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*Zydney Hunter*

ARTICLE I.—*A Half-Century of the Unitarian Controversy; with particular Reference to its Origin, its Course, and its prominent Subjects among the Congregationalists of Massachusetts.* With an Appendix. By GEORGE E. ELLIS. Boston: Crosby, Nichols & Co. 1857.

THIS book deals with great topics. In form, it is an historic survey of Unitarianism, during the fifty years of its avowed existence, and distinct organic development, in New England. In substance, it is an elaborate and ingenious defence of rationalism, both abstract and concrete—as a principle, and in its actual workings and fruits among Unitarians and other parties in the Congregational connection. The principal chapters in the volume first appeared in a series of articles in the *Christian Examiner*, of which its author was editor. We have no doubt that their republication in this form was demanded by the general conviction of his brethren, that nothing could better subserve their cause. On nearly every page, we see the strategy of the dexterous polemic, familiar with the whole history of the conflict, the present position and attitude of his foes, and striking his keen and polished weapons, with consummate precision, at their tenderest points. He accomplishes much by his calmness, self-possession, and generally courteous and conciliatory style, which he seldom loses, except when he touches Old

gifted at the same time with a rare superiority to pretty theories and modish jargon, and with manly zeal for the essentials of the gospel, without pantheistic, puritanical, or popish leaning, he could do far more for us in this department, than any mere American or English scholar, and immeasurably more than any German of the Germans. It may perhaps be running this *chimera ad absurdum*, when we suppose our ideal church historian to be capable of writing in both languages, with ease and power, and of printing what he writes with due regard to the habits, tastes, prepossessions, of the race for which he writes, without attempting to thrust German food down English throats, or *vice versa*. If among the youth of either nation now in training, we had reason even to suspect that there was one who promised to assume and occupy this high but difficult position, we should be disposed to wait, if not too long, for his maturity, and in the meantime to express our hopes of his success, by saying, TU MARCELLUS ERIS!

by Charles Hodge

ART. V.—*The Inspiration of Holy Scripture, its Nature and Proof.* Eight Discourses delivered before the University of Dublin. By WILLIAM LEE, M. A., Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 530 Broadway, 1857, pp. 478.

IN our number for April we expressed a high opinion of the general merits of this work, and our conviction of the truth of the doctrine which it is designed to explain and defend. We wish now to call attention to the subject of which it treats. Happily the belief of the inspiration of the Scriptures is so connected with faith in Christ, that the latter in a measure necessitates the former. A man can hardly believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and worship him as such, without regarding as the word of God the volume which reveals his glory; which treats of his person and work, from its first page to its last sentence; which predicted his advent four thousand years before his manifestation in the flesh; which, centuries before his birth,

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described his glory as though it was an object of sight, and his life and death as though they had already occurred. To such a believer the assumption that the Scriptures are the work of man, is as preposterous as the assumption that man made the sun. Nor can any such believer read the discourses of our Lord, and hear him say, that the Scriptures cannot be broken, that heaven and earth may pass away, but one jot of the law cannot fail until all be fulfilled, that David spoke in the Spirit; he cannot hear his command, "Search the Scriptures, for they testify of me," without sharing in his conviction that the Scriptures are infallible. When a man becomes a true Christian, when he is made a partaker of the precious faith of God's elect, what is it that he believes? The scriptural answer to that question is, He believes the record which God has given of his Son. And where is that record? In every part of the Bible, directly or indirectly, from Genesis to Revelation.

Faith therefore in Christ involves faith in the Scriptures as the word of God, and faith in the Scriptures as the word of God, is faith in their plenary inspiration. That is, it is the persuasion that they are not the product of the fallible intellect of man, but of the infallible intellect of God. This faith, as the apostle teaches us, is not founded on reason, i. e. on arguments addressed to the understanding, nor is it induced by persuasive words addressed to the feelings, but it rests in the demonstration of the Spirit. This demonstration is internal. It does not consist in the outward array of evidence, but in a supernatural illumination imparting spiritual discernment, so that its subjects have no need of external teaching, but this anointing teacheth them what is truth. It is no mere intellectual cognition, cold as a northern light, but it is a power, controlling at once the convictions, the affections, and the conscience. It is, therefore, irresistible. It cannot be shaken off by any voluntary effort, any more than a man can free himself from the belief in the moral law. Nor can it be effectually assailed by any of the weapons of argument, contempt, or ridicule. Philosophers look down with disdain, and even with disgust, on those who profess a faith thus supported as doting fanatics. They refute by logical demonstration the doctrines which are the objects of this faith; they demonstrate

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that reason is the guiding faculty of the soul, that nothing can be received as true which reason does not sanction, and because of that sanction; they pour contempt on all claims to the testimony of the Spirit. But all this avails nothing. They are like children or maniacs endeavouring to trample out the sun light. The moment they raise their feet there it is as calm and bright as ever. They may turn infuriated and curse the source of that light, but it still shines beneficent and glorious. Such has been the experience of the church from the beginning. How many times has the gospel been proved to be foolish! How often has some antichristian philosophy, first one and then another, received the homage of the leading minds of the world, and left the gospel to the poor and uncultivated! But the simple faith of the Church remains ever the same and ever sure. There are probably more sincere believers now alive on earth, than at any previous period of the world's history. We can therefore afford to have our doctrines derided and contemned. We can bear to hear the philosophers of to-day repeat the shout of triumph uttered by the philosophers of yesterday. We can even afford to acknowledge our incompetence to meet them in argument, or to answer their objections; and yet our faith remain unshaken and rational. Comparatively few men are able to meet or refute the arguments of a skilful idealist, and yet comparatively few are the least shaken in their convictions of the reality of the external world.

✓ Faith in Christ, therefore, of necessity involves faith in the Scriptures, and faith in the Scriptures involves the belief that they are the word of God and not the word of man. They come to us in the name of God; they profess to be his word; they claim divine authority, they are quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and are a discerners of the thoughts and intents of the heart. They control the reason and conscience, in the same way that the infinite reason controls that which is finite, and infinite excellence controls that which is limited and imperfect. All this is perfectly consistent with the admission that there are many ✓ intellectual difficulties connected with the doctrine, that the



Scriptures are the word of God. It is our duty to endeavour to solve these difficulties; to disperse these clouds; to bring the understanding into harmony with our spiritual convictions. But our faith is in no degree dependent on the success of these endeavours. There are difficulties connected with the being of God and his relation to the world, which no human intellect can solve, and yet our belief that God is, and that he is the creator, preserver, and governor of the world, is none the less assured. If the fact that there are many things in creation and providence which we find hard to reconcile with Theism, does not shake our faith in God, why should the fact that there are many things in the Scriptures which we find it hard to reconcile, shake our confidence in them?

In saying that the Bible is the word of God, we mean that he is its author; that he says whatever the Bible says; that everything which the Bible affirms to be true is true; that whatever it says is right is right, and whatever it declares to be wrong is wrong, because its declarations as to truth and duty, as to facts and principles, are the declarations of God. What the Scriptures teach is to be believed, not on the authority of Moses or the prophets, or of the apostles and evangelists, but on the authority of God, who used the sacred writers as his organs of communication. The Bible is the product of one mind. It is one book. It is the evolution through successive centuries, and in the use of a multitude of writers, of one great system of truth. The end was sure from the beginning. It contains a revelation of the secret things of God, of the nature, necessities and destiny of man, of things before human history and of things future—a knowledge altogether supernatural. Its several parts stand related to each other, the one supporting the others, all being mutually dependent and harmonious. The Bible is as obviously an evolution of the plan of redemption as an object of faith, as the history of our race is an evolution of that plan as a matter of experience. The two run parallel—the one was sketched out from the beginning, the outlines being more and more filled up until they are lost in the clouds and glories which overhang the book of Revelation, and the historical accomplishment following after, in its slow and certain progress—from the fall of Adam to the crucifixion of Christ, and

from the crucifixion to the consummation. If there are unity and design in history, there are unity and design in the Bible. If the one is the work, the other is the word of God. They stand in such relation to each other, that they must have the same author. It will hardly be denied that this is the doctrine of the whole Christian Church. All Christians in every age and of every name have regarded the Bible in all its parts as in such a sense the word of God as to be infallible and of divine authority. This is the faith of the Greeks and Latins, of Romanists and Protestants. We differ from Romanists as to what is Scripture, in so far as they receive certain books into the canon which Protestants reject. We differ also as to what the Scriptures teach; but Greeks, Romans, and Protestants all agree in saying, that everything in the Bible which purports to be the word of God, or which is uttered by those whom he used as his messengers, is to be received with the same faith and submission, as though spoken directly by the lips of God himself. This is the doctrine of plenary, as opposed to the theory of partial, inspiration. The church doctrine is opposed to the doctrine that some parts of Scripture are inspired, and others not; or that a higher degree of inspiration belongs to some portions than to others; or that inspiration is confined to the moral and religious truths contained in the Bible, to the exclusion of its historical or geographical details. It is also opposed to the theory which merges inspiration into revelation, and teaches that we have in the Scriptures a divine revelation communicated by fallible men; or, what amounts to much the same thing, that the thoughts are to be referred to the Spirit of God, but the words in which those thoughts are communicated, are due to the unassisted minds of the sacred writers. The doctrine of the Church on this subject has ever been, that the thoughts and language, the substance and the form of Scripture are given by inspiration of God; that the holy men of old SPAKE as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, sets forth this doctrine in the clearest light. He teaches, first, as to the source of the truths which he taught, negatively, that they were not derived from human reason, or the wisdom of men. They were neither the product of his own intelligence, nor communicated

to him by other men. On the contrary, what he taught had never entered into the mind of man to conceive. This is his negative statement. Affirmatively, he says these truths were revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, who alone is competent to make known the things of God. Secondly, as to the mode of communicating these truths, it was not in words which man's wisdom teaches, or which his own mind suggested, but in words taught by the Holy Ghost. Thirdly, that the ability to discern the spiritual excellence of these truths, and faith in them as being of God, are due to the teaching of the Spirit. These three great doctrines, viz. that the origin of the contents of the Scriptures is from God, that the mode of communication was controlled by the Spirit, and that saving knowledge and faith are the result of spiritual illumination, constitute the essential elements of the doctrine of the Church concerning the Scriptures from the beginning.

Inspiration, therefore, is essentially different from revelation, although the two were often united in experience, and although the two ideas are often expressed by the same word. The object of the latter is to impart knowledge to its subjects or recipients; the object of the former is to render men infallible in communicating truth to others. As these gifts are distinct, so they are not always united. Many have received supernatural revelations, who were not inspired to communicate them. Thousands heard the discourses of our Lord, but only the evangelists were inspired to record them. On the other hand many inspired men were not the subjects of any special revelations. The authors of the historical books of the Bible in many cases needed no supernatural communication of the facts which they recorded. All that they required was to be rendered infallible as narrators. Most frequently, however, the gifts of revelation and inspiration were combined. The prophets and apostles were at once imbued supernaturally by the Spirit of God with divine knowledge, and rendered infallible in communicating that knowledge orally and by writing.

Still more obvious is the distinction between inspiration and spiritual illumination. They differ as to their objects or the ends they are designed to accomplish. Spiritual illumination is designed to make men holy by imparting to them the discern-

ment of the truth and excellence of "the things of the Spirit," that is of divine truths already objectively revealed. Whereas the end of inspiration is simply to render men infallible in the communication of truth. All true believers are the subjects of spiritual illumination; but only a few men selected to be prophets or spokesmen of God, are inspired. Neither of these gifts necessarily implies the other. Wicked men, as Balaam, and Caiaphas, have been inspired. The Spirit of God in selecting a man, and making him the organ of communicating divine truth, does not thereby renew or purify his soul, any more than when he imparted to them the gift of miracles. The apostle tells us a man may be a prophet, that is, an inspired man knowing all mysteries, and his inspiration be proved by removing mountains, and yet he be a sounding brass or tinkling cymbal.

As to the nature of inspiration we are entirely ignorant; that is, we have no knowledge whatever of the mode of the Spirit's operation. We only know its effects. The case is analogous to the divine influence in the work of regeneration. We know nothing of the manner in which the Holy Ghost imparts spiritual life to those previously dead in trespasses and sins. We only know that the effect of that influence is to convey the principle of a new life. So we know nothing as to how the Spirit operates on the minds of those whom he makes his organs in communicating divine truth. We can only know the effects, and those effects are to be learned from the didactic statements of the Bible, and from the actual phenomena of Scripture. As we know the effects of regeneration by what the Bible declares to be its necessary consequences, and by the experience or observation of its sequents, so we know the effects of inspiration by the declarations of the Scriptures, and by the exhibition of those effects in the Bible itself. From these sources we learn:

- 1st. That the effect of inspiration was to render its subject the infallible organ of the Holy Ghost in communicating truth, in such sense as that what was said or written by an inspired man, the Holy Ghost said or wrote. Hence the formulas, "Isaiah or David said," and "the Holy Ghost said," mean precisely the same thing, and are in fact interchanged as synonymous in the sacred Scriptures. Consequently we are as much bound to believe and obey what is said by a man speaking under inspiration, as though



God himself were the speaker. It therefore matters not what is the nature of the truth communicated, whether a simple historical fact, a doctrine, a moral truth, or something relating to the future. The effect is the same. It is simply infallibility. There is not one kind of influence, or one kind of inspiration, required in the one of these cases, and another in the others. The Holy Spirit rendered the historian, the teacher, the unfolded of the future, infallible. How this was done is perfectly inscrutable in all these cases alike. In some instances, inspiration and revelation, as before remarked, were combined; and therefore the inward state of one inspired man may have been very different from that of another. But this does not suppose any difference in the nature of inspiration, or justify our making a distinction between the degree of divine influence exerted, or the measure of divine authority due to one portion of Scripture, as distinguished from another. If all are alike infallible; if God is the real author equally of the whole Bible, it is all we need require. While inspiration, considered as that divine influence by which the sacred writers were rendered infallible in communicating the will of God, was thus uniform, its incidental subjective effects may have varied indefinitely, not only according to the nature of the truths to be communicated, but also according to the character or inward state of the subject of this divine influence. The incidental effects of regeneration are probably in no two cases precisely the same; the thoughts and feelings accompanying that great change may vary indefinitely in their nature and strength. So when the Spirit descended on the apostles on the day of Pentecost, while it rendered them all equally infallible, it affected each no doubt differently, according to his natural constitution or peculiar inward state. The same prophet may have been very differently affected, when made the organ of recording the facts of history, and when he was unfolding the future glories of the Messiah and his kingdom. These incidental effects, however, are entirely subordinate and unimportant. <The simple end and object of inspiration was to render the sacred writers infallible; whether they were calm or excited, is to us a matter of no account.>

The doctrine that inspiration was a matter of degrees, and therefore imperfect, rests on a radically false theory of its

nature. It supposes that it consists in a divine afflatus, analogous to the inspirations of genius, by which the powers of the mind were aroused and strengthened, and thus the man was enabled to take clearer and higher views than other men, or than he himself could take under ordinary circumstances. If this were true, the Bible would be a mere human production. It would lose its supernatural character and divine authority, and one part would differ from another, in its title to our deference and submission, just as the writers were more or less enlightened and elevated in their subjective feelings and conceptions. But if inspiration be simply that influence of the Spirit of God, by which men were rendered infallible, then there is no difference as to correctness and authority between one portion of the Bible and another. There can be no degrees in infallibility; and therefore no degrees in inspiration. There may be great difference in the importance and extent of the revelations imparted to different men, but in the attribute of infallibility the sacred writers were upon a par.

2. A second important fact both taught and manifested in the Bible on this subject is, that the infallibility consequent on inspiration was limited to the nature of the object to be accomplished. As that object was the communication, orally and by writing, of the will of God, (i. e. of what God willed to be communicated and recorded as his word,) inspired men were infallible only in that work. Infallibility did not become a personal attribute, so that the sacred writers could not err in judgment or conduct in the ordinary affairs of life. Inspiration did not cure their ignorance, nor preserve them from error, except in their official work, and while acting as the spokesmen of God. They might have been, and in many cases they doubtless were, unskilful or ignorant as agriculturists, mechanics, historians, geographers, astronomers, and even as theologians. Inspiration does not suppose the illumination of the mind with all truth. It does not even suppose that inspired men understood what they spoke or wrote any better than other men. The prophets "searched what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." That is, they endeavoured to find out

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what was the true import of the communications which they were commissioned to deliver. Their infallibility as organs of communication did not imply infallibility in understanding what they communicated. They were the organs of the Spirit in predicting the advent, the work, and the kingdom of Christ, but their own views as to the person of the Messiah, and as to the nature of his kingdom, may have been as erroneous and grovelling as those of any of their contemporaries. When David predicted that "all things were to be put under" the feet of man, he probably had no idea that the Spirit of God which was in him did thereby signify that the whole universe (God alone excepted) was to be included in that subjection. All that is in the New Testament is in the Old, but it was not fully understood until expounded and unfolded by the prophets and apostles of the new dispensation. And much contained in the New Testament has a fulness of meaning which the apostles themselves little imagined. They were ignorant of many things, and were as liable to error or ignorance, beyond the limits of their official teaching, as other men. An inspired man could not, indeed, err in his instruction on any subject. He could not teach by inspiration that the earth is the centre of our system, or that the sun, moon, and stars are mere satellites of our globe, but such may have been his own conviction. Inspiration did not elevate him in secular knowledge above the age in which he lived; it only, so far as secular and scientific truths are concerned, preserved him from teaching error. The indications are abundant and conclusive that the sacred writers shared in all the current opinions of the generation to which they belonged. To them the heavens were solid, and the earth a plane; the sun moved from east to west over their heads. Whatever the ancient Hebrews thought of the constitution of the universe, of the laws and operations of nature, of the constitution of man, of the influence of unseen spirits, was no part of the faith of the sacred writers. The latter were not rendered by their inspiration one whit wiser than the former in relation to any such points. We may therefore hold that the Bible is in the strictest sense the word of God, and infallible in all its parts, and yet admit the ignorance and errors of the sacred writers as men. It was only as sacred writers they were infal-

libe. The Romish doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope, is perfectly consistent with the admission that the Pope as a man may be ignorant, unwise, erroneous, and even heretical. He is infallible only when acting officially and speaking *ex cathedra*. In his ordinary life and opinions he is not free from the errors and infirmities of ordinary men. And the scriptural doctrine of inspiration is perfectly consistent with the admission that the sacred writers shared in all the popular errors of their age and nation. It was only when acting as the organs of the Holy Ghost, that they were preserved from all mistakes. The failure to distinguish between infallibility as the result of divine guidance, and infallibility as the result of omniscience, or at least, of plenary knowledge, is the source of many of the popular objections to the doctrine of inspiration. It is abundantly evident that the sacred writers were erring, fallible men, and every evidence of this fact, every indication that they were not endowed with plenary knowledge of all truth, is adduced as proof that they were not inspired. So Isaiah might be guided by the Spirit of God in foretelling the birth and sufferings of Christ, without knowing the Copernican theory of the universe. Paul might unfold the true doctrine of redemption, without its being revealed to him how many persons he had baptized in Corinth. The apostles could predict the second advent of our Lord, without knowing when he was to come. The Scriptures may be absolutely free from error, although the knowledge of the men who wrote them was limited to the things which are therein recorded.

It follows from what has been said, or rather is included in it, that the sacred writers may not only have been more or less ignorant or erroneous in their personal convictions, but also that they may have differed among themselves. It is perfectly consistent with their plenary inspiration, and the consequent infallibility and perfect agreement in their teachings, that they should still differ in the measure in which they understood the things of the Spirit; as one may have experienced more of the sanctifying power of the truth revealed than another, some may have attained to greater freedom from personal and national prejudices, and to greater clearness of intellectual apprehension. It is beyond doubt that such was the case not only with the



ancient prophets, but also with the apostles. And it is the glimmering through of these subjective differences which imparts that beautiful diversity of form and manner in which the truth is exhibited in the sacred Scriptures; analogous to the different aspects of the same landscape, as viewed from different points, or under different conditions of light and shade. Even good men are apt to overlook this essential point. They transfer the attributes of the Bible to the writers. Because the Bible cannot err, they infer that the prophets and apostles could not err. Because the different portions of the Bible are perfectly consistent, they assume that the sacred writers, as men, could not differ. In cherishing this misapprehension, they are really conceding the rationalistic or mystic theory of inspiration. Instead of regarding it as a supernatural divine guidance in the communication of truth, they regard it as a subjective illumination, analogous to the inspirations of genius, where everything comes from the writer's own mind, and everything is human. We may again refer to the Romish theory of papal infallibility in illustration of this point. According to the ultramontane doctrine, the Pope is infallible in all his official judgments in matters of faith and morals. Yet the Popes differ not only in their personal character, but in their private convictions; in the degree in which they understand and receive the doctrines of the church. So with the prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles of the New, they were all infallible and all harmonious in their teachings, although they differed in character and in the measure in which they comprehended the system which they revealed. When Caiaphas said, "It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people," the apostle adds, "This he spake not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied, (that is, was inspired to say,) that Jesus should die for that nation." John xi. 50, 51. What Caiaphas's own views were of the vicarious death of Christ, is a matter which does not concern either the truth or meaning of the words which he uttered. His views on the subject may have been correct or incorrect, still what he said agreed exactly with what Isaiah predicted, and with what Paul taught. It is to us a matter of very little consequence, whether Paul and James differed in their opinions, so long as they agree in their

official teaching. It is very evident that they did differ in their whole inward state. They do not contradict each other. As Paul excelled the other apostles in zeal and activity, so it is plain that he excelled them all in the clearness and compass of his views of the plan of redemption. It is preposterous to attempt to reduce the sacred writers to a dead level—to place Isaiah and Amos upon the same footing as to their subjective state. Any theory of inspiration which requires this, is not only inconsistent with the phenomena of the Bible, but really destroys its authority. So long as it is assumed that inspiration consists in the exaltation of the faculties of the soul, enabling it to perceive what otherwise would remain unapprehended, so long must we admit the Scriptures are fallible and unreliable; because this subjective elevation is of course imperfect and limited, and consequently the perceptions to which it gave rise must also be imperfect. There is all the difference between this view of inspiration and the common or church doctrine, that there is between the human and divine. According to the church doctrine, it is God who speaks or writes; according to this other view, it is merely an excited fellow man. According to the church doctrine, the infallibility consequent on inspiration is limited to the official acts of its subjects in teaching or writing; according to the other doctrine, the authority of an inspired man arising out of his personal qualities is not official, and cannot be limited to official action. Wisdom and prudence being personal qualities, give weight and influence to the wise and prudent as men, and in every sphere in which they are called to act; but inspiration being an *ab extra* guidance, though infinitely above any mere personal attribute, is limited to the work to be performed. A child, if under the guidance of the Spirit, would be infallible, although he remained a child in intellect and knowledge.

3. A third fact not less clearly manifest, is that inspiration did not destroy the conscious self-control of its subjects. Inspired men were not thrown into a state of ecstasy, in which their understandings were in abeyance, and they led to give utterance to words of which they knew not the import. They were not carried away to speak or write, as it were, in spite of themselves, as was the case with the utterers of heathen

oracles, or those possessed with evil spirits. The spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets. The influence under which they spoke, may not have revealed itself to their consciousness, any more than the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Spirit are matters of consciousness to those who experience them. From the beginning to the end of the Bible, there is constant evidence of the calm self-control of the sacred writers. They all wrote and spoke as men in the full possession of their faculties, just as men of their age and circumstances might be expected to speak and write. It is, therefore, a perversion of the common doctrine, to represent it as reducing the inspired penmen into mere machines, as though they were guided by an influence which destroyed or superseded their own activity. If the Spirit of God can mingle itself with the elements of human action, and render it certain that a man will repent and believe, and persevere in holiness, without interfering with his consciousness or liberty, why may not that same Spirit guide the mental operations of a man, so that he shall speak or write without error, and still be perfectly self-controlled and free?

4. Inspiration being an influence by which a man was so guided in the exercise of his natural faculties, as that what he thought and said should express the mind of the Spirit, it follows that the individuality of its subject was fully preserved. His character was not changed by his inspiration. He was not thereby rendered more refined or cultivated, more intellectual or logical, more impassioned or eloquent. He retained all his peculiarities as a thinker and writer. If a Hebrew, he wrote the Hebrew language. If Greek was his ordinary language, he wrote Greek. If he lived in the time of Moses or Isaiah, he wrote Hebrew in its purity. If he belonged to the time of the captivity, he wrote Hebrew with all the idiomatic and grammatical peculiarities which the language had at that period assumed. If he wrote Greek, it was the Greek which he and his contemporaries were accustomed to use. The apostles did not use the Greek of Athens, but of Palestine. They wrote as Jews, using the Greek, modified by their Jewish training. These are facts, and they are facts which must determine our views of the nature of inspiration. It is also a fact that

if the subject of inspiration was a shepherd, he wrote as a shepherd; if a man of education, he wrote as an educated man. If his mind was logical and his style of writing argumentative; if disposed to throw everything into the form of syllogisms, and make every new proposition a deduction from what preceded it, he retained all these characteristics when writing under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. On the other hand, if imaginative and emotional, rather than logical, in his natural constitution, he was so in all his inspired utterances. If his mind was full of scriptural language and imagery, he was abundant in the use of scriptural expressions and illustrations, as we see in the writings of Matthew as compared with those of John. The relation of the Spirit to the minds of those whom he inspires, is in some points analogous to the relation of the soul to the body. The soul animates the whole body in all its acts equally, whether important or trivial. It uses and governs it effectually, but in a manner perfectly accordant with the laws of its nature, and with its organization; and not only so, but also in accordance with all its individual peculiarities. If a man's body is graceful and agile; if his voice is melodious; when moved by the indwelling soul to act or speak, its motions and utterances are graceful and pleasing. But if the body is ungainly and awkward, the voice harsh and unmusical, the indwelling soul in producing and guiding its activity will of course produce ungraceful action and harsh utterances. So the Spirit of God, when it actuated the mind of a man and made him its organ of communication, not only actuated it according to the general laws of mind, doing no violence to its nature, but also according to the peculiar characteristic traits of that particular mind. Hence the Bible, containing as it does the writings of some thirty or forty different authors, presents the same diversity of style and manner, as the productions of any like number of uninspired men.

5. There is still another fact which is not only asserted in Scripture, but may be said to be included in its actual phenomena, and that is, that the guidance of the Spirit extended to the words no less than to the thoughts of the sacred writers. The prophets not only constantly say, "Thus saith the Lord," and the apostle not only affirms that he used "words taught by



the Spirit," but it arises from the very nature of inspiration as actually exhibited in the sacred volume, that the guidance of the Spirit extended to the words employed. If inspiration were only an elevation of the natural powers, analogous to the stimulus of passion or the excitement of enthusiasm, then indeed, both thoughts and words would be due to the writer's own mind, and inspiration would lose its divine character and value. But if, (as it actually reveals itself in Scripture,) it is a supernatural control exerted by the Holy Spirit over the minds of its subjects, it must of necessity include the language which they use. In no other way could there be any effectual control over the thoughts expressed. The end to be accomplished is the communication or the record of truth. That communication or record is made in human language; unless the language is determined by the Spirit, the communication after all is human, and not divine. In the historical portions of Scripture, there is little for inspiration to accomplish beyond the proper selection of the materials, and accuracy of statement; and if the Spirit left the mode of such to the uninfluenced mind of the writer, then the whole end to be accomplished failed. There is nothing on this hypothesis, to distinguish the scriptural histories from the narratives of ordinary men. Again, in those instances in which the revelations to be recorded were objectively made, as in the discourses of our Lord, the only office of inspiration, the only thing which could distinguish the record of those discourses made by an apostle, from a report made by any other auditor, would be the infallible correctness of the report, and this, of course, involves the propriety and fitness of the language used to convey the thoughts to be communicated. To deny, in such cases, the control of the Spirit over the words of the sacred writer, is to deny inspiration altogether. It is a matter of daily observation, that when two or more persons hear the same discourse and are called upon to record from memory its substance, they uniformly differ in their representations. There is no confidence ever rendered to such reports, beyond their general drift. No speaker could justly be held responsible for statements made from memory, and after an interval of years, of what he had delivered in a public discourse. The contents of the Bible consist mainly of historical records, and of statements of moral and

religious truths. Its trustworthiness as to both these departments depends on the fact that the language employed is the word of God, and not the word of man. If there were no divine influence, or if that influence was only designed to elevate the mental state of the writer, to rouse his energies and excite his feelings, then it is evident that the Bible is utterly unworthy of the representations which it makes of itself. It is essentially a human production. It would be absurd to quote the language of David as the language of the Holy Ghost, or to say that the Scriptures cannot be broken; or to appeal to them, as Christ and his apostles constantly do, as an ultimate authority both as to facts and doctrines, if it is the mere work of excited men. It is therefore only by denying inspiration altogether, or by adopting an unscriptural view of its nature, that the language of the Bible can be regarded as merely human.

There is another obvious fact which proves that the sacred writers employed words "taught by the Holy Ghost." In many cases the appeal is made to a single word, or the argument is made to rest upon the form of expression. In many instances, indeed, the apostles in quoting the Old Testament content themselves with giving the sense without regarding the language of the original, but they often rest the force of the passage quoted upon the very words employed. They argue from the titles given to the Messiah; they make the very language of the ancient prophets the foundation of their conclusions, and Paul rests his exposition of an ancient prediction on the use of the singular (seed) instead of the plural (seeds.) The view, therefore, everywhere presented in the New Testament of the inspiration of the ancient prophets, supposes them to be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the selection of the words which they employ. David sat down to portray the sufferings of a child of God, as in Psalm xxii.: unconsciously to himself, it may be, he was led to select such figures and use such language, as to present a portrait of the suffering Messiah, recognized at once as a divine delineation. The same remark may be made in reference to Psalms xlv. lxxii. cx., and many other portions of Scripture. Of what worth are the thoughts of Isaiah concerning the person, work, and kingdom of Christ, if his language was all his own; if his "wonderful,"

“counsellor,” “mighty God,” “Father of eternity” are mere forms of human speech—phrases suggested by his own mind. We can understand how a man can regard the Bible as a mere human composition; we can understand how he can regard inspiration as a mere elevation of the religious consciousness; but how any one can hold that the sacred writers were inspired as to their thoughts, but not as to their language, is to us perfectly incomprehensible. The denial of verbal inspiration is in our view the denial of all inspiration, in the scriptural sense of the doctrine. No man can have a wordless thought, any more than there can be a formless flower. By a law of our present constitution, we think in words, and as far as our consciousness goes, it is as impossible to infuse thoughts into the mind without words, as it is to bring men into the world without bodies.

It has already been remarked, that verbal inspiration does not suppose anything mechanical. It does not make the writer a machine. It is not a process of dictation, as when a language unknown to the penman is employed. The writer retains his consciousness and self-control; he may be unconscious of the influence of which he is subject; he speaks or writes as freely and as characteristically as though he were entirely uninfluenced by the Spirit of God. When the brethren of Joseph sold him to the Midianites, and when Judas sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver, they acted freely, while they accomplished with certainty the purposes of God. When the saints on earth and in heaven fulfil the will of God in heart and life, they are unconscious of the grace by which their obedience is infallibly secured, and act as freely as though they were absolutely independent. If then the providential and the spiritual agency of God may control human action, and leave the agent free, why may not the Spirit of God, as the spirit of inspiration, guide the mental operations of the sacred writers, so that while they are unconscious of his power, they yet speak as they are moved by the Holy Ghost? It is a mere popular misconception, with which, however, even scholars are often chargeable, which supposes that verbal inspiration implies such a dictation as supersedes the free selection of his words on the part of the sacred writer. It is a fundamental principle of scriptural theology, that a man

→ may be infallibly guided in his free acts. If four men were to witness the same series of events, they would all describe them differently; in the use of different words, in different combinations, and in different lights. Each would state what he happened to see, or what specially attracted his attention, or what was suited to the end he had in view in constructing his narrative. If they were all inspired, their narratives would retain all these differences, with this single limitation, that they would all be free from error; and while constructed to answer the end proposed to himself by each individual writer, they would all be framed to answer the higher end proposed by that Spirit of whom they were unconsciously the organs. The events of our Saviour's life are thus narrated by the four evangelists. Each account was written for a special purpose. One evangelist records one event, another, another; or two or more describe the same event with variations, one account being fuller than the others, or one bringing into view circumstances unrecorded by the other. Matthew says the inscription on the cross was, "This is Jesus the king of the Jews," Mark says it was, "The king of the Jews;" Luke, "This is the king of the Jews;" John, "Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews." All different, yet all true; the difference being precisely such as would naturally occur where no special importance was placed on the mere form of expression. (Verbal inspiration, therefore, or that influence of the Spirit which controlled the sacred writers in the selection of their words, allowed them perfect freedom within the limits of truth.) They were kept from error, and guided to the use of words which expressed the mind of the Spirit, but within these limits they were free to use such language, and to narrate such circumstances as suited their own taste or purposes. To adduce the evidence of this freedom, and consequent diversity in the sacred writers, as an argument against verbal inspiration, as is done even by distinguished writers, only betrays ignorance of the doctrine which they profess to oppose.

The theory of inspiration here presented, is not an arbitrary one; it is not new; it is the theory which the Bible demands of those who recognize its divine origin. It is, as we believe, nothing more than a statement of the impression which the Scriptures themselves have made in all ages, on the general



consciousness of the Church. They claim to be of God; they assume to have divine authority; of the whole volume recognized by the Jews as Holy Scripture, our Lord asserts the infallibility; to that volume, known as the Law and Prophets, he and the apostles constantly appeal as the word of God; its writers are declared to have spoken as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit spake by the mouth of David; what the prophets (i. e. inspired men) said, the Holy Ghost is declared to have said. The divine character thus, on divine authority, ascribed to the Old Testament, belongs also to the New. Christ promised the Holy Spirit to his apostles, to render them infallible, to give to their teachings the authority which belonged to his own, so that those who heard them, would, at the same time, hear him. This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. The gift of inspiration then bestowed, was confirmed not only by signs, and wonders, and diverse miracles, but by the wonderful change wrought instantaneously in the apostles themselves. Before that event, they were converted men indeed, but blinded, bigoted Jews, immediately afterwards, they were large minded, enlightened Christians. They spake as the Spirit gave them utterance. They claimed divine authority for all they taught. They made the salvation of all men to depend on submission to the doctrines which they inculcated, and to the rule of life which they prescribed. This is the light in which the whole Bible presents itself. It claims to be the word of God. This claim is enforced and sustained, not only by the immeasurable superiority of the truths concerning God and his law, concerning man and his destiny, which it contains, but by the absolutely undeniable supernatural character of its contents. It presents one grand concatenated system of truth, gradually developed during fifteen hundred years, implying a knowledge of God, of man, of the past, and of the future, beyond controversy, superhuman and divine. This book which thus claims and reveals its divine origin, has a corresponding divine power. To the natural man, it stands in the same relation that conscience does. Its authority is questioned, argued against, resisted, often silenced, but as soon as the mind settles down again, it comes back as divine and authoritative as ever. To the spiritual man, it is "the wisdom of God, and the power of

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God unto salvation." It can hardly be denied that this is the light in which the Bible presents itself, and in which it has been received by the Church, i. e. by the great body of true believers in all ages. But this view necessarily supposes, 1. That the sacred writers are not the real authors of the book. In point of fact they disappear, and God takes their place. That is, our faith in what the Bible reveals, and our submission to what it enjoins, are faith and submission towards God, not towards Moses, the prophets, or apostles, as men. Every Christian is conscious of this, as a matter of personal experience. He knows that when he reads the Bible, the voice to which he listens, to which his reason bows, his conscience submits, and to which his inmost soul responds, which calms his fears, which illumines, purifies, and elevates him above the world, is not the voice of man. But if the voice of God, it must be true. The Scriptures must be infallible. It is the Bible, the Bible as a book, the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation, which reveals itself as divine. When the disciples fell down, in adoring wonder, at the feet of their transfigured Master, it was the whole Christ whose glory filled their souls. They did not ask what the hairs of his head, or the nails on his hands, had to do with his majesty. So the believer, to whom the Bible commends itself as the word of God, is not troubled by the question, What special glory is there in Chronicles or Esther? Such portions of Scripture are to him what the girdle and the sandals of the glorified Redeemer were to the apostles. They have their place, and their importance; taken by themselves they would be nothing. This view of the Bible, as we have endeavoured to show, necessitates the idea of inspiration, not as the subjective illumination and elevation of the sacred writers, but as an *ab extra* divine influence, rendering them infallible as the organs of the Spirit. It thus differs from revelation on the one hand, and spiritual illumination on the other. These gifts of revelation, inspiration, and illumination, are distinct and separable, and it is of great importance that they should not be confounded. With regard to inspiration, all the sacred writers were on a par. With regard to revelation and illumination, they differed indefinitely. Though we know that some men were inspired who had no revelation, and no spiritual illu-

mination, yet in the majority of cases, these gifts were combined in different measures. In Isaiah, Paul and John, we have this union exemplified in its highest form. They were not only inspired to communicate the truth of God, but they were abundant in the revelations which they received, and obviously spiritually illuminated and sanctified in a degree altogether extraordinary. But their authority is no greater than that of any other sacred writer, because that authority rests on inspiration which was common to all, not on their subjective illumination and elevation which differed in all. 2. In the second place, (as we are now recapitulating,) as inspiration reveals itself in Scripture as a divine guidance, and not an inward elevation, it follows that the infallibility of inspired men was limited to their official teachings. It was not as men, or in virtue of their personal wisdom or knowledge that they were infallible, but simply in virtue of the *ab extra* influence under which they wrote. Their infallibility as teachers or writers, therefore, is perfectly consistent with their personal ignorance, errors, prejudices, and mutual differences. It is a matter of no moment to us what Moses or Isaiah, Paul or Peter, thought of the solar system, or of the kingdom of Christ, or of the end of the world, or of any other subject, provided only they were preserved from all error in their teaching. 3. It also follows from this view of the matter, that the sacred writers were not mere machines, carried on by a power which destroyed their consciousness or self-control. Whatever they spoke or wrote, they spoke and wrote in the full exercise of their faculties; and therefore, 4. All their individual peculiarities, as to modes of thought and expression, are left undisturbed. As the providential efficiency of God, and the influences of his grace act on his creatures, in accordance with the laws of their nature, so that they act freely, although with absolute certainty as to the event, so the guidance of the Spirit in inspiration leaves the mind free, although exemption from all error is infallibly secured. 5. And finally, it is obvious from this view of the nature of inspiration, it must control the language as well as the thoughts of the sacred writers. Indeed its whole object, as distinguished from revelation, is to secure the correct and faithful expression of the divine mind, so that it fails entirely of its object, (in other words all

inspiration in the scriptural sense of the doctrine is denied,) if the words of the sacred writers were not determined by the Spirit of God.

That there are difficulties connected with this theory, is a matter of course. What great doctrine of either natural or revealed religion is free from difficulty? The great majority of educated men believe in the existence of a personal God, the Creator and Governor of the universe. Let any man, however, try to carry out that theory; let him fall into the hands of a subtle Atheist or Pantheist, and he will soon find that his faith must rest on the proper evidence of the doctrine, and not on his ability to solve all the difficulties connected with it. The same remark applies to the doctrine of providence, the immortality of the soul, the person and work of Christ, and every other doctrine which enters into the faith of man. A faith which cannot stand in the face of difficulties, must lapse into blank and universal scepticism; a scepticism which is itself beset with difficulties, a thousand times greater than those to which it is a cowardly surrender. The only rational, and indeed the only possible course for men to pursue, is to believe what is proved to be true, and let the difficulties abide their solution.

2. It is not only natural and according to analogy that there should be difficulties connected with this doctrine, but the marvel is, that they are not a hundred-fold greater. Let any man bring the case before his mind. Infallibility, or absolute freedom from error, is claimed for a book containing sixty-six distinct productions, on all subjects, of history, of law, of religion, of morals; embracing poetry, prophecy, doctrinal and practical discourses, covering the whole of man's present necessities and future destiny, written by about forty different men, at intervals more or less distant, during fifteen hundred years. If this is a human production, if written by uninspired men, its claim to infallibility could be disproved to the conviction of an idiot. It must contain evidence of human imbecility, ignorance, and error, so overwhelming as to put to silence and cover with shame the most illiterate and bigoted advocate of its divine origin. Instead, however, of any such overwhelming evidence against the infallibility of the Bible, the difficulties are so minute



as to escape the notice of ordinary intelligence. They must be sought as with a microscope, and picked out with the most delicate forceps of criticism. One writer says that on a certain occasion twenty-four thousand persons were slain; another, a thousand years after, says, there were twenty-three thousand; one evangelist says the inscription on the cross was, "The King of the Jews;" another says it was, "This is the King of the Jews." Are not these objections pitiful? And yet they are seriously adduced by able and learned men. We do not say that there are not other objections, and some of a more serious kind; but we do say that, considering the nature of the claim, these difficulties are miraculously small. That is, it is a miracle they are not greater. Let it be remembered that the Bible was written before the birth of science, that it touches on all departments of human knowledge; it speaks of the sun, moon, and stars, of the earth, air, and ocean, of the origin, constitution, and destiny of man; yet, what has science or philosophy to say against the Bible? It is true, when astronomy first began to unfold the mechanism of the universe there was great triumph among infidels, and great alarm among believers, at the apparent conflict between science and the Scriptures. But how stands the case now? The universe is revealed to its profoundest depths, and the Bible is found to harmonize with all its new discovered wonders. No man now pretends that there is a word in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, inconsistent with the highest results of astronomy. Geology has of late asserted her claims, and there are the same exultations and the same alarms. But any one who has attended to the progress of this new science, must be blind indeed not to see that geology will soon be found side by side with astronomy in obsequiously bearing up the queenly train of God's majestic word.

3. A third remark on this subject is, that a very large proportion of the objections to the common doctrine of inspiration is founded on misapprehension of its nature. It is assumed that if the Bible is the word of God, there can be no human element about it, no diversity of style, no evidence of different mental peculiarities, no variety in the narratives of the same event, no greater amplitude in one case than in another, no

presenting the same event or the same truth, under different aspects or relations. That is, if God creates flowers, they must all be alike; if he made the stars, they must be of the same size; if he inspires different men, they must all use the same language, be it Hebrew or Greek. If a musician performs on different instruments, no man (on this hypothesis) can tell which is which. Now, as the church doctrine of inspiration is that the Spirit guides each man in the use of his own peculiar faculties and powers, whether he be Greek or Hebrew, gentle or simple, learned or unlearned, infant or adult, such objections as the above are wide of the mark. The orchestra of the Bible is not composed of one instrument, but of many. There are no discords, no false notes, but perfect harmony with indefinite diversity. A still more prolific misapprehension is the assumption that what is true of the Bible must be true of its authors; and therefore if the Bible be infallible, the writers, as men, must be infallible. "Any admission," it is said, "of a single instance of mistake, or error in purpose, word, or action in the apostles, impairs the inspired infallibility of their teachings and writings, and leaves every reader to draw the line as best he can in deciding the authority of Scripture." Hence it is asked how could Paul be inspired and not know that Caiaphas was high priest, Acts xxiii. 5; or how many persons he had baptized in Corinth, 1 Cor. i. 16; or how could he be mistaken as to the end of the world? We must be permitted to say that these objections, although made by eminent men, are not above the level of those made by itinerant lecturers on Romanism against the infallibility of the Pope. They would indeed be fatal, if the doctrine of inspiration assumed that the infallibility of the sacred writers arose out of the plenitude of their knowledge, or their personal qualities, and was therefore inherent in them, like wisdom and prudence, to be manifested on all occasions, and in reference to all subjects. But if the doctrine assumes nothing more than a divine guidance of certain men in the exercise of their office as teachers, these objections have not the weight of a feather. All that the doctrine requires in the cases above referred to, is, that Paul should make a truthful record of his ignorance as to who Caiaphas was, as to how many persons he had baptized in Corinth, and as to when the end of the world was to be. He

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did not teach any error on these points. He did not affirm as an inspired man, that Caiaphas was not the high priest, or that he had baptized ten persons in Corinth, when in fact he had baptized only five, or that the end of the world was to come at a certain fixed period. It matters nothing what he thought as to any of these points, provided he did not teach error. The whole end and office of inspiration is to preserve the sacred writers from error in teaching. Special stress is laid in this connection, on the phenomena of the book of Job, where one man teaches one doctrine, and another another. But Job's friends were not inspired. All our doctrine demands, is that the writer of that book was inspired to give a true account, first of what the men said, and then of what God said. We do not hold that the devil was inspired when he tempted Eve, but simply that Moses was inspired to give a true account of the temptation. Another misconception nearly allied to the preceding, is the assumption that inspiration makes men holy, that it controls their emotions, affections and moral conduct. Hence it is asked, "When Peter and Paul differed, or, in plain English, quarrelled, about the judaizing element which some wished to connect with the adoption of the gospel by the Gentiles, when Paul withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed, Gal. ii. 11, on which side was the inspiration?" *Ellis*, p. 263. On the same ground reference is made to the denunciatory Psalms, and the question is asked, how an inspired man could pour out such execrations. But Balaam was inspired, Saul was among the prophets, Caiaphas prophesied, Judas wrought miracles, and might have been, in full consistency with the doctrine of inspiration, as infallible a teacher (had Christ seen fit to employ him) as Paul, although he was a devil. Peter denied his master in Jerusalem, and belied his principles at Antioch, but this only proves that he was no hero. It certainly does not prove that his epistles contradict those of Paul. Peter taught the doctrine of justification by faith, as Paul told him "before them all," as fully as Paul himself did. The trouble was that he did not act up to his doctrine. His inspiration controlled his teaching, but not his conduct. So with regard to the denunciatory Psalms. David was the organ of God in denouncing the divine judgments against the wicked. If he



did this with the feelings with which a benevolent judge pronounces sentence on a criminal, so much the better for him. But if he did it in the spirit of malice and revenge, so much the worse for him. In either case the Spirit spake by the mouth of David. How David's heart was affected by those denunciations, is a question entirely apart from his inspiration. These objections evidently proceed from misapprehension of the doctrine against which they are directed. Men were not inspired because they were holy, nor did their inspiration render them holy. It is true indeed, as before remarked, that in the great majority of cases, God selected holy men as his organs in communicating truth, but their holiness was not the effect of their inspiration. The fact therefore that the sacred writers were not perfect, or that they did not always act up to their principles, is no proof that they were not inspired.

4. Another large class of objections consists in gratuitous assumptions. It is assumed that in a multitude of cases the writers of the New Testament misinterpret the Old Testament; that in many other cases they reason badly, drawing conclusions not justified by the premises, or advancing weak arguments; and in other cases still, that they teach false doctrines, or accommodate themselves to the erroneous opinions or prejudices of their age and nation. This is a very convenient method of disposing of the question. If a man does not agree with Paul, it is easy for him to say, Paul was mistaken, and therefore not inspired. Unless however the objector himself be infallible, his differing from the apostles as to the correctness of an interpretation, or the force of an argument, is no proof that the latter were not inspired.

5. Much the most serious difficulties which the advocate of the doctrine of inspiration has to encounter, arise from the real or apparent inconsistencies, contradictions, and inaccuracies of the sacred volume. With regard to this class of objections, we would repeat a remark already made, viz. that the cases of contradiction or inconsistencies, are, considering the age and character of the different books constituting the Bible, wonderfully few and trivial. Secondly, these inconsistencies do not concern matters of doctrine or duty, but numbers, dates, and historical details. Thirdly, in many cases the contradictions



are merely apparent, and readily admit of being fairly reconciled. Fourthly, with regard to those which cannot be satisfactorily explained it is rational to confess our ignorance, but irrational to assume that what we cannot explain is inexplicable. There are so many errors of transcription in the text of Scripture, such obscurity as to matters necessary to elucidate these ancient records, so little is known of contemporary history, that a man's faith in the divinity of the Bible must be small indeed, if it be shaken because he cannot harmonize the conflicting dates and numbers in Kings and Chronicles. We are perfectly willing to let these difficulties remain, and to allow the objectors to make the most of them. They can no more shake the faith of a Christian, than the unsolved perturbations of the orbit of a comet shake the astronomer's confidence in the law of gravitation.

The various classes of objections above mentioned are superficial, and probably produce little effect. They are used as means of annoyance, while the real ground of dissent lies much deeper. The common doctrine of inspiration does not admit of being brought into harmony with the reigning philosophy, and therefore it is rejected. Any great change of a man's views of the nature of God, of his relation to the world, of the constitution of man, of the principles of virtue, or nature of free agency, necessitates a change in all other related doctrines. It often happens, too, that when a new philosophy springs up in one country, and leads to a corresponding modification of Christian doctrine, these modifications are adopted even where the philosophy is either not known or not assented to. Thus there are views of inspiration current in this country and in England, the product of German philosophy, adopted by many who know or care little or nothing about the real basis and genesis of the views which they embrace. The two great points, so far as our present subject is concerned, on which the new philosophy has introduced principles which of necessity modify the doctrine of inspiration, are the nature of God, and the nature of religion.

(a) The doctrine of inspiration, in common with those of creation, providence, regeneration, sanctification, &c., rests on the assumption of Theism, that is, of a personal, extra mundane God,

existing before and independent of the world. They assume that God and the world are not identical; that man is a person distinct from God, and capable of being the subject and object of divine acts. Now, though we are told by the latest authority,\* that Pantheism, which denies all this, is dead in Germany; that Feuerbach has run Hegelianism into the ground, and thereby killed it; still its fruits remain, and enough of its principles survive to give those fruits vitality and continuance. The very latest speculative theology essays to keep up a distinction between God and the world, but not a separation. God is not an individual, in the presence of other individuals; he is all, pervading all, the indwelling energy in all that is finite. *Schwarz*, p. 305. In all its forms this new philosophy makes the world and history a process, a development of God, in which process there is no room for any special intervention of God. All is growth. Revelation is not outward, but inward; not once for all, but constant; not particular, or to particular persons, but universal; not supernatural, but according to fixed and necessary laws. In some men, and at some periods, this process of divine development is more remarkable than at others; and those are the men who may be said to be the inspired, and those the periods of revelation. <The fundamental idea that God and the world are one, however distinguished; that God is the life of the world, and that all history is the self-evolution of God, determines the nature of all the doctrines of religion.> There is, of course, according to this view, no such thing as miracles, supernatural revelation, or inspiration. This idea pervades a large part of the theology of Germany, and determines the views of Cousin, Coleridge, Carlisle, and others, so far as their writings touch on religion, or treat philosophically of its nature. To a Christian who holds fast the fundamental doctrine of a God who is the real Creator and Governor of the world, distinct from it, though everywhere present in it, who is not bound to a process of development, and to act according to fixed laws, but may act how and when he pleases, the objections

\* See Schwarz: *Geschichte der neuesten Theologie*. "Feuerbach," he says, "is in one view the necessary consequence of the Hegelian philosophy, in another, a great advance beyond it. He is the sequence of the system, and its destruction," &c. p. 219.

founded on the denial of that fundamental doctrine, can have no force.)

As to the nature of religion, the new philosophy teaches that it is not a form of knowledge, not a mode of action, but a life, a peculiar state of feeling; and Christianity is a life, or form of the religious consciousness produced by Christ, or in some way due to him, and derived from him. Theology is the intellectual forms in which the religious sentiment expresses itself, or the scientific interpretation of the intuitions of the religious consciousness. Revelation is that process (natural or supernatural) by which those intuitions are awakened in the mind; and inspiration is the inward influence by which the mind is enabled to seize on those intuitions. These radical ideas are the life-blood of two-thirds of what passes for orthodoxy in Germany, and of the affiliated systems in this country. That Christianity is not a system of doctrine, but a new life, or principle, or leaven introduced into the world, is the spinal cord of Neander's History; it is the substance of Ullmann's "Wesen des Christenthums;" the basis of Twisten's Dogmatik; the sole distinction of the "Mercersburgh Theology;" the beginning and end of Morell's "Philosophy of Religion." It is the shibboleth and pass-word of an extended school of theology, including many men of science and mere sciolists. It is the formula of incantation by which ghosts are raised and laid, and by which all positive doctrines, all fixed forms of faith, are blown into thin air, whenever the occasion calls for it. The forms in which this general theory are held, are indefinitely numerous. In Schleiermacher it was a form of Pantheism—or at least it arose out of the pantheistic philosophy which he at one time openly avowed, and which underlies all his theology.

On this subject Schwarz says, Schleiermacher "began in his *Reden über die Religion*, with undisguised Pantheism," p. 28, and in another place, "Schleiermacher stands in his Ontology and Cosmology, in all that concerns the relation of God and the world, entirely on the ground of their identity. This is true even of his doctrines of Creation and Preservation, as unfolded in his Dogmatik. God and the world are inseparable correlatives; the relation of God to the world is necessary, uniform, indissoluble. No place is allowed for extraordinary

action, or special intervention on the part of God. He is indeed above nature, as its author, nevertheless all his activity is according to the laws of nature, and in connection with them. It is however admitted, that this philosophical view of the immanence of God in the world is not strictly carried out by Schleiermacher, as a theologian. Miracles, banished from his Ontology and Cosmology, appear in his Christology. The person of Christ is a miracle, an exception from natural law, it stands alone," p. 256. Christ was however only a new starting point; from him the process of development according to law goes on. The life (the theanthropic life) of which he was the germ, expands and unfolds itself in the Church. It is not pertinent to our object to trace out this theory, or to notice the different forms in which it is presented. Neither is it consistent with our purpose to enter on any attempt to refute the philosophy on which this theory is founded. It is enough for us to show that the view of revelation and inspiration derived from the doctrine that religion is a form of feeling, that Christianity is merely an inward life, or form of the religious consciousness derived in some way from Christ, is unscriptural and antichristian. Revelation, as just stated, according to this doctrine, is not the communication of truths, of facts and doctrines to the understanding, but the production or calling up of intuitions in the reason; and inspiration is not a divine, special operation of the Spirit of God on the mind, guiding it in the communication of truth, but the elevating influence by which the mind is enabled to see spiritual objects. The distinction, however, between revelation and inspiration is seldom made or adhered to by the advocates of this theory. They include both under the word *Eingebung*.

The simple fact is, or is assumed to be, that when Christ appeared on earth, his person, life, works, and words, made a certain impression on those about him, which awakened to an extraordinary degree their religious consciousness. The effect of this was to elevate and purify their minds, so that they saw truths which they never saw before. They had intuitions of spiritual things which were new, not only to their experience, but to the experience of all other men. Had this inward purification been perfect, their intuitions would have been perfect.



They would have seen all spiritual truths which the human intellect can receive. But it was imperfect in all, and different in each. It was however greater in the apostles than in others, and therefore their writings have a certain normal authority for us. "What the first *Begeisterung* (enthusiasm) is for a gifted man, that" says Martensen, "is inspiration for the church. The first *Begeisterung*, the first influx of this life, is canonical for those who follow." *Dogmatik*, p. 382. The difference however between our inspiration and that of the apostles is only a matter of degree, not of kind. Thus even Morell says, "Revelation and inspiration indicate one united process, the result of which upon the human mind is to produce a state of spiritual intuition, whose phenomena are so extraordinary, that we at once separate the agency by which they are produced from any of the ordinary principles of human development. And yet the agency is applied in perfect consistency with the laws and natural operations of our spiritual nature. Inspiration does not imply anything generically new in the actual process of the human mind; it does not involve any form of intelligence essentially different from what we already possess; it indicates rather the elevation of the religious consciousness, and with it, of course, the power of spiritual vision, to a degree of intensity peculiar to the individuals thus highly favoured of God—indicating, in fact, an inward nature so perfectly harmonized with the Divine, so freed from the distorting influences of prejudice, passion, and sin, so simply recipient of the Divine ideas circumambient around it, so responsive in all its strings to the breath of heaven, that truth leaves an impress upon it, which answers perfectly to its objective reality." *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 148. Inspiration, he says, "is a higher potency of a certain form of consciousness, which every man to some degree possesses," p. 159. All the leaders of this school unite in teaching that inspiration was not peculiar to the apostles; they only participated with other Christians therein. See *Hase's Hutterus Redivivus*, p. 104. The Bible, according to this doctrine, does not contain a revelation. As Christianity does not consist in propositions, but is a life in the soul, the apostles did not go forth to teach a system of doctrine, says Morell, but to awaken man's power of spiritual

intuition. The doctrines which they present in their writings are not revealed, they are not from God, they are the human, imperfect intellectual forms in which the sacred writers gave expression to their feelings and intuitions. These forms were of necessity Jewish. The ideas of God, sin, redemption, immortality, considered as "eternal verities," are presented in the form given to them by the understanding of men trained in Judaism. We may clothe those verities in different forms. Because the apostles conceived of redemption under the form of a purification from guilt by a sacrifice, is no reason why we should so conceive of it. It may be to us the destruction of a sinful life by the infusion of a new life, the purification of a polluted stream by the influx of pure water. Of course the Bible is not infallible; it is full of human imperfections; of the misconceptions, or imperfect conceptions or expressions of eternal truths. It simply records the scenes which awakened the religious consciousness of the apostles, and the thoughts and feelings which this awakening produced in their minds. The followers of this school, therefore, do not hesitate, however they may differ among themselves in the degree of reverence which they feel for the Scriptures, as the record of the views and experience of holy men, not only to question the accuracy of the narratives therein contained, but the correctness of the doctrines there set forth. The apostles not only failed in memory, made false quotations and erroneous expositions, but they misconceived in many cases the teachings of their Master, and present the truths which he desired to awaken in their minds in the imperfect forms of their Jewish modes of thought.

In reference to this whole theory, we would remark, that the principle on which it is founded is contrary to the general judgment and common consciousness of men. Intellectual apprehension produces feeling, and not feeling intellectual apprehension. There must be the perception or conception of beauty, before there can be the emotion. This is specially true of the religious affections. They cannot exist, and can have no character, except as they terminate on some object. What is the love of God, without the idea of God? What is reverence for Christ, without the apprehension of his excellence? What is penitence for sin, without any perception of its contrariety to

the law and character of God? How do we act when we desire to awaken right feeling, but exhibit the proper object of that feeling. The Scriptures everywhere take this great truth for granted. They lay no stress on feeling, except so far as it is excited by proper objects. They inculcate everywhere the exhibition of truth as the only possible means of producing holiness.

2. The idea that Christianity is a form of feeling, a life, and not a system of doctrines, is contrary to the faith of all Christians. Christianity always has had a creed. A man who believes certain doctrines is a Christian. If his faith is mere assent, he is a speculative Christian; if it is cordial and appreciating, he is a true Christian. But to say that a man may be a Christian, without believing the doctrines of Christianity, is a contradiction. A man may be amiable or benevolent, without any definite form of faith, but how is he to be a Christian, Jew, or Mohammedan, without a specific belief? It is true that there is an inward state, answering to the objects of faith; and it is also true that this subjective state is necessary to complete the idea of a Christian, Jew, or Mohammedan, but the inward is due to the objective, and cannot exist without it. The idea that Christianity is a feeling, analogous to amiability or benevolence, and, therefore, that a man may be a Christian, although an atheist or pagan, destroys all distinction between truth and falsehood; between God and idols; between good and evil. It is, indeed, admitted by the consistent advocates of this theory, that there is no proper distinction between religions as true and false. There are not true trees and false trees; there are trees more or less perfect; but every tree is a genuine product of vegetable life; and every religion is a genuine expression of the religious sentiment.

3. Nothing can be more opposed to Scripture than this depreciation of the importance of doctrine. It is one of the fundamental principles of the Bible, that truth is as essential to holiness as light is to vision. Hence, on the one hand, the reception of the truth is made essential to salvation, and, on the other, false doctrine is denounced as the source of sin, and the precursor of perdition. The knowledge of God is eternal life. Paul renounced everything for the excellency of the

knowledge of Christ Jesus. He declares the gospel to be the word of God; the doctrines which he preached, to be the power of God, and the wisdom of God, unto salvation. He teaches that it is impossible to exercise faith without knowledge, and that without faith men cannot be saved. Those who renounced the gospel, or the doctrines which he taught, he declares must perish. "If our gospel be hid," he says, "it is hid to them that are lost." The whole Bible is pervaded by this idea of the saving power of truth, and of the destructive influence of error.

It is a thoroughly infidel sentiment, as commonly understood, that his creed cannot be wrong whose life is in the right. The reverse is true, his life cannot be right, whose creed is in the wrong. The inward life of the soul is as much sustained by truth, and as much dependent on it, as the life of the body is dependent on air and food. This doctrine thus clearly taught in Scripture, is confirmed by all experience, and by the testimony of the whole Church. In no part of the world, and in no period of its history, has holiness been found without truth; and the only possible way in which we can promote holiness among men, is by the diffusion of the truth. Even the Edinburgh Review, some years ago, admitted that the character of an age depends on its theology. A doctrine, therefore, which avowedly makes truth of subordinate importance, which claims that feeling, as distinguished from doctrine and independent of it, is the essence of religion, is as thoroughly antisciptural as any doctrine ever advanced by man.

4. It need hardly be remarked that this doctrine destroys the authority of Scripture. The Bible is not a revelation. It does not contain a revelation. This is expressly asserted, see *Morell*, p. 143. It contains only the narrative of "the scenes which awakened the religious nature of the writers to a new life, and the high ideas and aspirations to which that life gave origin." Everything about the Bible is human, all its narratives, all its doctrines, all its precepts, all its promises, and all its predictions. There is nothing divine in the book itself. There was some divine agency in ordering the circumstances which awakened a new life in the sacred writers, and there may have been, as others admit, some divine influence, some sanctifying power exerted on their minds, to make them holy. But the



doctrines and predictions of the Bible are nothing more than the forms in which holy men expressed their thoughts and aspirations, and derive all their authority from the holiness of the writers. Now, as holy men are still men, fallible, imperfect, short-sighted, there can, on this theory, be nothing but human authority attributed to the Bible. How does this agree with, "Thus saith the Lord," found on every page of Scripture? How is the awful voice of God, which sounds through the Bible from beginning to end, before which the heart quakes and the people tremble, reduced, on this theory, to the cooing of a dove or the hooting of an owl. It is lamentable when open infidels take this ground; but it is enough to make a man cover his face with his hands in shame, to see those who profess to be Christians, and who are set for the defence of the gospel, through treachery, vanity, or weakness, assuming the same position. We bow with reverence before Neander and other advocates of this doctrine in Germany, for in their case it shows heroic faith to hold fast even thus much in the flood of Atheistic Pantheism which has deluged that country. But because a man, by superhuman exertion, escapes shipwreck in his shirt, it is no reason why men on dry land should denude themselves, and then glory in their costume. The great and good Neander deprecated the republication of his "Life of Christ" in this country. He knew that Christians in Germany had been despoiled by the enemy of much precious truth, which it was of the last importance for the Christians of America to preserve. This is perfectly consistent. A man's faith is not under his control. It is no uncommon thing to hear unbelievers say that they know that the gospel is true, and that they would give the world to believe it. Paradoxical as it may sound, it is nevertheless a fact of consciousness and experience, that a man may know a thing to be true which he cannot believe. It is so with these German Christians. Their moral nature and religious experience assure them that things are true, to which their speculative principles forbid their assent. The Christians, therefore, in England and America, who strip themselves of their clothing that they may encounter *in puris naturalibus* the wintry blasts of error, are not exactly the objects of admiration to their German brethren which they imagine themselves to be. That the

theory in question does destroy the authority of Scripture, as a rule of faith, is not a matter of inference. Its advocates do not profess to feel bound to receive as true any fact or doctrine of the Bible on the authority of the Bible itself. They receive just what pleases them and reject what they dislike, or what conflicts with their critical or philosophical principles. The miraculous conception of our Lord is a myth; the account which Paul gives of his conversion is only a record of his inward experience, there was no voice, no preternatural light, no visible appearance of Christ; all that is said about demons and demoniacal possessions, is of course accommodation; the gospel appears in one form in the Evangelists, but in a very different and worse form in the Epistles: Paul had one view of Christianity, Peter another, John another, and James another. They differ not merely in different aspects in which they view and present the same truths, but they differ in doctrine. The one affirms to be true, what the other declares to be false. Their religious life expressed itself in different intellectual forms. Of course there is no one form which is authoritative; no doctrinal propositions which we are bound to accept. As the advocates of this general theory differ indefinitely in their likes and dislikes, and in their principles of criticism and of philosophy, there is, of course, a corresponding difference among them as to what they receive as genuinely Christian, and what they reject as Jewish or spurious. This, however, is only a difference of detail, it does not affect the general principle common to them all.

5. As we occupy the position, that what is unscriptural is untrue, and as our only object is to show that the theory of inspiration under consideration is contrary to the Bible, it is unnecessary to pursue the subject any further. There is, however, one other respect, to which it may be well to advert, in which this theory stands in the most obvious contradiction to the Scriptures. According to this theory, revelation and inspiration are that process or influence by which the inward life of the soul is awakened and quickened, so that the mind takes cognizance of "eternal verities." But a large portion of the doctrines of the Bible are not eternal verities; they do not fall under the category of universal and necessary truths which alone are the objects of intuition. The doctrines of Scripture

concerning the creation and fall of man, redemption, the person of Christ, his atonement, resurrection, ascension, second coming, and kingdom, are not necessary truths. No elevation of the religious consciousness of angels could enable them to perceive these things to be true. Much less are historical facts the objects of the intuition of the religious consciousness. This theory of inspiration precludes the possibility of prophecy so far at least as historical events are concerned. What amount of holiness could enable a man to foresee that Abraham was to have possession of the land of Canaan; that his posterity were to be bondsmen in Egypt; that they were to be delivered and brought back to the promised land; that Jerusalem was to be destroyed, and the people led into captivity for seventy years, and then restored to their own country; that Christ was to be born of a virgin, in the city of Bethlehem; that he was to be crucified, dead, and buried, and rise again on the third day; that Jerusalem was to be again destroyed, and the Jews scattered over the earth, and yet preserved a distinct people? All these events were predicted long before they came to pass; but no degree of spiritual elevation, no elevation of the religious consciousness, could enable a man to foresee them. They do not belong to the class of objects of which the religious consciousness takes cognizance. You might as well assert that a man, if he had a good telescope, could see who is to be king of France a thousand years hence. It is out of the question, therefore, that this theory can be reconciled with the facts and doctrines of Scripture, and this its intelligent advocates have the candor to admit.

The reader will not fail to notice how analogous this modern theory is in its results, although not in its principles, with the old doctrine of the Quakers. According to the original doctrine of the Friends, the Holy Spirit is given to all men to guide them to the knowledge of truth and duty. The clearness and correctness of their apprehensions on these subjects, depends on the degree of their spiritual illumination. Inspiration is the same in kind, in the sacred writers, and in other men; the difference is only in degree. As the sacred writers were preëminently holy, their teachings have a corresponding authority. The ultimate appeal, however, is to the inward light. The

points of analogy between these theories are, 1. That the design of inspiration is to produce holiness, i. e. "the elevation of the religious consciousness" in its subjects. 2. That the authority of the teachings of inspired men is to be measured by their holiness. 3. That the doctrines of the Bible are merely the views which certain holy men were led in their circumstances to entertain on religious subjects. 4. That as these doctrines are really the product of the human mind, more or less under the influence of personal or national prejudices, we may receive or reject the teachings of the Bible, according as they agree or disagree with the teachings of our own inward life. Both theories are subversive of the authority of the Scriptures. Any doctrine of inspiration which assumes that its object is to produce holiness, and that the knowledge of inspired men flows from the elevation of their religious feelings, and that the authority of their teachings depends on the measure of that elevation, is entirely irreconcilable, both with the assertions and the phenomena of the Bible. Inspiration, as we learn both from the teachings and facts of Scripture, was not designed to make men holy, and did not, in point of fact, do it. It was simply designed to guide them in the communication of truth; and therefore, according to the Bible, a man might be as wicked as Judas, and as infallible as Paul. True, indeed, all the writers of the Scriptures, so far as we know, were not only inspired, but holy. But their inspiration did not make them holy. The contents of the Scriptures, therefore, are not derived from the human mind; they are not due to its elevation and purity, but are derived from the Holy Ghost, and consequently the authority of its teachings is not human, but divine. The Bible is the word of God, and not the word of man.