


THE
INSPIRATION
OF THE
SCRIPTURES.



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I CANNOT reduce the question to one of the degree of inspiration which we claim for the Scriptures. I shall not enter upon the discussion of inspiration, literal or not, interesting as this question is to those who believe in a revelation from God. Truths are not denied by some who deny their immediate communication to us by God. The existence of a written revelation from God, bearing His authority as His word in any shape, is conceded. It is important to keep this clearly before us: for what is denied is that we have any communication of divine truth which possesses divine authority.

Now for us, if there is no inspiration from God, there is no divine truth; because a truth which is not communicated with divine certainty is not to us a divine truth. Or, to speak more accurately, an existing fact which cannot be naturally known to man,

because not relating to this creation, cannot be a truth to my soul, if it be not communicated with divine certainty. In order to this, there might be an immediate revelation to each individual in each case; or there must be an inspired communication through others either written or by word of mouth. I speak not of truth previously revealed being applied to the conscience by the Holy Ghost, but of the way in which we arrive at the divine certainty of the truth, by knowing that it came from God. A man, without being inspired, may be the channel through which truth, already existing as a revelation from God, is imparted; and the truth, thus communicated, may act through the Spirit's power on the heart and conscience; but such an uninspired medium of communication—a preacher, for instance, or a tract—does not constitute a divine basis for faith in him who hears. That basis must exist beforehand, in the fact of God's having vouchsafed an inspired communication; and the effect now produced by God is that the hearer is led to recognise this. Otherwise, though he may say, "I believe this or that," if I ask him, "Why do you believe it?" he has no answer; he can give no satisfactory reason for his faith.

Let us remember then that when authority is spoken of (and it is said there is no authority in matters of faith), the words divine certainty may be substituted for authority; and that the doctrine now opposed is that there is no divine certainty in the things of faith; that is, there is no warrant for faith at all. John the Baptist describes faith in these words—"He that hath received his testimony, hath set to (affixed) his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." But this reception of divine testimony has no existence in the system which denies inspiration. The testimony of God is excluded, and there is no place for faith. This may be called an *a priori* argu-

ment. But no: I only present the question in its true light; and this is often enough to convince a sincere person. For example, if any one disputed the interpretation of a text, and I could show that this mode of looking at it—the effect of this reasoning upon it—was to make it appear that Christ was wicked, or to prove that He was not the Son of God, to state the real question would be in fact to decide it in the mind of one who knew Christ.

Besides there are two kinds of *à priori* arguments which it is important to distinguish; they differ totally from each other, and are morally opposed to each other. Let us suppose that some one tried to prove God a liar. I answer, "This cannot be. *A priori*, I condemn your reasoning as false." In this case my judgment is sound (perfectly logical and philosophical—if you like to take such ground), because it is much more sure, nay, it is infallibly sure, that God cannot lie; whilst it is very possible that your reasoning is false, even though I were unable to detect the fallacy. How many things there are as to which the judgment of a wayfaring man is right, although he may be wanting in the capacity for reasoning rightly! And this is the safeguard which God has given to the simple-minded, namely, a divine conviction as to the truth with respect to things which are beyond their reach—beyond the reach of man; while the philosopher, who undertakes to explain them, sinks in the mire.

To say, "God ought not to be or to do so and so," is also what is called *à priori* reasoning; but it is of an entirely different kind. In the former case, I measure the folly of man by the certainty of what God is; in the latter, I measure what God ought to be or to do by the standard of human thought, which is necessarily false. "Thou thoughtest," said God, "that I was altogether such a one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things which thou hast done." In the

first case, I say, "God is true; therefore your argument, which denies it, must be false!" In the second, I say, "This is my thought; and God must be, or must act, according to my thoughts." To measure man by the certainty of what God is, and to measure God by man, are two very different things. The former may be termed *à priori* reasoning; it presumes, I allow, that there is the knowledge of God; and all men have not this knowledge. He hides these things from the wise and prudent, and reveals them unto babes.

To return: It is evident that whatever may be the competency of witnesses, from their own faithfulness, and from the important fact of their knowledge of the circumstances which they relate, yet to deny direct inspiration, and to put in its stead the competency of witnesses, is to substitute merely human testimony for divine testimony. The aim of such a system is to exclude God. It asserts (for without this it would be open infidelity) that revelation is allowed, although not inspiration; that is, that the apostles, or others employed to communicate truth, had a divine basis for their faith, but that other believers have not: this is plainly the effect of this supposition. According to this system, truth has been revealed from heaven; that is, it has been divinely communicated to the apostles and others; but since that time there has been nothing to rest on but human testimony—credible it may be, but only human. This system allows of no divine basis which, on God's part,* could shield the church from error.

Now the mere statement of this doctrine is almost its refutation; besides which it is formally contradicted in the word itself. "But God," says the apostle, who carefully states the opposite of the notion

* On God's part, I say, because no one disputes the possibility of man's falling into error through his own folly or negligence.

which we combat, "God has revealed them unto us* by his Spirit." The reason which the apostle gives for this revelation is very striking. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are given to us of God." I was going to dwell upon this argument, forgetting that the apostle had used it; I will now only insist on the force of his statement: "Without a divine communication there can be no faith." That which belongs to man—that which is within the limits of his intelligence—may be known through the senses, through reasoning, or through the testimony of man; but it is not so in the things of faith, as to divine thoughts and truths. God alone knows them, and God alone can make them known; consequently, man must be entirely ignorant of them, unless God reveal them. But He makes them known by His Spirit (that is, by revelation); giving the Holy Ghost Himself, who reveals them to the mind. I speak of the apostolic work.

The question then stands within very narrow limits. It is this: the apostles having received the knowledge of these things in a divine manner, did they communicate them to us in a divine manner, or in a manner, excellent indeed, but not inspired? God had revealed them to the apostles by His Spirit; how did they communicate them? Was their inspiration what is termed "simply religious inspiration?" Was it only that operation of the Spirit which is found in a spiritual preacher, and which leaves him still liable to error? Nothing can be

* What is true in this respect of one apostle, or sacred writer, is, no doubt, true of the rest. No one would venture to assert that the communications made through Paul were of a different character, or of another nature, than those given through Peter, or John, or any other prophet.

more precise than the testimony of the apostle on this point. Continuing the passage already quoted, he says, "which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Could the idea of inspiration be embodied in a form of words more absolutely definite than the expression, "words—which the Holy Ghost teacheth?" Here then there is nothing equivocal. When the apostle set forth the truths which the Holy Ghost had taught him, he used words which the Holy Ghost had also taught him; that is, it was God Himself speaking through the mouth of man.

As to the idea of reducing all inspiration to "religious inspiration," it is overturned by the fact that inspiration is asserted in cases where "religious inspiration" was impossible, as in that of Balaam, when "he took up his parable" and spoke, having "heard the words of God." Besides, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many others of the Scripture writers (who have said to us, "Thus saith the Lord;" "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying," &c.) are all properly so-called examples of positive inspiration. The prophets boldly proclaim their inspiration; and we have the results of it in a written form.

Be it remembered, moreover, that the arguments which deny inspiration must, if applied at all, be applied universally. The Old and New Testaments stand or fall together. In examining this subject, the Old Testament cannot honestly be left out, because the arguments (except, perhaps, those which relate to the canon) apply to both—to the Old as to the New; with the addition that the inspiration of the Old has the positive attestation of the Lord and the apostles, supposing only the authenticity and correctness of the New. But has the Old Testament authority, and has the New none? Is the Old Testament the word of God, and not the New? It may be very convenient to our opponents, in reasoning upon a subject, to leave out that part of

which the proofs are incontestable. For if the Old Testament be inspired, inspiration is a reality, and we possess the absolute authority of God's own word. The prophets have affirmed it; the Lord has recognised it, that is, He has recognised the inspiration of the Old Testament as it stands; and He has declared that nothing can invalidate its authority. The apostle also has declared that these Scriptures were "given by inspiration of God," and are capable of making us "wise unto salvation."

The principle of inspiration and of authority, then, is established. This should be thoroughly understood. The inspiration of the Old Testament is certain—its divine authority incontestable. This question then alone remains:—Is the New Testament also inspired? There are those who tell us that it is not—that it is a mere human record of what the writers knew either by their senses or by personal revelations to themselves, but which they were not inspired to write. Let us remember, however, that inspiration itself is denied. But he who denies inspiration denies that which the Lord and the apostles maintain, for they maintain the inspiration of the Old Testament. Such an one, therefore, forfeits all my confidence; and I cannot allow any weight to his judgment when he tells me that the New Testament has not the authority of inspiration.

I will not multiply quotations to prove that the prophets assert the inspiration of their prophecies, because it recurs at the beginning of almost every separate prophecy; but I will point out the passages in the New Testament which recognise the Scriptures of the Old as having this authority. "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me" (Luke xxiv. 44). Jesus here recognises the body of writings called the Old Testament in its three parts—still thus entitled in the modern Hebrew Bibles. The Lord

gives them equal authority, in verse 27—"And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself." "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" (John v. 39). "And the scripture cannot be broken" (John x. 35). These passages demonstrate that the Scriptures of the Old Testament were a body of writings recognised by the Lord, and that, in the detail of its present divisions, it was recognised as having absolute authority. But to have these writings—to have truths communicated in this form—is something more than to have the truth spoken by word of mouth, even though it were by the mouth of the Lord Himself. "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John v. 47.) The writings, then, were the object of faith, and consequently had the authority of the word of God. "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them;" "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke xvi. 29-31). When the apostle preached the truth at Berea, the Jews—his hearers—"searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so;" that is to say, they made use of the Scriptures as an authority by which they judged the teaching even of an apostle; and they are commended for so doing (Acts xvii. 11). The inspiration then of the Old Testament is demonstrated; its authority is recognised by the Lord; and the whole—as we possess it—is declared to be authentic, and to be clothed with an authority which nothing can invalidate.

"The scriptures," as a whole, are owned of God, as a distinct class of writings, having a certain authority, namely, that of His word. As it is written in Prov. xxx. 5, 6—"Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add

thou not to his words, lest he reproveth thee, and thou be found a liar." Finally, the Apostle Paul (2 Tim. iii. 16) gives a remarkable testimony to the same effect—a testimony which clearly designates this class of writings: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished into all good works." We have only therefore to learn whether the New Testament forms a part of "the scriptures," or whether the church is without a divine communication specially given to herself, and possesses only the Old Testament.

Here I would notice the folly of a principle set forth by some of those who deny the inspiration. It is said that the claim to inspiration is necessarily limited to the book which makes the claim, or at least to the writings of the same author. This assertion is futile. Why could not an inspired author, or the Lord, declare all the other books, or some amongst them, to be inspired? And on the other hand, there is no necessity that the other writings of an author should be inspired, because one of them is so. The Lord sets His seal to the entire Old Testament; and Paul declares that every Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Does this only prove the inspiration of the Epistle to Timothy, in which the assertion is found? Those who seek to overthrow the foundations of truth by such arguments as these deserve reproof rather than refutation.

There is another point which must be noticed in this discussion. It is maintained that we cannot avail ourselves of the New Testament till the canon is settled. Why not? Let us suppose that a wilding is found in my garden, can I therefore make no use of the good trees which are in it? Supposing the second Epistle of Peter were spurious, what has

that to do with the Epistles of John or of Paul? I might admit that one epistle was questionable—which, however, I do not admit—without in the least questioning the others.

But I return to direct proofs. We have seen the inspiration, the authority, the canon even, of the Old Testament fully proved, and the principles which deny inspiration itself utterly overthrown. But we have seen more than this. Paul received “by revelation” the truths he taught, and he communicated them in “words which the Holy Ghost teacheth,” that is, by inspiration; consequently, it is certain that the early disciples had the truth communicated to them by inspiration, as the foundation of their faith. Now the argument which denies inspiration to the New Testament, if true, would only prove that God had changed His mode of acting, and left the succeeding ages without this foundation, without a divine basis for their faith—a change incredible indeed! But when Paul says, “which things we speak,” does he mean those things which he spoke only by word of mouth? And has he taught nothing by writing? We well know that he has taught by writing that which had been revealed to him; that is, that his writings for this purpose were inspired. He even says so, which would not have been necessary after the passage we have quoted from Corinthians. But God has favoured us with this additional proof. “How,” he says, “by revelation he made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words, whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.” Should any say, “It may be so when fundamental truths are concerned, but not otherwise,” even this refuge is denied by Scripture. In giving details for the inward regulation of a church (1 Cor. xiv. 36, 37) the apostle says, “Came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man

think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." The communications then of the Spirit to the church or to the world were the "word of God," and that which was written by the apostle to direct the saints, was "the commandment of the Lord." "For this cause," said the apostle to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. ii. 13), "we thank God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, THE WORD OF GOD, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." Thus we see that the apostle puts his writings on the footing of "commandments of the Lord," with the sorrowful consolation for those who cannot discern it, "If any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."

Now will anyone say that the apostle, acting in the self-same character, and addressing himself in the same manner, in virtue of his apostolic sanction and authority to the Romans or to the Galatians, is less inspired than when he addresses the Corinthians? Such an argument deserves no other refutation than, "if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant!" To say God has willed that the faith of the Ephesians and Corinthians should rest upon divine inspiration, and that of the Romans and Galatians on a human basis, deserves no serious answer. We have a particular class of writings; and this class of writings is called "the Scriptures."

The sixteenth chapter of Romans defines this principle very clearly (verse 26):—"But is now made manifest (i.e., the mystery), and by prophetic writings (see Greek) according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." This passage again points out that class of writings which we call "the Scriptures," writings which have the authority of a revelation—of an oracle from

God: they are "prophetic writings." In short, to sum up this part of the testimonies which we possess, Peter, in his second epistle, recognising these writings as the Scriptures, tells us, when speaking of Paul's epistles, that those who are "unlearned and unstable, wrest them, as they do the other scriptures;" hereby proving that Paul's epistles form a part of "the scriptures," a term very well understood, and having the same meaning then as now, as the Lord's own words demonstrate. I know indeed that some reject this epistle; but I do not accept their dictum as an authority.

The existence then of prophetic Scriptures—of the Scriptures of the New Testament, which have the authority of "the word of God"—of "the commandments of God"—is most clearly proved. He who finds more authority in the words of the Lord's apostle than in those of the adversaries of inspiration—he who reveres the word of God and the revelations of God, will have no doubt on the subject. But if there exist writings of John or Peter, making the same claim, addressing Christians in the same manner, and that in perfect accordance with the same divine ministry committed to these apostles, as, for instance, the epistles of Peter to the circumcision, could a Christian say, "The writings of one apostle are inspired, but those of another are not," although entirely of the same nature, and although the writer speaks expressly in the name of his apostolate, and as exercising the authority of his mission? I assume now their authenticity, and that they are really the writings they claim to be. We need not look for the words, "I am inspired." We find in them the unequivocal expression of authority: the faith of Christians consequently clothes them with this authority. The authors announce the truth, as having a right to impose their thoughts upon the acceptance of Christians; and in fact they do so impose them. Take the first Epistle

of Peter. Does he not speak with full authority as an apostle? And when Paul said, "If any obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him," had not that written word apostolic authority? When John said, "We are of God: he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us" (1 John iv. 6), exercising thus divine authority over the conscience, do you think he meant that these words, pronounced so solemnly, had not the same authority? Such a conclusion would involve a palpable contradiction; for if they rejected his words, they did not hear him. One cannot attribute authority to his words spoken elsewhere, without attributing it to the words which claim that authority. If I say, "I command you to obey me," the command which I give, and the authority of that which I have already commanded, stand or fall together. I cannot believe the authority of Peter to be less than that of John or of Paul. He was sent forth with the same authority by the Lord.

What then have we proved? That there is a class of writings called the "Scriptures," which are inspired; which possess absolute authority as the word of God; which are recognised as such by the Lord and His apostles, and are constantly referred to by them with the greatest solemnity. We have found that a very large portion of the New Testament is spoken of as forming part of these Scriptures; that there is a body of writings attached to the apostolic work, "prophetic Scriptures," employed by the command of God, and having the authority of the word of God. The question then is narrowed into very small dimensions. The assertion that there is no inspiration, no divine authority for "the word," has been proved entirely false. It is in flagrant opposition to the authority of the Lord and the apostles; and it seeks to overthrow that which they maintain. The only question then is this: Does such or

such a book form a part of this inspired collection?—a very important question, but one which, by the very fact of its being asked, pre-supposes the existence and the authority of the word of God, and seeks only not to confound human pretensions with the divine authority which it reveres, and of which it seeks to preserve the full value untouched and without alloy.

It is not our present object to bring forward detailed proofs of the authenticity of each book of the New Testament: to do so would be to write an introduction to the New Testament. The great question is decided. It did not consist in inquiring whether such or such a book be genuine, admitting the inspiration of the rest, but in ascertaining whether there be such a thing as inspiration at all. Now this has been proved: inspiration does exist. The truth revealed has been communicated in words taught by the Holy Ghost. If this be so (mark it well), the system which denies it bears the character, not only of a false principle, but of a principle hostile to God and to His goodness; it is subversive of the truth which He has condescended to make known to us, and destroys the very foundations of our faith. It is very important to have a right judgment as to the source and the character of that which presents itself as truth. "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; for many false prophets are gone out into the world." Following this injunction of the apostle's—of the Holy Ghost's, I solemnly judge that the spirit in question proceeds from Satan. Whatever saps the foundations of faith, in opposition to the express declarations of the Spirit of God, comes from the enemy; and I have always found that to deal with that which is of the enemy, openly and publicly as from the enemy, is the wisdom of God, and is accompanied by His strength and His blessing. Thus I deal with the doctrine which denies the inspiration of Scripture.

The final appeal to the "written word" as to a

recognised authority, which we find continually in the Scriptures, is another proof of its authority. It is used there as an authority which no one, except a professed unbeliever, would think of disputing. Open the New Testament at almost what page you like you will find a proof of this. "It is written—it is written," settled every question, decided every controversy. It is not the Scriptures which have to be proved; they themselves serve for an absolute and final proof. This is the strongest testimony we can have. If I say, in canvassing some proof of human conduct, the law says this and the law says that, as settling the question, it takes for granted the existence of the law and its sovereign authority over all disputed points—an authority which no one can gainsay. Thus it is in the use of Scripture. "These things were done that the scripture might be fulfilled." "Jesus, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers." "Promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures." "Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures," and was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. "And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith." "And the scripture cannot be broken." "Give place unto wrath; for it is written." "That by comfort of the scriptures we might have hope."

It was the highest of all the Jewish privileges that the "oracles of God" were committed to them. "For what saith the scripture?" "The scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation." The Jews made "the word of God of none effect through their traditions." "Then opened he their understanding, that they understand the scriptures; and said unto them, Thus it is written." Is it in accommodating Himself to man, as the adversaries of inspiration pretend He did in appealing amongst the Jews to the written word, that the

Lord opens the understanding, that they may understand things which have not divine authority? No, the Scriptures are treated by the apostles, by the Lord Himself, as having an incontestable and divine authority as the oracles of God—as the word of God. This is so entirely true that when—in fulfilling his divine mission—it behoved the Lord to undergo the temptation of the enemy, the Scripture was the weapon which He used—as being divinely tempered—against which Satan had no power and his devices no possible success. It sufficed to say, “It is written.” The tempter would have betrayed himself if he had questioned the absolute authority of the quotation; his best resource was to quote Scripture his own way; but does it not fail under this trial? The second Adam still replies, “It is also written.” One may without blame prefer the perfect wisdom of our divine Saviour to the self-sufficiency and unbelief of human wisdom. And observe here the importance of this use of the word of God, the holy Scriptures, the Oracles of God, by the apostles and by the Lord.

People say, “but there are various readings, bad translations, statements which the increase of knowledge has proved impossible, so that Scripture cannot be used as an authority.” The Lord then was mistaken! There were various readings, bad translations (especially that of the Septuagint), and supposed inconsistencies, at the very time when the Lord said, “The scripture cannot be broken.” When in His controversy with Satan He employed the Scriptures, Satan, lest he should appear to be Satan undisguised, durst not question their authority. These things existed too when the apostle called them “the oracles of God.” But none of these things prevented the Lord’s recognising their absolute authority on every occasion. “The foolishness of God is wiser than men.”

As to proofs which may be given of the authority of

the word, it carries its own proof with it, as does every testimony from God. This is a fundamental principle. It does not require proof; it furnishes its own proofs of every thing to the soul. We do not bring a light to the sun in order to discern it; it enlightens us. The word of God is not judged; it judges. If God speaks, woe unto him that hears what is spoken and knows not that it is God who speaks. There are those, assuredly, who will not own that it is He. If this refusal to believe be final they are lost—sentence has already been passed upon them; the light is come, and the darkness comprehends it not. “The word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The word of God, whether spoken or written, has to be received as the word of God: he who rejects it is lost. If any remain in ignorance of some of its details—if any are mistaken as to some book—they lose just so much of it through their pride. “The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple . . . moreover by them is thy servant warned.” “The entrance of thy word giveth light, it giveth understanding unto the simple.” Read the whole of Psalm cxix. This conviction that the word is its own evidence is all-important; this alone maintains the true character of the word of God. Like Jesus, it receives not testimony from man. He who believes not in the Son of God will be condemned. He that believeth not the record that God gave of His Son hath made God a liar, and hath not life. Now, according to the Lord’s own words, the Scriptures testify of Him. The fundamental principle is this:—the word of God must be received by faith; and the reasonings of man cannot be the foundation of faith: if they were, it would not be faith in God, nor faith in His word. “He believed God.” “They shall be all taught of God.” “Every man,

therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

Having established this principle, I would enter into some details respecting the ways of God in this matter. We have seen how the Lord while on earth set His seal to the Scriptures; but observe, in so doing He set His seal to the faith of those who had previously believed in them. It was not because He had already done so that those faithful ones believed. Their heart, their faith, had been previously tested. They had faith, because they had received the testimony of the Scriptures (before they were thus sanctioned) when presented to their faith on the ground of their own authority. When Jeremiah spoke, it does not follow that all received his testimony: there were some who had not "ears to hear," but who listened to false prophets. When God is to be owned it becomes a moral question; but in all ages believers have owned God by receiving his testimony. And unbelievers have not acknowledged God in the testimony. It is so now. God gives in His word sufficient moral evidence to commend it to the conscience. When He has established anything new He has added a sufficiency of extraordinary evidences. But with this comes the moral responsibility of him who hears, which God never sets aside, and also the grace which acts in giving and establishing faith. The reception of the word, and afterwards the understanding this word, are things presented to the responsibility of man. Grace alone can enable him to receive and to understand it; but nothing can set aside this responsibility, and nothing take away the necessity of this grace, or destroy its efficacy. The positive authority of the apostolic testimony, claiming submission as it does in the most peremptory manner, cannot alter this. "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are

the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." An apostle cannot go beyond that. For the things which are communicated in words taught by the Spirit are spiritually discerned. It was thus in the days of all the prophets. "Hear ye and give ear," said Jeremiah; "be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride." Now the condition which brings judgment upon the house of God is marked by this feature—the word loses its authority, excepting over the remnant preserved by Him. "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed. And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men. Therefore, behold," &c. (Isa. xxix.) Such was the condition of the people of Israel, and the cause of the judgment which befell them. It was then the Lord said, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples To the law and to the testimony."

Thus also in the New Testament we are told, "In the last days perilous times shall come." What is then the resource of the faithful? "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God." The resource in "the last days" is reverence for the Holy Scriptures and

the assurance of their sufficiency. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God."

Therefore, whether it be amongst the Jews or in the church, the resource in evil days is confidence in the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The Lord has pointed it out and sanctioned it; but this confidence in the authority of the word existed before He had given it His sanction. And it is this faith, without any other sanction than the word itself, which He has sanctioned. Precious testimony for later days, since the same sanction applies to them also! The apostle, in warning us of perilous times, directs our thoughts beforehand to the same means of establishing the soul. Those who had faith in the Scriptures before the Saviour's testimony to their authority were enabled, through grace, to discern what was God's word, and were approved by Him. Those who do so now have this same approval.

There is another principle which should be noticed here. "The oracles of God" are committed to His people. This does not entitle the church to impose her authority upon us; but she is undoubtedly responsible for preserving that which has been committed to her. In this trust Rome has shewn her unfaithfulness by adding apocryphal books. Now although the church may in detail fail in her responsibility, it is impossible, in anything essential to it, that God should fail towards His church, or that Christ should cease to nourish and cherish it. God watches over all this; not to keep the learned from stumbling, but that believers may have food from Him, and an unerring rule of life. It is not the babe and the wayfaring man who find difficulties; God has given them the word, and preserved it for them; and their conscience bears them witness in the Holy Ghost that God works in them by this word. The Holy Ghost enables them, according to the measure

of their spirituality, to use and understand it. A heart, full of peace and joy because taught of God, discerns and acknowledges that it is indeed the word of God. It is read perhaps in a bad translation, and doubtless something is lost thereby; but God has taken care that enough should remain to teach the heart with certainty His truth and His ways. This word is "the sword of the Spirit." It carries conviction with it when the Spirit uses it in the power of His grace. It leaves man under the responsibility of having rejected it, whenever it has been presented to his conscience.

A man of little information but taught of God is much more able to apprehend the whole truth, even through the medium of an indifferent translation, than the learned man, who, though a stranger to Christ, thinks he can judge of the whole canon. This is easily accounted for. The church puts the New Testament into our hands, for the oracles of God are committed to the church: this does not indeed impart faith, but it is the means which God uses for this end. The church presents us with the divine oracles; not with authority, as having power to judge the word, but as the faithful guardian of that which has been committed to her. This is done through parents, friends, ministers; and there is a general belief in the professing church that these oracles are the word of God. The simple-minded do not set themselves to judge of the whole canon of the New Testament before reading it. They read it, and the word produces faith.

A man receives, by the teaching of God, first one truth and then another. The word has judged him—the word has revealed Jesus to him. To such a one the history of Jesus is all divine; it communicates to his soul what he receives with divine knowledge, for these things are spiritually discerned. The Epistles unfold to him divine truth, and he receives

it with a divine certainty that God has spoken to him. He makes use of every book in the New Testament, without knowing what the term "canon" means. And if some scholar would deprive him of his treasure—of that divinely inspired word which he knows to be of God, this word is "the sword of the Spirit" in his hands, to shew him the folly of human wisdom. He pities the learned man, who is a stranger to all that which he himself is enjoying.

He who has eaten bread knows what bread is, although he may not understand the art of baking. If, through grace, the believer grows in divine knowledge, he sees the harmony of the whole—the adaptation of the several parts. He has not only "the full assurance of faith," but "the full assurance of understanding" also. He perceives the divine wisdom of the Bible—not merely the divine truth which it contains. He finds, perhaps, a text spoiled by a bad translation: it does not harmonise with what he knows to be the truth of God. Under such circumstances he will say, "I don't understand that passage." I am supposing a person deprived of all spiritual help, which, according to the ways of God in His church, is very seldom the case. Humble in heart, he will attribute to his own ignorance his inability to understand the passage. "The wisdom of this world" reasons about the canon, and will form its judgment before it reads, and, in consequence, it receives nothing. The mind of man cannot create for itself the things of God. Nor can human reason pronounce upon the authority of the word of God. It may be said, "This is trusting to feelings;" but no, it is trusting to God. They shall be all "taught of God." The authority of the word can only be really known by believing in it.

He who has only man's thoughts will say, "But I must know that it is the word of God before I can believe in it." I reply, "You cannot." It is true,

happily true, that we receive the New Testament as the word of God on the faith of our parents or of our education; but it is never really received as such till it is "mixed with faith" in those that read it. For my part, I receive the New Testament with full assurance, in its present form, as it has been adopted by the universal church. Circumstances having called me to it, I have examined the external evidences and found them satisfactory; but that does not produce faith. It may be useful, to obviate the objections made by those who do not live upon the word, and cannot judge of it. The authority of God is not subject to human intelligence. I know that some of the epistles were questioned in the early ages, at least in certain places; but I doubt not that in receiving as inspired those books which form the New Testament the church was guided by God. The means by which God's word may be communicated are to be distinguished from that word itself as an authoritative rule; but these means may nevertheless be used according to the certainty of that rule. A mother instructs her child in the truth, but she is not the rule or standard of truth. Thus the unlettered Christian receives the New Testament in the form in which it is distributed. It may be that he cannot demonstrate its authenticity, but he happily profits by the fact that the church receives it. It comes thus into his possession, and when he reads it he finds it divine. God thus uses means to spread the truth, and the book which contains it. The multitude of believers profit by it. It is God who acts thus. If any answer must be given to unbelievers who dispute the authority of the word, it may be that only a few amongst those who receive and enjoy it are able to convince gainsayers; but that does not hinder God from using the Scriptures, and giving faith to those who receive them.

He whose heart and mind are exercised in the word

according to God finds not only the proof of its divinity in the application of passage after passage to his conscience, but he gains the deepest conviction of its perfection as a whole through the knowledge thus obtained of the fulness of Christ. I will take an instance which is sometimes used to prove that there are things in the New Testament which are outside the province of spiritual discernment. The Spirit of God cannot, it is said, make us feel the value of a genealogy. Such a remark only betrays ignorance of the word of God and of Christ Himself. To set forth the varied glory of Jesus, according to the counsels of God respecting Him, it is needful to present the different characters which He bears. This is the substance of God's revelation. Now His connection with Abraham and David, and His connection with Adam, are leading points in this revelation; and the genealogies of the New Testament set this before us. But this is not all. They correspond exactly with the character of the gospels in which we find them. The gospel by Matthew, in which the genealogy is traced from Abraham and David, treats especially of the Messiah—of the relation of Christ to the Jews, of the fulfilment of prophecy in Him, and at the same time, of His rejection as Messiah, and the transition to a new dispensation. Luke sets before us the great features of grace brought in by "the second Adam," and the great moral principles connected with this grace; so that in the body of this gospel events are not arranged in chronological order, but according to their moral bearing. This is true, even in the history of the temptation. In this gospel the genealogy is traced up to Adam. John, on the contrary, gives us the person of the Saviour, who is above all the dispensational dealings of God in the earth, the Jews being throughout set aside as rejected, and therefore no genealogy is given. "The word was God." John's gospel begins

before Genesis, and at the close we find neither the agony in Gethsemane nor the being forsaken on the cross; but other things are mentioned which are not found in Matthew or in Luke. Thus the different glories of Christ are manifested, and by degrees the admirable perfection of the word shines forth in all its splendour. The criticisms of man fade away like the stars before the sun, which makes them disappear with the darkness that allowed them to be seen. The Bible presents us with a perfection, both in its details and as a whole, which leaves no doubt in the mind of one who has tasted it that, as a complete whole, it is divine.

I have hitherto spoken of the divinity of the word in its separate parts as the sword of the Spirit, which causes its power to be felt in the soul, while judging it, and revealing Christ to it; but I speak now of the word as a whole—of what is called the canon of Scripture. If Matthew were wanting, we should not have the Messiah, Son of David, and Son of Abraham. If Mark were wanting, we should not have the servant made in the likeness of man—a prophet on the earth; if Luke, we should not have the Son of Man; if John, we should lose the Son of God. In the Acts we find the foundation of the church by the power of the Spirit of God; the commencement and development of the church in Jerusalem, through the instrumentality of the twelve; then the Gentiles grafted into the good olive tree by Peter, the apostle of the circumcision; and, when Jerusalem had rejected the testimony, the church fully revealed, and called by the ministry of Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles.

The Epistle to the Romans furnishes the eternal principles of God's relationship with man, the way in which, by means of Christ, dead and risen, the believer is established in blessing, and the reconciling of these things with the speciality of the promises made to the Jews by Him whose gifts and calling are without repentance. In

the Corinthians are found details respecting the internal regulation of a church ; its walk, its order, its restoration when it had gone astray—the patience and the energy of grace ; the whole being sketched by the Spirit of God, acting through an apostle, and declaring the divine authority of His commands. In Galatians we find the contrast between law and promise, as well as the source of ministry ; in a word, the condemnation of Judaism, even in its very roots. Ephesians presents to us the relationship of the believer with the Father and with Christ, and the fulness of the church's privileges as the body of Christ, her connection with Him, and “the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations,” in which all the counsels of God for His own glory are unfolded. In Colossians the fulness which dwells in the Head for the body is set forth, and the solemn warning is given not to separate practically from this union with the Head through allowing a show of humility to glide into the bosom of the church. In Philippians we have the apostle's experience of what Christ is to the Christian—as sufficient for all things, whatever his position may be ; His immediate sufficiency, even when the Christian should be deprived of apostolic support ; and the walk of the church in the unity of grace—in unity maintained by grace, when the spiritual energy of her human leaders should be wanting. It is a precious epistle in this point of view. 1 and 2 Thessalonians give us the hope of the church in the freshness of her affections ; and the mystery of the iniquity ending in the manifestation of the man of sin—a mystery notwithstanding which the church is called to maintain this hope and to cherish these affections. Timothy and Titus exhibit what may be termed ecclesiastical care for the maintenance whether of truth or of order. 1 Timothy, the normal order of the church. 2 Timothy, the path of the individual when it is in disorder, and there is

general false profession of Christianity. All these present salvation and life. In the Epistle to the Ephesians the church is seen seated as a body in the heavenly places. In the Epistle to the Hebrews the faithful are viewed as journeying in weakness upon the earth, and Christ is consequently seen apart, as appearing for them in the presence of God in heaven. This is in contrast with the earthly figures given to Israel. This gives rise to a glorious unfolding of the person of our Lord, as God the Creator, as man, and as the Son over His own house, the Creator of all things, and lastly as High Priest. His priesthood is very largely set forth. It is after the order of Melchisedek, as to His personal rights; after the likeness of Aaron, or rather in contrast with Aaron, as to its present exercise. This leads to the unfolding of the life of faith—the faith common to all saints—and to the final separation of the believing Jews from the camp of earthly religion, as having “come to the heavenly Jerusalem.”

James sets before us that girdle of practical righteousness which restrains the natural tendency of the heart to abuse grace; faith must be real or living faith; and the last dealings of God with the twelve tribes (as in Jonah with the Gentiles), when the light and perfection of a new order of things eclipsed that old order, to which those tribes had proved unfaithful.

Peter gives us the government of God. In 1 Peter, in blessing to saints as far as was applied; 2 Peter, in reference to the wicked. In the First Epistle of Peter we find the Christian a pilgrim on the earth, placed in this position by the power of Christ's resurrection, according to an election, which is not that of an earthly people, but unto eternal life. This epistle was addressed to the Jews of the dispersion (Peter being the apostle of circumcision), and was particularly adapted to them, setting them free from the idea of an earthly establishment, to be pilgrims,

through grace, on the earth, in view of an incorruptible inheritance. The Second Epistle of Peter is written in the prospect of his departure, and of the flowing in of evil. It exhorts them to press forward. On the one hand, it gives the picture and the assurance of the glory of the coming kingdom in its heavenly aspect, but manifested on the earth; on the other, the corruption which would degrade and swallow up Christianity, and the consequences of this in judgment. Peter never represents the church as one body in heaven, as Paul does: he views her, or rather her members, as on the earth, and as pilgrims there. The exact correspondence of every detail with this point of view, even in the manner of presenting the glory (2 Peter i.), manifests a perfection which proves its divine origin.

Jude admirably unfolds all the moral features of the apostacy,* its beginnings and its results; recording the solemn prophecy of Enoch, which we should otherwise have lost, and thus proving how clear, even before the flood, was the testimony of God, who is unchangeable in purpose from the beginning to the end.

John presents us with all the features of the divine nature, and that as life, first of all, as manifested in Jesus, and then as characteristic of the whole family. The epistle is thus a safeguard against every pretension which, wanting in these features, would seek to pervert the faithful. It is the means also of strengthening and establishing Christians, by the development of those qualities which belong to the nature of God, with whom, if light be in them, they have communion, as the Father and the Son, and in whom, if love be in them, they dwell. Philemon and the two lesser Epistles of John shew us that if the mystery of God is revealed to us by one apostle, and the nature of God set evidently before us

* Where there is similarity between Jude and 2 Peter, there is a profound moral difference. Peter speaks of wickedness in connection with government; Jude of apostacy from a first estate.

by another; if they lift us up to the height of His counsels and of His being, they can also be occupied with the interests of a runaway slave and his master, and with the anxieties and practical difficulties of an excellent lady, who was to reject those who did not bring the truth; and a kind and worthy brother, as to receiving persons to whom Christian love would open the door, insisting on the truth, but refuting the jealousy of a local selfish person, who desired to have things in his own hands. They shew us that that love which dwells in God, which is the very nature of God, which is manifested in the glorious work of Christ—that wisdom which ordains all mysteries for His eternal glory, disdains not to provide with perfect delicacy for the difficult relationships between a master and his slave, nor to manifest the tenderest solicitude with respect to the details of life. This love, in the perfection of wisdom and grace, links the fulness and perfection of God with every emotion of the human heart, with every circumstance of our life in this world. It sanctifies, by the revelation of what God is, a people who are to dwell with Him, and fits them for His presence by creating pure affections—by making a holy love the spring of their whole life.

In the Apocalypse, the Spirit of God gives, at the outset, in an admirable review of the state of seven Asiatic churches, the elements of a perfect judgment with respect to every state in which the professing church would be found, and guiding any one connected with the church in these circumstances. He at the same time encourages the faithfulness of those who have ears to hear by promises of blessing from above, specially suited to the difficulties of these several conditions. He declares that these blessings are prepared for "him that overcometh" in the conflict, into which he is brought by the declension of the church. This declension had already commenced in the days of the

apostle in their leaving their first love; it will end in compelling Christ to spew out of His mouth those who bear His name. . Such is the substance of that which the Spirit of God gives us in the earlier chapters of this book. Having thus furnished the Christian with all that he needs in the midst of the difficulties presented by the state of the professing church, and having revealed the judgment of Christ with a perfection and a circumstantial adaptation which are most admirable, the Holy Ghost then lifts the veil, to show how all this will end in the judgment of the world. He reveals chastenings, first of all in outward things, then more directly upon man himself: afterwards, He discloses all the features of man's dreadful apostacy, the diabolical organisation of his forces against Christ; and, at length, the judgment which will break forth at the coming of Christ Himself, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. This judgment is to make way for an administration of blessings and happiness (Satan being bound), which will only be interrupted by his being loosed from his prison, to test those who have enjoyed this happiness, and thus to bring on the final judgment of the dead, and the eternal state in which God will be "all in all." This is the methodical and complete development of that which Jude, 2 Peter, and 2 Thessalonians had made known to the church in its moral elements. At the close of the book we have more particularly unfolded to us the connection of the church with Christ in heaven, and with the times of blessing enjoyed under His reign.

There is another striking feature of the perfection of the Apocalypse which may be noticed here, that is, its moral unity. The standing of the church is indeed defined in the opening and concluding paragraphs, by the expression of her own sentiments; but throughout the book there is not one thought connected with the living communication of grace from the Head to the

members. It is a prophetic book of judgment, treating first of all that relates to the church, as seen in its responsibility upon the earth. In this portion of it there is promise, threatening, warning, judgment of its condition, revelation of the characters of the Son of man, everything connected with responsibility. But the Head, the source of life and knowledge to the body, is not mentioned as such. After the judgment of the church comes that of the world—the church being seen on high—a judgment increasing in severity, up to the destruction of the wicked one. In this part of the book is found all that the faithful need in order to understand the ways of God, and to discern the path which He has marked out for them in these perilous times; but Christ as the living source of grace is never referred to: everything is in its right place, for it is the work of God.

The New Testament then, commencing with the manifestation of the man Christ in humiliation on the earth, and carrying us forward to the eternal state when God will be "all in all," presents us with the full development of all the ways of God, and of what He is in Himself, in order that man may joy in Him, know Him, and glorify Him—that the believer may be kept through all the difficulties and dangers of the way, by the wisdom and the admonitions of God—and that He may understand His wisdom and His love. Man could not have composed this as a whole—could not have foreseen the necessity for each part. One feels in it the energetic spontaneity of life, that is, of the Spirit of God. Take away one single part, now that we possess the whole, and the breach is immediately felt by one who has seen and appreciated its completeness. Perfection marks the book of God as a whole, as it marks everything which God has made, from the insect which sports in the air up to man himself, created in the image of God, with a body of exquisite workman-

ship united to a mind capable of enjoying God, of communing with Him, and even, through grace, of expressing something of His character and His ways. The word is not a shapeless mass; it is the complete body of the revealed thoughts of God, more perfect even than man, to whom it is addressed, because more immediately divine. Man, who would be wise, does not understand this body of divine communications, but judges this or that part of it according to the little pitiful history of ecclesiastical weaknesses and contentions. Things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned. For him who is spiritual divine perfection shines forth in every page; and the unity of the whole, the perfect connection of its several parts, the relation of these parts to each other and to all the ways of God, to the person of Christ, to the Old Testament, to the heart of the renewed man, to the necessities of sinful man, to the dangers and difficulties which have sprung up in the church—all combine to crown with divine glory the demonstration of the origin and the authorship of the book which contains these things. Its author is so much the more evidently God from the human instruments having been many and diverse. But its unity—and, above all, the intimate union of its different parts—demonstrates a complete and perfect body. If but one joint of a finger were wanting to a man he is not a man such as God made him; he may have life, but he is imperfect, and his imperfection is perceptible. So take away a book from the New Testament, the remainder is divine undoubtedly, but it is no longer the New Testament in its divine perfection. As in a noble tree, the inward energy, the freedom of the sovereign vital power, produces a variety of forms, in which the details of human order may appear to be wanting, but in which there is a beauty that no human art can imitate. Cut off one of its branches and the void is obvious; the minute connection of the remainder is destroyed; the gap which

is made in the intertwining of its tender leaves proves that the devastating hand of man has been there.

This then is the way in which the Christian uses the word: each part of it acts divinely in him, and in proportion to the progress he makes it unfolds itself as a whole to the eyes of his faith, with a divine evidence which unites itself with every element of his faith, with the varied glories of the person of Christ, and with the universal perfection of the ways of God—a perfection of which the Christian has not judged *à priori*, but which he has learnt in the word itself.

When I see a man, do I need to be told that his form is complete? The more I know of anatomy the more I shall admire its structure; but it is the sight of the man himself which makes me apprehend his perfectness. Thus it is with all the works of God; only His word requires, even as it produces, spiritual discernment. If any one be “a prophet or spiritual,” let him acknowledge it. And how does the word dispose of those who do not acknowledge it? “If any be ignorant, let him be ignorant.” It is humbling, no doubt, to have all one’s learning treated thus; but, between God and man, this is as it should be. Outward evidences, as has been remarked, confirm the spiritual judgment. The learned man, who creates doubts for himself, needs evidences to remove them. The simple Christian feeds on that which is divine, and knows nothing of the difficulties which man’s poor learning creates.

As, however, there are souls perplexed with these difficulties, I will now, in order to show their futility, examine some of the arguments which are used to deny inspiration. It is a melancholy task, after having one’s thoughts directed towards the perfection of the Bible.

The first thing which strikes one is that the arguments themselves are all extrinsic to the Scriptures. We are told, for instance, that at the time of the Reformation one authority was substituted for another. But

observe, it is not through anything found in the Bible itself that unbelief judges of its authority. Men would have faith to rest upon historical certainty and external moral evidence. But this indicates entire ignorance of what faith is. He who could be satisfied with historical certainty and moral evidence of an external kind has never had divine conviction: he feels not the need of divine faith, and knows not its nature; for no such historical or moral certainty can be faith. Faith comes from God, and receives a testimony, whereupon it sets to its seal that God is true. The rationalist, who has not the Spirit, can only see in Scripture the testimony of the man who wrote it. This is easy to be understood. He gives up the Spirit and the word together, and falls back upon his own reason. Again, stress is laid on the imperfection of the text of the New Testament, on its being written in a dead language, on its being read in translations; and, finally, we are told that its authors followed the opinions of the day in which they lived. This last objection is itself but a judgment founded upon the opinions of the present day, and is not worth a refutation. It is an accusation, not a proof; and the accusation is but a calumny. In fact, if it were well-founded, the same should be said of the Lord's own discourses, or the whole history should be rejected as false (see John iii. 33, 34; viii. 47). As to the other objections, I have a divine certainty of their futility; because, as I have already shown, the Lord has set His seal to the Old Testament Scriptures in spite of the same difficulties. I would add a few words. Those who reason in this way confound the rule of faith with the means by which it is made known; in the latter, the imperfection of the instrument is felt. No one would assert that a translation was divine; but, through human diligence, we profit by a divine work. The deposit, the rule of faith, remains in its original purity.

If clouds, formed by exhalations from the earth, obscure the light of the sun, they only prove by thus veiling it the power of that light, which, although not seen in all its brightness, still suffices for all human purposes. This objection then only tells us that when God gives blessing we profit by the blessing according to our diligence.

But this is not all. It is said that we do not even possess the original in its purity. This objection is in the main the same in principle as that we have just touched on. All that God gives He puts into the hands of men for their use, and they never know how to keep it as they ought. The revelation of God has been placed in the hands of men—of the church. Man has not preserved it in its absolute perfection: be it so. God allows man to learn what man himself is; but faith knows that behind all human failure there is the faithfulness of God, who watches over the church, and that Christ nourishes and cherishes it. Experience teaches, and the day of judgment will make manifest, that faith in God is always in the right. Thus the believer supposes it possible that, through human carelessness, some defects may have crept into what was committed to man; but he has full confidence in the faithfulness of God. His experience, as we have seen, confirms his faith, for he finds the word divine. The judgment of God will decide that question for the unbeliever which divine faith has already decided for the believer.

The examination of the text by learned men has indeed shown the rashness of infidel knowledge; but it has left no serious doubt, except as to an extremely small number of texts, or rather of words. It has not left a shade of obscurity upon any passage of the slightest importance as to the truth. One thus learns God's grace in caring for the word, as well as His original bestowal of it, although apparently He left all to the responsibility of man.

To say that the meaning of a passage is doubtful in order to deny its inspiration, as if the doubt about its meaning proved it, is too absurd an argument to be repeated. It is saying that the ignorance and incapacity of man are a proof that God has not acted in anything which man does not understand. There is a superficiality in such reasoning as this which reveals the true value of mere human wisdom. The meaning is doubtful! Doubtful to whom? To him who refuses to be taught of God.

It is said that the writers of the New Testament implicitly followed the translation of the Seventy. The contrary is the fact. When the Septuagint gives the sense, they used it. Half their quotations are faithfully rendered from the Hebrew; and if there are passages which differ from the present Hebrew text, the researches of the learned have proved that they are borne out by the testimony of the oldest translations. In many instances the meaning is given without confining themselves to the exact words. Conscientious research on this point strongly confirms the divine inspiration of the authors of the New Testament.

Inaccuracies, errors, and contradictions are alleged. I deny these contradictions and these inaccuracies. Let us remember that the certainty of the objector's knowledge must be first ascertained. I have no confidence in it. I have known many cases in which man would prune away the fruit of the spontaneous actings of the Spirit, and carve the beautiful tree into a round or a square. For my part, I behold divine perfection in the form it bears. All is divinely adapted to the object which the Holy Ghost had in view. We have seen that John does not mention the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane; Matthew and Luke omit what John relates. What does this prove to me? That John was not there? Not so; but that the Holy Ghost is the author of the two accounts, and not John and Matthew:

they were but the penmen of the Holy Ghost. Man would have related what man had seen. The Holy Ghost sets before me, in the one gospel, the man and the Messiah suffering; in the other, the divine person who offered up Himself, and whose life no man took from Him. I see divine perfection where human wisdom sees blemishes. In the history of our Lord's temptation, Luke puts the offer of the kingdoms of the earth before the temptation on the pinnacle of the temple, and, in consequence, omits, "Get thee hence, Satan!" "This is wrong!" cries the worldly scholar. "What perfection!" says the Christian. Matthew gives the historical order, Luke the moral order; for the spiritual temptation, through the written word, was of a deeper character than that of the offer of the whole world. The Man—the Messiah, Son of man—the Holy One relying on the promises, duly succeed each other. Now this moral order is characteristic of the whole of Luke's gospel, excepting where the historical order is necessary to the truth of the recital. It is the Holy Ghost who writes.

I have myself found difficulties in the word. This has not surprised me, ignorant as I am; but I have found these difficulties, one after another, to be but the means of entering more fully into the perfection, the wisdom, and the divine beauty of the revelation of my God. If I still find more of these difficulties, and I do so, I wait upon Him to solve them for me; I do not say, "The meaning is doubtful," but, "The meaning is doubtful to me." I do not say, "There is inaccuracy, and I am accurate enough to judge it without divine light;" but, "I am ignorant, and God will enlighten me in due time."

Some have even gone so far as to say that Scripture does not lay claim to inspiration. This shows an ignorance, or a disregard, of its contents which, especially on such a subject, renders the arguments of those who

could assert it unworthy of the attention of a serious man. The apostle asserts the exact contrary in the most clear and absolute manner. We have already seen how the Scriptures claim for themselves the authority of inspiration. I need not return to it. I have already exposed the folly of the argument that inspiration is limited to the passage which asserts it. I say it is folly; for why could not a text say, "All these writings are inspired." The fact is that the passages which assert inspiration limit it neither to the book which contains them nor to the writings of the same author. They establish a principle, or allude to the writings of another, to invest them with the authority of Scripture. They establish the existence of a class of writings which have divine authority: they ascribe this authority to the entire Old Testament.

The church, it is also said, may have made mistakes. Be it so; but is there no God? Would He allow us to be deceived on so essential a point? Those who do not know His goodness answer that He might, and boldly pronounce about books which have edified the church for centuries. But what is this opinion worth? That must be settled, before we allow it to invalidate the book to which it refers. I by no means admit the authority of the church; but I recognise her duty to preserve the deposit committed to her; and I believe in the faithfulness of God.

In a certain sense, everything is necessarily referred to individual judgment, that is, each one is under its responsibility for himself. A Socinian claims a right to deny the divinity of Christ and the Atonement. Were I the Pope I could not hinder his thinking so; but, being a Christian, I know that he is lost if he remain in this state. I cannot make another believe the inspiration of the New Testament: each one must judge for himself. But if any man rejects the word of God, the word will reject him. He is bolder than

man should dare to be; but he will not be stronger than God. Salvation does not depend on faith in the inspiration of the New Testament. A man may be saved, though ignorant of its existence, for the truth which it contains may reach his heart through the lips of another. To reject the word of God, when it is known to us, is quite another thing.

I admit that there is a difference between the inspiration of the New Testament and that of the Old—not as to authority, but as to character. The prophets of old said, "Thus saith the Lord;" and they announced the thoughts of God, in His own words, on a particular subject, at the moment when His word was addressed to them. But the Holy Ghost—come down, as the Comforter, to lead into all truth—is different from the Spirit of prophecy, although the same Spirit (see 1 Pet. i. 11, 12). "He searches all things, even the deep things of God." "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." Christ being glorified, the Holy Ghost dwells in His disciples, and can open all the treasures of the glory of the Lord, all the tenderness of His love, of His relations, as man, with His own. God was made man, and God the Holy Ghost dwells in the church, and thus, if I may so speak, humanizes Himself, or at least the expression of His thoughts, while not ceasing to be God; He expresses Himself in grace and blessing in all the details and circumstances of human life: He helps our infirmities. "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to God."

The inspiration of the New Testament partakes of this character. It unfolds itself in the unity of the church, in feelings and affections, and ministers to her need by telling of the love and the ways of God manifest in the flesh in a world of sinners; but if the Holy Ghost has thus acted in the church united to the Head-

whom He glorifies, what He spoke and what He caused to be written was none the less the word of God—the thoughts of God communicated in words of His own teaching. As Christ did not cease to be God because He was made man, so he that received the testimony of Christ set to his seal that God is true. We must not give up (alas! that so many have done so) that presence of the Holy Ghost in the church which produces religious inspiration; that is, the energy which acts in Christians in power and blessing, without making them an authority; neither must we give up the authority of that which has been communicated, whether orally, had we been present to profit by it, or by writings inspired by the Holy Ghost.

Observe also that it is not apostolic authority only which is the question, but the authority of the word of God. A prophet, who spoke by inspiration, and who could say, "The Holy Ghost saith, Separate me Barnabas and Saul," had as much authority in that instance as Paul or Barnabas. He was but the mouth-piece of God, just as that which Paul and Barnabas spoke by the same inspiration was the word of God. Therefore to allege that the gospels were not written by apostles is idle. If an apostle had written without being inspired his writing would only have had the value of that of a godly man. If one of the least in the church has been used by the Holy Ghost his writing has the authority of the word of God. The infinite value of Scripture proceeds from its one Divine Author, and not in any instance from the character of its subordinate human authors.

The two gospels which are not written by apostles are not on that account the less perfect in their presentation of God manifest in the flesh, according to that peculiar aspect in which the Holy Ghost would present Him in each. The instrument used in giving us the history of our Saviour is of no importance: the only

essential point is, Is Christ faithfully presented to us as God would present Him ?

Doubts are raised especially about the Epistle of Jude, the Second Epistle of Peter, and the Apocalypse. Let us briefly examine these three books.

Peter's epistle contains the assertion that it was written by himself : it has a tone of deep and spiritual holiness, a dignified confidence, most remote from imposture ; yet imposture it must be, if it were not written by the apostle Peter. I find in it minute allusions to things which happened to himself, and are related elsewhere, which would never have occurred to an impostor. There is not the smallest deviation from divine truth. There is a solemnity and an authority nowhere found except in inspired writings, and a direct application to the soul, as from God, of the authority of its contents, which is one characteristic of inspiration. The manner in which it deals with the word, as well as with the events of the life of Christ, has a divine character. We see in it a knowledge and a use of the grand principles of divine truth which are unquestionably original, and which possess, at the same time, that divine force which belongs to the whole Bible. There is an absence of amplification only to be found in the Bible, and which is the result of that consciousness of authority with which an inspired man would speak, or rather which was the natural consequence of his divine authority. Those who have read the epistle of Barnabas, which some would compare with that of Peter, will be able to judge of the difference between them, and of the discernment of those who could put it on a level with that of the apostle. It is scarcely doubtful that this so-called epistle of Barnabas is a fabrication, though of his time ; but one has only to read any of the epistles of the Fathers (called apostolic) to see that God has guarded the testimony of His word by the counter-proof of the futility of the writings even of the apostle's

companions. One would scarcely find so much nonsense in these days even in religious books written for children. There is an epistle by Clement—kind and amiable enough—written to make peace at Corinth, but it is the only passable one; and even this is as inferior to the New Testament as doubtless the humility of the author would have admitted it to be.

Jude is accused of having made use of fables and apocryphal books in his epistle; but where is the proof of this? The epistle, on the whole, contains deep and wonderful instruction as to the features of the apostacy, which is foretold in other parts of the word—supplying elements which, although linking themselves with the whole of Scripture, are found nowhere else. It contains deep principles of eternal and divine truth, and it sketches, with surprising distinctness, in a few words, the moral progressive steps of man's apostacy, as well as its historical beginnings in the church—beginnings confirmed doctrinally, and by allusions to other parts of the New Testament. It bears the same marks of inspiration and divine authority which I have pointed out in Peter, and the same contrast with what we know to be of man.

But, it is said, there are fables in it. Which are they? Is the fall of the angels a fable? The Lord Himself tells us that Satan is a fallen being. We learn from Peter that there are angels reserved for judgment. The temerity of human knowledge calls everything which is beyond its reach a fable. Jude and Peter are borne out, if that were needful, by other passages. All Revelation is a fable to him who believes not. Perhaps it is the mention of Michael contending with the devil to which the objector refers. But this conflict with evil angels is, as a scriptural truth, recognised, not only in the Apocalypse and the second of Peter, but also in the

book of Daniel (x. 20, 21), quoted by the Lord Himself. That passage shows that Michael especially interests himself in Israel: he is there called their "prince." We find the same thing in Dan. xii. 1, a chapter, one part of which is especially pointed out as worthy of attention by the Lord Jesus. It proves that Michael is used of the Lord in behalf of Israel. One can easily understand the use which the Israelites would have made of the body of Moses, as we know what they did for centuries with the brazen serpent. We know also that the Lord buried him, carefully concealing the place of his interment. Does He not use the angels in His service for these things, and Michael especially, for Israel and against Satan, who opposed his service to that people? So there is not an element contained in Jude's statement that is not borne out in principle by the general testimony of the word of God.

That Jude should have been commissioned to add to all this the record of another and similar fact is no difficulty to one whose mind is imbued with the word of God. On the contrary, there is much solemnity in the instruction. It has none of those curious and idle details which we find in the fables of the apocryphal books; but it throws much light on that invisible world of providence, the existence of which is proved by a multitude of passages, and which will be unveiled to us when we shall know even as we are known. If I reason thus it is not that I question the inspiration of Jude: no, for his whole epistle is stamped with the love, the holiness, and the authority of God, and has its own manifest place in the series of the books of the New Testament. I am not proving the truth of what Jude spoke by inspiration, but the superficial character of the objections brought against that epistle.

As to the accusation of borrowing from the Apocrypha, where is it proved? I conclude the prophec

of Enoch is alluded to, as it is found in an apocryphal book, bearing the name of Enoch, which was published in England some years ago, and which exists in the Ethiopian language. But there is no shadow of a proof that Jude borrowed it from this Ethiopian book. There would be nothing extraordinary in the supposition that the author of the so-called "Book of Enoch" may have been acquainted with this prophecy. The prophecy itself is confirmed by a multitude of passages in the Old and New Testament. Its divine truth is proved by innumerable texts of all kinds. Is the relating of that which is certainly true, and nothing more, a proof of not being directed by God, because he who composes a book known to be an imposture adds to it a mass of crudities? Is it not rather a proof to the contrary, if proof were needed? Jude gives us a true prophecy. Another avails himself of the truth of this prophecy, which had come to his knowledge, to accredit a mass of errors. And this is brought forward as a proof that the former was not under the direction of God, and that he must have quoted the true prophecy from him who made so bad a use of it! And this is called reasoning, and wisdom, and knowledge! To a Christian the preservation of this prophecy has an affecting interest. In adding to a truth taught elsewhere the fact of its having been prophesied by Enoch, we have a testimony that, even before the flood, the man of God—who "walked with God," and was taken from the world, as the church will one day be—had already, at that early period, announced the judgment of the world he was leaving. "Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world." All His purposes are fixed beforehand, whatever may be His patience and His dealings in long-suffering and in righteousness with man ere those purposes be accomplished.

In short, to say that this passage has been taken

from an apocryphal book is an assertion destitute of proof. The date of the apocryphal book of Enoch is controverted. Yet this must be settled before there can be any foundation whatever for alleging that the passage in Jude was taken from it. My own examination of the question has thoroughly convinced me that it was not.

We have now to consider the Apocalypse. This book is only rejected because not understood. Ignorance assumes the office of judge, and decides with the temerity natural to it. To one not familiar with the word it is indeed obscure in its style, and it is so in its matter, because it treats of subjects which naturally tend to make it so. But there is no book in the New Testament of which the date and the author are established by more precise, more ancient, and more competent evidences; not one which has acted in a more holy and solemn manner on the conscience of true Christians; not one which links itself more admirably with the whole structure of the New Testament, as completing the whole edifice; not one, the absence of which in this respect would be more sensibly felt. There is not one that connects itself so much with the Old Testament, by borrowing the imagery of the prophets to unfold its revelations, while so far altering that imagery as to adapt it to the New Testament.

This mode of using the Old Testament forms the most perfect connection between heavenly and earthly things, a connection which is fully established in the New Testament. It also makes the symbolic language of the Revelation more easy to be understood, and the object of the book more apparent. There is scarcely a subject, from the first chapter of Genesis, with which the Apocalypse does not link itself, without effort, and in a manner which is altogether beyond human art. This book has the impress, the lofty

range, the perfection of the mind of God, precisely in those representations and symbols from which man has endeavoured to borrow something, in order to give a more exalted character to the idolatrous creations of his own mind. Creation—the Jew—Man—his power in the world—the work of Satan—that of Christ in its results of glory to Himself and to the earth—the church—the condition of the saints in relation to God and to the earth—the government and the long-suffering of God—the angels—all these subjects are in this wondrous book treated of, and set in their relations to each other and to God. Nor is it deficient as to any one doctrine revealed in the word. It does not rehearse these doctrines; but it expresses them in new forms, and under altogether new circumstances, which throw fresh light upon their former associations, and receive it from them in return.

How could there have been so suited a close to such a volume as the Bible? The Bible sets forth all the ways of God, from the creation to the return of that creation (long fallen, rebellious, and miserable, but now redeemed) into the order and blessing in which it is securely set by the fulness of God's grace; nothing being excluded save that which is incompatible with the blessing itself. It reveals the eternal Son of God acting in the midst of this whole scene, glorifying His Father, and bringing everything into a more beautiful order than had been lost. One can understand that a book like this would not close without taking up again all the threads of this wondrous divine process, and exhibiting those results which, when the work of the Son is perfected, and all things subdued, will bring in the full and perfect dominion of the eternal God—the blessing of that God who has made Himself known in Jesus. This is what the Apocalypse sets before us.

To enter into some details of another part of this book, who is it that in choosing seven churches (a number which in itself suggests the idea of a complete whole), could give us, in two short chapters, every moral position in which the church (and even every individual who has ears to hear) could be found, from the beginning to the end of its career? Who could, with this, give us the most precious revelation of heavenly blessings, adapted as special encouragement to the difficulties of each of these respective conditions? Who is it that could at the same time furnish the richest revelations of the divine and varied glory of the person of the Son of God, a glory which beams with all-pervading brightness over every part of the subject; and that too in such details as are calculated to strengthen those who may be placed in the circumstances described? This is what we find in chapters ii. and iii. of the Apocalypse. One can understand, moreover, that when the inspired communications made to the church were about to be closed; when those who were commissioned by God to superintend were being removed; when evil, as the word everywhere testifies, was coming in like a flood; one can understand, I say, that the Spirit of God should have thus left to the church—to the faithful who need it—a moral summary which could meet their need in the darkness gathering round them. Such a summary these chapters of Revelation afford us: a summary which, if God arouses those who are His, explains to them the course and result of events which have taken place during the darkness, and makes manifest, even though the church may have slumbered, that nothing has happened without God; a summary which gives warning also of the judgment which will fall upon the professing church, as the result of her unfaithfulness to God, and to the light which he has dispensed, and makes room for His dealing with the world. This

terrific judgment is the consequence of man's rejection and corruption of God's last and most gracious manifestation of Himself. The consummated iniquity of that which professes to be the church leaves room for nothing but judgment; and when this judgment is executed, this closing book of Scripture tells us righteousness will be established in the world by divine power.

How consistent that such a book as this should close the revelations of God! Rationalism sees nothing in it but historic speculations—a view worthy of such a system. That it should contain things hard to be understood is not to be wondered at. Its language, it is true, is figurative, but it is full of moral instruction to the spiritual. God intended it to be a light to His people, for a peculiar blessing is attached to the observance of it (i. 3). It is only in proportion as the church awakens, takes her place in humbling herself, and apprehends her true relationship to God, that she will be able also to acquire a divine understanding of this rich treasury of all which throws light upon her outward position, and to comprehend the way in which God will resume the government of the world, to place it in the hands of the First-begotten, to whom every knee shall bow.

Rationalism prefers man to God, or at least would rather listen to him, and that is, in reality, preferring him. This will be charged as calumny. I shall be glad of it, for this sensitiveness will at least show that conscience feels it is a horrible thing if true; and that a system which adopts such a principle as its basis condemns itself. Well then, I repeat it, Rationalism prefers man to God, and avows that it does so. For the Rationalist the Bible is no longer the word of God. Human reason pronounces upon it, upon its verity, upon its moral worth; but it is self-evident that were it recognised as the word of God this could not, dare

not, be done. It is equally certain that the Rationalist does thus judge the Bible, and chooses rather to rely on his own reason than to acknowledge divine authority, be it in what book it may. One of the most recent expositors of this doctrine in France says, "The Bible is no longer the word of God, and I know not what detriment it will be to the cause of piety to exchange a written code for the living productions of apostolic individuality, authority for history, and, to speak plainly, a cabalistic ventriloquy, for the noble accents of the human voice." If this be not preferring the word of a man to the word of God, what is it? Inspiration, which makes man the mouth and the voice of God, is "a cabalistic ventriloquy"!!

The author prefers the voice of man: he thinks it a nobler voice. Poor Rationalists! self-admirers, to whom the voice of God too clearly heard is a deadly alarm—an unknown sound, which too plainly tells them what they are! Yet hearken to it, ye wise men, who are tempted of Satan to search into good and evil, relying solely upon yourselves. Hearken to it: you will find it, if it convict you, a voice of grace, which can restore you, and cover your moral nakedness with the perfection and the glory of the second Adam—of the Son of God.

One of the shapes which error has taken of late years is, to assert that the rejection of the inspiration of the Bible, and of its authority over believers, allows the Holy Ghost to resume His rightful place. I fully allow that the church has grievously forgotten the presence and authority of the Holy Ghost dwelling in her. But I cannot understand how rejecting the authority of what the Holy Ghost has already spoken can enhance His authority. It appears to me to be rather opening the door to human pretensions and the devices of Satan. I have seen the latter effect—a door opened for Satan's devices—produced by the same

cause; and in the writings which advocate this system we are completely given over to human pretensions, under the specious guise of greater spirituality. The language of the author already quoted is:—"Instead of the authority of the word, we shall have the word of authority; instead of referring the poor proselyte to the article of a code, to the ritual of a dogmatist [which I would no more do than the author whom I quote], or to the pages of I know not what mysterious oracles; we will refer him to all the great prophets of all ages, to the living instructions of the church, to the word of God personified in His servants, to the Spirit and to His manifestations, in a word, to the immediate contact of the heart with truth." How my heart would be brought into more immediate contact with truth by listening to the voice of man, rather than by listening to "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," it is difficult to conceive. I accept "the manifestation of the Spirit," if thereby is only meant the exercise of spiritual gifts for the edification of the church, and the energy of the Spirit manifested in these gifts; but I warn the believer to be carefully on his guard against all false claims to these "spiritual manifestation." I have witnessed such, and have had evidence which, to me, plainly identified them with the active energy of Satan. It is not every spirit which is the Spirit of God; and Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light. Such "manifestations," when accompanied by the rejection of the word of God and of its direct authority over the soul, proceed from the enemy of souls. This is the case, I doubt not, with many modern delusions. It seems to me that the enemy is preparing bolder attempts of this kind, if the Lord hinder him not. The church in general does not sufficiently own the Holy Ghost to have real strength against such pretensions. But it is not in giving up the word, which the Spirit has given us, that we shall find this strength.

Observe, we are asked to renounce that which is here styled, "I know not what mysterious oracles," but which Stephen calls, "the lively oracles," and Paul, "the oracles of God" (and remark, "the lively oracles" were the letter of Scripture), and to give ourselves up to "all the great prophets of all ages," *i.e.*, to all the vagaries of the human mind, apart from God, perhaps under the influence of Satan, to be tossed about on a restless ocean of uncertainty, without chart and without compass; for there is no word of God—only "the noble accents of the human voice," and a "word of authority"—that is, whether it be an individual or a body which assumes this authority, we are to resign ourselves to the guidance of man—not of God!

I recognise the existence of the evil which this system professes to assail. It is one of the commonest devices of the enemy to attack a corruption when it grows old and loses its power over the mind of man, in order to set up some other evil more in accordance with the state of men's minds. Thus the Roman mythology was assailed by the scoffs of infidelity, as soon as it had been shaken by Christianity. Modern rationalism is pursuing the same course; it attacks that lifeless dogmatic theology which makes use of the name of God in order to put restraint, not on man, but on the Holy Ghost. But while doing this, instead of bringing us back to the authority of God, it sets up that of man; instead of restoring the liberty and the rights of the Spirit of God, it gives us up to the spirit of man, publishing its unbelief as to the word, and undermining, as far as it can, all that is certainly of God. When this is once taken away—when there is no more authority of God (which alone secures true liberty to man)—when there is no other authority than that of him who speaks, or of the church, who will then be free?

It is said that faith in the person of the Saviour will

remain. Doubtless this is the centre and the strength of Christianity: but what would faith there be, or in what Saviour, if the word of God were taken from us?

The Holy Ghost is spoken of in this system. Now I own most fully the way in which the Comforter, sent down from heaven, has been grieved and forgotten; but, if the authority of the written word be set aside, it is something vague and mystical that is meant by those who use the sacred words "Holy Ghost," and not the promised Spirit, whose office is to glorify the Saviour. It is a principle which engenders a kind of communism, and not the revealer of Christ, and the power of a divine person in the church.

The Holy Ghost is the source of strength, of power, and of understanding in the church, and in the Christian. But if you separate the idea of the Holy Ghost from the inspiration and the authority of the written word, you give yourself up to the imaginations of the mind, or to an authority which is merely human, whatever may be its pretensions, or the ecclesiastical form it may assume. It is authority, and not truth that is established. The word of God is the authority of the truth, and of Him who reveals it.

There is an important point which I have not yet brought forward, and on which I would add a few words; that is, the authority of the word, independently of the effect it produces on the heart. I may be led to recognise the authority of the word of God through the effect which it has produced in my soul; but evidently it is not this effect which gives it its authority. If the word produces this effect, it is because it possessed the authority which I recognise before I yielded to it. I recognise it because it exists. If Christ pronounced the words of God, His words had authority, notwithstanding the unbelief of His hearers; that is, they possessed intrinsic authority.

Nor have they lost it by being written. The Lord speaks of "writings" being the highest order of means of communication. If the apostle has made the will of God known to us in "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth" the revelations he received and thus communicated have a divine authority over the conscience, even though they should be rejected by man. The authority of the word does not depend upon its being received by him who hears. It is not he who is to judge it, except at his own peril. "The words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

We are not now discussing the authenticity of the Testimony, but its authority, allowing it to be authentic. Wherein lies this authority? Suppose two persons read a portion of the Bible: the heart of one is touched and convinced of the divine authority of what he reads; the other remains in his unbelief. Does the authority of the word depend on the faith of one who believes, or is it the same for both, although unrecognised by him who believes not? It is evident that either he who believed was mistaken, or if not, that the authority of the book, although unrecognised by the unbeliever, is as great for him as for the one who bowed to it. The authority lies then in the word itself, independently of the effect produced by it, or of the opinion man forms of it. It possesses intrinsic authority. The judgment of the last day will prove it. "The words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." It could not be otherwise with the word of God; but it is important clearly to establish this principle.

The word itself establishes it. "And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear; for they are most rebellious" (Ezek. ii. 7). Compare 1 John iii. 11-27. "He that believes has the witness in himself:" this is the inward power of the testimony; "He that believeth

not God hath made him a liar :” here is the guilt of him who believes not. Thus the authority of testimony from God is independent of the judgment which man may pronounce upon it. The testimony will itself judge man.

The intrinsic authority then of the testimony of Scripture is clearly established. It is an authority independent of the reception of the testimony by the hearer ; so entirely independent, that the word will judge him who is not obedient to it. This proves to us that God has endued it with moral evidence powerful enough to bring in guilty the man who does not receive the testimony, and who thereby treats God as a liar. Nevertheless, it is only the grace of God which can overcome the moral resistance of man’s heart, unbelieving as it is by nature and by will as to the things of God, though full of credulity as to the things of man.

There is another point which I have only glanced at, and which I desire to put forward a little more plainly. Many circumstances testify that the narratives of the evangelists were not written merely by man, but by the Holy Ghost. For instance, John was one of the three apostles who were with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, an attendant upon the scene of His agony. Nothing could be more affecting and more solemn. John most certainly had not forgotten it, for he relates many other of the circumstances which are not to be found in the other gospels ; for instance, that those who came to take Jesus “ went backward and fell to the ground,” and yet respecting the Saviour’s agony he makes not the slightest mention. John accompanied Jesus also to the cross, yet he says not a word of His having been forsaken of God, although he relates a multitude of other circumstances, which prove that the Saviour was as calm there as when he describes Him to us in the garden. A man who had written

the history of the sufferings of the Saviour would not have failed to relate things so deeply interesting, and of which he had himself been an eye-witness. Matthew also would have related the remarkable incident which occurred in the garden of Gethsemane, of which he was an eye-witness, namely, that they all fell to the ground; but he does not mention it, whilst he gives an account of the agony of Jesus and His prayer, although he was not one of three who accompanied Him at that time.

Now, if you examine these gospels, you will find that this peculiarity—inexplicable as it would be if they were not inspired—becomes quite intelligible when we recognise their inspiration. One and the same author wrote them all. The Holy Ghost, whose office it is to take of the things of Christ and to show them unto us, furnishes us in John with those circumstances of the history of Jesus which would bring out the glory of His person as Son of God—the glory of Him “who offered himself to God” for us. In Matthew He gives that which is needed to make known the suffering Messiah. The result is, not only harmony between the parts of each gospel, but also between all the gospels; producing a perfect whole—exhibiting the design and the workmanship of one and the same author. This principle is applicable to the entire contents of the four gospels. I have only called the reader’s attention to the garden of Gethsemane and to the cross, as striking instances. One who is well versed in the gospels, and who has spiritual discernment, would know by the manner in which a subject is presented in which gospel it is to be found. Compare the connection between the end of Matt. xxi. and the parable in the beginning of chap. xxii.; also the way in which the corresponding parable in Luke xvi. 16 is introduced, with that of the husbandmen in Luke xx., and you will perceive that the substance, the form,

and the diversities of these parables are in perfect harmony with the design of each gospel. In Matthew, we have the rejection of Christ in connection with the relation of the Messiah to the Jews; in Luke, the moral order of the events, the acts and ways of the God of Grace, founded on the broader, more moral, and less official basis of the character of the Son of man. The same thing may be observed in comparing Matt. xxiv. and Luke xxi.

There is another testimony to the truth of inspiration, the peculiar character of which deserves the reader's attention. It applies especially to the Old Testament; but it brings out very clearly the difference between the inspiration of the Old and that of the New. It is that the prophets did not understand their own prophecies, but studied them as we might do. We read in 1 Peter i. 11—"Searching 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. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister," &c. The prophets searched into that which the Holy Ghost had spoken through themselves. Their inspiration was so absolute, and so independent of the workings of their own minds, that they inquired into the meaning of that which they uttered, as any of us might do. This is not precisely the character of the inspiration of the New Testament; but it is not, therefore, the less real. Its character is declared in the succeeding word—"reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

"The Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" leads into all truth; and thus inspiration acts in the understanding and by the understanding; but it is not on that account the less inspiration. On the contrary, the Apostle Paul preferred the inspiration which acts by the

understanding to that which is apparently more independent of it. 1 Cor. xiv. 14-19—"If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prayeth; but my understanding is unfruitful." Dan. xii. 8, gives us an example of that which Peter describes—"And I heard, but understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

The reader will remember that the passage I have quoted is the one to which the Lord Himself referred the disciples, in order that they might understand it. Now if the prophet did not understand the revelation he gave—if the prophets searched into the signification of their own prophecies—it is most evident that those prophecies were given through direct and positive inspiration.

I desire to add a thought which tends to confirm the truth I seek to maintain, and which applies to the whole of the Bible. Our attention is called to the fact that the Bible is not one book, but a collection of writings by different authors. It is precisely on this fact that I ground my argument, adding also that they were written at periods very remote from each other. In spite of this great diversity of times and of authors, there is a perfect unity of design and of doctrine: a unity, the separate parts of which are so linked with each other, and so entirely adapted to each other, that the whole work is evidently that of one and the same Spirit—one and the same mind; with one purpose carried on from the beginning to the end, whatever might be the date of each separate book. And this, not at all by means of mere uniformity of idea, for the promises are quite distinct from the law; and the gospel of grace is distinct from them both; nevertheless, its parts are so correlative, and form so harmonious a whole, that, with the least attention, one

cannot fail to perceive that it is the production of One Mind. Now there is but One who lived through all the ages during which the various books of the Bible were written, and that one is the Holy Ghost.

Look at Genesis. You will find in it doctrines—promises—types, which are in perfect harmony with that which is more fully developed in the New Testament; but in this book they are related in the way of narrative with the greatest simplicity, yet in such a manner as to give the most perfect picture of things which should happen in after ages. Feelings natural to piety (speaking historically) are so related as to possess a meaning which, when we have the key to it, throws light upon the most precious doctrines of the New Testament and the most remarkable events of prophecy.

Look at Exodus, and you will find the same thing. Everything is made according to the pattern seen by Moses in the Mount, and furnishes us with the clearest exposition we possess of the ways of God in Christ. At the same time the law is given, and yet the law is not imitated in the gospel, which does not so much as contain a copy of it. Nevertheless the law is linked with the gospel in a manner which makes it impossible to separate them, and which gives to the authority of this revelation a divine and absolute character. Were it not so, Christ would have died to suffer the consequences of a partially human institution; for He bore the curse of the law. Observe this carefully—it was “the curse of the law” revealed to man, and of which He said that not one jot or tittle should pass away till all were fulfilled. And moreover it was not when reasoning with the Jews upon their own ground that Christ said this, but when teaching His disciples according to His own perfect wisdom, and solemnly setting before them the principles of His kingdom.

Take Leviticus. The details of its sacrifices furnish

a light which throws upon the work of Christ rays so bright that nothing could replace them—supplying a key to all the workings of the human heart and an answer to all its need, such as it is found even among the heathen. These details prefigure every aspect of the work of Christ, as doctrinally unfolded in the New Testament, whether by Himself or by His apostles; yet to the inspired writer they were only Jewish ordinances.

Take Numbers—the history of the journeyings of God's people through the wilderness. "These things," says the apostle, "happened to them for examples [types], and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come." Who was it that wrote them for us? Certainly not Moses (although he was the human instrument), but He who knoweth the end from the beginning, and who orders all things according to His good pleasure.

All the circumstances of Christian life are found treasured up in these oracles, in so complete a manner that the apostle could say, "They are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ." On the other hand the New Testament is equally far from merely repeating the substance of the Old, or from making void its authority. It brings in an altogether new light—a light which (while setting aside a multitude of things as fulfilled) throws upon the Old Testament a radiance which alone gives its contents their true bearing. All this applies to the moral and to the ceremonial law—to the history of the Patriarchs—to the royalties of David and of Solomon—to the sentiments expressed in the Psalms, as well as to other subjects. Is it not ONE MIND which has done all this? Was it the mind of Moses or of Paul? Assuredly not. Observe also that all this refers to Christ, and to all the various glories of Christ—glories which God alone knew so as to reveal them beforehand, and to give in

the history and ordinances of His people, and even in that which is related of the world, precisely that which would serve for the development of all that was to be manifested in His Son Jesus. Accordingly, what says Peter? (Acts ii.) "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David; that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day; therefore being a prophet, and seeing this before, he spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

I do not go through other books of the Bible to furnish proofs of this unity of design, which is manifested in a work wrought by such various instruments, and at periods so remote from each other—a unity realised in such a manner as precludes all idea of its having been intended by the persons who executed it. I only use this fact here in confirmation of the principle which I maintain; but to one who has any knowledge of the word of God it is an incontestable proof.

I add but one word. In judging of inspiration by the precision of the account, a mistake is often committed as to what should be sought for. The Holy Ghost does not aim at that accuracy which would be needful to prove the truthfulness of man. The Holy Ghost has always a moral or spiritual object—the revelation of some eternal principle of truth and grace. Every circumstance which has no bearing upon His object is omitted. He regards not accuracy in that respect. But the moral accuracy is all the greater on this account, and the picture presented to the conscience much more complete. The introduction of something needful to human accuracy would spoil the perfection of the whole as God's testimony. God does not seek to amuse the mind of man by stories to no purpose, but to instruct his heart by truth. This might sometimes make it rather difficult to balance the whole as a

mere narrative; but there are two ways of explaining the cause of a difficulty:—the ignorance of him who feels the difficulty, or the impossibility of the thing which has perplexed him. And man willingly attributes to the latter cause that which proceeds from the former. He who understands the designs of the Holy Ghost in what He says seizes the perfection of the word, where the mind of man is perplexed by a thousand difficulties.

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