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this discussion have a theological application still more important. Are the Christian scriptures merely the fragments of an earlier and larger national literature of the Hebrews? Are these books the recorded remnants of a prehistoric literature, in which the first task of the critic is to trace the growth of myth and legend, to detect interpolation and forgery, and to draw the line between tradition and history? We believe that rationalistic criticism finds no basis for its assumptions in the results of comparative research, but may be met on its own vantage-ground with a complete and triumphant refutation. But we defer this argument to a separate consideration.

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## ARTICLE II.

### REVELATION AND INSPIRATION.

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IN ANDOVER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

#### No. VIII.

##### THE INSPIRATION OF THE RECORD HOW ASCERTAINED.

THE gospel rests on a basis of facts, in such a full sense that if the substratum of facts be taken away the gospel itself perishes. The facts that underlie the gospel history are to be ascertained by candid investigation according to the ordinary rules of evidence. In the preceding series of Articles we have endeavored to point out concisely the main lines of historic evidence by which this basis of facts is shown to be impregnable to all the assaults of scepticism — that the gospel history is genuine; that it has come down to us in a form essentially uncorrupt; and that it is worthy of full credence. In demonstrating this, we have also shown its supernatural character; and also that the very existence of such a supernatural history implies a preceding series of supernatural revelations, such as we have in the Old Testament, and a sequel of supernatural manifestations, like that

recorded in the Acts of the Apostles and implied in the apostolic epistles.

The reader may perhaps ask, what more do we need for our salvation? If the gospel history is genuine, uncorrupt, and worthy of full credence, why not take it as a sufficient rule of faith and practice, without troubling ourselves further with questions concerning the inspiration of the record? We answer that the very question now before us is whether one can consistently believe so much without believing more. Thus far we have considered the gospel narratives as worthy of credence in the ordinary historic sense. We have shown that the writers upon whose testimony we receive the facts of the gospel were honest and competent witnesses, and that their statements of facts are therefore reliable. But it must be obvious to every reflecting mind that questions of the gravest import remain to be settled. In the manifestation of the Son of God the world received, beyond all doubt, a supernatural revelation from heaven. The revelation itself was, of course, infallible; since "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." But what about the *record* of that revelation which we have in the New Testament? Is that infallible also; or was it penned by fallible men, honest indeed, and competent in the common acceptance of the words, but liable to the misconceptions, prejudices, and false inferences of their age? Were the writers of the gospel history so illuminated and guided by God's Spirit that their record possesses for us a divine authority; or is it only a fallible record of an infallible revelation? Even upon this latter supposition we must believe that the great facts of our Lord's life and the substance of his teaching are given without essential error; for they pervade every part of the narrative, as the vital blood pervades the living body. But it is to us a matter of solemn interest to know whether we are, or are not, at liberty to judge that in particular cases they misunderstood the true connection and scope of their Master's words, and have consequently given a one-sided and defective account of them. We know from their own

candid confession, that up to the time of his passion many of his teachings remained to them a hidden mystery. They tell us how the Lord, after his resurrection, upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart;<sup>1</sup> and how, just before his ascension, they still clung to the idea that his kingdom was to be of this world.<sup>2</sup> Were these misapprehensions and prejudices removed by the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit; or did they remain, at least in part?

Then, again, a large part of the New Testament is occupied with the history, not of our Lord's life and teachings, but of the acts and doctrines of his apostles and their co-adjutors. The Acts of the Apostles contains an account not only of their preaching, but of the authoritative way in which they settled the constitution of the Christian church, not indeed in the details of its polity, but in its great principles.<sup>3</sup> The apostolic epistles unfold with great fulness some doctrines which Christ, from the nature of the case, could teach only in a germinal way; particularly the two great related doctrines of atonement for sin through his propitiatory death on Calvary, and justification through faith in his blood. They contain also some remarkable prophecies respecting the apostasy of the man of sin,<sup>4</sup> and the resurrection of the dead.<sup>5</sup> What view are we to take of this important part of the New Testament? Does it come to us with full divine authority; or does it contain, along with an honest statement of the great facts of revelation, the reasonings and inferences of fallible men, upon which we are at liberty to sit in judgment, receiving some of them and rejecting the rest? This is the momentous question now before us. We propose to settle it, if possible, by "reasoning out of the scriptures." In the position which we have now reached this mode of procedure is legitimate; for it has been shown in previous Numbers that we have, in the New Testament, a sure scriptural basis from which to reason. Having shown that the gospel record,

<sup>1</sup> Mark xvi. 14; Luke xxiv. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Acts i. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Acts vi. 1-6; x. 1-xi. 18; xv. 1-29; xiii. 1-4, etc.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 1-12.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. chap. xv.; 1 Thess. iv. 13-18.

with the apostolic writings based upon it, is worthy of credence in the common acceptance of the words, we proceed to inquire what light may be gathered from it in respect to the question of the inspiration of the writers.

*What is meant by the Inspiration of the Record?*

Before entering directly upon this inquiry, it is important that we settle definitely what is meant by the inspiration of the record; since, if we mistake not, the idea floats before the minds of some in a very undefined form. They seem to regard the inspiration of the written word as something peculiar, and distinct from inspiration in general. The more this idea is examined the more untenable will it appear. The inspiration of the record means the inspiration of the men who wrote the record; and we have no evidence that they had as writers any different kind of inspiration from that which they possessed as preachers. The question reduces itself simply to this: When Matthew or Mark preached, did they speak with divine authority? When Peter and John taught in the temple or in Samaria, did they teach by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and thus without error? If so, then they *wrote* with the same divine authority. And the same is true of Paul and all the other writers of the New Testament. Whatever authority their oral teachings had belongs to their writings also. If they could speak, then they could write, without error. If their preaching was fallible, so were their writings. When we say, then, that the books of the New Testament are inspired, we mean neither more nor less than that the men who wrote them were under the influence of inspiration.

It is only that class of theologians who advocate the doctrine of verbal inspiration in the most literal sense, thus virtually making the sacred writer the amanuensis of the Holy Spirit, who can, with any show of reason, make a distinction between the inspiration of the apostles and the inspiration of scripture. This is done by Carson, a prominent champion of this view. Respecting the two passages: "How-

beit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all the truth,"<sup>1</sup> and "All scripture is given by inspiration of God,"<sup>2</sup> he uses the following language: "The one respects the inspiration of the apostles, the other the inspiration of the scriptures. The promise referred to respects the inspiration of the apostles, but says nothing of the mode of inspiration. 2 Tim. iii. 16 speaks of inspiration as it respects the scripture itself. It is not said that *all scripture is guided into all the truth*. With the full approbation of this promise, all scripture may be divinely communicated."<sup>3</sup> Again, commenting on Dr. Henderson's exposition of the apostle's words: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth,"<sup>4</sup> he extends the same distinction to oral discourse, making the words uttered, not the speaker, the subject of inspiration. "The contrast," says he, "is between words taught by human wisdom, and words taught by the Holy Spirit. This of necessity implies that the words were taught by the Spirit, not that the speakers or writers were taught by wisdom conferred by the Spirit, to choose their words."<sup>5</sup> Haldane also makes apparently the same distinction when he says, as the true meaning of 2 Tim. iii. 16: "*All scripture is inspired by God, or breathed into the writers by God*. It is therefore of the *writing* that the inspiration is asserted."<sup>6</sup> The full examination of this subject is necessarily deferred till the question concerning the *mode* of inspiration shall come up for consideration. At present it is sufficient to remark:

First, that according to Carson's own showing, inspired *discourse* and inspired *writing* stand on the same level, which is the main position here contended for. In whatever sense Peter's oral address on the day of Pentecost was inspired, in the same sense were his epistles inspired. Whether Paul *spoke* or *wrote* it was alike "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

<sup>1</sup> John xvi. 13.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Refutation of Dr. Henderson on Inspiration, p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Carson as above, p. 91.

<sup>6</sup> On Inspiration (ed. 1845), p. 113.

Secondly, that, according to Carson's own view, the inspiration is properly in the *minds* of the speakers or writers. They utter or write down what, according to him, is infused into or communicated to their minds. So much for his view. We add that, according to any view of inspiration, scripture itself is inspired only in the sense that it is, as our English version has it, "given by inspiration of God"—given through the medium of inspired men.

Whether the writers of the New Testament received in all cases a special commission in the way of direct revelation or suggestion, to write the books which they have left us, or whether they were led to the performance of this work by the general illumination which they enjoyed from above, is a question of secondary importance, which we may well leave undetermined. Of far higher importance is the question whether they had the gift of the Holy Spirit as a permanent possession, or only as an occasional, transient, visitation. Under the Mosaic dispensation a wide difference existed between such men as Balaam and the old prophet of Bethel, whom it pleased Jehovah to use on certain occasions as the instruments of announcing his will, and the holy men of God who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," from whom we have received the books of the Old Testament. "The Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus shalt thou speak;" "He saw all Israel abiding in their tents according to their tribes, and the Spirit of God came upon him."<sup>1</sup> But we cannot suppose that Balaam had such a relation to God as placed him on a level with men like David, Isaiah, Ezekiel, or Ezra. So also the lying prophet at Bethel received, as he sat at the table with the true prophet of Judah, a revelation from the Lord announcing the impending judgment that should overtake his disobedient servant.<sup>2</sup> But God never employed prophets of this character to pen any part of scripture.

Passing now to the authors of the New Testament, we need, as the basis of our faith in the divine authority of

<sup>1</sup> Num. xxiii. 5; xxiv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings xiii.

their writings, a reasonable assurance that they enjoyed, not the occasional visitations of the Divine Spirit, but his permanent indwelling and guidance. It may be objected, indeed, that one might be inspired for the specific work of writing a gospel or an epistle. Very true. But if we have no satisfactory evidence that he enjoyed permanently the presence of the Holy Spirit in that high sense which inspiration implies, how is his transient presence during the act of writing a given gospel or epistle to be certified to us? It might be, one might perhaps maintain, by some miraculous sign given as the divine seal to his own testimony respecting the commission which he had received; or by a revelation made to another man, which, again, would need in some way divine authentication. Yes, such a method of authentication might be; but we find in the New Testament no trace of anything of this clumsy and mechanical character. The writers of its several books had, as we shall endeavor to show, the broad seal of their inspiration. But it was from such a source, and in such a way as to make its permanence most evident. Whatever they spoke or wrote in the sphere of Christian doctrines and duties<sup>1</sup> had the impress of divine authority.

But how is this consistent, some one may ask, with your acknowledgment of the fact that certain epistles of Paul are lost.<sup>2</sup> Can we suppose that the providence of God would have suffered an inspired writing to be lost? We answer this question by asking in our turn another: Are not many of our Lord's words lost to our knowledge?<sup>3</sup> Were they less divine than those of which we have the record? And is not very much of the oral teaching of the apostles, lost? We have only a sketch of Peter's Pentecostal address: "With many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."<sup>4</sup> Was not

<sup>1</sup> We add this qualifying clause that we may not include such acts as Peter's dissimulation at Antioch, in which human infirmity not divine inspiration, was manifested.

<sup>2</sup> See *Bibliotheca Sacra* for July, 1870, p. 539.

<sup>3</sup> See John xx. 30, 31; xxi. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Acts ii. 42.



what is omitted from the record inspired, as well as what is inserted? and if this be undeniably true, where, we ask again, has God authorized us to make the distinction that all that was *written* by inspiration must have been preserved, while by far the larger part of what was *spoken* by inspiration, or by the Son of God himself, whose words are above inspiration, has been lost? We would suggest in a reverential spirit, as the true explanation, that the providence of God has preserved to us, through the ministry of his churches, all the apostolic writings that he judged needful for doctrine or practice. We may reasonably suppose that by far the larger part of them remains in our possession as a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

But how is it, one may further ask, when the apostle says: "To the rest speak I, not the Lord?"<sup>1</sup> We answer that the meaning of these words is clearly defined by another passage in the same epistle: "Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful."<sup>2</sup> Under the full illumination and guidance of the Holy Spirit, the apostle gives his faithful advice on points which the Lord has left to human discretion; and where, consequently, he has "no commandment from the Lord." Where God has expressly legislated he says: "I command, yet not I, but the Lord"<sup>3</sup>; but where God has left men free from any positive command he says: "To the rest speak I, not the Lord." The difference is not within the apostle's soul, as if he were in one case inspired and in the other uninspired; but without, in the nature of the duties discussed. To assume that an apostle, speaking or writing in his official character as a teacher of the gospel, might be sometimes inspired and sometimes without inspiration, would be to assume very slippery and dangerous ground.

#### *What is the Test of Inspiration?*

The question now arises, How are we to know that the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 25.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 10.

author of a given book of the New Testament wrote under the illumination and guidance of the Holy Spirit in such a high and peculiar sense that his words come to us with full divine authority?

We remark, first of all, that it cannot be from the *simple testimony of the writer*. We shall show hereafter that this testimony, taken in connection with other evidence, is of the highest importance. But the point now is, that no man's inspiration is to be acknowledged simply on his own word. It is with him as with the ambassador whom a sovereign nation sends to represent itself at a foreign court. He must first present his credentials, and then his declarations are of supreme importance. This equitable rule is acknowledged in both the Old and the New Testament. When God sent Moses with a message to his people, he empowered him to give them certain miraculous signs;<sup>1</sup> and when the Israelites had now received a revelation attested by irrefragable proof, the further test of a true prophet was added, that his words must be in harmony with the law already given, not in contradiction to it.<sup>2</sup> The Saviour's mission was attested by a series of stupendous supernatural signs, and to these he was accustomed to appeal. "If I bear witness of myself," he said, "my witness is not true" (that is, not to be received as of itself valid). "There is another that beareth witness of me, and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true." "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me."<sup>3</sup> "I am one that bear witness of myself; and the Father that sent me, beareth witness of me."<sup>4</sup> "If I honor myself, my honor is nothing; it is my Father that honoreth me, of whom ye say, that he is your God."<sup>5</sup> "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him."<sup>6</sup> If the Son of God himself thus con-

<sup>1</sup> Ex. iv. 8, 9.<sup>2</sup> Deut. xiii. 1-3.<sup>3</sup> John v. 31, 32, 36.<sup>4</sup> John viii. 18.<sup>5</sup> John viii. 54.<sup>6</sup> John x. 37, 38.

descended to present the credentials of his heavenly mission, it is certainly reasonable that we ask for like credentials in the case of one of his disciples whose words we are asked to receive not simply as true and credible in the ordinary acceptation of the words, but as invested with divine authority; all whose arguments, inferences, and new revelations of truth, claim the attribute of infallibility, as well as his statements of historic facts. The ordinary religious teacher, who keeps within the sphere of scripture and appeals to that alone, needs no further attestation. "To the law and the testimony," this is for him a sufficient rule of judgment. But when a man professes to come with new revelations, or with infallible statements, reasonings, and inferences respecting revelations already made, it is not only our right, but our duty, to ask for his credentials—his credentials not merely as an honest and competent witness (these have been already considered under the general head of the credibility of the New Testament writings), but his credentials as one authorized to speak with full divine authority. The moment we depart from this equitable rule we open the floodgates to fanaticism and imposture. Swedenborg, for example, may claim that he has had visions of the unseen world; and we may be satisfied that he is sincere in his statements, uttering only what he believes to be true. But this is no ground for receiving his words as co-ordinate in value with the visions of the Apocalypse, or, indeed, as possessing any authority. We must first have his commission to make revelations concerning the world to come duly authenticated by God himself.

Carson, in the work already quoted, insists on the simple testimony of the writers of scripture: "If," says he, "there is sufficient evidence that the Bible contains a revelation from God, is not the word of the writers sufficient to prove anything which they allege?"<sup>1</sup> The proposition: "The Bible contains a revelation from God," may mean that the whole of the Bible is given to men by God, and then the

<sup>1</sup> Refutation of Dr. Henderson on Inspiration, p. 6.

very point under discussion is assumed as a basis of proof. Or it may mean (and this is the legitimate sense of the words) that the Bible contains the *record* of a revelation from God, and then the question arises respecting the infallibility of this record, which is the same thing as the question concerning its divine authority. We entirely agree with Carson when he says: "It is surely a most unhappy omen, in commencing a controversy with respect to a scripture doctrine, to declare that the assertion of an apostle is not ultimate authority to establish it."<sup>1</sup> It is not, however, on the apostle's simple assertion that he writes by inspiration of God; but rather because there is irrefragable proof, as we shall endeavor to show hereafter, that whatever he says, or writes, the assertion respecting his own inspiration included, comes to us with divine authority. The question of the inspiration of the record covers the whole ground of its divine authority. This is first to be ascertained, and then all its specific declarations are to be received as valid evidence. It is our aim to deal with actual forms of error. Unhappily one of these is the denial that we have in the New Testament a divinely authoritative record of the revelation made to us by the Son of God. The general authenticity of the writers of the New Testament, at least of many of them, is admitted; but it is asserted that they have erred in particular cases, from not fully apprehending their Lord's words, or from not being raised above the prejudices of their age. We propose to meet this error in a fair and candid spirit.

We remark, secondly, that we cannot decide that a given writing is inspired simply from the *character of its contents*. Very important indeed is the question respecting the contents of a book that claims inspiration, and we are far from undervaluing the simple impression of these contents on a believing spirit. Many thousands have from their own experience a full and joyous conviction that the Bible is the word of God. Of this they feel assured, because it meets all their wants as sinners. They have the same evidence

<sup>1</sup> Refutation of Dr. Henderson on Inspiration, p. 6.

that God gave the gospel for the salvation of their souls, as that he gave bread for the stomach, air for the lungs, and light for the eyes. If you tell a man who daily feeds on the finest of the wheat, and is nourished and strengthened by it, that the field of golden grain which waves before his door is wormwood and gall; or that the pure water welling up from the bosom of the earth which quenches his thirst day by day is a deadly poison; or that the blessed air of heaven which fans his lungs and imparts vital energy to his blood is a pestilential vapor; he replies: "My own experience is a sufficient answer to your empty assertion." Just so the believer may well reply to the cavils of the sceptic: "I know that the gospel is truth and not error, because it nourishes, refreshes, and guides my soul in the way of holiness and happiness. Not until falsehood becomes the nutriment of the soul and truth its destruction, can this argument from my own experience be set aside or gainsaid." But the evidence which God furnishes for the divine authority of his word is not niggardly or one-sided. It is full in all directions, and thus it meets all the reasonable wants of men. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."<sup>1</sup> This is his testimony given *to* faith. But when God calls upon men to believe on his Son, he furnishes at the same time in rich abundance testimony *for* their faith. So the beloved disciple argues: "These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."<sup>2</sup> If God does not require men to believe that scripture contains a *revelation* from himself concerning his Son without reasonable evidence, neither does he ask them to believe in the *inspiration* of the record without like evidence. The moment we adopt the principle of faith on the ground of our own subjective feelings and judgment, we are afloat on a troubled sea, without rudder, compass, or anchor. Were all men humble and pure in heart, their judgment would be clear and their moral instincts right. Then they would

<sup>1</sup> 1 John v. 10.

<sup>2</sup> John xx. 31.

undoubtedly love the record of God's word, cordially receive its testimony concerning his Son, and have in their own experience the inward witness of its truth. But multitudes want this inward preparation. To them experience is a blind guide. Their corrupt affections pervert their judgment in respect to what is morally excellent. If we throw them upon their own subjective feelings, telling them to choose for themselves the system of belief and practice which they find most congenial, they will either reject the record of scripture altogether, taking instead of it the reveries of modern pretenders to revelation, or they will supplement this record by these reveries, thus practically subordinating it to them. The pretended new revelations will have their real faith; the word of God will be interpreted by them; and thus they will slide downward by a steady influence into the region of infidelity. It is further important to remember that true believers have their prejudices and misconceptions. Under the influence of these they may, if left simply to the test of their own feelings and judgment, reject certain parts of scripture as unprofitable, because they find them at variance with their particular views on certain points of faith or practice. We have a notable example of this in the case of Martin Luther, who, says Davidson, "expressed his opinion plainly when he called it [the epistle of James] *eine recht stroherne Epistel*,—a *right strawy epistle*, in comparison with the writings of John, Paul, and Peter."<sup>1</sup> He seems not to have considered that herein he was following the example of Marcion, who rejected, upon subjective grounds, all the gospels save that of Luke, paring that down also in accordance with his preconceived views.

Shall we then, in the third place, receive a given book of the New Testament as inspired on the simple *testimony of the ancient church*? In answering this question it is necessary to proceed with caution. It is through the ancient church that we have the evidence of the genuineness, integrity, and credibility of the New Testament writings. Her

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. iii p. 339.

testimony to their *divine authority*, as written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is worthy of reverential regard. We assent fully to the following words of Lee, when writing respecting the formation of the canon of the New Testament :

“ That continued exercise of solid judgment which selected such writings, and such writings only ; that critical sagacity which the most ingenious and subtile investigations of modern times have never been able to prove at fault ; that unceasing caution and vigilance, which never admitted into the canon a single book for the rejection of which any valid reasons have ever been shown ; such qualities, conceded to the Fathers of the first ages of the church, only serve to enhance the value of their opinions upon every point connected with the scriptures, and, above all, upon the subject of their inspiration.”<sup>1</sup>

But it is of primary importance to determine *on what ground* the primitive churches proceeded in receiving or rejecting books. That they did not act on the authoritative decision of councils is conceded by all well-informed ecclesiastical historians. No general councils were held till long after the canon of the New Testament was settled ; while the local synods held in the last half of the second century had respect to Montanism, and were, moreover, very considerable. The reception of books, then, into the canon took place without external concert, and in a practical rather than a formal way ; that is, as Hug judiciously remarks : “ It was the distinguished and peculiar prerogative accorded to these writings, and for a long time the only mark of distinction which could be given them, that they were publicly read in the Christian assemblies. As in the religious meetings of the Jews this honor was usually conferred only upon the law and the prophets, so among the Christians this eminent prerogative was granted only to the writings of the apostles, together with the Old Testament which they retained from the Jews.”<sup>2</sup> Thus the New Testament books were first

<sup>1</sup> The Inspiration of Scripture, Lect. ii. p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Introduction to the New Testament, chap. iii. § 16.

practically, and afterwards by a conscious recognition, placed on a level with those of the Old. In all this process we have no intimation that the canon of the New Testament was formed by direct revelation of the Holy Spirit, any more than it was by the formal authoritative decision of the church as a whole. The work was accomplished in a spontaneous, informal way, by the use of human means under the illumination and guidance of the Spirit. This is implied in the words above quoted; for the exercise of "solid judgment," "critical sagacity," and "unceasing caution and anxious vigilance" in respect to the reception of books into the canon implies that the procedure was according to some reasonable ground of evidence. It was not a prophetic dictum, "Thus saith the Lord," but a process of judgment; and it is concerning the *rule of judgment* that we are now inquiring. We do not take the naked authoritative decision of the primitive church; for, as we have seen, no such decision was ever given.<sup>1</sup> Nor do we rest upon any revelations made to a New Testament prophet or body of prophets concerning the canon. For ecclesiastical history furnishes no trace of such revelations. We inquire rather, in a reverential, but not a blind spirit, concerning the *grounds* on which the primitive churches received certain books into the canon while they rejected others.

Here the answer is at hand, and in it we find the true test of inspiration. The primitive churches received the writings of certain men as invested with divine authority on the ground of their *special relation to Christ as apostles or their recognized associates and fellow-laborers*. Lee, in the work that has been already quoted, speaks with disapprobation of a theory of inspiration which "estimates the divine character of scripture by the relation in which its authors stood to Christ." And he adds:

"From this . . . . view it results, we are further told, that

<sup>1</sup> That is, for the *formation* of the canon. There was plenty of ecclesiastical legislation in later times, as all know, on the canon, as on all other points pertaining to the doctrine and discipline of the churches.



a distinction is to be drawn between the different parts of the New Testament; and that higher authority must be ascribed to the writings of the apostles, than to those portions of it which have been composed by their disciples and assistants; hence it follows that the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke possess less authority than those of St. Matthew or St. John.”<sup>1</sup>

We agree with the author that any theory of inspiration which admits of such an inference must be faulty; and we are inclined to think that, in the form stated by him, the theory virtually sets aside inspiration. Its underlying idea, if we rightly apprehend it, is this: Christ himself was infallible. If we could have an exact record of his teachings, in their true connections and relations, this would be truth without any mixture of error. The apostles, by virtue of their nearer relation to Christ, may be reasonably supposed to have had a more perfect apprehension of his words and deeds than men who, like Mark and Luke, were only the companions of the apostles and their fellow-laborers. Consequently the writings of the former possess for us higher authority than those of the latter. This is not so much a theory of inspiration, as a theory to dispense with inspiration, in the true sense of the word. Nevertheless it remains true that the primitive Christians judged of the claims of a writing to have a place in the New Testament canon from the author's relation to Christ. If a book could be shown to have been written by an apostle, that was a sufficient warrant for its reception. If, as is commonly believed, certain apostolic epistles were early lost, it cannot be shown that this was due to their rejection as not having the marks of inspiration. There are other suppositions more natural and reasonable. It is certainly conceivable that an apostolic epistle, if its contents related mainly to the local interests of a particular church, should have been left with this church uncopied till it finally perished by some one of the many casualties to which all written documents are liable. Considered on the

<sup>1</sup> The Inspiration of Scripture, Lect. v. pp. 218, 219.

divine side, such a loss would be providential; but on the human side it might be regarded as fortuitous. But, however this may be, there is not a particle of evidence that any writing known to have proceeded from the pen of an apostle was ever rejected as uninspired.

With regard to the *companions of the apostles*, there is ground for believing that the primitive churches recognized gradations among them, and that they did not receive indiscriminately the writings of all of them as possessing divine authority. The full consideration of this subject is reserved for consideration in a future Number. It is sufficient to remark at present that no writing was admitted into the canon of the New Testament that did not proceed from an *apostle*, or from one who was *associated with the apostles in the work of the ministry* and recognized as possessing spiritual gifts in common with them.

Here, then, we have an intelligible objective rule of judgment, and one that is in harmony with the whole history of redemption. God is not the author of confusion. He works in a sovereign way, but never at random. There is system in the operations of grace as well as of nature. Having chosen the nation of Israel as his peculiar people, he made them, and not the world at large, the depositaries of his revelations. Nor were his communications to them made in a scattered way without order, but rather according to an established economy. He raised up from Moses till the close of the Babylonish captivity a regular succession of prophets; most of them trained in the schools of the prophets, but some of them, like Amos,<sup>1</sup> called directly from the ordinary avocations of life. It is admitted that no book was received into the canon of the Old Testament which had not for its author a prophet, or a prophetic man, like Solomon, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Into the composition of certain books state documents may have entered; but they were selected by one who had the spirit of prophecy, and thus had the sanction of God. It is further admitted that the canon of

<sup>1</sup> Amos vii. 14, 15.

the Old Testament was closed soon after the captivity, because from that time, to use the words of Josephus, "the exact succession of the prophets was wanting."<sup>1</sup> An analogous economy of revelation appears under the New Testament. The gift of the Spirit, in a high and special sense, was imparted to the disciples on the day of Pentecost, and the apostles enjoyed the high prerogative of communicating this gift to others by the laying on of hands.<sup>2</sup> We have no indications in the New Testament that this power was extended beyond their circle. These men the primitive church acknowledged as having the broad seal of divine authority, and their writings they received as inspired of God. We shall proceed in the next Number to inquire whether their judgment rested on valid grounds.

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### ARTICLE III.

#### INSTINCT.

BY REV. JOHN BASCOM, PROFESSOR IN WILLIAMS COLLEGE.

THERE seem to be three forms of nervous and mental phenomena, very distinct in kind, yet easily passing into each other by slight gradations. The first form is purely a vital, nervous fact, and cannot properly be called mental. It is that by which through a nervous centre or centres the present condition and the muscular action of a living body are harmonized. Thus, in man, the lungs, heart, stomach, intestines are subject to a constant play of muscular forces, suited to the passing state of those organs by means of nervous centres, which receive, on the one hand, influences from these seats of activity, and on the other, return to them the impulses of regular, suitable, proportionate muscular effort,

<sup>1</sup> Ἀπὸ δὲ Ἀρταξέρξου μέχρι τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς χρόνου γέγραπται μὲν ἕκαστα, πίστεως δὲ οὐχ ὁμοίως ἤλθεται τοῖς πρὸ αὐτῶν, διὰ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι τὴν τῶν προφητῶν ἐκρίβη διαδοχὴν. — Against Apion, i. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Acts viii. 17 seq. ; xix. 6.