

III. THE DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION CONSIDERED ON ITS DIVINE AND ON ITS HUMAN SIDE.

It was common at one time, without regard to the question as to the mode of inspiration, to distinguish between different *kinds*, if not degrees, of inspiration. Several of these gradations or species used to be pointed out, such as the inspiration of direction and superintendence, the inspiration of suggestion, and the inspiration of elevation or exaltation. To the extent that these schemes admitted, or gave countenance to, the notion of a graduated scale, they were in conflict with the only orthodox doctrine, viz., that of a theopneustia or plenary, and, as Gausson would add, universal inspiration of God's word. Theodore of Mopsuestia, followed by Michaelis, in his Introduction, denied that the inspiration was co extensive with the limits of the Bible, holding that a part was wholly divine and the remainder not inspired at all, and merely human. Archdeacon Hare has been understood to maintain the infallible and even verbal inspiration of the revelations of spiritual truth contained in the Scriptures, but not of the other portions of the word. Twisten in Germany, and Pye Smith, Dick and others in Great Britain, held that all parts of the Bible were divinely but not equally (*nicht gleichmaessig*)¹ inspired. Inspiration, therefore, might be conceded to be universal, but was unequal, and often allowed imperfections and errors to creep in unobserved. Agreeably to this view, the degree of inspiration varied according to the character of the passage and the nature of the subject. Closely connected with this view was the scheme which involved the employment of the distinctions just referred to between different kinds or degrees of inspiration in a heterodox sense. Some of these have been represented as defining the inspiration of superintendence as that divine influence by which the writers "were preserved from serious error in all that relates to

¹ See *De Wette, Lehrbuch Anmerk. Twisten, Vorlesungen über die Dogmatik*, tome 1, p. 424, etc.; and Michaelis, *Introduction to the New Testament*, all in *Gausson*, p. 27.

faith and life;" the inspiration of elevation as the one which raised the minds and souls of the men of God into the purest and sublimest regions of truth, and thus "indirectly stamped the same characters of holiness and grandeur on their words"; the inspiration of direction as the one under the more powerful influence of which the sacred writers were subject to God's guidance, both as respects what they said and what they abstained from saying; and the inspiration of suggestion, as the one through which all the thoughts, and even the words, were divinely controlled "by means of a still more energetic and direct operation of his Spirit."¹ The Swiss theologian whose name has been once or twice repeated in this article appears to have been ignorant of any other employment of these terms of distinction, and from his view was amply justified in condemning them in wholesale. He was correct in saying that these distinguishing terms were chiefly current in England, from which country, it may be additionally stated, they passed over to America. But they have been widely employed, too, in a strictly orthodox acceptance. Thus the inspiration of superintendence and direction have usually been identified and made to refer to the divine restraint from error; the inspiration of suggestion has been so defined as to limit its reference to truths beyond the range of natural information; and the inspiration of elevation, or exaltation, to the superhuman toning up of the style, especially in the case of the prophets, and to the remarkable exemption of the writers, when writing, from certain human and ordinarily inevitable frailties.

Where the inspiration of direction is distinguished from that of superintendence, the first of these terms, though not identified with the second, would be involved in it, as meaning the divine impulse urging them on to write at all, and enabling them to select from the sum total of their knowledge just what God intended to be conveyed by their lips or by their pens. On this view the inspiration of elevation applies to the manner, not the matter, of the sacred propositions, and differs essentially, but not repugnantly, from the technical inspiration of infallibility, whereas the inspiration of superintendence denotes what we now call

¹ *Gaussen*, pp. 27, 28.

“inspiration,” and the inspiration of suggestion what we have somewhat recently learned to denominate “revelation.” This far more vital and stringently indispensable, as well as truly scientific, distinction between *inspiration* and *revelation* has, to a great extent, superseded all the others. There is, it is true, a certain propriety and convenience in the descriptive phrase, “the inspiration of exaltation.” This one phrase, then, may well be retained, even though the other and analogous phrases should have to be abandoned. It serves us in good stead in our attempts to explain the unimpassioned and judicial style of the four accounts of the crucifixion, and has also been made to account for the unutterable grandeur of the language attributed to the three “uninspired” friends of Job, no less than for the ecstatic glow of Jacob and Balaam, and what Burns, in one of his immortal lines, has described as “rapt Isaiah’s sacred fire.” By far the most reasonable view is that the style of Job’s friends is simply that of the “inspired” author of the book, who gives, in a garb of lofty and profound dramatic poetry, yet infallibly, the substance rather than the words of the historic dialogues.

The need for the use of these precarious distinctions we have already intimated is to a great degree avoided by the more exact and far more important distinction between inspiration and revelation. Upon this view, the term *revelation* denotes the supernatural operation of God in imparting truth, otherwise unknowable, to the minds of his human instruments, or to any minds; whilst *inspiration* is the supernatural operation of God fitting the subject of it to be his divinely accredited and infallible spokesman to others.

By revelation in the highest sense of the word is meant, not only divine, but supernatural revelation; by inspiration, not only divine, but supernatural inspiration. There is such a thing as a *revelation*, and even a revelation from God, which is merely natural; as for example, in the divine works of nature and providence. We sometimes employ the term in a still lower acceptance. We say of this or that discovery, no matter how ordinary, that it was “a revelation” to us. So, too, there is such a thing as an *inspiration* which is not supernatural, but natural. Thus we

not only say, and say correctly, that Homer or Shakspeare wrote from the "inspiration" of his own genius, but also that every good thought and wish is "inspired" by God.

We address the Most High in our hymnology as the "inspirer and hearer of prayer." Nay, we use the term in a lower sense still. When Elihu declares that "the inspiration of God" giveth man understanding, his reference would appear to be to the original inbreathing of intelligence into the human soul. When we say that a certain organ, or article, was inspired by Bismarck, we only mean to say that Bismarck dictated its ideas or sentiments. *Inspiration* in the technical sense must, therefore, be distinguished carefully, not only from the rhetorical *afflatus* of the poets, but also from *illumination*, or the enlightening influence of the Spirit in the hearts of all believers, and therefore inseparable from sanctification; and *revelation* in the technical sense must be distinguished carefully from the conveyance of knowledge by ordinary means and in purely natural ways.

There may be, and there is, such a thing as *illumination* without either revelation or inspiration. All believers have as such been illuminated; but all believers have not received "revelations," nor have all believers been inspired. There may be revelation without either inspiration or illumination; for example, the great body of the people of Israel at Sinai, and of the contemporaries and eye-witnesses and auditors of Christ and the apostles. There may be revelation and inspiration without illumination; as is the case of Balaam and Caiaphas. There might be inspiration without either revelation or illumination. On the assumption that Solomon wrote the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and that he was unregenerate, which many hold to have been the case, the narrative portions of these books would seem to afford an instance in point. There may be revelation without inspiration; as witness Paul's "visions and revelations" from the Lord, when he heard unspeakable words which he was not permitted to utter. There may be inspiration without revelation; as witness the historical statements in Luke's Gospel, and in the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, and all the other purely narrative portions of Holy Scripture.

In regard of the sacred volume it is proper and necessary, not only to affirm that all of it was *inspired*, but also that all of it was *revealed*; and we do affirm this when we declare that the whole Bible is a revelation from God. We do not, however, mean when we so speak to employ the term "revelation" in the narrow and technical sense as distinct from inspiration, but in the broad and popular acceptance of it, which covers the whole supernatural work and product of Almighty God, as evinced or embodied in his word. It is well to bear in mind also that, when we say "the whole Bible is a revelation from God," or "God's revealed will," we then have reference simply to its divine source and authority, not to the method by which its subject-matter was conveyed as truth to the minds of the inspired writers. In point of fact the subject-matter of the knowledge which they were inspired to impart to us came to them, as it would appear, by two very different channels—the one natural, the other supernatural. Much of the truth God instructed them to convey to us by infallible inspiration they knew at any rate themselves, and through the exercise of their own natural unaided faculties. Much of it, again, and that the most important part of it, they could never have known except as specially and supernaturally "taught of God."

The absolute necessity of a proper revelation from heaven—a revelation even in the strict exclusive sense—is thus seen to be obvious. Much of the truth contained in the Bible relates to matters beyond the reach of our faculties and organs. The gospel itself is defined as τὸ μυστήριον τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν, νυνὶ δὲ ἐφανερώθη τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ. The *promulgation*, too, of this, as of all other truth, required that the writers should be inspired.

But much, again, of the truth contained in the Bible was not only within the reach of our unassisted powers, but was actually known; *i. e.*, by a limited circle of witnesses. What was necessary here was simply the divine certification, extension and perpetuation of the knowledge already possessed by the few for that purpose.

We cannot but think that Bannerman and Lee were engaged in what was to a considerable extent a logomachy upon this point.

Bannerman contends that the whole subject-matter of the Bible, even what was already known to the inspired penmen through the mere exercise of their senses and other unaided powers, was supernaturally confirmed to them by divine revelation, and argues ingeniously from the conceded duplication and corroboration of natural by revealed religion. In this particular we opine that this stout defender of the faith in his praiseworthy endeavor to stand upright has leaned backwards. To change the figure, he appears to us to be *plus royaliste que le roi*; that is to say, if he means anything more than is involved in the statement that the whole subject-matter of the Bible is not only alike infallibly true, but is also alike God's infallible *message to us*. This statement covers the whole ground, and obviates the awkward necessity of making the plainest and most familiar history a revelation *in the same sense* with the doctrinal and prophetic portions of the sacred canon. The statement just referred to would have been perfectly acceptable to Dr. Lee, and is indeed carefully embodied in his definition of inspiration. Part of what was embraced by Dr. Bannerman under the term "revelation," and is essential, as he justly held, to a full account of the matter, is fully provided for in Dr. Lee's admirable treatise under the term "inspiration." Viewed in this light the debate is little more than a question about words, and the two stalwart champions occupy positions as regards this point resembling those of the two knights, one of whom swore that the shield was of silver, and the other that it was of gold, when the fact was that it was both gold and silver—silver on one side and gold on the other. Bannerman has notwithstanding been perhaps the first to point out the inadequacy of that definition of plenary inspiration which makes it to be simply the supernatural influence and product which rendered certain men and their sayings and writings "infallible." The definition, to be complete as well as sound, must read, "The infallible *spokesmen of God*."

The author of the Scottish disquisition is also entitled to the high distinction of having grasped more strongly and tenaciously than any of his predecessors the all-important fact, that the fundamental conception underlying this whole subject is that of the sender of a message, the messenger who conveys it, and the mes-

sage thus sent. The Bible contemplated in this fundamental aspect is, whether merely in a broad or also in a narrower sense, God's infallible message to mankind. Lee would not have shrunk from admitting the substantial truth of this averment. There are in reality only two assertions that are indispensable to a sound doctrine of inspiration. They are these, first, that the whole Bible is, and not merely contains, God's message to man; and second, that that message is throughout infallibly true. If the writers might err in any, even the smallest particular, it is self-evident that they were only fallible.

Now, by a slight change in Bannerman's impressive illustration of the human message-sender and the errand-boy, light may be thrown on the connection between inspiration and revelation.

Let us suppose that a messenger-boy is summoned in one of the New York telegraph offices, and instructed to deliver a given message to a certain gentleman living in a distant street. Let us further suppose that he is allowed to write it down in the way that suits him best, and that all pains are taken to prevent him from making the slightest mistake. That may serve to illustrate the connection between doctrinal or prophetic revelation on the one hand, and an infallible inspiration on the other. But now let us vary the supposition, and try to imagine a different case. The scene is again laid in the New York telegraph office, and the same or similar persons are before us. But suppose the messenger-boy has been waiting for his turn, and has happened to overhear a piece of news, and is then interrogated as to whether he understood, remembers, and can himself report it accurately to another, and upon the exact ascertainment that he can write it down without mistake, is instructed to run on the errand and deliver the message, as in the former case. Here it is manifest the source and authority of the message are in no way affected by the circumstance that the channel through which the messenger-boy received his information is different in the second case from what it was in the first. This may serve to illustrate the connection between an infallible inspiration and that part of the message of the sacred writers which, in so far as it is regarded merely as a part of their acquired knowledge, came into their possession, not in an

extraordinary and supernatural, but in a natural and ordinary way. The signature, it will be observed, of the telegraph operator makes the errand-boy's message the operator's own, no matter whether the boy derived his knowledge of the facts to be reported from the operator himself, or in the uncircumscribed freedom of his own senses and mental faculties from some third party. So the whole message of the Bible is amply authenticated as addressed to us by God, and as being God's infallible truth, by the signature and seal that are everywhere upon it of God's own undeniable authorship and direction.

Says Dr. William Lee, late Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, Dublin, "In the combination of the two elements thus cooperating, viz., the actuation by the Spirit of God, and the distinct, but subordinate agency of man, consists the 'dynamical' theory of inspiration. According to this theory the Holy Ghost employs man's faculties in conformity with their natural laws, at the same time animating, guiding, moulding them so as to accomplish the divine purpose, just as in nature the principle of life when annexed to certain portions of matter exhibits its vital energy in accordance with the conditions which that nature imposes, while it governs and directs at the same time the organism with which it is combined. We must, therefore, look upon inspiration as a divine power, acting not only *on*, but *through* man. We must not regard the sacred penmen, on the one hand, as passive machines, yielding to an external mechanical force; such a view takes in merely the *objective* side of inspiration; on the other hand, if we dwell solely on the *subjective* phase of this influence, we lose sight of the living connection of the writer with God. Were this latter conception correct, the authors of Scripture, following the impulse of their own genius, and in accordance with their own judgment, proceeded in the natural course of things to develop new inferences from the germ of truth implanted within them; and hence, as some have argued, we cannot accept all the conclusions at which they have arrived as either infallible or authoritative. The true theory, as it recoils from any such negation of the divine majesty of the Bible, so it equally ignores the defective estimate of the opposite scheme. The human element instead of being suppressed

becomes an integral part of the agency employed, moulded, it is true, and guided, and brought into action by the coöperation of the Spirit, but not the less really on that account participating in the result produced. Nay, more, the peculiar type of each writer's nature was even essential to the due reception of that particular phase of truth presented by his statements; his share in the great work was apportioned to the order of his intellect and the class of his emotions, while his characteristic form of expression was absolutely requisite for the adequate and complete conveyance of his divine message. Without the moving power man could not have grasped the divine communications; without the living instrument these communications could not have received fitting expression. The Bible, it has been well observed,¹ is authoritative, for it is the voice of God; it is intelligible, for it is in the language of men."²

The distinctions already laid down relieve the matter of many difficulties. The German heresy on this subject, as advocated by such men as Schleiermacher, and in England and this country by such men as Morell and Professor Ladd, confound essentially different things. If, as has been shown, inspiration and revelation are not only wholly distinct, but are actually separable in experience, then any theory of inspiration which resolves it into a form of revelation must be false. In like manner, if inspiration and illumination are equally distinct and separable, then any theory of inspiration which resolves it into a form of illumination or sanctification must be false. If, too, the inspiration of literary or any other form of mere genius is distinct from the inspiration of the sacred penmen, it follows, as well as from the preceding statement, that any theory which resolves inspiration into a unique and extraordinary, but merely natural, elevation of the human faculties, *e. g.*, of the intuitional consciousness (Morell's "religious consciousness") must be false. And more comprehensively, if all these distinctions are just, then any theory which resolves inspiration into revelation conjoined with illumination, or revelation conjoined with the glow of poetic afflatus, or revelation conjoined with illumination and genius, or illumination conjoined with an

¹ By Bishop Westcott.

² Lee on *Inspiration*, pp. 143, 144.

extraordinary degree of natural insight and poetic or eloquent fervor, must be false.

Inspiration cannot be a mere form of revelation, for we have seen that there may be inspiration where there is no revelation. Inspiration cannot be a mere form of illumination, for we have seen that there may be inspiration where there is no illumination. Inspiration cannot be a mere form of natural genius raised to an abnormal pitch, for not only do we have instances of inspiration where there is a total absence of poetic glow or vatic rapture, but we have one instance of undoubted inspiration where the astute dictum of a worldly politician was by his own inspiration turned into a different and spiritual sense—that of Caiaphas—a sense too with which he, of all men in Jerusalem, was wholly out of sympathy, and of which he himself was as ignorant as if it did not exist. Once more, it is manifest that inspiration cannot be due to the combination of revelation, illumination and genius, or of any two of these, for we have seen that there may be inspiration without any one of them.

If these positions have been securely taken, then the whole fabric of false teaching as to the nature of the influence and product denoted by the term inspiration sinks into ruin.

These distinctions help us, moreover, in determining the question of the *extent* of inspiration. The answer we have given to this question is that the inspiration of the Scriptures is *plenary*. Inspiration is said to be *plenary* in opposition to the idea that it may be *partial*. When the distinction between inspiration and revelation is kept in view, the notice of a sliding-scale of degrees of inspiration is at once seen to be untenable and absurd.

When the *plenary* INSPIRATION of the holy men is affirmed, it is not meant to affirm that they had a plenary *revelation*. It is a mistake, however, on the part of Lee, to contend that this would necessarily be to affirm that the human writers were omniscient, and were consequently gods. True, in one sense of the words, this would be the case; but the language admits of another construction; and all that Bannerman means by endorsing the phrase, a "plenary revelation," is that the whole book was fully inspired.

Still, what is now urged is not any doctrine of plenary revelation, but the familiar doctrine of plenary inspiration.

It is not meant, then, to affirm that Paul had a revelation of the number of persons he had baptized at Corinth, or of the fact that Caiaphas was the high priest before whom he was on a memorable occasion arraigned; or the apostles generally a revelation of the date of the Parousia, or of the ages that should precede it; or the older writers of the heliocentric system of astronomy, or the exact scientific truth as to the yet mooted questions in geology. It is not even meant to affirm that the sacred penmen and inspired spokesmen had, by revelation or otherwise, a full, or even always an accurate, knowledge of the sense of their own infallible words.¹ Caiaphas uttered words of this world's wisdom which, with a purely governmental and humanly selfish intent, were aimed at the very life of the Nazarene, and employed to disconcert his entire scheme. And yet it was this self-same dictum of which the evangelist declares, "And this spake he not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one all the children of God that were scattered abroad." (John xi. 51.) Daniel, after he had seen a vision, tells us he sought for the meaning (Dan. viii. 15); and again, that he fainted upon the occurrence of another unintelligible vision, and was astonished and made sick by it. (Dan. viii. 27.) Of still another vision it is said that "he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision." But the Apostle Peter expressly informs us that the prophets inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace of Christ, "searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow," the plain purport of which is that the prophets referred to did not know the exact, much less the complete, meaning of their own words. When Moses, according to Exodus xii. 46, said, "Neither shall ye break a bone thereof," it is altogether doubtful whether he saw the prophetic reference it bore to Christ on the cross. Nor is it by any means ascertained that Malachi was aware

¹ See *Butler's Analogy*, Part II., Chap. 7.

that his own prediction of the angel or messenger of the Lord was to be fulfilled in John the Baptist. These are a few instances taken somewhat at random out of a multitude.

All that is contended for under the term *plenary*, as opposed to *partial*, INSPIRATION is, that the divine influence was plenary which enabled and fitted the human instruments to *impart* or *communicate* the divinely accredited truth to others. Nothing is involved here as to the nature or the extent of any real or imaginary influence enabling the human instruments to understand the divine message fully themselves.

The design and result of their inspiration was to make them suitable spokesmen of God to mankind. But if they are God's spokesmen, they must utter truth, for God is not the author of falsehood. Inspiration must, therefore, make them infallible, and infallible in all they utter officially in behalf of God. It is not essential that they shall comprehend their own words, but it is essential that they shall utter words that are infallibly true, and there are no degrees in infallibility. This is in a sentence the whole case for the upholders of the old-fashioned, strait-laced doctrine of the divine plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

It is also important to take notice that when the inspiration of the sacred writers is styled plenary, it is not meant that they uttered the infallible truth of heaven on all occasions, but only when they were speaking for God. Having uttered the divine message they were like Samson when he was shorn of his locks in which resided his miraculous strength. Nathan was not infallible when he assured David that "the Lord was with him" in his purpose of building the ark. This he "spake of himself." Inspired men might even go so far as to write uninspired and wicked epistles. Such was the letter of David to Joab in the matter of Uriah. Much less were the original heralds of the cross infallibly apprized of what was true and false, right and wrong, in matters affecting merely their own private conduct. They were "earthen vessels." They were "men of like passions" with ourselves. Here the distinctions already drawn again stand us in stead. Paul had more discretion, more force of character, more stability of opinion, and it may be more spiritual illumina-

tion than had Peter, and was compelled to withstand him face to face, and confirm, both by word and example, the general judgment which had blamed him; and yet Peter, as an inspired man, is precisely on a par with Paul.

This point may be illustrated from a heretical dogma which was lately agitating papal Europe to its foundations. I refer to the dogma of the infallibility of the pope. Pio Nono claimed to be infallible; but Pio Nono never claimed, nor does his successor, Leo, claim, to be impeccable or omniscient. The Roman pontiff only claims to be infallible as to what he utters *ex cathedra*; i. e., from the papal chair, and when dealing with the peculiar class of truths which the ultramontanists affirmed and the defenders of the Gallican liberties denied, that he can and should authoritatively declare.

Just so the inspired spokesmen of God are infallible *when speaking for God*, and the apologetic argument for Christianity, in so far as it guarantees to us the credentials of the holy men, proves, if it proves anything, that the inspired spokesmen *are speaking for God* in the Holy Scriptures. All that we contend for is that the inspired teachers and writers were inspired when acting officially, and in what they officially taught and wrote; not that they were infallible at all times or as men. It was when, and only when, acting as organs of the Holy Ghost that they were supernaturally preserved from error. The popes, on the Romish theory of papal infallibility, may lead vicious lives, and may differ amongst themselves when not speaking from the sacred chair. So Balaam led a vicious life, and yet was inspired;¹ and Paul and Barnabas, at least for a time, held opposite views as to certain matters of Christian practice, and yet were equally the infallible spokesmen of God.

There is another important distinction which has been well drawn by old Francis Turretin, and must be insisted upon just here. It is between what is presented in the Scriptures as mere *fact* or *history*, and what is presented as of the binding nature of

¹ See the whole of Turretin's *Locus Secundus, Questiones Tertia, Quarta et cætera*, for admirably exact and thorough discussions of many points belonging to this field of argument.

a *doctrine* or a *rule*. The inspiration is in both cases the same, only in the one case the inspiration vouches for the record; in the other case for the teaching or command. The whole question resolves itself into this two-fold form: Who is it that is inspired, and what does the inspired man commit himself to as true? The author of the book is always inspired, and sometimes, not by any means always, others whom he introduces as speaking, and whose words he reports at variable length.

Because the sacred writer is inspired it does not follow, and it often is not true, that all the men or beings whose words he records are also inspired. The three friends of Job utter opinions that are at variance, not only with those of Job and Elihu, but even with those of God himself; but it is not necessary to hold that Job's three friends were inspired. All we need to maintain is that the author of the book was inspired to give an infallible report of what was said. Job's wife was certainly not inspired when she exclaimed, "Curse God and die!" Satan did not speak by inspiration when he uttered the words, "Ye shall not surely die;" but the sacred narrator was inspired to assure us infallibly that the words were said. We must in every case look to the intention of the writer. Whatever he sets before us as truth is truth, and the very species of truth which he represents it to be; whether intrinsic moral, or spiritual verity, or merely a correct and unerring report of facts or statements, or of continuous discourses, and whether in the case of reported words the accuracy be verbal or only general. It is a great mistake to suppose that the inspired writers always pretend to quote to the letter. Sometimes they only aim to give the *spirit* of what was written or uttered. Marked verbal discrepancies in such cases are obviously no contradictions *ex necessitate rei*. The author's undertaking is to reproduce the *spirit* of the language, and he is invariably and infallibly successful in the endeavor. Thus Matthew tells us the inscription above our Saviour's head as he hung on the cross was, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews;" and yet Mark says it was "The King of the Jews;" and Luke has it, "This is the King of the Jews;" and John, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Had the evangelists claimed to give *ipsissima verba*, there might be con-

tradition here; albeit, as has often been pointed out, the inscription may have been in a different form in each of the three languages; but none of them has made such claim. The accounts are accordingly consistent.

It is a plain inference from the view of the doctrine which we have been unfolding that the sacred writers may have differed indefinitely as to what Lee denominates *their whole subjective state*; and the fact is that they did so differ. The doctrine which has been directed against inspiration from this quarter is consequently baseless.

The obvious fact of the characteristic differences of the sacred penmen does not furnish even a presumptive argument against their inspiration. Says Dr. Thornwell, writing upon this very subject; "The external proofs of inspiration . . . require in most cases a knowledge of the author. And in conducting an inquiry upon this point the internal evidence arising from style, structure and habits of thought materially contributes to a satisfactory result. In the first stage of the investigation we consider the productions simply as human compositions, and God has wisely distributed the gift of inspiration so that, while he is responsible for all that is said, the individual peculiarities of the agent shall designate the person whose instrumentality he employs. He has facilitated our inquiry into the human organ of the Holy Spirit. Having ascertained ourselves as to the human authors or their works, the next question is as to the claims which they themselves put forward in the divine direction. What are these claims, and how are they substantiated? If they pretend to a verbal dictation, and then adduce the credentials sufficient to authenticate it, we have all which in the way of external evidence could be reasonably exacted. The Epistle to the Romans, for example, is put into our hands as a part of the word of God. The first question is, Who wrote it? If it can be traced to Paul, we know that he was an apostle of the Saviour, and enjoyed whatever inspiration was attached to the apostolic office. He possessed, in an eminent degree, the signs of an apostle, and if it were one of the privileges of the office that those who were called to it should, in their public instructions and testimonies for Jesus, speak the language of

the Holy Ghost, as soon as we are convinced that Paul was the writer of the document, its ultimate emanation from God is settled. Now it obviously facilitates this inquiry to have the mind of Paul stamped upon the letter, to have it distinctly impressed with his image, while it contains nothing but the true and faithful sayings of God. It is consequently no presumption against the divine dictation of a book that it should exhibit traces of the hand that was employed."¹

I will add that there are other less or more obvious reasons why God should have employed as his instrument a **MAN**, not a machine, an intelligent, moral, individual agent. It is in harmony with all his dealings with the universe, and therefore antecedently probable that he should have done so. He usually, if not always, operates through, and not against, *law*. We agree in terms with the Duke of Argyll in affirming the absolute universality of law in the unlimited sense of that word; for even the volitions of the Supreme Being are in voluntary accordance with the laws of his own nature. No divine act, therefore, can in the highest sense be said to be unnatural or anomalous. We hesitate to go so far as to affirm with that eminent authority the universality of *physical* law. It would appear to be an inevitable deduction from the omnipotence of God—and it is honoring him to say so—that he has the ability to interrupt at pleasure the whole ordinary course of nature, in the *physical* sense, and it may have suited him at times to do so. This is the simplest, and, as it seems to us, the most probable account to give of the *miracles* of the Old and New Testaments. It is not necessary to hold that the ordinary physical force is for the time being no longer exerted in the case of a miracle. It is only necessary to recognize the interposition of a new and higher force than the ordinary physical one—a force, too, exerted from the outside, not the inside, of the system of ordinary causation—and the inadequacy of the ordinary, and the adequacy of the extra-ordinary force to produce the miraculous effect. It by no means follows from this that there should be any physical contrivance or machinery, or any system of physical laws, higher than the familiar system commonly spoken of as the ordi-

¹ *Collected Writings*, Vol. III., pp. 55, 56.

nary course of nature, or the ordinary system of second causes, in the physical sense, that is employed by the Almighty in the production of the effect. There is not a tittle of proof that anything whatever of a causative kind intervened between the sovereign fiat of God and the occurrence of the miraculous event. If any energy was put forth other than the divine volition, it would most likely be a direct characteristic (shall we say spiritual?) energy proceeding from the source of all wisdom and of all power. But whatever view may be taken of God's miraculous agency, such agency is confessedly and *ex vi termini* exceptional.

Are inspiration and revelation to be classed as miracles? So Bannerman opines and maintains. In the technical sense, clearly they are not. They are not to be so much regarded as themselves evidential, as matters to be supported by evidence *ab extra*; and are not, as John Locke declares the technical miracles to be, "*sensible* events." Miracles they may be in a wider acceptation of the term. They are supernatural, not natural, phenomena and products. They are in a manner singular and extraordinary events. But—and this is the point we would emphasize—it is, as we have seen, antecedently more likely, as more agreeable to God's usual mode of procedure, and more in harmony with the acknowledged facts of the case, that the allwise and omnipotent Jehovah should have made use of, rather than that he should have superseded, the faculties and even the personal idiosyncrasies of the human instruments. Inspiration and revelation do, however, bear a relation to the ordinary course of Christian experience analogous to that borne by a miracle to the ordinary course of nature.

Again, there were eminent and controlling reasons for it of a practical kind. All sorts of persons and tribes were to be reached and benefited by the revelations. Dr. William Lee, as we saw, believes that the peculiar type of each writer's individual nature was essential to the due conveyance and reception of that particular phase of truth which he presents. It may be added that every one of these particular phases of truth was exactly adapted to corresponding phases of the human soul, whether in the case of one and the same person or of different persons. Some tempera-

ments are mercurial, now up, now down, and require corresponding variety of intellectual and spiritual stimulus and aliment. The same man, whether mercurial or not, is apt to be in different moods at different times. Such moods commonly vary according to events and circumstances. Other temperaments are sanguine, or phlegmatic, or atrabilious and melancholic. There are also different degrees and orders of intelligence. There are seasons when a man craves logic, and seasons when the same man craves poetry or homely exhortation. One man loves, or needs, to be instructed in doctrine, another man to be guided in practice. Certain persons are more impressed by Moses, others by David, or by Isaiah, or by Luke, or by Paul, or by James, or by John. The whole range of knowledge and genius is compassed, and the entire gamut of emotion and affection is run, in these sacred oracles. There is something in the word of God for those who are elated, and still more for those who are depressed and dejected. There is matter here for both sexes, and for all races, ages, and climates. As Matthew Henry says, here are shallows where a lamb may wade, and deeps where an elephant would have to swim.

Because of the striking elevation in the subjective condition of Isaiah, Paul and John, in comparison with that of most or all of the other biblical writers, it has been confidently urged by some that their words have a *higher authority* than those of the other writers. If this were so of any we should plead for the inclusion of Moses and David in this list. The difference, however, to the advantage of some, as compared with others of the biblical writers, is due to their superior natural powers, to their superior *illumination*, and to the peculiar exaltation of soul which usually accompanied their superior degrees of *revelation*. It is a difference which does not affect one whit the equal *inspiration*; that is to say, the divinely-secured *infallibility* of the otherwise inferior writers. We have been led to conclude that inspiration may be found apart from revelation, and even from illumination. It is probable, notwithstanding, that a majority, if not all, of the inspired writers—that is, the men whose books compose the sacred canon—had received revelations, and that all had probably received

spiritual illumination. Let it be borne in mind, however, that it was neither their revelations nor their illuminations that made them inspired; but it was common for these three things to be united in one person. Now Isaiah, John and Paul, if you please, were endowed with singular measures or degrees of revelation and illumination; but mark you, there are *no* measures or degrees in INSPIRATION.

H. C. ALEXANDER.