

The Protestant Rule of Faith

by Charles Hodge

The Protestant rule of faith is that the word of God, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

Scripture: Luke 12:12, John 10:35, 1 Corinthians 14:37, 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21

Topics: "Biblical Inspiration", "Canon Of Scripture"

Description

Charles Hodge preaches about the doctrine of inspiration, emphasizing the belief that the Scriptures are the infallible Word of God, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He highlights Protestants' agreement that the Bible contains all supernatural revelations of God and is the rule of faith and practice for the Church. Hodge explains the Canon of the Old Testament, rejecting apocryphal books and emphasizing the recognition of books included in the Jewish canon. He discusses the nature of inspiration, distinguishing it from revelation and emphasizing that inspired men were the organs of God, speaking His words. Hodge refutes objections to the doctrine of inspiration, addressing discrepancies and errors in the Bible, historical and scientific objections, and adverse theories like the naturalistic doctrine and Schleiermacher's theory.

Transcript

§1. Statement of the Doctrine.

All Protestants agree in teaching that "the word of God, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only infallible rule of faith and practice."

In the Smalcald Articles,¹ the Lutheran Church says "Ex patrum -- verbis et factis non sunt exstruedi articuli fidei -- Regulam autem aliam habemus, ut videlicet verbum Dei condat articulos fidei et praeterea nemo, ne angelus quidem." In the "Form of Concord,"² it is said: "Credimus, confitemur et docemus, unicam regulam et normam secundum quam omnia dogmata omnesque doctores aestimari et iudicari oporteat, nullam omnino aliam esse, quam prophetica et apostolica scripta cum V. tum N. Testamenti."

The symbols of the Reformed churches teach the same doctrine. Confessio Helvetica, II.3 says: "In scriptura sancta habet universalis Christi Ecclesia plenissime exposita, quaecunque pertinent cum ad salvificam fidem, tum ad vitam Deo placentem."⁴ Non alium in causa fidei iudicem, quam ipsum Deum per Scripturas sacras pronuntiantem, quid verum sit, quid falsum, quid sequendum sit quidne fugiendum. Confessio Gallicana:⁵ Quum haec (SS.) sit omnis veritatis summa, complectens quidquid ad cultum Dei et

salutem nostram requiritur, neque hominibus neque ipsis etiam angelis fas esse dicimus quicquam ei verbo adjicere vel detrudere vel quicquam prorsus in eo immutare " In the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England,⁶ it is said : "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." The Westminster Confession⁷ teaches: "Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testament, which are these: etc. . . . All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.⁸ The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men.⁹ All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them."

From these statements it appears that Protestants hold, (1.) That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and are therefore infallible, and of divine authority in all things pertaining to faith and practice, and consequently free from all error whether of doctrine, fact, or precept. (2.) That they contain all the extant supernatural revelations of God designed to be a rule of faith and practice to his Church. (3.) That they are sufficiently perspicuous to be understood by the people, in the use of ordinary means and by the aid of the Holy Spirit, in all things necessary to faith or practice, without the need of any infallible interpreter.

The Canon.

Before entering on the consideration of these points, it is necessary to answer the question, What books are entitled to a place in the canon, or rule of faith and practice? Romanists answer this question by saying, that all those which the Church has decided to be divine in their origin, and none others, are to be thus received. Protestants answer it by saying, so far as the Old Testament is concerned, that those books, and those only, which Christ and his Apostles recognized as the written Word of God, are entitled to be regarded as canonical. This recognition was afforded in a twofold manner: First, many of the books of the Old Testament are quoted as the Word of God, as being given by the Spirit; or the Spirit is said to have uttered what is therein recorded. Secondly, Christ and his Apostles refer to the sacred writings of the Jews -- the volume which they regarded as divine -- as being what it claimed to be, the Word of God. When we refer to the Bible as of divine authority, we refer to it as a volume and recognize all the writings which it contains as given by the inspiration of the Spirit. In like manner when Christ or his Apostles quote the "Scriptures," or the "law and the prophets," and speak of the volume then so called, they give their sanction to the divine authority of all the books which that volume contained. All, therefore, that is necessary to determine for Christians the canon of the Old Testament, is to ascertain what books were included in the "Scriptures" recognized by the Jews of that period. This is a point about which there is no reasonable doubt. The Jewish canon of the Old Testament included all the books and no others, which Protestants now recognize as constituting the Old Testament Scriptures. On this ground Protestants reject the so-called apocryphal books. They were not written in Hebrew and were not included in the canon of the Jews. They were, therefore, not recognized by Christ as the Word of God. This reason is of itself sufficient. It is however confirmed by considerations drawn from the character of the books themselves.

They abound in errors, and in statements contrary to those found in the undoubtedly canonical books.

The principle on which the canon of the New Testament is determined is equally simple. Those books, and those only which can be proved to have been written by the Apostles, or to have received their sanction, are to be recognized as of divine authority. The reason of this rule is obvious. The Apostles were the duly authenticated messengers of Christ, of whom He said, "He that heareth you, heareth me."

§2. The Scriptures are Infallible, i. e., given by Inspiration of God.

The infallibility and divine authority of the Scriptures are due to the fact that they are the word of God; and they are the word of God because they were given by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

A. The Nature of Inspiration. Definition.

The nature of inspiration is to be learnt from the Scriptures; from their didactic statements, and from their phenomena. There are certain general facts or principles which underlie the Bible, which are assumed in all its teachings, and which therefore must be assumed in its interpretation. We must, for example, assume, (1.) That God is not the unconscious ground of all things; nor an unintelligent force; nor a name for the moral order of the universe; nor mere causality; but a Spirit, -- a self-conscious, intelligent, voluntary agent, possessing all the attributes of our spirits without limitation, and to an infinite degree. (2.) That He is the creator of the world, and extra-mundane, existing before, and independently of it; not its soul, life, or animating principle; but its maker, preserver, and ruler. (3.) That as a spirit He is everywhere present, and everywhere active, preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions. (4.) That while both in the external world and in the world of mind He generally acts according to fixed laws and through secondary causes, He is free to act, and often does act immediately, or without the intervention of such causes, as in creation, regeneration, and miracles. (5.) That the Bible contains a divine, or supernatural revelation. The present question is not, Whether the Bible is what it claims to be; but, What does it teach as to the nature and effects of the influence under which it was written?

On this subject the common doctrine of the Church is, and ever has been, that inspiration was an influence of the Holy Spirit on the minds of certain select men, which rendered them the organs of God for the infallible communication of his mind and will. They were in such a sense the organs of God, that what they said God said.

B. Inspiration Supernatural.

This definition includes several distinct points. First. Inspiration is a supernatural influence. It is thus distinguished, on the one hand from the providential agency of God, which is everywhere and always in operation; and on the other hand, from the gracious operations of the Spirit on the hearts of his people. According to the Scriptures, and the common views of men, a marked distinction is to be made between those effects which are due to the efficiency of God operating regularly through second causes, and those which are produced by his immediate efficiency without the intervention of such causes. The one class of effects is natural; the other, supernatural. Inspiration belongs to the latter class. It is not a natural effect due to the inward state of its subject, or to the influence of external circumstances.

No less obvious is the distinction which the Bible makes between the gracious operations of the Spirit and those by which extraordinary gifts are bestowed upon particular persons. Inspiration, therefore, is not to be confounded with spiritual illumination. They differ, first, as to their subjects. The subjects of inspiration are

a few selected persons; the subjects of spiritual illumination are all true believers. And, secondly, they differ as to their design. The design of the former is to render certain men infallible as teachers. the design of the latter is to render men holy; and of course they differ as to their effects. Inspiration in itself has no sanctifying influence. Balaam was inspired. Saul was among the prophets. Caiaphas uttered a prediction which "he spake not of himself." (John xi. 51.) In the last day many will be able to say to Christ, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" To whom he will say: "I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. vii. 22, 23.)

C. Distinction between Revelation and Inspiration.

Second. The above definition assumes a difference between revelation and inspiration. They differ, first, as to their object. The object of revelation is the communication of knowledge. The object or design of inspiration is to secure infallibility in teaching. Consequently they differ, secondly, in their effects. The effect of revelation was to render its recipient wiser. The effect of inspiration was to preserve him from error in teaching. These two gifts were often enjoyed by the same person at the same time.

That is, the Spirit often imparted knowledge, and controlled in its communication orally or in writing to others. This was no doubt the case with the Psalmists, and often with the Prophets and Apostles. Often, however, the revelations were made at one time, and were subsequently, under the guidance of the Spirit, committed to writing. Thus the Apostle Paul tells us that he received his knowledge of the gospel not from man, but by revelation from Jesus Christ; and this knowledge he communicated from time to time in his discourses and epistles.

In many cases these gifts were separated. Many of the sacred writers, although inspired, received no revelations. This was probably the fact with the authors of the historical books of the Old Testament. The evangelist Luke does not refer his knowledge of the events which he records to revelation, but says he derived it from those which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the Word." (Luke i. 2.) It is immaterial to us where Moses obtained his knowledge of the events recorded in the book of Genesis; whether from early documents, from tradition, or from direct revelation.

No more causes are to be assumed for any effect than are necessary. If the sacred writer had sufficient sources of knowledge in themselves, or in those about them, there is no need to assume any direct revelation, it is enough for us that they were rendered infallible as teachers. This distinction between revelation and inspiration is commonly made by systematic writers. Thus Quenstedt (1685)¹⁰ says: "Distingue inter revelationem et inspirationem. Revelatio vi vocis est manifestatio rerum ignotarum et occultarum, et potest fieri multis et diversis modis Inspiratio . . . est interna conceptum suggestio, sen infusio, sive res conceptae jam ante scriptori fuerint cognitae, sive occultae.

Illa potuit tempore antecedere scriptionem, haec cum scriptione semper fuit conjuncta et in ipsam scriptionem influebat." Often, however, the distinction in question is overlooked. In popular language, inspiration is made to include both the supernatural communication of truth to the mind, and a supernatural control in making known that truth to others. The two gifts, however, differ in their nature, and should therefore be distinguished. Confounding them has sometimes led to serious error.

When no revelation was necessary, no inspiration is admitted. Thus Grotius says: "Vere dixi non omnes libros qui sunt in Hebraeo Canone dictatos a Spiritu Sancto. Scriptos esse cum proprio animi motu, non nego; et hoc est quod judicavit Synagoga Magna, cujus judicio in hac re stant Hebraei. Sed a Spiritu Sancto

dictari historias nihil fuit opus: satis fuit scriptorem memoria valere circa res spectatas, aut diligentia in describendis veterum commentariis."11 It is an illogical conclusion, however, to infer that because a historian did not need to have the facts dictated to him, that therefore he needed no control to preserve him from error.

D. Inspired Men the Organs of God.

A third point included in the Church doctrine of inspiration is, that the sacred writers were the organs of God, so that what they taught, God taught. It is to be remembered, however, that when God uses any of his creatures as his instruments, He uses them according to their nature. He uses angels as angels, men as men, the elements as elements. Men are intelligent voluntary agents; and as such were made the organs of God. The sacred writers were not made unconscious or irrational.

The spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets. (1 Cor. xiv. 32.) They were not like calculating machines which grind out logarithms with infallible correctness. The ancients, indeed, were accustomed to say, as some theologians have also said, that the sacred writers were as pens in the hand of the Spirit; or as harps, from which He drew what sounds He pleased. These representations were, however intended simply to illustrate one point, namely, that the words uttered or recorded by inspired men were the words of God.

The Church has never held what has been stigmatized as the mechanical theory of inspiration. The sacred writers were not machines. Their self-consciousness was not suspended; nor were their intellectual powers superseded. Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It was men, not machines; not unconscious instruments, but living, thinking, willing minds, whom the Spirit used as his organs. Moreover, as inspiration did not involve the suspension or suppression of the human faculties, so neither did it interfere with the free exercise of the distinctive mental characteristics of the individual.

If a Hebrew was inspired, he spake Hebrew; if a Greek, he spake Greek; if an educated man, he spoke as a man of culture; if uneducated, he spoke as such a man is wont to speak. If his mind was logical, he reasoned, as Paul did; if emotional and contemplative, he wrote as John wrote. All this is involved in the fact that God uses his instruments according to their nature. The sacred writers impressed their peculiarities on their several productions as plainly as though they were the subjects of no extraordinary influence.

This is one of the phenomena of the Bible patent to the most cursory reader. It lies in the very nature of inspiration that God spake in the language of men; that He uses men as his organs, each according to his peculiar gifts and endowments. When He ordains praise out of the mouth of babes, they must speak as babes, or the whole power and beauty of the tribute will be lost. There is no reason to believe that the operation of the Spirit in inspiration revealed itself any more in the consciousness of the sacred writers, than his operations in sanctification reveal themselves in the consciousness of the Christian.

As the believer seems to himself to act, and in fact does act out of his own nature; so the inspired penmen wrote out of the fulness of their own thoughts and feelings, and employed the language and modes of expression which to them were the most natural and appropriate. Nevertheless, and none the less, they spoke as they were proved by the Holy Ghost, and their words were his words.

E. Proof of the Doctrine.

That this is the Scriptural view of inspiration; that inspired men were the organs of God in such a sense that their words are to be received not as the words of men, but as they are in truth, as the words of God (1 Thess. ii. 13), is proved, --

1. From the signification and usage of the word. It is, of course, admitted that words are to be understood in their historical sense. If it can be shown what idea the men living in the apostolic age attached to the word *qeo,pneustoj* and its equivalents, that is the idea which the Apostles intended to express by them. All nations have entertained the belief not only that God has access to the human mind and can control its operations, but that He at times did take such possession of particular persons as to make them the organs of his communications. Such persons were called by the Greeks *qeofo,roi* (those who bore a God within them); or, *e;qioj* (those in whom a God dwelt). In the Septuagint the word *pneuhatofo,roj* is used in the same sense. In Josephus,¹² the idea is expressed by the phrase "*tw/| qei,w| pneu,hati kekinh,menoj*" to which the words of Peter (2 Peter i. 21) exactly answer, *u`po. pneu,matoj fero,menoi*; and what is written by men under this influence of the Spirit is called *graph. qeo,pneustoj*. (2 Tim. iii. 16.) Gregory of Nyssa,¹³ having quoted the words of our Lord in Matt. xxii. 43, "How then doth David in Spirit call him Lord," adds, *ouvkou/n th/| duna,mei tou/ Pneu,matoj oi` qeoforou,menoi tw/n a`gi,wn empne,ontai, kai. dia. tou/to pa/sa graph. qeo,pneustoj le,getai, dia. to. th/j qei,aj evmpneu,sewj eivnai didaskali,an,* that is, "Hence those of the saints who by the power of the Spirit are full of God are inspired, and therefore all Scripture is called *qeo,pneustoj*, because the instruction is by divine inspiration." The idea of inspiration is therefore fixed. It is not to be arbitrarily determined. We must not interpret the word or the fact, according to our theories of the relation of God to the world, but according to the usage of antiquity, sacred and profane, and according to the doctrine which the sacred writers and the men of their generation are known to have entertained on the subject. According to all antiquity, an inspired man was one who was the organ of God in what he said, so that his words were the words of the god of which he was the organ. When, therefore, the sacred writers use the same words and forms of expression which the ancients used to convey that idea, they must in all honesty be assumed to mean the same thing.

Argument from the Meaning of the Word Prophet.

2. That this is the Scriptural idea of inspiration is further proved from the meaning of the word prophet. The sacred writers divide the Scriptures into the "law and the prophets." As the law was written by Moses, and as Moses was the greatest of the prophets, it follows that all the Old Testament was written by prophets. If, therefore, we can determine the Scriptural idea of a prophet, we shall thereby determine the character of their writings and the authority due to them. A prophet, then, in the Scriptural sense of the term, is a spokesman, one who speaks for another, in his name, and by his authority; so that it is not the spokesman but the person for whom he acts, who is responsible for the truth of what is said. In Exodus vii. 1, it is said, "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet," i. e., thy spokesman. This is explained by what is said in Exodus iv. 14-16, "Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. . . . Thou shalt speak unto him, and put words into his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be, even he shall be, to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God." (See Jeremiah xxxvi. 17, 18.) This determines definitely, what a prophet is. He is the mouth of God; one through whom God speaks to the people; so that what the prophet says God says. So when a prophet was consecrated, it was said, "Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." (Jer. i. 9; Is. li. 16.) That this is the Scriptural idea of a prophet is moreover evident from the formulas, constantly recurring, which relate to his duties and mission. He was the messenger of God; he spoke in the name of

God; the words, "Thus saith the Lord," were continually in his mouth. "The word of the Lord" is said to have come to this prophet and on that; "the Spirit came upon," "the power," or "hand" of God was upon him; all implying that the prophet was the organ of God, that what he said, he said in God's name and by his authority. It is true, therefore, as Philo¹⁴ says, *profh, thj ga, r i; dion ouvde. n avpofqe, ggetai avllo, tria de. pa, nta u`phcou/ntoj e`te, ron.*

This is precisely what the Apostle Peter teaches when he says (2 Peter i. 20, 21), "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men spake as they were moved (fero, menoi, borne along as a ship by the wind) by the Holy Ghost." Prophecy, i. e., what a prophet said, was not human, but divine. It was not the prophet's own interpretation of the mind and will of God. He spoke as the organ of the Holy Ghost.

What the Prophets said God said.

3. It is another decisive proof that the sacred writers were the organs of God in the sense above stated, that whatever they said the Spirit is declared to have said. Christ himself said that David by the Spirit called the Messiah Lord. (Matt. xxii. 43.) David in the 95th Psalm said, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart;" but the Apostle (Heb. iii. 7), says that these were the words of the Holy Ghost. Again, in ch. x. 15, the same Apostle says, "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord." Thus quoting the language of Jeremiah xxxi. 33, as the language of the Holy Ghost. In Acts iv. 25, the assembled Apostles said, "with one accord," "Lord thou art God. . . . Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage?" In Acts xxviii. 25, Paul said to the Jews, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers." It is in this way that Christ and his Apostles constantly refer to the Scriptures, showing beyond doubt that they believed and taught, that what the sacred writers said the Holy Ghost said.

Inspiration of the New Testament Writers.

This proof bears specially, it is true, only on the writings of the Old Testament. But no Christian puts the inspiration of the Old Testament above that of the New. The tendency, and we may even say the evidence, is directly the other way. If the Scriptures of the old economy were given by inspiration of God, much more were those writings which were penned under the dispensation of the Spirit. Besides, the inspiration of the Apostles is proved, (1.) From the fact that Christ promised them the Holy Spirit, who should bring all things to their remembrance, and render them infallible in teaching.

It is not you, He said, that speak, but the Spirit of my Father speaketh in you. He that heareth you heareth me. He forbade them to enter upon their office as teachers until they were endued with power from on high. (2) This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit descended upon the Apostles as a mighty rushing wind, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance (*dabat eloqui*, as the Vulgate more literally renders the words).

From this moment they were new men, with new views, with new spirit, and with new power and authority. The change was sudden. It was not a development. It was something altogether supernatural; as when God said, Let there be light, and there was light. Nothing can be more unreasonable than to ascribe this sudden transformation of the Apostles from narrow-minded, bigoted Jews, into enlightened, large-minded, catholic Christians, to mere natural causes. Their Jewish prejudices had resisted all the instructions and influence of Christ for three years, but gave way in a moment when the Spirit came upon them from on

high. (3.)

After the day of Pentecost the Apostles claimed to be the infallible organs of God in all their teachings. They required men to receive what they taught not as the word of man but as the word of God (1 Thess. ii. 13); then declared as Paul does (1 Cor. xiv. 37), that the things which they wrote were the commandments of the Lord. They made the salvation of men to depend on faith in the doctrines which they taught. Paul pronounces anathema even an angel from heaven who should preach any other gospel than that which he had taught. (Gal. i. 8.)

John says that whoever did not receive the testimony which he bore concerning Christ, made God a liar, because John's testimony was God's testimony. (1 John v. 10.) "He that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us." (iv. 6.) This assertion of infallibility, this claim for the divine authority of their teaching, is characteristic of the whole Bible. The sacred writers all, and everywhere, disclaim personal authority; they never rest the obligation to faith in their teachings, on their own knowledge or wisdom; they never rest it on the truth of what they taught as manifest to reason or as capable of being proved by argument. They speak as messengers, as witnesses, as organs. They declare that what they said God said, and, therefore, on his authority it was to be received and obeyed.

The Testimony of Paul.

The Corinthians objected to Paul's preaching that he did not attempt any rational or philosophical proof of the doctrines which he propounded; that his language and whole manner of discourse were not in accordance with rhetorical rules. He answers these objections, -- first, by saying that the doctrines which he taught were not the truths of reason, were not derived from the wisdom of men, but were matters of divine revelation; that he simply taught what God declared to be true; and secondly, that as to the manner of presenting these truths, he was the mere organ of the Spirit of God. In 1 Cor. ii. 7-13, he sets forth this whole subject in the clearest and most concise manner. The things which he taught, which he calls "the wisdom of God," "the things of the Spirit," i. e., the gospel, the system of doctrine taught in the Bible, he says, had never entered into the mind of man. God had revealed those truths by his Spirit; for the Spirit is the only competent source of such knowledge. "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." So much for the source of knowledge, and the ground on which the doctrines he taught were to be received. As to the second objection, which concerned his language and mode of presentation, he says, These things of the Spirit, thus revealed, we teach "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth; but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," pneumatikoi/j pneumatika. sugkri,nontej, combining spiritual with spiritual, i. e., clothing the truths of the Spirit in the words of the Spirit. There is neither in the Bible nor in the writings of men, a simpler or clearer statement of the doctrines of revelation and inspiration. Revelation is the act of communicating divine knowledge by the Spirit to the mind. Inspiration is the act of the same Spirit, controlling those who make the truth known to others. The thoughts, the truths made known, and the words in which they are recorded, are declared to be equally from the Spirit. This, from first to last, has been the doctrine of the Church, notwithstanding the endless diversity of speculations in which theologians have indulged on the subject. This then is the ground on which the sacred writers rested their claims. They were the mere organs of God. They were his messengers. Those who heard them, heard God; and those who refused to hear them, refused to hear God. (Matt. x. 40; John xiii. 20.)

4. This claim to infallibility on the part of the Apostles was duly authenticated, not only by the nature of the truths which they communicated, and by the power which those truths have ever exerted over the minds

and hearts of men, but also by the inward witness of the Spirit of which St. John speaks, when he says, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (1 John v. 10); "an unction from the Holy One." (1 John ii. 20.) It was confirmed also by miraculous gifts. As soon as the Apostles were endued with power from on high, they spake in "other tongues;" they healed the sick, restored the lame and the blind, "God also," as the Apostle says (Heb. ii. 4), "bearing them witness, both with signs, and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." And Paul tells the Corinthians that the signs of an Apostle had been wrought among them "in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." (2 Cor. xii. 12.) The mere working of miracles was not an evidence of a divine commission as a teacher. But when a man claims to be the organ of God, when he says that God speaks through him, then his working of miracles is the testimony of God to the validity of his claims. And such testimony God gave to the infallibility of the Apostles.

The above considerations are sufficient to show, that according to the Scriptures, inspired men were the organs, or mouth of God, in the sense that what they said and taught has the sanction and authority of God.

F. Inspiration extends equally to all Parts of Scripture.

This is the fourth element of the Church doctrine on this subject. It means, first, that all the books of Scripture are equally inspired. All alike are infallible in what they teach. And secondly, that inspiration extends to all the contents of these several books. It is not confined to moral and religious truths, but extends to the statements of facts, whether scientific, historical, or geographical. It is not confined to those facts the importance of which is obvious, or which are involved in matters of doctrine. It extends to everything which any sacred writer asserts to be true.

This is proved, (1) Because it is involved in, or follows as a necessary consequence from, the proposition that the sacred writers were the organs of God. If what they assert, God asserts, which, as has been shown, is the Scriptural idea of inspiration, their assertions must be free from error. (2.) Because our Lord expressly says, "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John x. 35), i. e., it cannot err. (3.) Because Christ and his Apostles refer to all parts of the Scriptures, or to the whole volume, as the word of God. They make no distinction as to the authority of the Law, the Prophets, or the Hagiographa. They quote the Pentateuch, the historical books, the Psalms, and the Prophets, as all and equally the word of God. (4.) Because Christ and the writers of the New Testament refer to all classes of facts recorded in the Old Testament as infallibly true. Not only doctrinal facts, such as those of the creation and probation of man; his apostasy; the covenant with Abraham; the giving the law upon Mount Sinai not only great historical facts, as the deluge, the deliverance of the people out of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, and the like but incidental circumstances, or facts of apparently minor importance, as e. g. that Satan tempted our first parents in the form of serpent; that Moses lifted up a serpent in the wilderness: that Elijah healed Naaman, the Syrian, and was sent to the widow in Sarepta; that David ate the shew-bread in the temple; and even that great stumbling-block, that Jonah was three days in the whale's belly, are all referred to by our Lord and his Apostles with the sublime simplicity and confidence with which they are received by little children. (5.) It lies in the very idea of the Bible, that God chose some men to write history; some to indite psalms; some to unfold the future; some to teach doctrines. All were equally his organs, and each was infallible in his own sphere. As the principle of vegetable life pervades the whole plant, the root, stem, and flower; as the life of the body belongs as much to the feet as to the head, so the Spirit of God pervades the whole Scripture, and is not more important than in other. Some members of the body are more in one part than in another; and some books of the Bible could be far better spared than others. There may be as great a

difference between St. John's Gospel and the Book of Chronicles as between a man's brain and his hair; nevertheless the life of the body is as truly in the hair as in the brain.

G. The Inspiration of the Scriptures extends to the Words.

1. This again is included in the infallibility which our Lord ascribes to the Scriptures. A mere human report or record of a divine revelation must of necessity be not only fallible, but more or less erroneous.

2. The thoughts are in the words. The two are inseparable. If the words, priest, sacrifice, ransom, expiation, propitiation, purification by blood, and the like, have no divine authority, then the doctrine which they embody has no such authority.

3. Christ and his Apostles argue from the very words of Scripture. Our Lord says that David by the Spirit called the Messiah Lord, i. e., David used that word. It was in the use of a particular word, that Christ said (John x. 35), that the Scriptures cannot be broken. "If he call them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken," etc. The use of that word, therefore, according to Christ's view of the Scripture, was determined by the Spirit of God. Paul, in Gal. iii. 16, lays stress on the fact, that in the promise made to Abraham, a word used is singular and not plural, "seed," "as of one," and not "seeds as of many." Constantly it is the very words of Scripture which are quoted as of divine authority.

4. The very form in which the doctrine of inspiration is taught in the Bible, assumes that the organs of God in the communication of his will were controlled by Him in the words which they used. "I have put my words in thy mouth." (Jer. i. 9.) "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." (Matt. x. 20.) They spake "as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts ii. 4.) "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. i. 21.) All these, and similar modes of expression with which the Scriptures abound, imply that the words uttered were the words of God. This, moreover, is the very idea of inspiration as understood by the ancient world. The words of the oracle were assumed to be the words of the divinity, and not those selected by the organ of communication. And this, too, as has been shown, was the idea attached to the gift of prophecy. The words of the prophet were the words of God, or he could not be God's spokesman and mouth. It has also been shown that in the most formally didactic passage in the whole Bible on this subject (1 Cor. ii. 10-13), the Apostle expressly asserts that the truths revealed by the Spirit, he communicated in words taught by the Spirit.

Plenary Inspiration.

The view presented above is known as the doctrine of plenary inspiration. Plenary is opposed to partial. The Church doctrine denies that inspiration is confined to parts of the Bible; and affirms that it applies to all the books of the sacred canon. It denies that the sacred writers were merely partially inspired; it asserts that they were fully inspired as to all that they teach, whether of doctrine or fact. This of course does not imply that the sacred writers were infallible except for the special purpose for which they were employed. They were not imbued with plenary knowledge. As to all matters of science, philosophy, and history, they stood on the same level with their contemporaries. They were infallible only as teachers, and when acting as the spokesmen of God. Their inspiration no more made them astronomers than it made them agriculturists. Isaiah was infallible in his predictions, although he shared with his countrymen the views then prevalent as to the mechanism of the universe. Paul could not err in anything he taught, although he could not recollect how many persons he had baptized in Corinth. The sacred writers also, doubtless, differed as to insight into the truths which they taught. The Apostle Peter intimates that the prophets searched diligently into the meaning of their own predictions. When David said God had put "all things"

under the feet of man, he probably little thought that "all things" meant the whole universe (Heb. iv. 8.) And Moses, when he recorded the promise that childless Abraham was to be the father "of many nations," little thought that it meant the whole world (Rom. iv. 13). Nor does the Scriptural doctrine on this subject imply that the sacred writers were free from errors in conduct. Their infallibility did not arise from their holiness, nor did inspiration render them holy. Balaam was inspired, and Saul was among the prophets. David committed many crimes, although inspired to write psalms. Peter erred in conduct at Antioch; but this does not prove that he erred in teaching. The influence which preserved him from mistakes in teaching was not designed to preserve him from mistakes in conduct.

H. General Considerations in Support of the Doctrine.

On this point little need be said. If the questions, What is the Scriptural doctrine concerning inspiration? and, What is the true doctrine? be considered different, then after showing what the Scriptures teach on the subject, it would be necessary to prove that what they teach is true. This, however, is not the position of the Christian theologian. It is his business to set forth what the Bible teaches. If the sacred writers assert that they are the organs of God; that what they taught He taught through them; that they spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, so that what they said the Holy Spirit said, then, if we believe their divine mission, we must believe what they teach as to the nature of the influence under which they spoke and wrote. This is the reason why in the earlier period of the Church there was no separate discussion of the doctrine of inspiration. That was regarded as involved in the divine origin of the Scriptures. If they are a revelation from God, they must be received and obeyed; but they cannot be thus received without attributing to them divine authority, and they can not have such authority without being infallible in all they teach.

The organic unity of the Scriptures proves them to be the product of one mind. They are not only so united that we cannot believe one part without believing the whole; we cannot believe the New Testament without believing the Old; we cannot believe the Prophets without believing the Law; we cannot believe Christ without believing his Apostles; but besides all this they present the regular development, carried on through centuries and millenniums, of the great original promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." This development was conducted by some forty independent writers, many of whom understood very little of the plan they were unfolding, but each contributed his part to the progress and completion of the whole.

If the Bible be the work of one mind, that mind must be the mind of God. He only knows the end from the beginning. He only could know what the Bible reveals. No one, says the Apostle, knows the things of God but the Spirit of God. He only could reveal the nature, the thoughts, and purposes of God. He only could tell whether sin can be pardoned. No one knows the Son but the Father. The revelation of the person and work of Christ is as clearly the work of God as are the heavens in all their majesty and glory.

Besides, we have the witness in ourselves. We find that the truths revealed in the Bible have the same adaptation to our souls that the atmosphere has to our bodies. The body cannot live without air, which it receives and appropriates instinctively, with full confidence in its adaptation to the end designed. In like manner the soul receives and appropriates the truths of Scripture as the atmosphere in which alone it can breathe and live. Thus in receiving the Bible as true, we necessarily receive it as divine. In believing it as a supernatural revelation, we believe its plenary inspiration.

This doctrine involves nothing out of analogy with the ordinary operations of God. We believe that He is everywhere present in the material world, and controls the operations of natural causes. We know that He causes the grass to grow, and gives rain and fruitful seasons. We believe that He exercises a like control over the minds of men, turning them as the rivers of water are turned. All religion, natural and revealed, is founded on the assumption of this providential government of God. Besides this, we believe in the gracious operations of his Spirit, by which He works in the hearts of his people to will and to do; we believe that faith, repentance, and holy living are due to the ever-present influence of the Holy Spirit. If, then, this wonder-working God everywhere operates in nature and in grace, why should it be deemed incredible that holy men should speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, so that they should say just what He would have them say, so that their words should be his words.

After all Christ is the great object of the Christian's faith. We believe him and we believe everything else on his authority. He hands us the Old Testament and tells us that it is the Word of God; that its authors spoke by the Spirit; that the Scriptures cannot be broken. And we believe on his testimony. His testimony to his Apostles is no less explicit, although given in a different way. He promised to give them a mouth and a wisdom which their adversaries could not gainsay or resist. He told them to take no thought what they should say, "For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say." (Luke xii. 12.) "It is not ye that speak but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." He said to them "he that receiveth you receiveth me"; and He prayed for those who should believe on Him through their word. We believe the Scriptures, therefore, because Christ declares them to be the Word of God. Heaven and earth may pass away, but his word cannot pass away.

I. Objections.

A large class of the objections to the doctrine of inspiration, which for many minds are the most effective, arise from the rejection of one or other of the presumptions specified on a preceding page. If a man denies the existence of a personal, extramundane God, he must deny the doctrine of inspiration, but it is not necessary in order to prove that doctrine that we should first prove the being of God. If he denies that God exerts any direct efficiency in the government of the world, and holds that everything is the product of fixed laws, he cannot believe what the Scriptures teach of inspiration. If the supernatural be impossible, inspiration is impossible. It will be found that most of the objections, especially those of recent date, are founded on unscriptural views of the relation of God to the world, or on the peculiar philosophical views of the objectors as to the nature of man or of his free agency.

A still larger class of objections is founded on misconceptions of the doctrine. Such objections are answered by the correct statement of what the Church believes on the subject. Even a man so distinguished for knowledge and ability as Coleridge, speaks with contempt of what he regards as the common theory of inspiration, when he utterly misunderstands the real doctrine which he opposes. He says: "All the miracles which the legends of monk or rabbi contain, can scarcely be put in competition, on the score of complication, inexplicableness, the absence of all intelligible use or purpose, and of circuitous self-frustration, with those that must be assumed by the maintainers of this doctrine, in order to give effect to the series of miracles by which all the nominal composers of the Hebrew nation before the time of Ezra, of whom there are any remains, were successively transformed into automaton composers,"¹⁵ etc. But if the Church doctrine of inspiration no more assumes that the sacred writers "were transformed into automaton composers," than that every believer is thus transformed in whom God "works to will and to do," then all such objections amount to nothing. If God, without interfering with a man's free agency, can make it infallibly certain that he will repent and believe, He can render it certain that he will not err in

teaching. It is in vain to profess to hold the common doctrine of Theism, and yet assert that God cannot control rational creatures without turning them into machines.

Discrepancies and Errors.

But although the theologian may rightfully dismiss all objections founded in the denial of the common principles of natural and revealed religion, there are others which cannot be thus summarily disposed of. The most obvious of these is, that the sacred writers contradict each other, and that they teach error. It is, of course, useless to contend that the sacred writers were infallible, if in point of fact they err. Our views of inspiration must be determined by the phenomena of the Bible as well as from its didactic statements. If in fact the sacred writers retain each his own style and mode of thought, then we must renounce any theory which assumes that inspiration obliterates or suppresses all individual peculiarities. If the Scriptures abound in contradictions and errors, then it is vain to contend that they were written under an influence which precludes all error. The question, therefore, is a question of fact. Do the sacred writers contradict each other? Do the Scriptures teach what from any source can be proved not to be true? The question is not whether the views of the sacred writers were incorrect, but whether they taught error? For example, it is not the question Whether they thought that the earth is the centre of our system? but, Did they teach that it is?

The objection under consideration, namely, that the Bible contains errors, divides itself into two. The first, that the sacred writers contradict themselves, or one the other. The second, that the Bible teaches what is inconsistent with the facts of history or science.

As to the former of these objections, it would require, not a volume, but volumes to discuss all the cases of alleged discrepancies. All that can be expected here is a few general remarks: (1.) These apparent discrepancies, although numerous, are for the most part trivial; relating in most cases to numbers or dates. (2.) The great majority of them are only apparent, and yield to careful examination. (3.) Many of them may fairly be ascribed to errors of transcribers. (4.) The marvel and the miracle is that there are so few of any real importance. Considering that the different books of the Bible were written not only by different authors, but by men of all degrees of culture, living in the course of fifteen hundred or two thousand years, it is altogether unaccountable that they should agree perfectly, on any other hypothesis than that the writers were under the guidance of the Spirit of God. In this respect, as in all others, the Bible stands alone. It is enough to impress any mind with awe, when it contemplates the Sacred Scriptures filled with the highest truths, speaking with authority in the name of God, and so miraculously free from the soiling touch of human fingers. The errors in matters of fact which skeptics search out bear no proportion to the whole. No sane man would deny that the Parthenon was built of marble, even if here and there a speck of sandstone should be detected in its structure. Not less unreasonable is it to deny the inspiration of such a book as the Bible, because one sacred writer says that on a given occasion twenty-four thousand, and another says that twenty-three thousand, men were slain. Surely a Christian may be allowed to tread such objections under his feet.

Admitting that the Scriptures do contain, in a few instances, discrepancies which with our present means of knowledge, we are unable satisfactorily to explain, they furnish no rational ground for denying their infallibility. "The Scripture cannot be broken." (John x. 35.) This is the whole doctrine of plenary inspiration, taught by the lips of Christ himself. The universe teems with evidences of design, so manifold, so diverse, so wonderful, as to overwhelm the mind with the conviction that it has had an intelligent author. Yet here and there isolated cases of monstrosity appear. It is irrational, because we cannot account for such cases,

to deny that the universe is the product of intelligence. So the Christian need not renounce his faith in the plenary inspiration of the Bible, although there may be some things about it in its present state which he cannot account for.

Historical and Scientific Objections.

The second great objection to the plenary inspiration of the Scripture is that it teaches what is inconsistent with historical and scientific truth.

Here again it is to be remarked, (1.) That we must distinguish between what the sacred writers themselves thought or believed, and what they teach. They may have believed that the sun moves round the earth, but they do not so teach. (2.) The language of the Bible is the language of common life; and the language of common life is founded on apparent, and not upon scientific truth. It would be ridiculous to refuse to speak of the sun rising and setting, because we know that it is not a satellite of our planet. (3.) There is a great distinction between theories and facts. Theories are of men. Facts are of God. The Bible often contradicts the former, never the latter. (4.) There is also a distinction to be made between the Bible and our interpretation. The latter may come into competition with settled facts; and then it must yield. Science has in many things taught the Church how to understand the Scriptures. The Bible was for ages understood and explained according to the Ptolemaic system of the universe; it is now explained without doing the least violence to its language, according to the Copernican system. Christians have commonly believed that the earth has existed only a few thousands of years. If geologists finally prove that it has existed for myriads of ages, it will be found that the first chapter of Genesis is in full accord with the facts, and that the last results of science are embodied on the first page of the Bible. It may cost the Church a severe struggle to give up one interpretation and adopt another, as it did in the seventeenth century, but no real evil need be apprehended. The Bible has stood, and still stands in the presence of the whole scientific world with its claims unshaken. Men hostile or indifferent to its truths may, on insufficient grounds, or because of their personal opinions, reject its authority; but, even in the judgment of the greatest authorities in science, its teachings cannot fairly be impeached.

It is impossible duly to estimate the importance of this subject. If the Bible be the word of God, all the great questions which for ages have agitated the minds of men are settled with infallible certainty. Human reason has never been able to answer to its own satisfaction, or to the assurance of others, the vital questions, What is God? What is man? What lies beyond the grave? If there be a future state of being, what is it? and How may future blessedness be secured? Without the Bible, we are, on all these subjects, in utter darkness. How endless and unsatisfying have been the answers to the greatest of all questions, What is God? The whole Eastern world answers by saying, "That He is the unconscious ground of being." The Greeks gave the same answer for philosophers, and made all nature God for the people. The moderns have reached no higher doctrine. Fichte says the subjective Ego is God. According to Schelling. God is the eternal movement of the universe, subject becoming object, object becoming subject, the infinite becoming finite, and the finite infinite. Hegel says, Thought is God. Cousin combines all the German answers to form his own. Coleridge refers us to Schelling for an answer to the question, What is God? Carlyle makes force God. A Christian child says: "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." Men and angels veil their faces in the presence of that answer. It is the highest, greatest, and most fruitful truth ever embodied in human language. Without the Bible, we are without God and without hope. The present is a burden, and the future a dread.

§3. Adverse Theories.

Although substantial unanimity as to the doctrine of inspiration has prevailed among the great historical Churches of Christendom, yet there has been no little diversity of opinion among theologians and philosophical writers. The theories are too numerous to be examined in detail. They may, perhaps, be advantageously referred to the following classes.

A. Naturalistic Doctrine.

There is a large class of writers who deny any supernatural agency in the affairs of men. This general class includes writers who differ essentially in their views.

First. There are those who, although Theists, hold the mechanical theory of the universe. That is, they hold that God having created the world, including all that it contains, organic and inorganic, rational and irrational, and having endowed matter with its properties and minds with their attributes, leaves it to itself. Just as a ship, when launched and equipped, is left to the winds and to its crew. This theory precludes the possibility not only of all miracles, prophecy, and supernatural revelation, but even of all providential government, whether general or special. Those who adopt this view of the relation of God to the world, must regard the Bible from beginning to end as a purely human production. They may rank it as the highest, or as among the lowest of the literary works of men; there is no possibility of its being inspired in any authorized sense of that word.

Secondly. There are those who do not so entirely banish God from his works. They admit that He is everywhere present, and everywhere active; that his providential efficiency and control are exercised in the occurrence of all events. But they maintain that He always acts according to fixed laws; and always in connection and cooperation with second causes. According to this theory also, all miracles and all prophecy, properly speaking, are excluded. A revelation is admitted, or at least, is possible. But it is merely providential. It consists in such an ordering of circumstances, and such a combination of influences as to secure the elevation of certain men to a higher level of religious knowledge than that attained by others. They may also, in a sense, be said to be inspired in so far as that inward, subjective state is purer, and more devout, as well as more intelligent than that of ordinary men. There is no specific difference, however, according to this theory, between inspired and uninspired men. It is only a matter of degrees. One is more and another less purified and enlightened. This theory also makes the Bible a purely human production. It confines revelation to the sphere of human knowledge. No possible degree of culture or development can get anything more than human out of man. According to the Scriptures, and to the faith of the Church, the Bible is a revelation of the things of God; of his thoughts and purposes. But who knoweth the things of God, asks the Apostle, but the Spirit of God? The things which the Bible purports to make known, are precisely those things which lie beyond the ken of the human mind. This theory, therefore, for bread gives us a stone; for the thoughts of God, the thoughts of man.

Schleiermacher's Theory.

Thirdly. There is a theory far more pretentious and philosophical, and which of late years has widely prevailed, which in reality differs very little from the preceding. It agrees with it in the main point in that it denies anything supernatural in the origin or composition of the Bible. Schleiermacher, the author of this theory, was addicted to a philosophy which precluded all intervention of the immediate efficiency of God in the world. He admits, however, of two exceptions: the creation of man, and the constitution of the person of Christ. There was a supernatural intervention in the origin of our race, and in the manifestation of Christ.

All else in the history of the world is natural. Of course there is nothing supernatural in the Bible; nothing in the Old Testament which the Adamic nature was not adequate to produce; and nothing in the New Testament, which Christianity, the life of the Church, a life common to all believers, is not sufficient to account for.

Religion consists in feeling, and specifically in a feeling or absolute dependence (or an absolute feeling of dependence) i.e., the consciousness that the finite is nothing in the presence of the Infinite, -- the individual in the presence of the universal. This consciousness involves the unity of the one and all, of God and man. "This system," says Dr. Ulmann, one of its more moderate and effective advocates, "is not absolutely new. We find it in another form in ancient Mysticism, especially in the German Mystics of the Middle Ages. Within them, too, the ground and central point of Christianity is the oneness of Deity and humanity effected through the incarnation of God, and deification of man."¹⁶

Christianity, therefore, is not a system of doctrine; it is not, subjectively considered, a form of knowledge. It is a life. It is the life of Christ. Ulmann again says explicitly: "The life of Christ is Christianity."¹⁷ God in becoming man did not take upon himself, "a true body and a reasonable soul," but generic humanity; i.e., humanity as a generic life. The effect of the incarnation was to unite the human and divine as one life. And this life passes over to the Church precisely as the life of Adam passed over to his descendants, by a process of natural development. And this life is Christianity. Participation of this divine-human life makes a man a Christian.

The Christian revelation consists in the providential dispensations connected within the appearance of Christ on the earth. The effect of these dispensations and events was the elevation of the religious consciousness of the men of that generation, and specially of those who came most directly under the influence of Christ. This subjective state, this excitement and elevation of their religious life, gave them intuitions of religious truths, "eternal verities." These intuitions were by the logical understanding clothed in the form of doctrines. This, however, was a gradual process as it was effected only by the Church-life, i.e., by the working of the new divine-human life in the body of believers.¹⁸ Mr. Morell in expounding this theory, says:¹⁹ "The essential germ of the religious life is concentrated in the absolute feeling of dependence, -- a feeling which implies nothing abject, but, on the contrary, a high and hallowed sense of our being inseparably related to Deity." On the preceding page he had said, "Let the subject become as nothing -- not, indeed, from its intrinsic insignificance or incapacity of moral action, but by virtue of the infinity of the object to which it stands consciously opposed; and the feeling of dependence must become absolute; for all finite power is as nothing in relation to the Infinite."

Christianity, as just stated, is the life of Christ, his human life, which is also divine, and is communicated to us as the life of Adam was communicated to his descendants. Morell, rather more in accordance with English modes of thought, says,²⁰ "Christianity, like every other religion, consists essentially in a state of man's inner consciousness, which develops itself into a system of thought and activity only in a community of awakened minds; and it was inevitable, therefore, that such a state of consciousness should require time, and intercourse, and mutual sympathy, before it could become moulded into a decided and distinctive form." He represents the Apostles as often meeting together and deliberating on essential points, correcting each other's views; and, after years of such fellowship, Christianity was at last brought into form.

Revelation is declared to be a communication of truth to our intuitional consciousness. The outward world is a revelation to our sense-intuitions; beauty is a revelation to our esthetic intuitions; and "eternal verities,"

when intuitively perceived, are said to be revealed; and this intuition is brought about by whatever purifies and exalts our religious feelings. "Revelation," says Morell, "is a process of the intuitional consciousness, gazing upon eternal verities; while theology is the reflection of the understanding upon those vital intuitions, so as to reduce them to a logical and scientific expression."²¹

Inspiration is the inward state of mind which enables us to apprehend the truth. "Revelation and inspiration," says Morell, "indicate one united process, the result of which upon the human mind is, to produce a state of spiritual intuition, whose phenomena are so extraordinary, that we at once separate the agency by which they are produced from any of the ordinary principles of human development. And yet this agency is applied in perfect consistency with the laws and natural operations of our spiritual nature. Inspiration does not imply anything generically new in the actual processes of the human mind; it does not involve any form of intelligence essentially different from what we already possess; it indicates rather the elevation of the religious consciousness, and with it, of course, the power of spiritual vision, to a degree of intensity peculiar to the individuals thus highly favoured of God."²² The only difference, therefore, between the Apostles and ordinary Christians is as to their relative holiness.

According to this theory there is no specific difference between genius and inspiration. The difference is simply in the objects apprehended and the causes of the inward excitement to which the apprehension is due. "Genius," says Morell, "consists in the possession of a remarkable power of intuition with reference to some particular object, a power which arises from the inward nature of a man being brought into unusual harmony with that object in its reality and its operations."²³ This is precisely his account of inspiration. "Let," he says, "there be a due purification of the moral nature, -- a perfect harmony of the spiritual being with the mind of God, -- a removal of all inward disturbances from the heart, and what is to prevent or disturb this immediate intuition of divine things."²⁴

This theory of inspiration, while retaining its essential elements, is variously modified. With those who believe with Schleiermacher, that man "is the form in which God comes to conscious existence on our earth," it has one form. With Realists who define man to be "the manifestation of generic humanity in connection with a given corporeal organization;" and who believe that it was generic humanity which Christ took and united in one life with his divine nature, which life is communicated to the Church as his body, and thereby to all its members; it takes a somewhat different form. With those again

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