be added the witness of the Spirit in our hearts; as our Confession admirably says, (c. I. §§ 4, 5 :) "The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God, who is truth itself, the author thereof; and, therefore, it is to be received, because it is the Word of God. * * * Our full per-

* See Dr. Woods' Works, vol. I. p. 151, sq. Alliot's Psychology and Theology, p. 323, sq..

suasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts." This is the "*fides divina*," that divine faith, often contemned, here nobly confessed, which is the root of entire assurance, the *aliquid inconcussum* in the fluctuations of argument and opinion. He who hath this witness is firm and unmoved; others may be rationally convinced, he knows that his Redeemer is the truth. And here, again, is an argument in a circle, only because, when the spirit of man is firmly united to the Spirit of God, the circle of man's being is completed. In all our primitive beliefs, in all last things, there must be a circle in the argument; and the union of man with God is the first and last thing in all true religion. Calvin says, even as we discern light from darkness, black from white, bitter from sweet, so, under this ultimate divine influence, we discern between truth and error. Strauss tells us, that this argument is the "heel of Achilles in the Protestant system;" if we may also use a Pagan illustration we would call it the shield of Jove. We must rest on some rock, and the rock of the Christian is the testimony of his God.

III. Having thus considered the Idea of Inspiration, and presented a cursory outline of the evidence for its reality, we now pass, as was proposed, to a statement of some of the leading theories as to its nature.

After what we have already said, it is apparent that the tests of a correct theory are chiefly these three: first, that it should conform to the proof that all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God; secondly, that it should be consistent with the actual character of the original Scriptures, allowing due integrity to both the divine and human elements, the divine being the regulating and shaping agency; and, thirdly, that the theory should have supreme regard to the main object for which the Scriptures were given, which is to instruct mankind in the facts and truths of the kingdom of Redemption.

The plenary inspiration of the Scriptures was an uncontested point within the Christian Church for sixteen hundred years, with the possible exception of Theodore of Mopsuestia, of Abelard, and in the fourth century, of such heretical sects as the Ano-

mœans, an extreme branch of the Arians.* But no developed theory was given, excepting so far as conveyed in vivid illustrations, as when Justin Martyr says, "that the divine plectrum, descending from heaven, made use of the holy men as a cythera or lyre, to reveal to us the knowledge of divine and heavenly things, (Cohart ad Graec.) or as when Augustine declares, "We can not say that Christ wrote nothing, since the apostles were merely his hands in writing," (De Cons. Evang. l. i. c. 35;) or as when Athanagoras compares them to "flute players." The prophets are sometimes spoken of as if their reason was suppressed, while they received revelations. But this was originally a heathen rather than a Jewish view. The Jews expressed the strict verbal theory much more definitely than any Christian fathers; though Eusebius says, "that it were rash to assert that one word could be exchanged for another by the sacred writers." And Irenæus has a marked passage to the same effect.† The Scriptures are constantly referred to as the work of the Holy Ghost, and cited by the formulas, "Thus spake the Holy Ghost;" "The Holy Spirit spake by Isaiah," and the like. Irenæus declares, "that the Scriptures are perfect, being spoken by the word of God and his Spirit;" and again, "that there is nothing in the Gospels or Apostles, which did not descend from the plenitude of the divine majesty." Cyprian terms them "the fountains of the divine plenitude." Gregory the Great says, "it is useless to seek who wrote the Book of Job, since we may faithfully believe that the Holy Ghost was its author."

During the mediæval corruptions, the book of God had a

* The opinions of the Fathers have been collected and arranged with great care in Lee's work on Inspiration, Lecture second, and Appendix G. He contends against the opinion of Neander, that Theodore of Mopsuestia held laxer views on this question. The Anomœans, when pressed in controversy, were wont to say: "The Apostle makes that statement merely as a man;" "Why do you quote the Old Testament against us?"

† Irenæus says, "Matthew might no doubt have said, 'The generation of *Jesus* was on this wise;' but the Holy Ghost, foreseeing that men would deprave the truth, and fortifying us against their deceptions, says by Matthew, 'The generation of *Christ* was on this wise.'" (Contra Haer. lib. III., xvi. 2.) Justin Martyr, rather than assert that "the Scriptures contradict each other," would "confess that he does not himself understand what is said." Origen does not believe "that one jot or one tittle of the divine instruction is in vain."

less prominent place ; and Rome has favored a laxer view of inspiration, that it might maintain a stricter view of church authority. But when in the Reformation the Scriptures emerged from their obscurity, and their final and supreme authority became of the highest moment, the theory of inspiration began to be more thoroughly discussed and defined. Luther's doubts were not about the inspiration of the Bible, but had respect to the canonical authority of certain books. In the Lutheran Church, the strictest verbal theory was developed, in which the sacred writers were described as the "amanuenses and notaries of the Holy Ghost," as the "pen rather than the penmen ;" and even the inspiration of the Hebrew vowel points, which were probably not added before the seventh century, was maintained by the Buxtorffs, and sanctioned by one of the less influential Reformed confessions. This verbal theory, in some extreme forms, declared that the Holy Ghost was "the sole author of the Bible." The Hellenistic idiom itself, which has been aptly termed "a symbol of the union of the Greek and Hebrew world," was declared to be pure classic Greek. Partly as a reaction from these extremes, we find the Arminians and Socinians of the seventeenth century advocating the indefinite theory, that the "Scriptures only contained a revelation," and maintaining that there were errors in the record. This was the general position of the German rationalism, and it has infected, with few exceptions, the whole of modern German theology. Its indefiniteness allows all shades of opinion. Some maintain that that only is a matter of divine teaching in the Scripture which is conformed to human reason ; while others, as Neander and Tholuck, attribute error only to unimportant and trivial details.

In the progress of this discussion various modifications of the leading views have been proposed, ranging between the two extreme positions, that all the contents of the Bible were dictated word for word, and syllable by syllable ; and the naturalistic theory, that the Bible has no other inspiration than that common to all works of genius. The one sees in the Scriptures only the divine influence ; the other, only human imperfection.

The strictest verbal theory may be compared to that view of divine sovereignty which annuls human agency, and makes every act to be from an immediate divine efficiency. Few of

those in modern times, who advocate the verbal theory, go to the extremes of other days. As Dr. Woods, for example, explains and defends his view, there is little room left for objections. We may sympathize in the general scope of Gausson's treatise, without sanctioning its rhetorical phrases. All who believe in the doctrine, will concede that in many cases the inspiration must be verbal; that the apostles often spake in words which the Holy Ghost taught; almost all grant that we can not separate in consciousness between thoughts and language. But when this theory is given as the final statement, and as designating the exclusive mode of the Spirit's agency, it seems to violate the principle that we can not know accurately all these modes. And when it is explained so as to be consistent with different reports of the same sayings, and with different details of the same facts, and with different citations of the same passage, we do not see that much room for controversy remains—the dispute becomes a *verbal* one. To call this theory, as thus explained, *mechanical*, seems to be as unfair as it is to term the theory of plenary inspiration *dynamical*, in the sense of merely signifying an indefinite influence; and these two terms, mechanical and dynamical, may well be banished from the discussion, since they are really more ambiguous than what they mean to explain.

In exact opposition to this verbal theory, is that which lays the sole or chief stress upon the human side of the Scriptures. Spinoza first openly advocated this position, which has been repeated with various modifications. Some, like Mr. Francis W. Newman, assert boldly, "that an authoritative external revelation of moral and spiritual truth is essentially impossible to man." All the plausibility of such a statement consists in the fact, which nobody denies, that a revelation must of course be primarily received and apprehended by the mind, the spirit; but why after it is thus received, it cannot be committed to an inspired record, Mr. Newman fails to show, and it is impossible to see.

Mr. Morell, in his "Philosophy of Religion," takes a somewhat higher, but kindred view, that inspiration consists in the elevation of the intuitional consciousness for the discernment of spiritual truth; and he virtually denies any special commission for writing the books. This theory slides off from the main question. The question as to both revelation and inspira-

tion, is not about intuitive truths, or intuitional consciousness. Intuitive truths are not the subject-matter of a special revelation. No heightening of our intuitions would give us a knowledge of Redemption, or the solution of the problems of our eternal destiny. The revelation imparted through the Scriptures presupposes, and is consistent with intuitive truths, but does not consist in them. The spiritual mind of Scripture is not the spiritualism of modern philosophy. The inspiration of Scripture embraces, undoubtedly, the elevation of the whole consciousness; but its special object is to give to man, in a permanent record, all needful facts and truths pertaining to the kingdom of God in Christ. This theory, which is also in substance that of Scherer, is a virtual denial of the proper inspiration of the Scriptures.

An intermediate view, most definitely stated by Twisten, maintains that the Bible is inspired in proportion to its relation to Christ, but leaves room for the inference that it is not to be considered as inspired where we can not discern in its facts or teachings any such direct reference to the Saviour. Still less satisfactory is the principle, which Schleiermacher proposed, that the Scripture of the New Testament has a normal dignity, since it contains the primitive utterance of Christian faith, as found in its most complete form in the Apostles of Christ, who had the fulness of the Spirit. This, besides excluding the whole of the Old Testament, thus setting at naught the authority of Christ and the Apostles, is liable, as a mere philosophical explanation, to the objection which Strauss urges, that on all grounds of merely *natural* analogy, we could not expect to find the first stage of any institution or religion to be most perfect. "Nothing," he says, "is complete at the beginning; only at the end." And if refuge from this objection be sought in the supernatural authority of the Apostles, then the principle does not reach as far as their claims, which are undoubtedly to a full and final revelation in an inspired form.* Under

* This view, though in a higher form, including the Old as well as the New Testament, is advocated by Bunsen, in his "Philosophy of History," vol. 2. p. 311, sq. He confounds revelation and inspiration, making the first subjects of inspiration to be the great heroes of Scripture history, preparatory to Christ, and Christ himself; and its second subjects to be the writers of the Books, whose "inspiration is in just proportion with what they undertake to represent, and with the measure of the Spirit which they manifest in treating it." The Gospel of John is highest, and Esther is lowest in the scale.

the influence of such speculations, it has been well said, that "the eternal Alp of an infallible Bible, the same in sunshine as in storm, melts away in the haze of a *fata morgana*, reflected from below, and varying with the changes of the atmosphere."*

The theory of plenary Inspiration, as we have already given it, comprises whatever is true in any and all these views, subordinate to the prime position, that the Bible not only contains, but is the Word of God. It agrees with the three proposed tests of a correct theory : for it allows that all of Scripture is inspired ; it recognizes the relative integrity of the divine and human elements ; and it judges all parts of the Bible with respect to the great object for which it was given, to redeem mankind. Men are the free organs for this high communication of divine truth ; they are selected and trained for this special work ; and the divine influence elevates and purifies their faculties, their thoughts, and, where needful, their very language. And the Book, written under such Inspiration, for our instruction, contains whatever is needful for all mankind, whether in this life or in that which is to come, and is thus a treasury for all times. Solomon gives us the maxims of worldly wisdom, and John discourses of the heavenly Jerusalem ; we have that marriage song of earthly love, which only the impure revile, as well as the promise of that blessed estate where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God. Temperance and chastity are enjoined for the care of our mortal bodies, while by faith we look forward to the time when this mortal shall put on immortality. History here instructs us even in minute details as to the chosen people of God, for of them the Redeemer was to come ; and in his Sacred Person the sum of type and prophecy was fulfilled. The same history tells us of the relations of the ancient nations to this one central kingdom, while prophecy, not yet consummated, but ever in the course of fulfilment, holds up the elevating vision of its final triumph to cheer us in all our conflicts. The highest

* North British Review, November, 1852, in an able article on the "Recent Theories of the Inspiration and Infallibility of the Bible," in which the theories of Gregg, Newman, Schleiermacher, Neander, Tholuck, and Scherer, are discussed. On the views of Scherer, see the Princeton Review, July, 1851, on "Inspiration and Catholicism," where the patristic testimony is collected.

truths, beyond which thought can not reach, as to God and man, and their relations to each other, centre in Him, who is both God and man, and the king of this divine empire. All, even the most insignificant portions of the original Scriptures, have their life from His Spirit, even as the principle of life embraces the hairs of the head as well as the beating of the heart. All is shaped by the wise builder into one glorious temple, which speaks of Him from the foundation to the topmost stone, and whose arches reverberate with the songs of saints and angels, magnifying the glories of His grace.

And hence, in conformity with the teachings of Scripture, with the confessions of the Church in all times, with the demands of Christian experience and of a wise philosophy, we judge that Inspiration is to be defined as *plenary*, working in all portions of the Bible. It is unwise and mechanical to try and measure it out by degrees, here a suggestion, there an elevation, again a direction, and in fine a superintendency. It is more than a superintending guidance; for that expresses but an external relation between the Spirit and the writer. But Inspiration is an influence within the soul, divine and supernatural, working through all the writers in one organizing method, making of the many one, by all one Book, the Book of God, the Book for man, divine and human in all its parts; having the same relation to all other books that the Person of the Son of God has to all other men, that the Church of the living God has to all other institutions.

IV. In the introduction to his Analogy, bishop Butler cites a remark of Origen, which is worthy of being carefully weighed, in discussing the last point we propose to consider, that is the Objections to the doctrine of Inspiration. "He who believes," says Origen, "the Scripture to have proceeded from him who is the Author of Nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it, as are found in the constitution of Nature." "And in a like way of reflection," adds Butler, "he who denies the Scripture to have been from God, upon account of these difficulties, may, for the very same reason, deny the world to have been formed by him." Against the doctrine of Providence there lie difficulties of the same nature as those urged against Inspiration. In both cases there are some phe-

nomena, which we can not fully solve, yet in both cases the objections are vanishing factors in the progressive series of argument; they leave but a minimum of doubt against a maximum of proof. The logical objections to the doctrine of Inspiration we have already considered, and the others we can here dwell upon only in their most general aspect.

Some of these objections are of weight only against vicious methods of interpreting the Scriptures. Thus the allegorical interpretation seems to demand that we find a moral or spiritual significancy in every verse or word of the Bible; and hence many conclude that what has only a plain historical sense can not be from God. But such difficulties are refuted as soon as we recognize the fact, that the Bible must be historical as well as doctrinal, if it is to instruct us truly and fully in the things of the kingdom of God. Even those who do not allegorize, yet who hunt out lessons of spiritual edification in all the verses of the Chronicles unconsciously nurture the same expectation in their hearers. But those long lists of names and genealogies were meant to be—just what they are; and we need not try to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. Those commentators who would find the whole of Christ, not in the whole of the Old Testament, but in each separate part, not only do violence to all sober rules of interpretation, but also lead us to imagine, that unless we can do this the Scripture is not inspired.

The neglect of the distinction between a direct revelation and Inspiration gives plausibility to many other objections; for example, to most of those urged by Mr. Coleridge in his unsatisfactory “Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit.” He seems to imply, that no theory of Inspiration is generally held, excepting the dead-letter one. The silent assumption in his eloquent descriptions of the song of Deborah and of the Book of Job, is, that all there uttered is supposed to be a direct dictation, a specific revelation, of the Holy Spirit, each clause containing the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. But not the strictest verbalist is so lost to common sense as to take such ground. Deborah’s Hymn is a nation’s exultant pæan; the Book of Job—of which even Mr. Carlyle says “every word is true; there is no book of equal literary merit in the Bible or out of it,”—is a high argument, in which Satan and false friends speak falsely upon the grand problem, How can the sufferings

of the comparatively righteous be vindicated? In most of the historical portions of the Scriptures the same distinction between revelation and inspiration has a valid application. The recorded facts are derived from testimony, from personal experience, or from antecedent documents, and not from direct revelation; and here the office of inspiration is to be conceived as extending only to the truthful record of the facts. Many errors and false opinions of men are truthfully reported, but not divinely sanctioned. In this point of view, Dr. Pye Smith (*Script. Testimony*, vol. I.) is correct in saying, "that those who affirm in a general and indiscriminate manner that all and every the parts of the Old Testament were immediately dictated by the Holy Spirit, appear to me to go farther than the evidence warrants, and to lay the cause of revealed religion under the feet of its enemies."

Among the objections most frequently urged are the apparent discrepancies, especially in the statements of the Evangelists. Some of these rest on the assumption that the Evangelists all profess to follow a strict chronological order, as if that were the most essential point in history. But it is now generally conceded that Matthew does not follow such an order; for he groups together similar facts and sayings from different periods of our Lord's ministry, in conducting his main argument for the Messiahship of Jesus; and this is a familiar and suitable method in biography and history.* Other discrepancies are made out by the assumption that our Saviour never repeats his deeds and sayings; but the report of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew and Luke disproves this.† The feeding of the multitude is twice narrated by Matthew alone. The purification of the temple must have occurred twice, since it is put by Matthew near the beginning, and by John at the close of Christ's ministry.

But contradiction is especially alleged in those cases in which the same fact is differently stated, the same sayings differently reported, and the same passages differently cited. It is said, that if there be a divine Inspiration, professing to give the ex-

* Compare, for example, the eighth of Matthew with Mark and Luke. *Journal of Sacred Literature*, April 1854, pp. 71-110.

† Compare Matthew 6 : 25-34 with Luke 12 : 22-31; Matthew 7 : 12, 13 with Luke 13 : 23-34.

act words and facts on the authority of an Omniscient Spirit, we are here involved in contradictions, for the words and facts are differently reported. Thus is it, for example, with the inscriptions on the cross ; with the railing of two thieves or one ; with the healing of two, or one, possessed (Matthew says two, 8 : 28 ; Mark, one, 5 : 2 ; compare Luke 8 : 27 ;) of two, or one, blind, (Mark 10 : 46 ; Luke 18 : 35 ;) with the healing of the blind near Jericho, where perhaps are two distinct cases ; with additional details in one and not in another, (as Matthew 14 : 21, adds, “besides women and children ;”) and with the frequently varying reports of our Saviour’s sayings.

Into the details of these difficulties we can not, of course, now enter. The general principle to be applied is that of the law of evidence, upon which every lawyer proceeds in addressing a jury, and every historian in his criticism of documents : and that is, that there is no contradiction, if the details can be brought into harmony by one credible hypothesis. Such an hypothesis is made in every examination of evidence ; and there is not any case of such differences in details in the Gospels, for the explanation of which some credible hypothesis has not been made. Thus, for example, with the cock-crowings and the denials of Peter ;* with the incidents connected with the observance of the last Passover, and with the resurrection and ascension of our Lord ;† and with the double calling of the Apostles.‡ Thus, too, when Mark says that Christ was crucified at the third hour, and John at the sixth, they are harmonized by supposing that the former gives the Jewish and the latter the Roman reckoning of time. And many other difficulties might be solved if we had access to all the data as in this case ; for even if we can not in all cases present an entirely satisfactory hypothesis, we should not be warranted in affirming a contradiction until we can show that no such hypothesis can be found.

We are also to bear in mind, in accounting for the different reports of verbal sayings, the fact that the Evangelists and other writers speak as witnesses, not professing to give all the

* See Journal of Sacred Lit., April 1854, pp. 85–92.

† Compare Dr. E. Robinson, in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 2, pp. 162–189, and 405–436.

‡ See the explanation by Tholuck, in his “Credibility of the Gospel History.”

details, but what they themselves had seen and heard. And variety in detail, with substantial truth in the whole, is an argument in favor of independent witnesses, and adds to the strength of testimony; else why do we have four Gospels instead of one? The inspiring Spirit guides them as witnesses, and, doubtless, in his guidance, observes the laws of evidence, and preserves their truthfulness as witnesses. Our Saviour made a specific promise, that he would call all things to their *remembrance*: We are witnesses of these things, says Peter, (Acts 5 : 32; compare 2 Peter 1 : 16-18;) John, throughout his epistle, claims that he declares what he has seen and heard. Paul makes it necessary to his apostleship to have seen the Lord (1 Cor. 9 : 1.)

Inspiration itself, then, to be truthful, not only allows, but must often demand differences in details, according to the observation and experience of the writers, guarding against error, but leading them to say what they had seen and heard. Gaussen unadvisedly says, "that the Holy Spirit has not the writers themselves for his object, but the holy books which were to abide;" but the Spirit must have had for his object both the writers and the books, and the books as composed by these writers and by no others, aiding doubtless even their memory, but still not surpassing the sphere of their experience, when they speak as witnesses. Tholuck, in an essay,* in which he insists upon conflict of the writers in small things, and disproves disagreement in important matters, cites the expression of Paul, "besides, I know not whether I baptized any others," (1 Cor. 1 : 16,) as an instance showing the possible lapse of memory in an apostle; but the exigencies of Paul's argument do not seem to require that he should here remember; not even an apostle need always remember every thing; but if, speaking as an apostle, he needed to remember, the promise of Christ would doubtless stand. However much these differences in details may be inconsistent with the theory of strict dictation, making an Omniscient Spirit directly responsible for every fact and word, they are certainly not inconsistent with the view which allows due integrity to all the human elements of the Bible, superintended by a divine guidance.†

* Deutsche Zeitschrift, 1850, 1, translated in Journal of Sacred Lit. July, 1854.

† I have not entered into the question of the alleged "lost books," nor into that

A special argument is made against Inspiration on the score of the citations from the Old Testament in the New, on two grounds: that a "fulfillment" is declared where there is no prediction, and that the citations are incorrect, being often made from the Septuagint instead of the Hebrew, and sometimes differently made.* As to the former of these cases, the general principle of interpretation upon which the solution of the difficulty must rest, is, that the old economy as a whole, and in many of its parts, foreshadows the new; its words are prophecies, its facts are types. This is the broad, historical character of that elder dispensation; it can not be explained from any other point of view.† The principle is not that of accommodation, which Coleridge calls "the favorite ornament and garnish of Jewish eloquence," but that of type and anti-type. This does not take from the passages of the Old Testament their historical character; but runs back into the well-known law, that the same event may have different bearings and relations, and the same words different fulfillments. To this is to be added the fact, that the phrase, "It is fulfilled," is not always used in the sense of strict prophecy; but sometimes as signifying a type, sometimes an analogy or correspondence. And as to the significancy of some of the types, which we might not otherwise know, the Spirit may be our instructor.‡

As to inaccuracy in citations, and the use of the Septuagint, a careful examination seems to show, that in no case is the real

of the multiplicity of readings in the MSS., since these points affect the question of inspiration only indirectly; they are properly discussed in considering the Canon and its integrity. The question of inspiration refers, in its most direct relations, only to the original Scriptures. But the variety of these readings, unimportant as most of them are, should keep us from laying undue stress upon unimportant words and phrases. Many argue against inspiration, as if they supposed a painful accuracy in writing down particular words were the chief office of the Spirit.

* Upon the first of these objections, see Woods' Lectures, vol. I. The second is ably discussed in Lee on Inspiration, pp. 324-352.

† See Tholuck, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July, 1854.

‡ Martensen, in his "Dogmatik," § 123, says: "The chosen people is the typical people. The idea of the typical is inseparable from the idea of a teleological development, in which the present is pregnant with the future, and where the end works through and in all that goes before. As the realm of nature is full of types of the realm of spirit, as every significant mythology contains profound images of the historical future of the nation; so is the history of Israel the holy type of that kingdom of grace, which was to come in the fullness of times." Compare 1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 10.

sense of the original improperly conveyed or implied, even where the exact terms are not employed. A freedom is allowed in citing *ad sensum*, and not *ad verbum*, such as is found in all literature, and such as has force only against a mechanical theory of inspiration. Thus the difficult passage, (Heb. 10 : 5,) "a body hast thou prepared me," is from the Septuagint, while the Hebrew reads, "mine ears hast thou bored;" yet both express the state of a servant, which is the idea for which probably the citation is introduced. Sometimes there is a deviation from both the Hebrew and the Septuagint, to bring out the sense of the passage yet more fully. Nor can any instance, says Mr. Lee, be adduced in which they quote merely from memory, if that means, that they so quote as to give an incorrect idea. These citations, while they disprove a mechanical, prove a real inspiration.

In thus noticing some of the main grounds of objection to the doctrine of the plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures, with the general principles upon which they are to be obviated, we are far from taking the position that there are no difficulties, or that, for all of them we can offer the best solution. Some of the data necessary for harmonizing all the facts of the Old Testament history and chronology we may no longer have; but this at least may be said, that for each difficulty a credible hypothesis may be, and has been suggested, as, for example, in Hengstenberg's able examination of the objections to the Pentateuch; in the case of the genealogies; and the taxing under Cyrenius. In such instances we may favor one or another of the hypotheses; if one be not correct, another may be; or, we may leave the difficulty without solving it, yet, also without saying, that it can not be solved. Humility and not arrogance best befits us, where the matter at stake is of such vital moment. And every candid person will allow that the chronology and history of the Old Testament are not involved in any such inextricable confusion as that of the contemporary ancient nations.* Moses, on all historical grounds, is more trustworthy than the fragments of Manetho, with their fluctuations between 300 and 500 kings; the records of India have been in vain ransacked to show a greater antiquity

* See *British Quarterly*, Jan. 1855. v

than that of our sacred books ; the 30,000 years of China have been all brought this side of the deluge ; Nineveh was declared a myth, and we are witnessing its resurrection ; no ancient zodiac reaches beyond 747 B. C. ; the hieroglyphs of Egypt have not disproved our venerable documents, and the two most eminent Egyptologists are still in doubt whether certain signs mean, shepherd captives or shepherd kings. While the two Greek historians of Egypt are every day proved more and more untrustworthy, our Scriptures have been constantly receiving fresh increase of evidence to their truthfulness. The sceptical canon, in defiance of all sound rules of testimony, that the Scriptures are to be considered guilty until proved innocent, has been recklessly applied ; and the Scriptures have stood even this hard test. Coleridge concedes that the errors in detail may be reduced to some half score of apparent discrepancies—"a petty breach, or a rat-hole in the walls of the temple."

And over against these difficulties and objections we may put the wonderful congruity of the Scriptures in all other things: their coherent unity, their pervading plan, their matchless morality, their majestic simplicity and simple majesty, their fitness to all times and men, their divine efficacy and life-giving power; their redemptive economy, their unsurpassed influence; and in view of these, well ask, what are all such objections in the comparison and contrast? They are at the utmost but as the spots on the sun, as straws floating upon the surface of a stately river which irrigates all the lands through which it passes, and bears upon its bosom innumerable barks freighted with immortal hopes and destinies. Every one of these difficulties might be unsolved, and the main object of the book still secured. Let some points of unimportant and remote chronology and history remain, for which we have no more than a fair hypothesis—what is this, in any candid judgment, in comparison with the broad fact, that for all the problems and questions of man's eternal destiny, the Bible has a definite and an authoritative response? What is here at stake, is not the inquiry, whether we can master all the genealogies, and give every name in order, but whether God has appeared in history, in the person of his Son for the redemption of a

lost world, and left a record thereof. In the blaze of the central sun of Scripture, the puerilities of sceptics vanish into insignificance with him whose eye has caught the sacred radiance.

A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic, like the sun ;
It gives a light to every age,
It gives but borrows none.

Yes, it gives but borrows none ; all literature has drawn deep and precious draughts from this unfailing fountain ; its orient pearls are scattered through all lands ; philosophy has there found the test of its errors and the lordliest of its truths ; for four thousand years its words have been inspiration and life, comforting the downcast, and breaking the oppressor's rod ; pledging peace to the penitent, and opening to all the very gates of endless life ; subduing with imperial might all other words, speaking in such tones of authority as you read in no other book ; and in the very name of the Lord proclaiming a kingdom, which has been ever advancing yet never subdued ; and thus like a living power has it been doing a living and abiding work among the children of men, in every clime, in every language, and now wider than ever before are its words rehearsed—its lines have gone out through all the earth and its words to the end of the world.

And such a Book is not inspired ! What then is ? Your modern gospels ? your philosophical evangelists ? a Carlyle, a Gregg, a Strauss, a Parker ! The Bible not inspired, or inspired only like such ! Moses the lawgiver, and David the psalmist, and Ezekiel the prophet, and Paul who made human language utter a dauntless faith ; and John with his words of heavenly contemplation ; and Jesus the Son of God, speaking in the name and love of his father ; these not inspired, and to give place to the arrogance and conceit of those false Christs and false prophets, who deny not only a Saviour, but full often God and immortality also ! Call out these heroes of our ancient faith, and match them against their modern antagonists ! Who will enter the lists with Paul ; who will speak to the soul with John ; who will prophecy with Ezekiel and Daniel ; who will give laws like Moses ; and who, but another Barabbas, chosen by another mob, will be put into comparison with the

hallowed majesty of the Son of God? And what names has the infidelity of all times to put into the scale against the defenders of the faith? Has it not in every age been over-matched, in whatever makes the patient scholar and the profound thinker, in keenness and comprehensiveness of argument, in manly sense and large humanity, in depth even of merely human philosophy by Augustine and Aquinas, by Luther and Calvin, by Pascal and Fenelon, by Edwards and Chalmers? And it is the Bible that has made such men strong in thought and heart; and it is the Bible which sets in the clearest light the ignorance and the arrogance of its opponents.

The Bible as an inspired record, is an infallible, and it is the final, authority for faith and life.

Its Inspiration involves its infallibility. Interpreted, as all works must be, by its real spirit, it gives us truth without error. Light and life come from the ministry of the Word. Its hallowed sayings are our stay, when all other support fails; our rock amid the billows; the songs of our pilgrimage; the pledge of our final rest. Such implicit faith may be stigmatised as bibliolatry; but where else can we go to find the words of eternal life? Bibliolatry clings to the letter; spirituality, in the letter finds the spirit, and dares not disown the letter which guided to the spirit. For the enduring wants of the soul, for the problems of sin, salvation and eternity, we here find an unwavering authority, and rest in faith and joy upon the last assurance of the highest testimony, Thus saith the Lord.

And as it is an infallible, so is it a final authority. No man may add unto, or take away from, the words of this Book. "Here is the judge that ends the strife." Like its divine author, it has full oft been called before human tribunals, been reviled, spit upon, yea buried—that it might rise again with new power and bless even its persecutors. Of controversy, as history testifies, it has ever been the arbiter; of opposing systems the invariable conqueror: every scheme of men has become wan and shrivelled at its touch. Beyond its revelations and its prophecies thought can not reach: it contains as well the oldest of records, as the most living of prophecies. New assailants in the flush of self-consciousness call it antiquated;

and its antiquity is as that of God himself ; it is older than the stars and the earth, and awaits their dissolution, that all its revelations may be fulfilled. But it is also ever new, as well as ever old, the most progressive as it is the most conservative of influences, the counterpart of the wisdom of God.

From these divine oracles, let us, my fathers and brethren, gather new faith ; for all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Let us trust in the power of the Word ; let ours be the ministry of the Word. What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord : is not my word like as a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces ? Let us not cease to declare the whole counsel of God ; and in doing this, let us rely on his effectual aid.

And unto all this word speaks, in its hallowed and earnest wisdom : Come ye to the fountain ; come to the Saviour ready to receive you ; here is the cure of death and the pledge of life. Heed its warnings ; hear its invitations ; accept its offers. It is our Redeemer that says, heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.