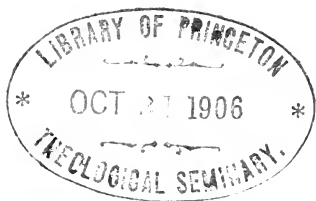


**PLENARY  
INSPIRATION.**

BS480  
.D99

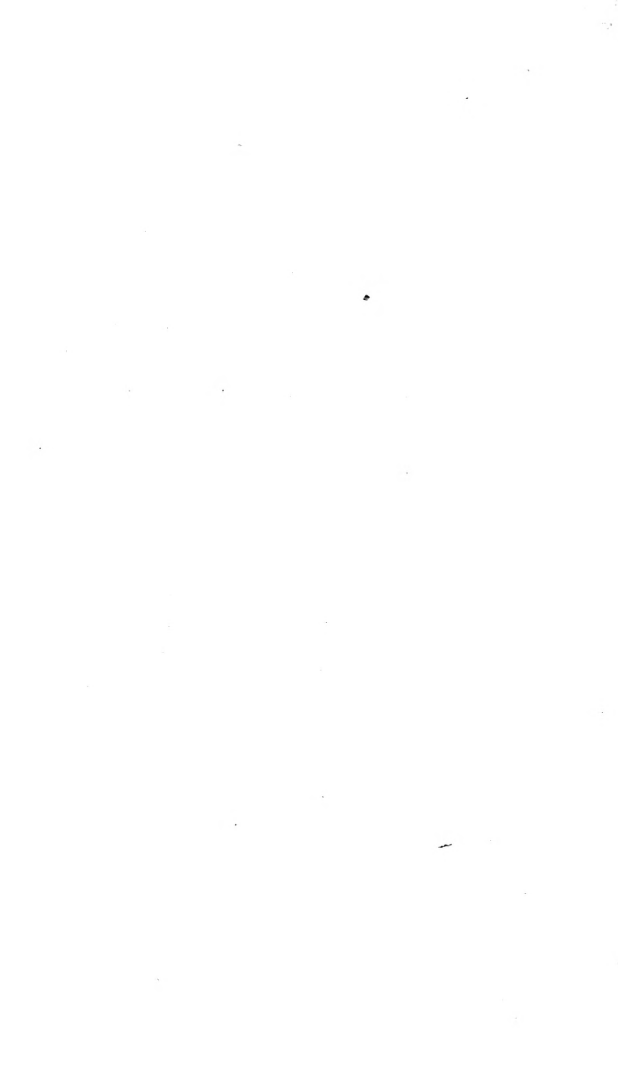


Division BS480  
Section .D99









THE  
PLENARY INSPIRATION

OF THE  
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

BY DAVID DYER,  
PASTOR OF THE VILLAGE CHURCH, DORCHESTER.

WITH AN  
INTRODUCTION:

BY REV. R. S. STORRS, D.D



BOSTON:  
TAPPAN, WHITTEMORE & MASON.  
1849.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1849,  
By TAPPAN, WHITEMORE & MASON,  
in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

BOSTON :  
DICKINSON PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT, 16 DEVONSHIRE ST.  
DANRELL & MOORE.



# CONTENTS.

---

ADVERTISEMENT.

INTRODUCTION.

## CHAPTER I.

THE NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PLENARY INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

## CHAPTER II.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

## CHAPTER III.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

## CHAPTER IV.

OBJECTIONS TO THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES ANSWERED, AND THE BEARINGS OF THE OPPOSITE SENTIMENT SHOWN.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

---

THE Author of the following Treatise on the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, having searched in vain for a small, compendious, popular work on this subject, adapted to the wants of young persons, and the ordinary members of religious congregations, has endeavored to furnish such a book.

How far he has succeeded, others will judge. In publishing it, he has been influenced and cheered by the advice and sanction of brethren to whose opinion he loves to defer. And should it have the effect of checking, in any degree, the progress of insidious error, and promoting a more enlightened and childlike deference to God's Word, he will be most amply repaid.

*Dorchester, June, 1849.*

## INTRODUCTION.



THAT the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures should be called in question at any time, and by any class of men professing faith in the Christian system, is to be lamented ; but that it should be questioned in a day like this, when the final struggle between Infidelity and Christianity is far advanced ; when antichristianism is bending beneath the death-blows dealt out to it by the hand of Providence, and the results of its protracted reign are in rapid progress of development on foreign shores ; when, too, there is a world-wide waking up to the question of emancipation from the thralldom of a thousand false religions, and the introduction in their stead of a faith honorable to God and safe for man ; — when the church of God is weeping between the porch and the altar, and supplicating Heaven's interposition, and putting forth her combined energies

to give the Bible to all nations, as the only Catholicon for their moral diseases and physical sufferings ; I say, at such a time, especially, the attempted diffusion of a spirit of distrust and unbelief in the oracles of God, on the part of any who yet profess to receive their instructions, in the main, as reasonable and true, is deeply to be deplored and as firmly resisted. The ultimate success of such attempts is not indeed to be feared ; the strong pillars of God's earthly abode are not to be torn down, nor the foundations on which the Church has stood these four thousand years, in despite of earth and hell, to be broken up, by the puny arms of modern infidels and neologists ; but the labors of the believing must unavoidably be diverted, more or less, from the direct enforcement of vital truth on the conscience, to its defence against covert or open assault, leaving many to "wonder and perish" who might otherwise be led to the Rock that is higher than they. In no form, however beautiful, and in no livery, stolen even from heaven itself, can infidelity triumph over the book of God ; but her meretricious charms and feigned words, — her occasionally meek demeanor and habitually boastful pretensions may delude

the unwary, and encourage the daring to wrest the scriptures to their destruction. This is to be feared, and from the lowest depths of the soul to be deprecated. The progress of truth is onward, and no speculations of "philosophy, falsely so called," can arrest its march; under the direction of the Holy One it is omnipotent, and the words of the prophet will apply to the spirit of antagonism it meets—"Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain;" its progress occasions all the plagues and torments now filling the seat of the beast, and advancing the wondrous revolution within the domains of the false prophet, and upheaving the despotic thrones of Europe, and confounding the counsels that the wily policy of centuries had matured for riveting the chains of civil and ecclesiastical bondage on the neck of man made in the image of God. Thus taught, and not doubting the promise that "all men shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest," in the fullness of time, we are ready to cry in the chief place of concourse, at the opening of the gates, "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge,"

rather than indulge the slightest apprehension of ultimate injury to Zion from the efforts of Rationalism, in any form and under any disguise, to destroy the confidence of men in the plenary inspiration of the Bible. Still, the seven churches of Asia needed not more the warning voice of the "beloved disciple" than the churches of New England need the admonitions of their pastors to "try them which say they are apostles and are not;" and also to repent and do their first works, and labor in the cause of truth without fainting; for, though the doctrines of Balaam and Jezebel and the Nicolaitanes are not yet avowed among us, other doctrines impugning the authority of God's word, are taught, which lead to consequences as disastrous as those which came upon Ephesus, Pergamos, and Thyatira.

The author of the little volume here introduced to the public, has endeavored, by this labor of love, to discharge his individual obligations. It belongs not to me to say how successfully he has done it. Others will judge for themselves. I can only say that the reading of the manuscript has afforded me much gratification, and the reading of the printed copy cannot

fail to be equally gratifying to as many as sympathize in the author's love of truth. Of course, it contains little more than a brief epitome of the main arguments on which the claims of inspiration rest. To expand, and illustrate, and defend against captious criticism, these and kindred arguments, as might be done, would require octavos and folios, more than laymen or ministers could find time to handle in this busy age; nor did this form any part of the author's design. He has aimed only at a clear and condensed statement of the principal grounds of faith in the Bible as the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the very thing wanted at the present time, and at all times when error is abroad, insidiously assailing the vitalities of Christianity through forced breaches in its outworks—to fortify the believing mind, to arrest the presumptuous in their downward course, and confound the gainsaying child of incredulity. That God may give it favor with the wise, and make it the successful instrument of dispelling darkness and diffusing heaven's light over the crowd of "the unlearned and unstable," is the earnest desire and sincere hope of

R. S. S.





# PLENARY INSPIRATION.



## CHAPTER I.

### *The Nature and Importance of the Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures.*

THE inspiration of the Word of God is a subject of the highest moment to us and to all mankind. It affects us in all the sentiments we nurture, in all the relations we sustain, in all the course we pursue, and in all that concerns our spiritual hopes and eternal interests. If that word is not divinely inspired, we have no perfect and all-sufficient directory for our faith and practice; we have no ground for hope in God, and we are in ignorance of the attributes of his nature, the features of his government, and all that relates to our own eternal state. We are launched on the ocean of life, having within us all the elements of eternal existence, without a compass or a pilot, without the sun or even a star to direct us in our course, and point us to the haven of safety and of peace.

We are weak, benighted, defenceless, and every way distressed, without anything to allay our fears or to excite our hopes.

If that word is only *partially*, or not fully inspired, our situation is but little improved; for then, in reading the Bible, we shall not do it as children receiving instruction from a wise and benignant parent, but as jurors who are to judge of the truth or falsehood of that which is presented to the mind. Then, instead of receiving "with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save the soul," we shall disregard or reject whatever may be unwelcome to our moral taste. Then we shall be in doubt what to believe and what to disbelieve; what degree of importance to attach to the different statements of the Bible, than which there can be no situation more unpleasant or dangerous.

This shows us at a glance how vastly important in itself, and in its bearings on the best interests of the human family, is the subject before us. It lies at the basis of revealed religion. Our opinion on this will affect our estimate of every part of that system. A distinguished theologian has well said, "The particular decision which is adopted on this question will have a direct and sensible influence upon the degree of reverence which will be felt for the Holy Scriptures: upon the manner in which they will be perused by the common

christian, and studied and interpreted by the critic and the theologian; upon the manner in which Christianity will be exhibited by the preacher, and apprehended and received by the hearer. Every thing which pertains to the doctrines and precepts of religion, and to the belief and practice of those who embrace it, will be colored by the particular views which are entertained of the inspiration of the Scriptures. And each of the different grades of opinion which may prevail on this subject, from the direct denial of all supernatural guidance, to the belief of a plenary inspiration, will be found to produce its appropriate effect upon those who maintain it.”\* These expressions are true, and have been fully confirmed by observation and experience.

Blessed be God! we need not be in doubt on this important subject. He has given us evidence respecting it which is amply sufficient, definite, and positive; and which conclusively shows that the holy Scriptures were fully inspired by God. It is declared, 2 Tim. 3. 16-17, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

The two words in the original (*θεο πνεύω*), which

---

\* Dr. L. Woods.

are translated *inspiration*, properly mean that God breathed into and pervaded the minds of the sacred writers, as they wrote his will. This idea is frequently and forcibly presented in the Holy Book. David said, 2. Sam. 23. 2, "*The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.*" Jesus said to his disciples, Luke 12. 11-12, "When they shall bring you unto the synagogues, and magistrates, and powers, take no thought how or what ye shall answer or what ye shall say; *For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.*" The apostle Peter said to those who waited for the descent of the Holy Spirit, Acts 1. 16, "Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the *Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake* before concerning Judas, which was guide to them who took Jesus." Again, 2 Pet. 1. 21, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of men; but holy men of God *spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*"

In these and many other passages of Scripture, the idea suggested by the original words rendered inspiration, is embodied and distinctly urged. There is no mistaking it or escaping from it. It is boldly asserted as the truth of God. Hence this word inspiration, as used in Scripture, means: *that the Holy Spirit so specially pervaded the minds of the sacred writers,*

*as that they wrote just what he pleased, and as he pleased; so that the Holy Scriptures are a full and perfect expression of the will of God.*

This special divine influence extended not only to the thoughts, but to the manner of expressing them;—not only to the facts, precepts, and doctrines presented, but to the language used. In this, however, let it be observed, the Holy Spirit did not supersede, or set aside the natural powers of those persons he employed, for such was not the case. They were not used as mere machines, or simply as amanuenses, but while employed to publish his will, they were left in the full use of their own natural capacities and tastes. “Instead of using these men as mere organic instruments of his power, he thought right to leave them to the operations of their own minds, and the dictates of their own knowledge, habits and feelings, as to the manner of communicating his will. The Divine Spirit guarded the sacred penmen when they would otherwise have gone astray; superintended and watched every step of their progress; suggested, by direct discoveries, what lay beyond the reach of their means of knowledge, and directed them to every topic, which, to his infinite wisdom, appeared necessary upon the whole, for the instruction of the church and the conversion of mankind. Thus, on the one hand, the inspiration did not supersede, but support, elevate, and direct them

in the use of their natural faculties, of their stores of knowledge, of their experience and observation, and their efforts of recollection and reasoning. The human agency, on the other hand, did not weaken or defeat the supernatural communications, but conveyed them to men, moulded by the conceptions, and expressed in the words, of common life. The facts of the case by no means imply that man mingled his frailties with the revealed truths of Christianity; but simply that God was pleased to use man as his instrument. The human agency was subordinate to the divine. The Almighty Spirit moved and gently led on; the holy penmen followed the guidance. God inspired; man indited and wrote.”\* The agency of the Holy Spirit in this instance corresponded with that he exerts in the conversion and sanctification of souls; and which is never exercised in the supplanting, but in the employment of their powers.

This is the doctrine of inspiration which is taught in the Bible, and which has been warmly cherished by every evangelical denomination of christians from the days of the apostles until now. They have always esteemed it an essential principle of their faith; and the more vigorous their piety, the more earnestly they have believed and advocated this doctrine.

---

\* Wilson on Inspiration.

Before showing that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are thus fully inspired,\* it is desirable to ponder the three following observations.

1. *This complete inspiration is necessary to justify and sustain the high claims of Scripture.* The Bible claims to be a perfect guide, and an infallible test of truth. It is given to us as an all-sufficient directory in all the relations of life, and in all the duties we have to discharge. It enforces rules for the highest monarch, as well as for the meanest peasant; and it urges them as the dictates of infinite authority and love.

It is commended to us as the guide of the perplexed, the solace of the bereaved, the support of the weary, the refuge of the distressed, the strength of the weak, and the divine remedy for all the wants and ills of life. Amidst our moral darkness it appears as "the day star" from on high: as "the sure word of prophecy unto which we do well to take heed." In our guilt and moral ruin, it comes to us as the word which is "able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus;" and it says, "whosoever believeth shall be saved." It claims to be nothing less than a perfect, universal, and permanent standard of truth, and its assertions

---

\* To any who question the propriety of saying *the words* of Scripture are inspired, I would say, See Chalmers on Christian Revelation, p. 374, vol. 4: also, John 6. 63: Heb. 4. 12.

are: "These are the true sayings of God." "The oracles of God." "The Scriptures of truth." "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." It denounces the most awful judgments on those who either pervert or reject its statements; or who add to them or detract from them. It says, "Cursed is every one that continueth not all things written in the book of the law to do them."

Now how can these high and all-comprehensive claims be justified and sustained, if the Bible be not thoroughly and perfectly inspired? if it be not, in the fullest sense, the word that proceeded out of the mouth of God? So important is this doctrine of plenary inspiration, that we must choose between its reception and the rejection of the Bible as the word of God; for a book that is but partially inspired, cannot maintain such superior and exclusive claims.

2. This complete inspiration of the Scriptures *is indispensable to their meriting our religious veneration and unqualified deference.* We are required to regard the Bible, "not as the word of men, but as it is, in truth, the word of God." It is said, "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, he shall not enter therein." These injunc-



tions require us to cherish a religious reverence for the sacred word ; — to receive with childlike docility its teachings ; — to bow with unqualified submission to its authority, and to yield a cheerful obedience to its commands. We are to search it, not with a self-sufficient, captious spirit, but that we may know what God the Lord has said, and that we may do his will.

But is it just to demand this religious veneration and deference of us, if the Bible is not fully inspired ? Does it merit this at our hands, or can we intelligently and justly comply with the demand, if it is not the *Word of God* ?

Suppose that the assertion made by Dr. Priestly be correct ; that the writers of the books of Scripture were men, and therefore fallible, and, like all other historians, were liable to mistakes ; — what justice would there be in this requirement ? What propriety in our regarding it ? Suppose that the statements made by a professed teacher of Christianity in the present day be true ; that “ God is represented in a most unbecoming manner throughout the Pentateuch,” or five books of Moses ; — “ that in the books of Joshua and Judges there is a great mixture of fabulous traditions, such as are found in the early history of all other nations,” and that “ no one who puts aside the notion of the divine authority of all the Hebrew books, can doubt that extravagant fables and false prodigies are found in all those which relate the Jewish history antecedent

to the time of Samuel ;” — and that “ there seems to be no good reason why the books of Samuel and Kings should be regarded as exceptions to this mixture.”\* I say, suppose these statements are true ; what shadow of justice is there in this demand of the Bible for religious veneration and deference ? What lover of truth can regard it ? What friend of honesty can commend a book making such pretensions, yet containing such fabulous matter ? Justice and propriety would, in that case, demand the disregard of this requirement, and the rejection of the book. “ We must, therefore, either admit these writings to be the inspired word of God, and consequently free from imperfection and mistake, or consider them as mere impositions. To pretend to venerate them as the authentic records of his will and dispensations, and yet deny their inspiration, is absurd : it is believing the writers in what they say of other subjects, and disbelieving them in what they say of themselves. If their writings be not what they profess to be, they are impositions and deserve to be rejected. There is no consistent medium between faith and unbelief.”

3. This plenary inspiration of the Bible is indispensable to its adequately meeting our spiritual wants.

Suppose that it is not a perfectly inspired book ; — that it is like the beclouded teachings

---

\* Professor Norton, as quoted by Dr. Stuart.

of reason, or the dubious dictates of conscience ; imperfect in its discoveries, uncertain in its conclusions, and sometimes erroneous in its directions ; what confidence could we then place in its statements ? What reliance could we put on its promises ? What assurance could we have of the faithfulness of its record, or the truth of its decisions ?

If such was the character of the Bible, it would be, at best, but a slight advance on the teachings of nature. Then we should have no perfect teacher to point out the way of life ; — no infallible guide of opinions and practice ; — no sure rock of truth on which to build ; — nor any certain light to lead us to the world of rest. Then we should be as those are who have not the word of God, burdened with obligations, yet know not how to meet them ; — oppressed with guilt, yet ignorant of the way of pardon ; — anxious for peace, yet knowing not how to find it ; — sunk in moral degradation, without the means of relief ; destined to eternity, yet in a state of miserable uncertainty respecting what awaits us there. Then the sweet assurance which we now have, that there is a Father in heaven, that there is an Almighty Saviour there, that there is pardon for the guilty through his blood, — that whosoever believeth in him is justified from all things, — that all may come to him and obtain peace and eternal life, and that the Holy Spirit will gra-

ciously sanctify and lead them to everlasting glory, would not be possessed, but all would be gloom, uncertainty, and distress.

Take away the divine inspiration of the Bible ; — reduce this blessed book to a level with those of men ; and we are deprived of all that is dear, valuable, and essential ; — we are bereft of that which alone is adapted to meet our spiritual and immortal wants. The pearl of great price is gone. The day star has disappeared. The sun of righteousness, with his enlivening and invigorating beams, is no more seen or felt ; but darkness, coldness, and moral death prevail. Oh, pitiable condition ! Oh, miserable state ! To this, with all its horrors, would those systems lead us which deny the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

## CHAPTER II.

### *The Plenary Inspiration of the Old Testament.*

IN investigating the correctness of any article of our religious faith, it is desirable not only to ascertain the opinions of others, but to obtain definite ideas of our own. This, indeed, is indispensable to our understanding and enjoying the doctrines of religion, and to our being able to give a reason for the hope that is in us.

Those who neglect this, deprive themselves of much intelligent satisfaction, hinder their usefulness, endanger their religious stability, and expose themselves to be driven about by every wind of doctrine. Their faith will stand in the wisdom of men, not in the power of God.

The apostles, conscious of the importance of this course, urged the disciples not to yield a blind reliance on their teachers, but to think for themselves — to examine the oracles of God ; and it is said of the Bereans : “ These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so.”

This course every individual should pursue. As the reasons for any doctrine or duty are presented, they should ask themselves, Are these reasons scriptural? Do they harmonize with the declarations of the sacred word? Do they commend themselves to our minds as reasonable and accountable creatures? Do they accord with the wants of the immortal soul?

The answer to these questions may demand earnest and continued thought, and a close personal application of the subject; but this should not be avoided, for it will promote spiritual health, and be of invaluable service. Unhappily, individuals generally shrink from this. They are content to receive their religious opinions from others, to be governed in the adoption of these sentiments by the dictates of their carnal hearts, their intellectual pride, the views of some prominent minister or friend, or by the opinions which are prevalent around them. Even those whose creed is evangelical, and whose dispositions and aims are generally correct, are sometimes, in this particular, culpably negligent, and consequently are far from being either wise or strong in the Lord. This is to be deprecated as every way disastrous, and unworthy a christian mind. Let it not be indulged in relation to the subject discussed in this little work, but let every reader feel that he has a personal interest in this theme, and that it becomes

him to seek enlightened views, and to nourish a firm and scriptural faith.

Having seen the nature and importance of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, we are now to show *that the Old Testament is thus inspired.*

*This will appear from the perfection of its teachings.* On opening the Old Testament, we are met at its commencement with an account of the creation of this world, and the various beings and things found therein. This account is brief, simple, and comprehensive, adapted to the humblest, as well as the most elevated mind. It was written when the great facts of natural history, and the great principles of natural science, were but imperfectly, if at all, understood. It was written, too, by an individual who made no pretensions to an acquaintance with those facts and principles, and who belonged to a nation where the study of them was not cultivated.

Now what is the character of this account? Has it borne the test of enlightened scrutiny? Has it received the confidence of those who were prepared to judge of its truth? Yes, verily. It has been before the world for more than three thousand years, and has been sanctioned by men of all persuasions, not excepting those who, from their love of infidelity, would have been glad to charge it with error. And though not a few, in the immaturity of their knowledge, have assailed

it as incorrect, yet, with more perfect information, they have seen its exact accordance with truth, and have paid it their warmest commendation. So invariably and successfully have the assaults made upon it been repelled by the advancing discoveries of science, that we feel no solicitude respecting its correctness, and are sure that whatever future developments may be made, they will be found, when fully understood, to harmonize with this statement of God's word. This account now stands before us in all its simplicity and plainness, as the acknowledged perfection of truth, and as meriting universal belief and homage.

How shall we account for this perfection, if Moses was not divinely inspired? How, apart from this, could he have known the facts detailed? How was it his information was so far in advance of all other men? How is it that the advancing researches of the present enlightened age are constantly confirming its truth? And how is it that in its inferences it is now in advance of the best informed minds? What reason shall we assign for these things, if we deny the doctrine of plenary inspiration?

But, what is true of this, is true of the other parts of the Old Testament. The character of this may be taken as a just criterion whereby to judge of them. For if they are not all inspired in an *equal degree*, they are sufficiently so to insure infallible correctness in the annunciation of



their predictions and principles, and in the record of their facts.

Take, as an illustration, the entire book of Genesis. In the record of its facts is found a depth of knowledge, a brevity, a comprehensiveness and power of statement, and a perfection of beauty, which are superhuman, and have excited the homage of the most cultivated minds. The predictions found in this book, though given in a most unenlightened and idolatrous age, extended in their application to the various divisions of the human family, and to events which reach to the very end of time, and they have been, or are now being, confirmed by the experience of mankind. There is, as every individual who has studied the subject knows, a striking harmony between these and the other predictions of the Old Testament, and the events which have transpired in the history of our race. The one have answered to the other and shown the divine wisdom which guided the prophet's pen.

It has been truthfully said, "The book of Genesis alone is a source of all knowledge. It is a mountain where lofty cedars, the cedars of God, strike their roots deep, in whose recesses there is golden ore, on whose surface there is a wilderness of native flowers and fruits, through whose ravines run mighty rivers, and where ancient nations dwelt that were many and strong. Men of learning have traversed it; imagination has culled its

purest flowers ; curious research has traced out its time-worn channels ; and patient and discriminating toil has dug about its roots — and they are all found fresh and pure, and the soil inexhaustible.”\*

In this and the other books of Moses are found, plainly revealed and commended to us, all the great principles of commercial and social intercourse, of domestic happiness and prosperity, of education, of government, and religion, which are now receiving the homage of the most liberal and enlightened nations. And it is not till those nations have made a far greater advance in all these, than is at present realized, that they will reach the happy state presented in the Old Testament. They have only *approached* perfection ; but there is perfection itself. Its teachings stop at nothing short of the entire abolition of oppression, injustice, and war ; the universal prevalence of knowledge, purity, and peace, and the practical predominance throughout the earth of equality and love.

Such are the teachings of the Old Testament. They were given, be it remembered, when idolatry almost universally prevailed ; when despotism swayed its iron sceptre over the bodies and minds of men ; when all was averse to the progress of virtue, liberty, and knowledge ; and when “ darkness

---

\* Spring's Power of the Pulpit.

covered the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people.”

Now ask yourself, How can I account for the perfection of these teachings? Why did they present such a marked contrast to the maxims and information of the periods when they were delivered? Why did they discover such a depth and exactness of knowledge, and foretell with such correctness events that were so far distant, and of such extensive application? Why have they been loved and revered by the purest and most expanded minds that have ever lived? And why are they now so extensively revered, and so far in advance of the world? Can any adequate reason be assigned apart from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? This *only* is the cause, and the perfection of these teachings plainly declares the possession of this gift by the holy men who wrote this sacred book.

*The plenary inspiration of the Old Testament is asserted by its writers.* The conviction that they were inspired to declare the will of God, had an abiding hold on their minds, and exerted a controlling influence on their actions.

They both affirmed and displayed it, and they taught others to regard their words as the true sayings of God.

Moses declared that the Lord said, respecting himself and Aaron, Exo. 4. 15-16, — “I will be with thy mouth, and be 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." David said, 2 Sam. 23. 2, "The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." As we turn to the writings of Isaiah and the other prophets, we find them frequently saying, "The Lord said unto me," or "Hear ye the word of the Lord." They usually commenced their respective books by saying, "The word of the Lord that came unto Jeremiah," or Hosea, &c.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, they denounced severe judgments against those who rejected or disobeyed the instructions they gave. Moses said, Deut. 28. 58-59, "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. See also, Lev. 26. 14-17; Deut. 28. 15, &c. Isaiah said, 5. 24, "Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have cast away the law of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel." The truth of these denun-

ciations the sacred historians declare, has been confirmed by the punishments experienced by the Jews.

What shall we say to these assertions? To suppose them *forgeries* is what no one can consistently do. To deny their truthfulness, and hence, the inspiration of the Old Testament, is to charge their authors with deception and falsehood, to affirm that the whole Jewish nation were deceived, that the divine historians have uttered untruths; and it is to brand as false a book which has received the unqualified approbation of holy men and God. From this issue we turn with thankfulness to the belief that this sacred book is fully inspired by God.

*Jesus and his Apostles taught and enforced the divine inspiration and authority of the Old Testament.* The Saviour was well aware of the religious veneration in which the Jews held the Scriptures, and we cannot doubt but that he would have condemned this spirit had it been erroneous. But instead of condemnation, he commended it, both by precept and example, and sought to make it more intelligent and practical. At the very commencement of his ministry he publicly said, Matt. 5. 17, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." In resisting the tempter he employed expressions taken from the Old Testament, which are, the sword of the

spirit, and the word of God. When appealed to on the subject of divorce, he referred to the declaration of Moses, in Genesis, as of divine authority, and said, Matt. 19. 4-5, "Have ye not *read* that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female, and said, 'For this cause shall man leave father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh?'" When the Sadducees, who said there is no resurrection, tempted him with a question respecting the Mosaic law, he said, Matt. 22. 29-32, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying; I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." When the disciples expressed astonishment at the events attendant on his death, he said, Luke 24. 25-27, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And *beginning at Moses and all the prophets*, he expounded unto them in *all the Scriptures* the things concerning himself." Referring to the common opinion which the Jews entertained of the sacred word, he said, John 5. 39, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." Again, in Luke 16. 29, he spoke of them as a sufficient guide to

heaven. And just before he ascended to heaven he said to his disciples, Luke 24. 44-45, "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in *the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms,\** concerning me. Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures."

No testimony to the divine authority of the Old Testament could be more full or decisive. It included every part of the sacred book, and consisted, not only in expounding and enforcing its truths, but in a personal and universal submission to its requirements. That individual who can suppose that Jesus Christ could do all this, and yet deny its *perfect inspiration*, must have strangely mistaken both the Saviour's knowledge and integrity.

It was precisely so with the Apostles. They did not, when referring to the Old Testament, speak with doubt or hesitation, but with a firm belief in its divine authority. They designated it, "The word of God," "The lively Oracles," "The Oracles of God." They quoted its assertions as beyond appeal. If the doctrine or the duty they enforced was confirmed by Moses and

---

\* That this designation of the Old Testament was common among the Jews, and comprised the books it now contains, and no others, see Chalmer's on Christian Revelation, pp. 213-343, vol. 4, and Stuart on the Old Testament

the prophets, that was deemed sufficient to prove it divine. Asserting the doctrine of universal depravity, Paul said, Rom. 3. 10, "*As it is written; There is none righteous, no, not one.*" Again, affirming the doctrine of justification by faith, he said, Rom. 4. 3, "What saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Again, respecting the divinity of Christ, Heb. 1. 6, "When he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, *he saith; And let all the angels of God worship him.*" Peter said, 1 Eph. 1. 15-16, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Because it is *written; Be ye holy; for I am holy.*" This proof was decisive. It was unanswerable and complete. Thus sustained, the doctrine, or the precept, was received as God's.

But they *positively asserted* this all-important fact. Peter directly said, Acts 1. 16, "*The Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake* before concerning Judas which was guide to them that took Jesus." Again, 1 Pet. 1. 21, "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Paul said, 2 Tim. 3. 16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."\*

---

\* If any think that truth uttered by heathen writers, was as much inspired, and of equal authority, as the



Here we have all, then, that can be reasonably required. The doctrine is declared in every way that can be justly wished. It was cherished and practically honored by Jesus and his inspired Apostles; and they have commended it to the world. "They never, in a single instance, taught or said the least thing which implied that there was any book, or any text contained in the Scriptures, which was not the word of God, and which had not divine authority. And they never said anything which implied that one part was the word of God in a lower sense, or that it had less authority than other parts. They never gave the least intimation which was calculated to make such an impression on the minds of men. They never gave any caution to christians, or even to Jews, against attributing too high an authority, or attaching too much importance to the Holy Scriptures. They were so far from this, that they made it a great object to produce among men a higher reverence for all and every part of the sacred volume, and to excite them

---

declarations of Moses, Isaiah, &c., it may be well for them to ask, Did *Jesus* teach thus? Did he ever submit his claims to the decision of those writers? Did he expound their declarations for the benefit of those who listened to him? Did he urge the Jews to search their writings, as he commanded them to "*Search the Scriptures?*" Did he utter a single word enjoining deference to them, as to "*Moses and the Prophets?*"

more diligently to search it, and more entirely to confide in it, as containing truth unmixed with error.”\* This is the course we should pursue ; for it alone is safe to man, and honorable to God.

*The divine utility of the Old Testament declares its complete inspiration.* This sacred book, like the New Testament, is designed to meet wants and accomplish ends, which nothing else can do. These wants are not physical, but spiritual ; not limited, but extending to all mankind, and to all eternity. These ends are nothing short of the spiritual illumination of the world, and the everlasting salvation of those who believe.

Now to effect these designs, it must be divinely inspired. For here are depths which no human eye can see ;— here are wants which no finite mind can understand ;—and here are bounds which no mortal intellect can reach. None but divine words could discover to us the glories of the divine character and government ;— the awful nature and effects of guilt ;— the sinful snares and hellish wiles to which we are exposed ;— the duties we owe to God ;— the kind designs he has formed respecting our race ; and the ultimate destiny of the righteous and the wicked in another world.

---

\* Dr. Woods on Inspiration.

None but divine words could renew the heart ; — subdue the unholy will — give peace to the troubled conscience — sanctify the nature — arm the soul against the allurements of sin, and strengthen it to resist all the temptations of the devil. And none but divine words could enable a single individual to rejoice in affliction — to look with intelligent composure and hope on death, or give an assurance of waking up hereafter in the likeness of Jesus, and participating in those eternal pleasures which are at his right hand.

And yet all this, and more than this, the precious words of the Old Testament have done. Hence the sacred writers speak with frequency and truth of their tendency to bless mankind. No point was presented with greater decision and power than this. The psalmist David said, Ps. 19. 7-11, ‘The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.’ The apostle Paul said, Rom. 15. 4, “What-

soever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Again, 2 Tim. 3. 15-17, "The Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." To consummate the whole, the apostle Peter presented a striking comparison between the assertions of the Old Testament and the voice which he, and two of his fellow disciples, heard, when with Jesus on the mount. After speaking of the testimony they received to the honor and glory of Christ, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, saying, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased," he added, "We have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." By this he meant the Scriptures of the Old Testament, for he immediately said, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

What force there is in this comparison! How immensely valuable must be this blessed book, when its testimony is of greater worth than a

direct revelation from heaven, accompanied with such overpowering manifestations of divine majesty! How utterly inadequate are all conceptions and expressions of its value and utility! How greatly should we prize it! How diligently should we study its precious truths!

What now shall we think of those who deny the plenary inspiration of this sacred book? who throw doubt on its statements, or affirm that some of them are fabulous and unworthy of belief? How shall we regard those who constantly and systematically aim to undermine and destroy its divine authority? From all such we should turn away. Their course is unscriptural and criminal. It is plainly opposed to the teachings of Jesus, and nothing short of an entire submission to him in this, as well as other particulars, will be pleasing to God, or safe and happy for ourselves. This is the book of God. It is his voice speaking to man. It brings to us saving knowledge. It points out the way to everlasting life.

“’T is like the sun, a heavenly light,  
That guides us all the day,  
And, through the dangers of the night,  
A lamp to lead our way.

“’T is a broad land of wealth unknown,  
Where springs of life arise;  
Seeds of immortal bliss are sown,  
And hidden glory lies.”

## CHAPTER III.

### *The Plenary Inspiration of the New Testament.*

AN adequate conception of the subject before us is indispensable to our earnest and prayerful investigation of the truth. We have to examine a question which is vitally important. It is whether the New Testament is, or is not, the book of God. And, compared with this, all matters of worldly interest dwindle into insignificance.

On a question of such magnitude it may be reasonably supposed that we are not left to doubtful and inconclusive testimony, but that we have the fullest and most decisive proof. So it is. God has graciously given us all we can justly desire or demand. It is plain, convincing, and abundant; adapted to the humblest and the loftiest mind. It only requires that we regard it with impartiality and candor to feel that it is unanswerable and complete.

*The New Testament assumes to be the perfect book of God.* Like the personal teaching of Jesus Christ, it does not stop to reason this point with

men, but proceeds throughout on the assumption that its authority is divine. This of itself, however, is not sufficient to prove that authority, but if it be sustained by the character of the book, and by other decisive proofs, it must be deemed worthy of regard.

In the preceding chapter we saw that the Old Testament is thus inspired. But the New Testament is declared to be superior to that; and this superiority consists in its more extensive and permanent application, its more perfect discoveries, and its clearer and richer manifestations of the divine character, designs, and will. That, as compared with this, was like the dawning before the perfect day. That was altogether local in its application — this is altogether universal. That was in part temporary — this is entirely permanent. That, like the numeral letters in arithmetic, presented the elements of truth — in this, the truth is fully revealed. That, in the wisdom and kindness of God, was suited to the then existing state of men — this conducts them on to perfection. That indicated the approach, but this announces the coming and reign of the Sun of Righteousness. That declared the splendor and solemnities of the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire; but this reveals the grace and attractions of Mount Zion, where we come “to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable

company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." The apostle Paul said, 2 Cor. 3. 7-10, "But if the ministration of death, written and engraved in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory which excelleth." This is decisive. If we had no other proof of the inspiration of the New Testament, this would be sufficient, — its superiority to the old.

*The scheme of doctrine and morals presented in the New Testament shows its perfect inspiration.* This scheme is so pure, exalted, and benevolent, that it has always been the admiration of all holy men. The more they have studied it, the more they have been impressed and delighted by its divine adaptation, its matchless purity, its surpassing kindness, its vast comprehen-



siveness, its ever increasing freshness, and its God-like sublimity. There the perfections, the character, the laws, and the works of God, are delineated in a manner that it was not possible for man to do, and which could only be done by that divine spirit, "who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." There the character of man is described in its original perfection, and its present lapsed and ruined state, as no one could describe it who is not perfectly acquainted with all the past history of our race, and all the disastrous operations and effects of sin. There the salvation provided by Jesus is made known, in the infinite benignity of its source; the eternity of its date; the manner of its purchase, by the incarnation, obedience, death and intercession of Christ; the gracious mode of its application by the Holy Spirit to the soul; the way of its realization through faith in Jesus, with all its glorious and eternal fruits. And there the great realities of futurity are fully presented to our view, so that we know what will be the rule of judgement in each individual case, who will be the judge of all mankind, what the transactions of the final day, what the destiny of the righteous and the wicked, and with whom they will separately mingle to all eternity. All these great doctrines are there described with such simplicity, fullness, and power, that every one who reads can readily perceive and understand them.

There, also, we are taught to “love the Lord our God with all our heart, and all our soul; to love our neighbor as ourselves; to fulfill perfectly the relative duties of every particular station; to lay aside all malice, envy, hatred, revenge, and other malevolent dispositions or passions, to love our enemies, to render good for evil, blessing for cursing, and to pray for them who despitefully use us and persecute us.” These laws of universal purity and benevolence are there prescribed with an authority proper only to God, and extended to such a compass and degree as God alone can demand: and those sins are forbidden which God alone could either observe or prohibit.

The most powerful motives to duty and dissuaves from vice, are there wisely proposed and powerfully urged; motives drawn from the nature and perfections, the promises and the threatenings, the mercies and judgments of God; particularly, from his overflowing benevolence and mercy in the work of our redemption, and from advantages and disadvantages, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. And while the most excellent means are employed of directing and exciting to the exercise of piety and virtue, the most engaging patterns of holiness are set before us, in the example of our Redeemer, and of God as reconciled in him, and reconciling the world to himself.

Such is the scheme of *doctrine* and *morals*, *presented* in the New Testament, and *on it* men have never been able to improve. *Though*, with two exceptions, it was written by a few poor illiterate and despised men; though it was written in a most idolatrous age; when the nations of the earth were sunk in the grossest ignorance of God and true religion; when immorality of every name was triumphant and encouraged; still it has ever stood before the world as surpassing in adaptation, comprehensiveness, and perfection, all the thoughts and works of men. There have been numbers of learned men of diverse views and dispositions, and belonging to different nations, who have, in every age, applied themselves to the study of religion and morals, with the attendant obligations and privileges. Some of them were friendly to the Christian system, while others were its decided foes. Yet, with all their prolonged, anxious, earnest study, they have neither been able to make any improvement on this divine system, nor find the least imperfection in it. After a trial, in every possible way, and in every variety of circumstance, throughout more than eighteen hundred years, it has always been found unequalled and perfect; and the more men have advanced in the knowledge and practice of virtue, whether in relation to each other, or the duty they owe to God, the more they have seen of its divine perfection. It has always been in advance of their spiritual

discoveries and attainments, and it is now, as with an angel's voice, calling them to higher degrees of moral excellence and pleasure.

Now I would ask, is not this absolutely astonishing? How is it that after a scrutiny so severe and prolonged, there has not been found the least imperfection in this system of doctrine and morals? How is it that amidst all the improvements which have been made in physical science, and civil economy, none has been made in this? How is it that with all the progress which, within the last century, has been made in the knowledge and practice of christian benevolence, we still find ourselves far behind both the spirit and precept of the New Testament? These things cannot be accounted for apart from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And, if there be anything convincing in an entire harmony of statement, in a perfect adaptation to all the mental and moral wants of mankind, and in an invariable tendency to elevate and bless them for time and eternity:—if there be anything decisive in the expression of spotless purity, in the declaration of all comprehending wisdom, and in the manifestation of infinite benevolence and truth, then we must regard this sacred book as a full and adequate expression of the mind of God.

*Jesus Christ promised that the writers of the New Testament should be inspired.* He said, Luke 12. 12, “The Holy Ghost shall teach you

in the same hour, what ye ought to say." Again, John 14. 26, "But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you;" 16. 13, "When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come;" 15. 26, 27, "He shall testify of me. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."

Here is a full and definite promise, given by the Lord to his disciples, of divine inspiration, to assist them to recollect what he had previously said to them; to guide them into all truth; to show them things to come, and to enable them to testify of him before the world.

Now, suppose for a moment, that these promises were not fulfilled; that the writers of the New Testament, were not thus inspired; and how does this supposition bear on the character and work of Jesus? It places him in the situation of one who has given a pledge, yet failed to fulfil it:—who has excited expectations, yet suffered them to fail. It implies, moreover, that he left them to publish the great truths and rules of his kingdom, which are of unspeakable importance to the best interests of the human family, and the maintenance

of his authority, without affording them an infallible guide, without giving them that aid which would ensure their doing it with truth, and without the mixture of human imperfections. Does this accord with the Saviour's faithfulness? with his previous regard to their necessities? with his love to mankind? or with his concern for the interest of religion and the glory of God? would a wise earthly ruler thus act? Do human legislators permit their laws to be thus published? Had Jesus done so, would it not altogether change our conceptions of his character, and declare that he is unfit to be the Mediatorial Sovereign of the world?

But from such a conclusion we instantly shrink. It is dishonorable to God, and distressing to man. Were it true, his claim to our confidence and homage would be gone. Our hope of salvation and peace would be blasted, and we should be shut up in gloomy, hopeless despair.

But, blessed be Jesus, this is not true. He did give his disciples the promised teacher and guide; and of it we have sufficient proof in the writings they have left. The late Dr. Dwight well said; "No power of human memory could enable them to retain such a mass of communications, for any length of time, much less for *such* a length of time as intervened between their reception of them, and the publication of those writings in which they were conveyed to the

world. If we consider the numerous events in the life of Christ which they recorded, and still more the numerous discourses which they have professed to recount, we must either admit that these records are very imperfectly true, because necessarily not exact, or that the apostles had such supernatural assistance as to make them exact, and in this manner, true. This assistance can be no other than inspiration.”

“The gospel of St. Matthew was written, according to the earliest calculation, *eight years* after the death of Christ; that of Mark and that of Luke about the year 64, more than twenty years after the death of Christ; and that of John, to say the least, at a much later period. Nothing can be more evident than that these writers could not, for such a length of time, retain, by the mere natural force of memory, the things which they have recorded. Particularly is this impossibility manifest with respect to the numerous discourses recorded by St. John, of which, in so great a proportion, his gospel consists; discourses differing from all others known in this present world, strongly characteristical, and therefore fairly presumed to be genuine; — discourses raised up by events distinctly recorded, and perfectly suited to those events, composed of questions and answers, arguments and objections, so minutely specified as to wear the appearance of having been taken down on the spot, and at the

moment, with uncommon skill and facility. He who believes St. John could remember these things in his old age, by the mere natural force of memory, certainly can find no difficulty in admitting any proposition because it asserts something miraculous ; for no miracle involves a more absolute counteraction of the known laws of nature than that which is involved in this supposition." Here, therefore, we have the proof that the Saviour's promise was fulfilled, and that the New Testament writers were divinely inspired.

*The writers of this sacred book believed themselves to be thus inspired.* This is evinced throughout their writings, and is shown by the claims they put forth. They affirmed that they were the divinely appointed and special witnesses for Christ. They said, 1. Cor. 4. 1, " Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." They urged their teachings as the truth of God, and said, 1 John, 4. 6, " We are of God. He that knoweth God heareth us ; he that is not of God heareth not us." They placed themselves on a full equality with the ancient prophets of the Lord. The apostle Paul said, Eph. 3. 4-5, " Whereby, when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ. Which in other ages was not made unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles, and



prophets, by the spirit." See also Rom. 16. 25-27. They designated their instructions as, "The truth," "The gospel of Christ," "The glorious gospel of the blessed God," "The word of God;" and the apostle Peter said, 4 Ep. 3. 1, 2, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you;—that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."

This would have been sufficient to have shown the reality and power of their conviction, that they were specially and fully inspired of God; but they went further, and *directly affirmed the fact*. Luke says, Acts 2. 4, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Paul said, Gal. 1. 11, 12, "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by revelation of Jesus Christ." Again, 1 Cor. 11. 23, "For I have received of the Lord that which, also, I delivered unto you." Again, 1 Cor. 2. 12, 13, 16, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God. Which things, also, we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. We have the mind of Christ." They enforced

their instructions as of *divine authority on the church*. Peter, in the passage already quoted, spoke of his epistles, "as the *commandment* of us the Apostles of the Lord." John said, 1 Ep. 1. 4, "These things we write unto you, that your joy may be full." Paul said, 2 Thess. 3. 6, "Now we *command* you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Again, 1 Thess. 4. 8, "He, therefore, that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us of his Holy Spirit." And referring to the last great day, he said, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, *according to my Gospel*."

Guided by the Holy Spirit, they, like the writers of the Old Testament, denounced heavy judgments against those who should take from or alter the sayings of this sacred book. Paul said, Gal. 1. 3, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." John said, Rev. 22. 18, 19, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and the things which are written in this book."

Here we have evidence of the fact that the writers of the New Testament believed themselves inspired, as complete as can be thought of or desired. It must carry conviction to every candid mind. And when it is remembered that Jehovah attested the correctness of their claims and assertions by his own miraculous gifts, so that they were enabled to heal the sick, raise the dead to life, and speak in other tongues the wonderful works of God, the argument must be regarded as unanswerable and sufficient of itself to sustain the doctrine that the New Testament is the perfect work of God.

Once more; the inspiration of this sacred book is shown *by the use which God has made of it, or what he has effected by it.*

The Gospel is peculiarly the sword of the spirit. By it Jehovah works in the subjugation of sin, the conversion and sanctification of souls, and in the fulfilment of his purposes of grace. Through his blessing it has prevailed, not only without any compromise with the world, or aid from its secular powers, but in direct opposition thereto. It has been "mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." It has "triumphed over the craft, rage, and power of the infuriated Jews, over the pride

of learning, and the obstinacy of ignorance, hatred, and lust;—over the hardened inclinations, deep rooted customs, and long established laws, of both Jews and Pagans, — so that, notwithstanding every conceivable form of opposition, within a few years after Christ's ascension, it prevailed, in a greater or less degree, in almost every corner of the Roman empire, and in the countries adjacent, and multitudes, at the hazard of every temporal loss or punishment, readily believed, constantly adhered to, and cheerfully and strictly practised its pure and holy precepts." Nor has the success of Christianity been confined to the early ages only; for during the period of eighteen centuries, notwithstanding innumerable persecutions, together with the wickedness of many of its professors and ministers, it has been successful in reforming the hearts and lives of multitudes in almost every nation under heaven; and at the present time there are hundreds of thousands who by it, have been quickened from a death in sin to a life in Jesus Christ, who, "being made free from sin, and become the servants of God, have their fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life."

The Gospel has been, from the very first, the efficient instrument of civilization, intelligence, and happiness. By it, peace, liberty, and righteousness have been diffused among mankind. By it, they have been raised from the depths of

wretchedness and sin, to the enjoyment of distinguished temporal blessings, and to the possession of spiritual health. By it, they have been brought nigh to God, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

“ This remedy did wisdom find,  
To heal diseases of the mind ;  
This sovereign balm, whose virtues can  
Restore the ruined creature, man.

“ The gospel bids the dead revive,  
Sinners obey the voice and live ;  
Dry bones are raised and clothed afresh,  
And hearts of stone are turned to flesh.

“ Nations, the learned, and the rude,  
Are by these heavenly arms subdued ;  
While satan rages at his loss,  
And hates the doctrine of the cross.”

## CHAPTER IV.

*Objections to the Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures answered, and the Bearings of the opposite Sentiment shown.*

IN the preceding chapters we have seen the nature and importance of inspiration, with the plenary inspiration of both the Old Testament and the New. It is necessary now to notice some of the objections to this doctrine with the consequences involved in its rejection.

It is no valid objection to this doctrine, *that we do not understand how, or in what manner, the minds of the sacred writers were affected by the Holy Spirit*; for neither can we tell how he works in the regeneration of the soul. All we know is, that Christ has said, John 3. 3, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Neither is it any good objection to this doctrine, *that the writers were not confined to the communication of new truths*. For it was quite as necessary to re-assert, and record with infallible correctness those truths which God had previously

stamped on the soul, as to declare those new doctrines, or precepts, he wished to reveal. This inspiration was therefore employed to assist the memories of the sacred writers in relation to what was previously known, as well as to enable them to foretell things to come.

It is no objection, *that the sacred writers wrote some expressions which seem of little importance.* For this is in harmony with God's operations in nature. He has created the blade of grass, as well as the spacious fruitful tree; — the insect as well as the man. These expressions were, not unfrequently, indispensable to the impartial and perfect presentation of the truth; and though they may appear to us, at this distance of time, as of but little moment, they probably were, when written, of great consequence in the estimation of the saints, and for the promotion of the truth.

It is not a sound objection to this doctrine, *that there are found occasional inaccuracies in the statements of Scripture, or instances of apparent disagreement among its writers.* For these inaccuracies are, at best, but slight. They never refer to predictions, doctrines, or precepts, but to matters of limited application, and of comparatively little moment, and should be attributed to transcribers, and not to the original writers. As to instances of disagreement, many have found these, with more enlightened and earnest study, to be only imaginary, and, did we more fully see

light in God's light, we should find that all is harmony, beauty, and perfection.

Neither, finally, is it any valid objection to the perfect inspiration of the Scriptures, *that there are found recorded in them some expressions which were not true*. Such a record was indispensable to the perfection of the holy word. An individual who undertakes to give a correct representation of some event which has transpired, may find himself obliged to repeat some unrighteous expressions; but in doing this he is influenced by a strict regard to truth, and, instead of approving or endorsing them, he may at the same time abominate them as most untrue.

So it is with the Scriptures of truth. God saw that it was necessary for our instruction that the expressions and deeds, not only of good men, but also those of bad men, should, in some instances, be recorded; therefore it has been done. But in making this record, the object was, *not to express approval*, but to give a faithful and infallible representation of what transpired. This fact it is very important to observe, for it will explain what otherwise would be perplexing to an inquiring mind.

The following illustrations will make this point more plain. In the book of Job we are informed that Satan said to God respecting that holy man, "Put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face." But



the result showed that this expression bore the characteristic of its author; *it was false*. For though all Job had was smitten, yet it is said, "In all this he sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

Again, Satan said to the Lord, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will be given for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face." Job was then smitten "with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown; and he took a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes." Yet it is declared, "In all this did not Job sin with his lips." In both instances the assertions of Satan were false, yet they are inscribed on the sacred page, to give us a faithful delineation of the character of this accuser of the brethren, and of the integrity of patient Job. So it is with other expressions found in this book; they are recorded, not because their authors were inspired by the Holy Spirit, or spoke truthfully, but to give us a faithful record of what was said, and to lead us to a just regard of God, of his designs, and of his administration.

So it is in the New Testament. There are recorded the reproaches and accusations of the Jews against the Lord. They said of him, Luke 7. 33, "Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." —

Again, Mark 3. 22, "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of devils casteth he out devils." Who believes these expressions are true, as applied to the Holy Jesus? Yet they are written in the sacred book, and it was necessary they should be, that the world might have a perfect history of the life of Christ. By this record we see how the blessed Redeemer was assailed, and how severe the trials which he endured. By it we are prepared to receive and bear the frowns of the world, and to look up with hope and sympathy to him, who "was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." And the record of these expressions, instead of being regarded as an objection to the perfect inspiration of the Scriptures, should be esteemed as a delightful proof of its reality, for it shows the regard which the Holy Spirit had to our comfort and instruction.

These are the principal objections to this doctrine. Others may be mentioned, but they are by no means unanswerable, nor of sufficient force to justify the rejection of any part of this book as uninspired, for divine testimony says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

It is now necessary to consider *the bearings of the sentiment that the Scriptures are not fully inspired*. These are most momentous, and apply to every article of our faith, to the vigor of our

piety, and to the very existence of our religious hopes.

Think of its bearings *on the practice and character of the Lord Jesus Christ*. We have already seen that he regarded the instructions of the Old Testament with unqualified reverence, enforced them as of divine authority, and exhorted the Jews to search them as the words of eternal life. Never, in a single instance, nor in the most indirect manner, did he say or do any thing which conflicted with these instructions, or indicated a doubt of the divinity of this part of the sacred word. But, if they were *not* divinely inspired, he either did or did not know it. If he did *not* know it, then it follows that he was subject to ignorance and error, that he was less wise than the sceptical critics of our own day, and that his teaching is erroneous and unworthy of our regard. If he *did* know it, then it follows, that though bound to teach faithfully the truth of God, he did not do so; that he fostered one of the greatest errors and superstitions of the Jews; that he presented as a divine book that which is not so; taught his disciples to do the same, and condemned the Jews for not regarding with greater reverence its words. One of these conclusions is inevitable. There is no possibility of escape. And either one, IF TRUE, would show that Jesus Christ does not deserve the unquali-

fied confidence of mankind, and that he is not fit to be the Saviour of the world.

The belief that the New Testament is not thus perfectly inspired, applies with similar effect to the *character of Jesus*. He did unquestionably promise that his servants should be inspired to teach his will ; that the Holy Spirit should bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever he had said unto them ; should tell them what to say, and show them things to come. The fulfilment of this promise was indispensable to fit the apostles for the duties they had to discharge, and to give perfection and authority to the instructions of the New Testament. But suppose the sentiment is true that they were not thus inspired ; then it follows that the promise of Jesus was not fulfilled ; that he was not faithful to his word ; that he sent forth his servants on an embassy which most intimately concerned the maintenance of his authority, and the highest welfare of his creatures, without giving them the necessary qualifications and instructions, and without furnishing them with infallible rules, for the perfect publication and enforcement of his will.

Do these things accord with the declaration of the gospel, that Jesus is "*full of grace and truth?*" Do they not reflect most painfully on his wisdom, integrity, benevolence, and entire character ? Would they not, if true, compel us

to change altogether our ideas of Jesus? destroy our confidence in him, and place us in a state of the most painful uncertainty respecting the requirements of God, and the way of peace and salvation?

Such are the bearings of the sentiment, that the Bible is only *partially inspired* on the practice and character of Jesus Christ. It not only denies his divinity, but it destroys his claim to be regarded as an infallible teacher of truth, and a perfect pattern for the imitation of mankind.

Think of the bearings of this sentiment *on those who indulge it in relation to Christ*. A great number of those who refuse to receive the Scriptures as wholly and perfectly inspired, profess to admire the perfect character and wisdom of Jesus, to receive his sayings as the truth of God, and to follow him as their teacher and pattern. They call themselves his disciples, and enjoin the duty of believing and doing as he did.

But where do we find that Jesus expressed the least doubt of the divine inspiration of the Bible? Where shall we look for the least indication of this? Where in all his teachings shall we find a single word, which, fairly construed, can be regarded as encouraging the disbelief of this doctrine?

I hazard nothing in saying that there is no such proof. He not only did not question this doctrine, but he boldly, continuously, and in the

most decisive manner, affirmed it. As of divine authority, he personally received and obeyed the Scriptures;—as such, he submitted his claims to their decision;—and as such, he enforced a childlike deference to their teachings. The Rev. Prof. Stuart, after an extensive examination of this subject, says, “I have fully shown that Christ and his apostles did receive the Old Testament Scriptures as divine and authoritative. If this be not fully shown, then I must despair of ever seeing any point established in sacred criticism, either in respect to facts or opinions. There is not a circumstance in all the history of religion, appertaining to ancient times, that is capable of more absolute demonstration than this.”

Now, I would ask, are they who disbelieve the plenary inspiration, either of the Old or New Testament Scriptures, the consistent followers of Christ? Are they obediently receiving his instructions? Are they imitating his perfect pattern? Nay, they are acting in direct opposition to his example, and, no matter what their professions, they are the opponents of Jesus and the rejecters of his authority. The distinguished theologian just quoted, says: “It is no light matter what judgment we form on a subject of such high and holy import as this. It is a case in which a direct demand is made upon us for submission and deference to Christ and his apostles; and we cannot thrust it aside. The

simple and ultimate question is: *Are we to admit their authority and example, or to gainsay the one, and shun an imitation of the other.*"

Think again, of the bearings of this sentiment *on ourselves, and the best interests of society.* Every individual who has earnestly thought on the subject, knows that mankind need, in matters of faith and practice, a perfect and infallible guide. Such a guide the Bible is, and the more elevated and Christ-like our moral dispositions are, the more disposed we shall be to receive its teachings with child-like homage and deference. *Then* it will be our delight, and we shall feel that the loftiest act of the human intellect is to receive, with unfeigned and unqualified submission, its divine statements.

But if this blessed book be not thus received; if we doubt its entire inspiration, and question the divine authority of any of its declarations, how shall our spiritual necessities be supplied? How shall we know what is truth? How shall we obtain religious comfort and stability? How shall we guard ourselves from the growing influence of error and sin?

I once knew an individual of considerable mental attainments, of great amiability of temper, and of high standing in the church, who, after professedly regarding the whole Bible as the book of God, began to doubt the correctness of this opinion. Then he disbelieved it. Then he

would not admit as true those principles which are based on this doctrine. Then he openly and bitterly opposed certain truths of the Bible. Then he separated himself from his previous religious connections, united himself with the advocates of error, and became an open enemy of the truth. Throughout this whole process he seemed in a most uncomfortable state of mind, and he was, I fear, ever after, a stranger to holy peace, and firm assured faith. This is not an uncommon case. Many have taken a similar course, and found a similar end.

“When our confidence in God’s word is impaired, however slightly, we are left in uncertainty and peril. It must be perfect and entire, else it has no element of safety. If one portion is cast away, the whole revelation may soon be doubted or discarded. Cut a single strand of the rope which raises the collier from his dark mine, and the rest may soon part, and leave him to be dashed in pieces below. Break a single line in the connected revealings of God, and you leave them a heap of fragments, to be picked away by every pilfering hand. The process once started in a sceptical mind, can thenceforward be traced, only as the spiral currents of the whirlwind, by the desolations they leave behind.”

Similar, in a great degree, will be the influence of this sentiment on society. That is made



up of separate individuals, and what their opinions and habits are, its prevailing features will be. Let the impression generally prevail that the Bible is not wholly true; that it is not entirely of divine authority, and, if the influence of this sentiment is not controled by opinions previously held, or by the religious views and habits of other persons around, it will soon appear that the word of God is but little read and revered by the members of that community, and that they pay little regard to its institutions and requirements. Deeply inlaid in their minds will be the seeds of error, which, if allowed to bring forth their appropriate fruit, will appear in the practical rejection of the Bible as a divine book; in the abandonment of its peculiar doctrines; in the repudiation of its high prohibitions and sanctions; in the disregard of its obligations; in the profanation of the sabbath; and in the indulgence of a prevailing scepticism which will be the bane of private and social happiness and virtue. There the foundations of the social fabric will be undermined; its securities will be weakened; its moral power will be broken; the source of its strength and happiness will be discarded; and it will be controled by influences which will inevitably lead to misery and ruin.

Such are the bearings of this sentiment that the word of God is *not* perfectly inspired, on the character of Jesus Christ; on the conduct of men

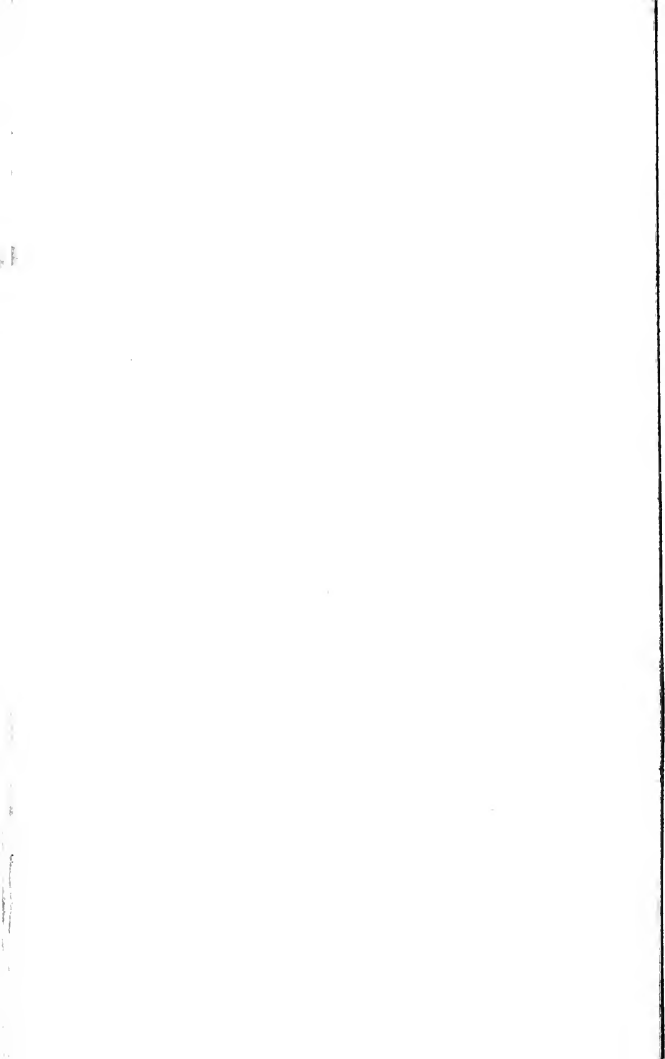
in relation to him ; and on the moral welfare of the individual, and of society. And can this sentiment be true ? Was the blessed Saviour chargeable with deceit ? Is *he* unworthy of our imitation and confidence ? Are his instructions undeserving our regard ? Shall we cast aside the light of heaven and plunge ourselves into worse than midnight darkness ? Shall we discard, what experience, as well as divine assertion, declares is the infallible and perfect guide, for the dubious, conflicting, and insufficient dictates of reason ? May God forbid ! But with a more enlightened and firmer faith, with increased docility of spirit, and with a stronger desire to know and do the will of God, let us earnestly cleave to the *whole Bible*, as the perfect, infallible, ever-enduring word of the Lord.

“ Most wondrous book ! bright candle of the Lord !  
Star of eternity ! the only star  
By which the bark of man could navigate  
The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss  
Securely ; only star which rose on Time,  
And on its dark and troubled billows, still,  
As generation drifting swiftly by,  
Succeeded generation, threw a ray,  
Of heaven’s own light, and to the hills of God,  
The eternal hills, pointed the sinner’s eyes ;  
By prophets, seers, and priests, and sacred bards,  
Evangelists, apostles, men inspired,  
And by the Holy Ghost anointed, set  
Apart and consecrated to declare  
To earth the counsels of the Eternal One,

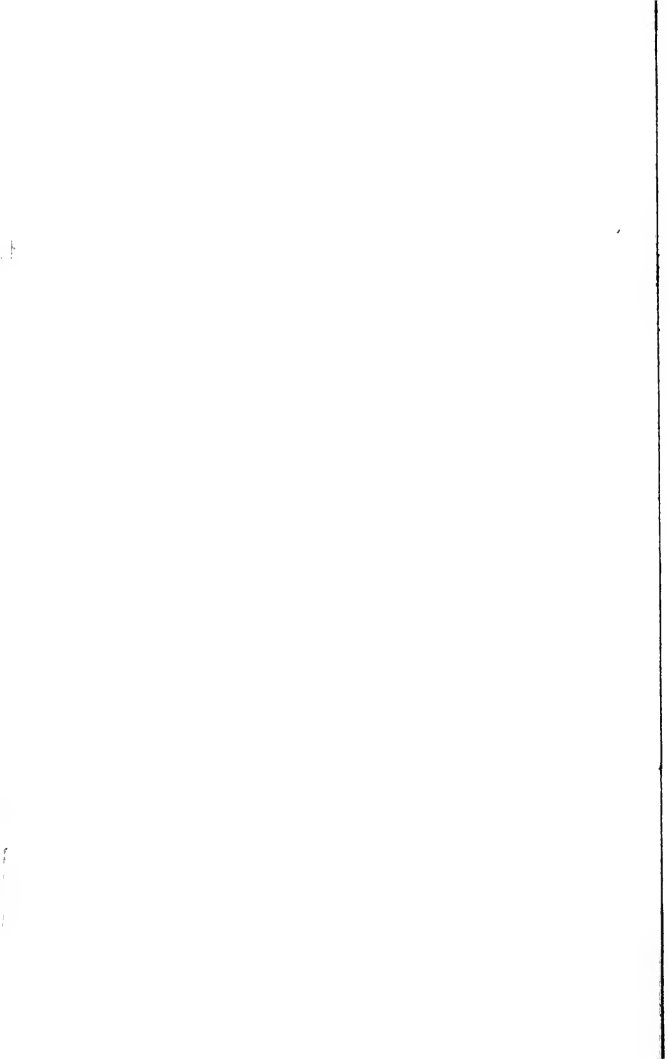
This book — this holiest, this sublimest book,  
Was sent, — Heaven's will, Heaven's code of laws entire.

This book, this holy book, on every line,  
Marked with the seal of high divinity,  
On every leaf bedewed with drops of love  
Divine, and with the eternal heraldry  
And signature of God Almighty stamped  
From first to last, — this ray of sacred light,  
This lamp from off the everlasting throne,  
Mercy took down, and in the night of Time  
Stood casting on the dark her gracious bow;  
And evermore beseeching men, with tears  
And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live."

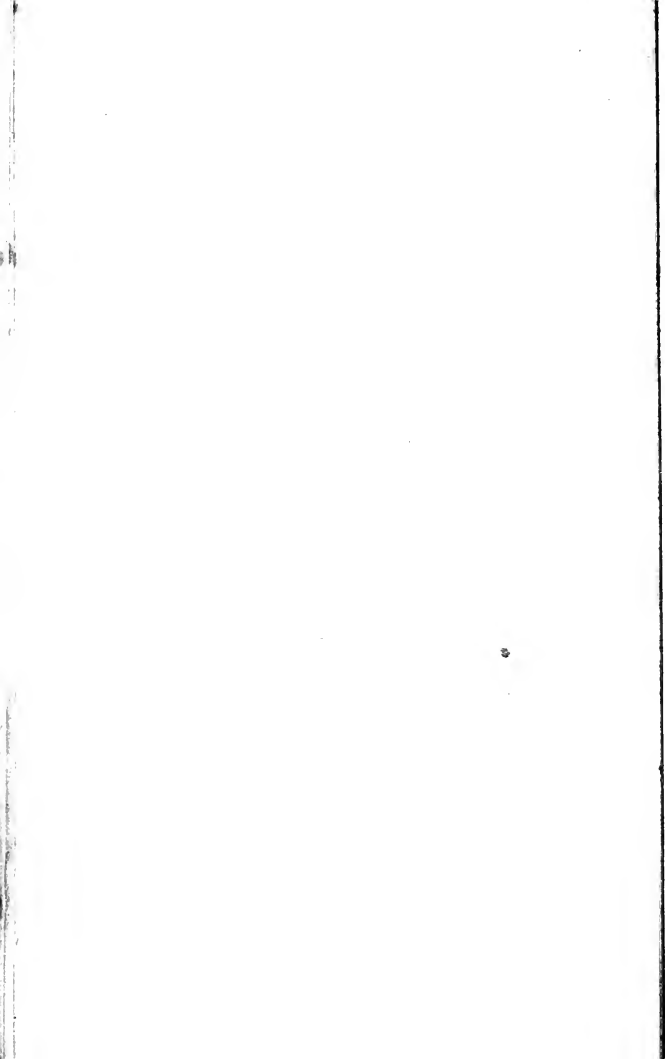
KIRKE WHITE.



















BS480 .D99

The plenary inspiration of the Old and

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00051 8730