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## ARTICLE VI.

## THE INSPIRATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

BY REV. I. P. WARREN, D.D., PORTLAND, ME.

I PROPOSE in the present article to support and illustrate the truth that the Old Testament Scriptures are the word of God. They are, in a sense that is true of no other book save their younger sister the New Testament, his communication to men. As such, they possess whatever qualities necessarily attach to his word, of truth, of sanctity, of authority, of infallibility.

This high character I prefer to designate by the word *divine* rather than *inspired*, because the latter, in addition to the quality itself, carries with it by etymological inference the assumption that it was imparted in a particular way, viz. by a direct influence of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of the writers. Whether this was true or not is worthy of special inquiry, but it is not, I think, necessary to the result. God may, conceivably, have given us a communication in some other way, and it tends to confuse us to be obliged to think of it always under the regimen of a term which blends the fact with a particular mode. The word *divine* will sufficiently express the fact, leaving the question of the mode to be considered by itself.

The truth of the proposition that the Old Testament is the word of God is, for Christian believers, readily established. It is directly affirmed in many ways by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the apostles. It cannot be necessary that I should cite their utterances here. They are thickly strewn through all the Gospels and Epistles. The divine sanctity and authority of the Scriptures were with them always a first principle, assumed as a matter of course, which nobody disputed, and which needed no proof. It may, indeed, be reckoned as among the primary Christian truths.

And let us note how comprehensive it was, as it appears in the sayings of the Lord and of those who had been taught by him. The sacred writings were classed by the Scribes under the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, an arrangement which Christ himself recognized. But he made no difference between them in this respect. Never did he single out one at the expense of the others. Never did he distinguish between known and unknown authors. Never did he speak of some that were more and some that were less inspired. If he did not quote from every one, it was not because he did not recognize their place in the sacred canon, but simply because he did not need to do so for the purpose in hand. He made little of the personality of the writer, but every thing of the authority by which he wrote. It was not what was spoken by the prophet, but what was spoken by the Lord *through* the prophet. To him the entire collection was a unit, and it was the word of God. The temple was made up of parts; it had its courts, outer and inner; its gates, some more and some less beautiful; its apartments, of varying use and dignity, from the closets which stored wood and ashes and salt up to the awful, unapproachable Holy of holies, but it was one sacred edifice throughout; it was the house of God. So with that book which was our Saviour's Bible,—it was in all its parts a divine unity,—the word of God.

Thus far we have solid ground to rest upon. Let us now inquire more particularly what is meant by that proposition.

Our Saviour, while declaring the Scriptures to be the word of God, did not say how they became such. Neither he nor the apostles gave us any theory of inspiration. That which, perhaps, comes nearest to a dogmatic statement, and has done most to shape our conceptions of the subject, is the language of Peter in his second Epistle: "No prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost" (i. 21, R. V.). But I do not understand the apostle as referring here to the Scriptures generally, or to their writers, but to prophecy in its stricter

sense, the utterance of predictions as to the future.<sup>1</sup> It was, he says, the power and the coming (the Parousia) of the Lord Jesus Christ which the scoffers derided, but which nevertheless should certainly take place as promised. To these, the prophetic portions of the Scriptures, his assertion is applicable and, doubtless, strictly descriptive, but that hardly gives us warrant for extending it to other portions of a wholly different nature.

With this exception, I do not remember that anything is said of the inspiration of the *writers* of the sacred books. Indeed, of a large part of those books the writers are wholly unknown. Their names are not mentioned, nor their characters, the circumstances in which they wrote, the motives that prompted them, nor the spiritual conditions they were in. Nearly everything pertaining to their personality is left in utter oblivion. Tradition to some extent has attempted to supply this lack, but its testimony is unreliable. Whatever affirmations of a divine quality in their writings are made belong to the writings themselves, not to the writers. "All *Scripture*," says Paul, "is *theopneustos*." Literally, "every writing, being inbreathed of God," or as DeWette defines it, "breathed through," "full of the Spirit," "is also profitable," etc. No matter whether the word be regarded as subject or predicate it applies to the *writing* only; of course, collectively, to the whole body of sacred writings which Timothy had been taught from his childhood, and which were able to make wise unto salvation. The word, therefore, is not a word of mode, but simply of quality. It covers any and all modes—every sort of divine action, direct and indirect, by which the volume came into being and form, and was clothed with authority as the vehicle of the divine will and thoughts to men. Says Dr. Van Oosterzee, in almost precisely the same language as Olshausen, "This passage alone is not sufficient to found a theory of inspiration upon, since the relation of

<sup>1</sup> Huther says: "*προφητεία γραφῆς* is undoubtedly to be understood of the prediction of the Old Testament, either the prophecy contained in Scripture, or that to which the Scripture gives expression."

human activity to the disposing power of the Spirit of God in the composition of Holy Scripture is not stated in words, and the question whether we must consider here an inspiration of words or of things remains wholly unanswered. A correct theory of inspiration will not rest upon this or the other passage of Scripture, but can truly and vitally result only from a consideration of the *object* which is the product of divine inspiration.”<sup>1</sup>

There being, then, no authoritative statement as to the mode in which the Scriptures became divine, and the readers being left free to determine it for themselves from a consideration of their characteristics, let us inquire whether we may not find the answer in the distinction above alluded to between the *writers* and the *writings*; and whether, also, we may not therein reach a solution of most of the difficulties which confessedly attend the usual statements and theories on the subject. Let us begin with a simple illustration.

A father undertakes to prepare for his young son a manual of instruction for his conduct and happiness through life. Obviously, it is not necessary that these should be written out by the father's own hand. It is not necessary that they should be of his own composition. They are, we will suppose, in the form of a book or library, like this of the Scriptures, of thirty-nine volumes, of varying size, structure, and style. They may have been composed by different authors, at different dates. Some are by amanuenses who have put down at the father's dictation statements and directions which could only originate with him. Some are compilations made under his care from existing literature, history, philosophy, poetry, or perhaps even the drama and fiction. Still others are independent productions of distinguished authors adapted to the purpose in view. The collection thus made up, thus composite in its sources, kinds, and qualities, he presents, say as a birthday gift, to his son, saying, “This, my son, I give you, selected and prepared with much care and expense, to make you wise for this life and the life to

<sup>1</sup> Lange's Commentary on 2 Tim. iii. 16.

come. Here you will find my counsels as to what is best for you. Here is my will as to what you are to do. Here are my promises and my admonitions. Take it as *my word* to you; study it, obey it, and you shall have my love and blessing."

Now, it is obvious that such a gift would be plenary invested with that father's authority to his son. That authority would attach to every part of it, and to all alike. No matter who held the pens that originally composed the several portions. No matter whether they were known to the son or not, or in what age or land or language they wrote. No matter whether the penmen were prince or peasant, priest or philosopher. No matter whether they knew, when they were writing, what use would one day be made of their productions or not, or shaped their utterances with any reference to such use. No matter how many marks of their personality they may have impressed on their writings,—peculiarities of diction, taste, linguistic purity or defect. No matter how much they betrayed the spirit of the age in which they lived, of the nationality or caste or school to which they belonged, or any other individual quality, intellectual or moral. The simple fact that the father has chosen them to be vehicles of his thought extinguishes in them, so far as the son is concerned, all personality but his own. They become to him his father's word. Whatsoever they say to him his father says. They are plenary filled with the love, the mind, and the will of the giver.

With this illustration in mind, let us take up this volume of the Scriptures—our Heavenly Father's book to us.

1. First, we have the prime fact that it is *his* book. Of this we are assured by the testimony of Jesus Christ and his apostles, as already stated. I do not adduce this as proof for infidels, but for those who believe that he was a teacher sent from God, and that his words and those of the men who were commissioned to speak in his name are true. They taught nothing more plainly or constantly than this, and for Christians this testimony is sufficient.

Still, though the fact rests primarily and satisfactorily on Christ's authority, there is no lack of corroborative evidence, sufficient even, were there no other, to render it the most certain of all truths. That evidence is found in the book itself, and in every department of human knowledge external to it. The subject is too wide for consideration here. I will briefly advert to but a single topic—the remarkable *unity* of the book as a collection not dissimilar to the one supposed.

The Old Testament as it was in Christ's day was a volume or body of writings substantially the same in form and contents as now. Probably the line between the canonical and the apocryphal had not been quite as sharply drawn. Esther, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles were in portions of the Jewish church still antilegomena; as, on the other hand, the First Book of Maccabees, Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus may have been publicly read in some of the Hellenist synagogues. But, with these unimportant exceptions, the canon of the Scriptures had been completed, presenting that noble unity which is one of its most marked characteristics. In doctrine, in precept, in moral purpose and spirit, it is throughout one. In its institutions, history, and prophecy it converges to one point—the coming and work of the promised Messiah. Jesus himself claimed that unity as a part of his credentials: “All things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms concerning me.” It stood on a footing unique and alone; it was “the Scripture”—*ἡ Γραφή*. Such a unity of contents evinces a unity of design in the collection, and a corresponding unity in the Giver. It is more than a uniformity in binding and lettering would be in the supposed case of a library, inasmuch as an interior oneness of subject and purpose is of greater significance than any oneness of outward dress and appearance.

2. We have the historical fact of an actual *collection and reception* of this composite volume as the word of God by the ancient church in the exercise of that spiritual intuition which was imparted to her by the indwelling Spirit of God.

It has long been the custom to attribute that work chiefly to Ezra, or rather to that body of learned men contemporary with him in the reconstruction of the commonwealth, sometimes called "the Great Synagogue," of which Ezra is said to have been the president. But this now appears to be a fable of the Talmud, growing out of an exaggeration of the account given in Nehemiah of the assembly which convened at Jerusalem to renew the covenant and subscribe to the law. Professor W. Robertson Smith has shown, on the contrary, that "the canon of the Old Testament was of gradual formation; that some books now accepted had long a doubtful position, while others were for a time admitted to a measure of reputation which made the line of demarcation between them and the canonical books uncertain and fluctuating. In short, we must suppose a time when the Old Testament canon was passing through the same kind of history through which we know the New Testament to have passed."<sup>1</sup> The principle underlying that history is familiar to us all. The collection of our New Testament books was not made by any one man, nor by any one church or council of churches. In other words, it was the product of the Spirit of God dwelling in the churches, and, according to our Saviour's assurance, guiding them into the truth. This was one of the great promises included in his parting legacy to his people — the ministration of the Comforter, who should dwell with them and be their abiding teacher in his name. And such an indwelling of the Spirit is a true inspiration; if not one which involves a commission to write in his name, at least one that empowers them to judge of what has been written, to exclude what is unworthy, and to gather and set forth what shall truly convey both to the church and the world the mind and will of God. The gift of discernment is by the apostle ranked as not inferior to the gift of utterance.

So likewise in the ancient church. We have become so much accustomed to think of the corruptions of that church, especially of the formality and hypocrisy of its leading classes

<sup>1</sup> *Old Test. in Jewish Church*, p. 153.



in the days of our Lord, that we are apt to forget that it was, after all, in its time, the church of God, and that his promise had been given it, "I will dwell with them and walk with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." And this inspiration in the whole church was greater than in any individual in it—greater than in any priest or prophet, or in any school of the prophets. And any body of writings which the church collectively thus made, spontaneously, out of its own enlightened instincts and perceptions, to meet its own spiritual wants and to carry out the will of God, may safely be regarded as more truly theopneustic than if it only bore the prestige of a single great name, as Ezra, or Isaiah, or David, or Samuel, or Moses. It is, indeed, the product of the combined inspiration of them all.

What, precisely, was the process by which this result was reached is now unknown. The Rabbis have handed down to us their traditions, but they are all uncertain. Professor Smith and other writers of his school have advanced their theories, many of which are ingenious and plausible; but they have not as yet carried with them the majority of Biblical scholars. Probably the exact history is now irrecoverable. But we may, looking at the materials before us, discern some probabilities which will aid us in studying the problem in hand—the nature and methods of their inspiration.

We begin with those writings that present the least difficulty—those which stand nearest to our usual idea of inspiration because of the known inspiration of their authors, viz. the prophetic books. I do not mean that in the order of time these were first introduced into the canon; I only mention them first for convenience sake. The prophets were literally inspired men, acknowledged to be such, and some of them armed with miraculous credentials of their office. They spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Undoubtedly there were many prophecies, in the long line from Samuel to Malachi, which were of local and temporary interest, and which for that reason were not preserved. The question as to which should be preserved and which passed

by — which transmitted for the use of coming ages, and which suffered to fall into oblivion — was silently determined by the judgment of the pious men of the age under the guidance of the Spirit.

The class of writings which perhaps come nearest to these are the devotional, embracing the ancient psalmody of the church. Some of these writings we may believe to have been, like the prophecies, of directly inspired production. David was “the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel, who said, ‘The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.’” There were others, doubtless, like him, though we know not their names. Some of the Psalms are of an historical character, commemorative of past events in the nation’s career, in which, though possessing poetic qualities, no special divine origin is discernible. There are others which display, to say the least, a very human character. After all that has been said in explanation of and apology for these, we find it very difficult to conceive of any divine influence being concerned in their production. What, for instance, can we make of the one hundred and thirty-seventh, in which the writer, — unknown to us, but of a post-exilian date, — recalling the sufferings of the captivity, and all that his people had endured from the oppressions of Babylon, invokes a fervent blessing on him that shall retaliate in equal measure, and smear the pavement of that proud city with the brains and blood of her unoffending infants?

I imagine that these books of psalmody, in four or five collections of different dates, were made up almost exactly as the various compilations of our best modern hymns have been. The indwelling Spirit, who was in the church in general, and in the hearts of prophets, priests, and kings in a special manner as the Lord’s anointed ones, discerned in the current productions of their times suitable vehicles for the expression of the pious emotions of God’s people. There is no evidence that it was made a fundamental question who wrote them, or whether in every case it was what we call an inspired man,

or even a good man. Our own hymn-books contain many a piece marked anonymous; nor do we hesitate to sing a beautiful hymn because Moore or Pope composed it. Fifty years and more ago there were many pieces by Dwight and Barlow and Trumbull, composed during or soon after the Revolution, containing patriotic reminiscences and sentiments analogous to those of the national Hebrew Psalms. Indeed, in very many cases we find those Psalms themselves versified into patriotic American hymns, in which the imprecations as well as the more benign sentiments found a congenial place. So the British national hymn, "God save the King," like some of those bearing the name of David, prays that God would "scatter his enemies, and make them fall." Who can say that those ancient Psalms of this type — after which, indeed, the modern ones were often closely patterned in diction as well as sentiment — had any diviner origin than they?

The Psalms, then, became divine in the sense before explained, not necessarily by having been composed under special influences of the Spirit, (though this was doubtless true of some), but because of their adoption and use in the church. The reference just made to Moore's poem, "Come ye disconsolate," may serve as an illustration. We neither know nor ask what was the mental state the poet was in when he wrote it, or how it differed from that in which he composed his *Irish Melodies*. We only know that his words have been taken and, so to speak, sanctified by being made the expression of the devout breathings of a soul imbued with the love of Christ as the Consoler of men. As they fell from the pen they may have been the offspring of a mere poetic impulse, with possibly some dim perception of a soul's need of Christ, but they have since been infiltrated with the fervor of piety, and made to mean what probably Moore himself never dreamed of. It is now, and will be through all time, to the church of God a "Spirit in-breathed" hymn, conveying to the minds of worshippers, not what Moore meant, but what He inspires who is the author and giver of divine life.

We may next refer to those books which have sometimes

been denominated the Hebrew classics,— Job, the Proverbs, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Esther. Job is a record of the discussion of a knotty point in theology,—a question of theodicy,—in which those five Oriental sages agreed about as well as eminent theologians and professors have been wont to do on the same topic, and whom when the Lord appeared in the whirlwind he pronounced to be *all* wrong, “darkening counsel by words without knowledge.” What can that theory which places inspiration in the authors make of a book like this? Five *inspired* men *disputing* among themselves, getting angry, and heaping sarcasm and reproaches upon each other, and all of them in *error*! Or if you place it in the transcriber of the conversation, the mere composer of the book, what does any body know of him? And yet, the book itself, however originated, was worthy because of those very imperfections of human reasoning, to be set by the discerning Spirit indwelling in the church, in its sacred records as a vehicle of profoundest wisdom to mankind in all ages whensoever this great and perplexing problem of God’s ways should be thought upon. The Proverbs were collected from many sources; we do not know that any were higher than human. Solomon could have been the author of but a part of them, and I know of no evidence that even he was inspired. True, he was endowed with surpassing wisdom in matters of science, and foreign traffic, and kingcraft, but his debaucheries and idolatries do not recommend him as the ideal of an inspired teacher of divine truth. Ecclesiastes was formerly supposed to be his work, a sort of Book of Confessions growing out of his experiences in worldliness and sensuality. Modern criticism ascribes it to a much later writer, who personated that monarch and put forth similiar confessions in his name. The Song of Solomon is *prima facie*, a beautiful love-poem, of some unknown author, but very surely not by him. Esther is a bit of history pertaining to an episode in the capital of Xerxes, the great Persian monarch, in which originated the Jewish Feast of Purim. All these books about whose *authorship* so little

can be said, are in their uses of the greatest practical value, — precious specimens of the literature of remote antiquity, in consequence of the very fact that they present divine instruction through the media of human thought, and even of human imperfection, all the better fitted to train mankind to virtue and godliness.

Lastly, we have the historical books. I need not go into the question of their authorship, especially that which is now so much disputed, the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch. Nor does it seem to me of such vital importance as is often assumed. For if the divine quality of a book does not so much depend upon who wrote it, as upon its adoption by the Holy Spirit as the vehicle of instruction to mankind, the full divine authority of the Pentateuch is not impeached even though it was made up from many original sources, and brought into its present shape, partly by Moses and partly by one or more supplementary writers after him. As early as we can discern anything in Hebrew history, we see evidences that the substantial contents of these books were accepted as God's word by Moses. There was never any dispute or doubt as to his being the Deliverer, Lawgiver, and Judge of the people of Israel; and if in some of the troublous times of their history his laws fell into desuetude or were forgotten, it cannot prove that they had never existed. It was upon the basis of this impregnable fact of tradition that Ezra's reform and reinstatement of the ancient institutions became possible. That the Jewish church then and ever after accepted the Pentateuch as the foundation of their institutions, and the other historical books as the true annals of their nation, is an attestation of their divine authority which cannot be disputed without denying that special covenant calling and providence which made them the chosen people.

These, then, are the two great facts on which we build our theory. Here is a volume which purports to be our Father's book, given by him to be the light of the world. Jesus Christ affirms it to be such, and its own contents corroborate the declaration. The various compositions entering into it

constitute a whole, which in its spirit, in its purpose, in all ethical and rational qualities is a grand unity, worthy of its lofty claim. This unity is itself a fact no less worthy to be noticed and to claim consideration than the authorship of its several portions. How meagre would be that anatomical philosophy which should describe with never so much truth the separate members of the human body, but had no word to say of the transcendent skill which adapted all these members to each other, binding the whole together by such mutual correlations as to make the complete man more wonderful than any of his parts,—a microcosm in himself.

And the other fact is, that the process of collecting and giving form to the volume by which said divine unity was attained, was carried on through the centuries under the guidance of the Holy Spirit by the church of God. What if it was not done at any one time by any one man, say, as has been alleged, by Ezra; what then? Is not the whole church more than any one of her ministers? What matter where and by whom the massive stones that were used in building the temple were quarried and sculptured; what matter though we know not the name of a single carpenter or mason or architect, if we know that *what* they built was the house of God? Those workmen in their various stations labored as the needs of the undertaking required; they gathered materials of every kind, new and old, wrought and unwrought; they laid them up in their places as directed, with a greater or less knowledge of the plan and purposes of the edifice, and then, when the work was finished, the Divine Builder descended into it in a cloud and filled it with the Shekinah of his presence and glory. It was not the workmen nor the work, which made it divine; it was the adoption of it by him for his own most holy ends.

I anticipate a question which may be interposed here, though the answer is logically no part of my subject, but pertains to the theory of *interpretation*, not *inspiration*. If any writing, originally human only, was by divine direction taken and placed in the canon of the Scriptures, how are we to

determine what is divine in it?—how distinguish between the divine and the human? I answer, in precisely the same way that we determine it upon any other theory. Suppose you are told dogmatically that the one hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm was directly dictated to the writer by the Holy Spirit; how does that enable you to see anything divine in it? The assertion itself does not alter its character. It may indeed introduce disorder into our moral convictions, but it cannot stifle or reverse those convictions. The assertion has done nothing to uplift the Psalm; it has done much to dishonor its alleged Author. The difficulty is that we find such sentiments *in* the sacred writings, and we only make it more inexplicable to say that the God of infinite purity and goodness put them there. I say, no; men put them there, though God for his own good purposes deigns to use them. He uses them not for their own sake, but for that of some other sentiment or truth in the composition, which fits them to be a source of instruction to man. It was the piety of that barbarous age *speaking in character*; one of the uses of which, at least, is to show by contrast to later ages the immeasurable advance wrought in human sentiments by the spirit and teachings of Jesus Christ.

That which is to be our guide in such cases,—a clew of safety through all the intricacies involved in the connection between the divine and human in the Bible, is an enlightened and sanctified *common sense*. Or if we prefer it, we may call it as some do, *faith*, or the Christian consciousness. The *thing* is nothing new. Our New England theology and metaphysics have been familiar with it ever since Edwards's day. All of us who sat at the feet of Nathaniel W. Taylor as he delivered those masterly lectures on mental philosophy will remember his lucid teachings on that subject. Let me cite a single paragraph from the pages of my note-book.

“God has so made the mind that it cannot but know something. And he has placed truth with its evidence before it, and such motives that, from the necessity of its nature and condition it will know so much truth that, if it never over-

looks nor denies known truth, it will never fall into criminal error. Here is our responsibility. We can see and admit truth, and we can overlook and deny it. It is upon this ground that God will be clear when he judgeth. Common sense, then, is the arbiter of God in the soul of man on that most absorbing of all questions, 'What is Truth?'

It is, then, neither a new departure nor a new return when we recognize an inward faculty of the soul, which, when pure in purpose and enlightened by the Spirit of God, is a sufficient guide in the interpretation of the inspired word. I do not say it may sit in judgment on what is properly established to be his word. There is but one Sovereign of truth. It is for him to speak, and for man to obey. But it is man's prerogative and duty to discern his utterances, and to distinguish them from what are not his, and by his own nature as a moral being he is endowed with a capacity for doing so.

Apply this test to any portion which upon the usual theory of interpretation has been found most difficult to explain. Here is the Book of Job, for instance, a *human* book, apparently, except in the very last scene, where God speaks directly, and a book of human *controversy*. The speakers in it disagree in what they say. What, then, does God say through them? Manifestly not what the letter of any one of the speakers affirms, of itself. That may indeed be true, and it may not. But consider what the book as a whole *means*, and that is what God says. As Richard Baxter remarks, "The *sense* is the soul of the Scripture."<sup>1</sup> The book thus read says concisely: "The problem at which you are laboring is insolvable by man. The administration of Divine Providence is a mystery to be disclosed, if at all, in another world. Man's duty is to be humble, to be obedient, and to trust." And this one lesson, taught in such an interesting because so human a manner, is worth the wealth of a kingdom. No matter what Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar and Elihu, and even Job himself said, as men; God said to them, and to us all, *this*, and this makes the book divine. So with all the

<sup>1</sup> Catechizing of Families.



other books; apply the maxim, "God *says* what the book *means*," and the volume becomes luminous throughout with the presence of the Divine Giver.

I am aware it may be said that this is to make the word of God the subject of every man's caprice. That only will have authority which he chooses to acknowledge. Any portion that he cannot reconcile with his own judgment he may set down as no part of God's utterance, and so escape its claims. But this is a perversion of our doctrine. Could the son who had been presented by his father with such a gift library as I have supposed pretend that he could not distinguish that father's will therein? I did not say that human caprice was to be the judge, but common sense, *enlightened* and *honest*. And, after all, we must come back to this at last, on any theory, unless we deny the right of private judgment altogether, and give up reason to the keeping of pope or council. They who object to the decisions of an enlightened understanding do it by the dictates of their own reason; that is, they determine by reason that nothing can be determined by reason.

In the view of the subject thus presented, I find no difficulty in saying that the Bible is a divine, or, if you please, an *inspired* book. Nearly all of the perplexities which ordinarily lie in the way of that proposition have arisen from the endeavor to attach the quality of inspiration to the *composition* of its several parts. Remove that quality to the process of *collecting and fitting* them as an instrument of instruction for man, and the perplexities vanish. We know nothing, in most cases, of the original *writers*; we do know, because Christ asserts it, that their *writings*, as they were taken and wrought with plastic skill under the guidance of the Spirit in the church into this book, are God's word. We refuse to be bound by the etymological trammels imposed by the word "inspiration." The apostle's term, "theopneustic," is one of wider scope than that. It may include all that divine action and influence of every sort which eventuated at last in the production of the book. It operated through a long

series of years and in a great variety of ways. The waters of a hundred fountains are gathered by it. Those fountains may have been remote, obscure, unknown to man. Whether they were natural or artificial, — living springs gushing from the recesses of the hills or rising from deep wells dug by patriarch or prophet, — they alike meet here and flow in a broad channel prepared for them by the divine hand — the river of the water of life.

Nor, again, do I hesitate to say that in this sense it is *wholly* inspired. If a father gives a library to his child, he gives it all — the first volume, the fifth, the twentieth; the small as well as the large ones; the history as well as the didactics; the songs as well as the essays; the anonymous as well as those whose writers are known. To single out a portion as the father's gift, and reject the rest, is an unwarrantable distinction, dishonorable to him whose kind care and beneficence included the whole.

Lastly, thus interpreted, I am able to say that the Bible is *verbally* inspired; that is, its *words* have been chosen by God as the vehicle of his communication to man. You cannot have a written revelation without having that which is written. Its own affirmation which it makes of itself is that its *writing* is theopneustos; not its writers, not its contents, apart from its words. I am not content with that ambiguous statement, which may mean much and which may mean nothing, "The Bible *contains* the word of God"; I prefer to say what it says, "The Bible *is* the word of God."