

arrived at a knowledge of the *auxilia gratiæ* with more practical success by the mere study of the Scriptures, than the Church of Rome has attained to, with the aid of all the skill and subtlety of Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans and seculars, even though her greatest champion, Bellarmine, was included among the combatants.

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ART. IV.—INSPIRATION.

WHAT do we mean by inspiration? It is not defined in the formularies of the Prayer-Book. The word is, I believe, only twice used in the Bible—once in Job, where Elihu says, “There is a spirit in man, and the *inspiration*¹ of the Almighty giveth them understanding;” and once in 2 Tim. iii. 16, where we are told that “all Scripture is given by *inspiration*² of God”—but neither of these passages helps us to a definition of what is meant by inspiration. It seems to me that the only true way to arrive at what inspiration implies is to examine the materials that may be presumed to exhibit the unknown entity, and to determine its nature by a process of induction. For instance, to begin with St. Paul’s statement as our first landmark, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” It matters not whether we take this as a predicate, or render “every God-inspired Scripture is also profitable” etc., because in either case inspiration of some kind is assumed and asserted. And there can be little doubt that it is assumed and asserted as the characteristic, special and peculiar, of the Old Testament. For instance, St. Paul did not include among God-inspired Scriptures the writings of Menander, Epimenides, or Aratus, which are even quoted by himself. At least, I think we have no right to assume, and cannot suppose, he did this. Thus we infer, therefore, that St. Paul recognised certain features of the Old Testament which distinguished it from all other books. What are these features? The Old Testament claims in many places to be the record of special Divine communication—“The word of the Lord came unto me,” and the like. This is only to be regarded as a direct falsehood, or as a mistaken truth, or as the actual truth. With the first we need not concern ourselves; but we must determine how far the persons who made use of this formula were protected against self-deception before we can be sure that we have in what they

¹ In Job it is *neshamah*, breath.

² In Tim. it is *θεόπνευστος*.

put on record the actual truth. When the Prophet said the word of the Lord came unto him, how did he know that it was the word of the Lord? and how may we know that he was not mistaken? If we have any guarantee for this, then we may be sure that we have in the record the results of inspiration. But even then the method of inspiration and the conditions of inspiration will not be clear to us. It will, however, be clear that inspiration must carry with it a supernatural communication and a supernatural sanction. So far as it is real it will be impossible to resolve it into anything natural, ordinary, or producible at will. St. Paul tells us that the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, by which he seems to mean that the prophets are responsible for the order and seemliness of their behaviour, but not that they can produce the results of prophecy at will.

There are two ways in which we may arrive at the conclusion that such and such a narrative is inspired. (1) One is when it comes to us as the medium of information that can only be due to inspiration, *e.g.*: If the first chapter of Genesis is true, it must be inspired, for otherwise the information it conveys could not have been known. No man could know or discover what took place before man existed, except so far as he could discover it by science. The first chapter of Genesis is not the result of science; therefore if it is true the information it conveys must have been imparted by inspiration. I do not say it is true; but I say that if it is true no man can have discovered it. I need not say that I believe it to be true, and, therefore, believe it to be inspired. I believe, also, that science has enabled us to perceive its truth in so many points that we may recognise in that fact the proof of its inspiration. It is the record of knowledge imparted by God. In like manner many of the statements of Scripture may be known to be inspired if they are true; for if they are true as matters of fact, their truth involves their inspiration. Such are the statements "The Lord spake unto Moses," "The Lord spake unto Joshua," and the like. If the fact is true and the record is accurate, then it cannot be but that we have therein what we could not have except for real inspiration.

Revelation, therefore, is the result of inspiration, and inspiration is the method or channel of revelation; if there is a true revelation, there must have been a true inspiration. The truth of the inspiration turns upon the reality of the revelation, and the reality of the revelation proves the truth of the inspiration.

But the reality of the revelation is very frequently proved by the thing revealed, and this is (2) the second way that we

arrive at the proof of inspiration. If revelation involves and implies inspiration, revelation itself is of the nature of light—it is self-evidencing, it is known by the light that it creates. When the sun bursts forth from behind a cloud, no other proof is needed of what has happened—it speaks for itself. In like manner, when God says, "Let there be light," and there is light no other proof of correspondence between the act and word is needed, for the light manifests itself, and is known in so doing. In like manner our Lord says, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness." He who believes His word is conscious of its truth. There are numerous passages and statements of Holy Scripture to which this applies; they carry their own message of truth with them: *e.g.*, "God created man in His own image: in the image of God created He him." When this is stated, we at once know and feel that it is true. But could we have discovered it of ourselves? If not, then the statement of it must have been inspired; and in addition to this, it carries its own evidence of inspiration with it. In like manner the name that was proclaimed before Moses in Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7, is one that speaks for itself, whether the circumstances of its being given were historical or not; but if they were, there is, of course, no question as to the reality of the revelation as well as the truth of the inspiration. In this case, to believe the fact recorded is to accept the revelation, and this is very frequently the case in Scripture. To accept the fact related involves the acceptance of an actual revelation and a veritable inspiration, as, for instance, in the promise to David, the vision of Isaiah, and the like.

It is, however, quite possible to make the proof of revelation to turn upon the evidence of one phenomenon of it, namely, prophecy. The characteristics of prophecy taken as a whole are so special and peculiar as to defy explanation on any natural principles. After making ample allowance for uncertainty of date, obscurity of meaning, elasticity of interpretation, and the like, it is still undeniable that the broad features of prophecy defy all natural explanation, if only as is evidenced from the fact of their being unique. The survey of Old Testament prophecy as a whole presents a spectacle that we can discover nowhere else. The two great sections of it are historical act and literary composition: the former as seen in Elijah, Elisha, and others; the latter in the written works of the sixteen prophets. The four greater prophets are significantly characteristic. Isaiah, judged by his recorded utterances alone, must stand supreme among the poets of any nation. Jeremiah, by the sombre tints of his personal history, and its evidence to the reality of his prophetic mission, with the light it throws

upon the career and life of a prophet in the last days of the monarchy; Ezekiel with the wonderful illustration his book affords of the power bestowed by his prophetic gifts of seeing what was distant in space as though it were present; and Daniel with his extraordinary combination of superhuman power manifested in personal deliverance and prophetic insight shown in vision—all this makes a fourfold exhibition of varied prophetic power which cannot be paralleled outside the Bible, and serves to show that prophecy was not a simple exercise of fantastic or fanatical action which can be set aside as among the vagaries of madness, but was a highly complex and elaborate gift which moulded the agents more than they moulded it. And then, when we set over against this broad and marked picture the extraordinary reflex that it casts on the New Testament times and history, we cannot but see that, whatever the methods by which they were achieved, the results produced upon and by the prophets were of a wholly unique and highly exceptional kind, to which we can find nothing similar, even if analogous, elsewhere. We may determine, therefore, that the phenomenon of prophecy is one of the proofs of inspiration, as it was one of the agencies of revelation. And when we come to the historical books we are confronted with the probable fact that these were, as in all appearance they are, the work of prophets. The name of Samuel, traditionally affixed to what are otherwise called the First and Second Books of Kings, and the name of Jeremiah, which in like manner has been closely connected with the third and fourth, are alone sufficient to show this, apart from the antecedent likelihood that it would be so. Clearly, therefore, the books of Samuel and Kings may be fairly credited with the authority, whatever that was, with which the prophets wrote. Now, if they were in any sense real prophets, as we have seen there is evidence to show they were, they must have had a certain authority. They must have possessed a certain illumination. I admit it may be very difficult to define this, for the simple reason that if they were holders of a unique office we can have no experience, and therefore no conception, of what it was; but by the very conditions of the case they were brought into such relations to God as to know His will, because at times they were empowered to express it. We may reasonably and consistently assume, therefore, that they wrote from the standpoint of this position. What they expressed in writing was but the complement of the belief which their actions embodied. Now it is to be observed that continually the prophets sink their own personality in that of the Lord. Their utterances are, "I will do" this or that, meaning that the Lord will do it. But unless they had the fullest com-

mission and authority for so speaking, it was an utterly unwarrantable form of speech. Kuenen has no hesitation in ascribing this to the *moral earnestness* of the prophets. But I maintain that no moral earnestness would have justified the use of such language; nay, the greater the earnestness the more it would have shrunk from using it. To utter in the name of God what on the supposition there can have been no ground for knowing was His, would certainly have been a course repugnant to any honest mind in proportion to its earnestness. To say distinctly that such and such a statement was the declaration of the Lord, when there was no evidence of its being so, was equivalent to telling a lie; at least, our consciences can detect no difference, and why are we to assume that theirs could not? If, then, this is so, we must surely interpret the actions of the prophets accordingly. In the case of Samuel, for instance, much of his book is a narrative of facts in which he was a principal actor; if, then, its facts are trustworthy, the inference they suggest is unmistakable. How he acted with regard to David interprets his action with regard to Saul, and as Saul was originally anointed by him, we may conclude that he would have been naturally unwilling to anoint David but for the same authority by which he anointed Saul. But supposing Samuel to have been supernaturally directed to anoint Saul or David, there is nothing unreasonable or inconsistent in believing him in other respects the recipient of Divine directions; but if so, he was to all intents and purposes inspired—he was the channel and recipient of Divine and supernaturally-imparted information, illumination, direction. Our own conscience assents to and confirms this when we meet with such words as “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” If we admit the purity and truth of this sentiment, shall we question it in the case of the action which occasioned the utterance? On what principle shall we pick and choose among material that is of the same piece and indistinguishable? Nor is there any reason to judge otherwise with regard to the work of Gad and Nathan and the other prophets who may be supposed to have continued the historical work of Samuel. All we can judge of their work by is the work itself. We know not the makers of it nor how it was made, the result only is before us, but that is sufficiently great. Nor must it be forgotten, in judging of this, that though the writers are not slow to say that such and such a king did right or wrong in the eyes of the Lord (by what principle did they know this?), yet oftentimes the actions of David and other kings are related entirely

without comment, with the barest impartiality, so that we are at a loss to know whether the writer approved of or condemned them himself. Nor is there any reason to believe that persons who were left to their own unaided guidance in general matters should not be the recipients of special illumination on special occasions. It may require very little inspiration to record the incidents in the opening of the First Book of Kings, and yet these events themselves may have been so directed as to show the natural working out of the promises and purposes of God, and so the record of them may well form a chapter in the revelation, and so far may tend to confirm the inspiration of which that was the result. In all these early chapters we can see the free agents of the history working freely, and yet the general upshot and bearing of the record as a whole may be strictly in accordance with God's design and purpose. In sacred history no more than in ordinary history were the agents deprived of their freedom, though oftentimes in their actions the working of the Divine Will showed itself in an exceptional way. But even when it did so the freedom of the human agents was left unrestrained. Probably the first section of the Book of Kings which at all fulfils our notions of inspiration is the prayer of Solomon, which everyone must feel to be a very lofty and sublime passage. That there is the true spirit of the living God breathing throughout that prayer no one can doubt; but whether or not it fulfils, as I said, the popular conditions and conceptions of inspiration, I am unable to say. I think it better to try to discover by examination of the examples the actual nature of inspiration than to start with a fixed conception of it which I may find it difficult to make square with facts. Here we may observe, also, that if the incidents recorded are true, such as the fact of the priests being unable to enter the temple because of the glory of the Lord which filled it, the vision in which the Lord appeared to Solomon, and the like, then the fact of revelation and the reality of inspiration are established. But it is clear that throughout the books the evidence of inspiration is to be seen not so much in the composition of them as in the teaching of the events they record, in the intrinsic importance of these events and the unmistakable way in which, if true, they witness for God. There may be nothing of very deep spiritual import in the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon, but the record of her visit, noteworthy and important as it is on its own account, is at least a striking instance of the way in which the promise of exceptional wisdom had been fulfilled to him, and this tends, therefore, to confirm another part of the narrative, which is of the highest importance on other grounds. On the other hand, the unhesitating and impartial record of Solomon's

fall and apostasy, spoiling, as it does, the narrative of his greatness, makes us feel that the former history is the less likely to have been exaggerated or contrary to fact. One feels, after all, that Solomon with all his greatness and glory was in the end not so great a man as his father. David's reign was marked with the troubles of war, but his own exhibited the disadvantages of peace, which brought forth fruit in the disruption of the monarchy.

Ewald, who was followed by Stanley, laboured to persuade himself and others that the real line of continuance in the monarchy was carried on in Israel, and not in Judah. Nothing can be more contrary to the whole spirit of the Books of Kings, whether they are inspired or not, than the suggestion of this theory. It is absolutely fatal to the whole tenor of the record, as well as opposed to the facts of the history. The succession of the throne had been promised to David's line. Whether as a fact this was so or not, and whatever may have been the meaning of the fact recorded, there is no question whatever as to the record. The succession to the throne is distinctly said to have been promised to David. Solomon, the beloved of the Lord, was the immediate earnest of the fulfilment of this promise. It was pledged to continue in his line. When the promise was given there had been sundry warnings of the consequences of disobedience. The luxury and self-indulgence of Solomon paved the way for the justification of these warnings, and in the time of his son and successor they were verified. Now, if all this is in any sense a record of fact, it is a record that speaks for itself, and is independent of interpretation; and the continuance of the monarchy in the line of Judah can only be regarded in relation to the fact, and as accomplishing the promise which is recorded: "I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: but he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel." Now, will anyone venture to say that if these words were actually spoken by Ahijah, they can by any manner of means be reconciled with or explained by any natural action or ordinary sources of knowledge? It would be a bold step to take to affirm that Jeremiah, writing at the close of the monarchy, put these words into the mouth of Ahijah for the sake of mere effect, and to embellish and heighten the interest of the subsequent history, the course of which was patent to him, but could not by any ordinary means be known to Ahijah. For if Jeremiah did so, and this is the real history of the narrative, then it is useless to talk about inspiration and revelation or anything of the kind. We are simply deluding ourselves and

throwing dust in the eyes of others, just as Jeremiah, supposing him to have written the narrative, was unpardonably deceiving his own nation and the world at large in so doing. We may therefore set aside any such theory as this; but, then, if we do, what remains? Simply the record of an incident which is either true or not true—which, if it was not true, leaves us exactly in the same position as before, but which, if it was true, is not to be explained apart from inspiration, and is itself the proof and evidence of an uncommon, a more than human and a more than natural, faculty of observation and power of foresight which may serve to illustrate the true character of inspiration, but will certainly not make it more intelligible or less marvellous. Here, then, the first question to be determined must be: "Is or is not the narrative true?" If it is true, then we can begin to lay down certain principles and limits with regard to inspiration which may guide us in our investigation of it. But then, also, the authenticity of the narrative will be that upon which depends our estimate of it, and this authenticity will itself depend largely upon the character of the writers, whether or not they were veracious and trustworthy, which, in many cases, will depend upon whether or not the writings were genuine. In the case of anonymous writings like Kings and Chronicles, this will not imply a correct identification of the writers, but rather the sanction and authority with which they will have been handed down to us. In this case there is no question as to the sanction, but only as to its validity. If the sanction is valid, the books may be regarded as genuine; and if in this sense genuine, they can hardly be other than authentic. But if in this case both genuine and authentic, then what is inspiration? Clearly that faculty of Divine illumination which enabled Ahijah to declare a resolution of the Divine Will which was fulfilled in the course of centuries to come, which no insight of his own could have enabled him to discover.

We may also, I think, fairly ascribe to inspiration that series of providences and dispositions by which the incident and the promise were recorded; but though the consideration of them may reveal to us the modes and conditions of its operation, they will not explain its method or character, which must surely remain inscrutable.

I feel, then, with regard to inspiration, that the word is frequently used without any definite meaning being attached to it; but I feel, also, that it is absolutely useless for us to try to understand the way in which the thing, whatever it was, worked, because by the hypothesis the word is used to express something of which we have, and can have, no experience, and all that we can do is to observe very carefully

the evidences of this, and to be very careful not to deny the reality of the thing because we see that it transcends our own experience.

I notice, moreover, one very common tendency in the teaching of the present day, and that is to dwell upon the use of the word "inspiration" in the Prayer-book, and to make that the basis for a theory of the inspiration of Scripture, as though it showed that it was one and the same *afflatus* which dwells in the heart of the believer and which spake by the prophets. This would, of course, be to make all believers prophets, and to do away with the reality of the gift of prophecy as a thing exceptional and unique. Here, again, we fall back upon the mere phenomena of prophecy, which we maintain cannot be duly recognised without forcing upon us the conviction that the gift was special and unique. Indeed, the difference between the inspiration which breathes in the bosom of the believer and that which spake by the prophets is analogous to the difference between the ordinary operation of the Holy Spirit in the conduct of the believer and that which was manifested in the working of miracles. There is a very strong tendency to eliminate, or at all events to attenuate, the action of the miraculous in the present day—to regard it as an open question, upon which we need not pronounce; and in like manner there is a tendency to blink and to ignore the phenomena of prophecy as indications of inspiration, and to make them merely identical with the ordinary inspiration of believers; but this cannot be done in either case without detriment and damage to ourselves on the one hand, and without violence to the facts and statements of Scripture on the other.

And when I thus appeal to the phenomena of prophecy, let me try to explain and illustrate what I mean. In the Books of Samuel we first meet with the idea of an anointed king. The nation wanted a king, and a king was given who was the anointed of the Lord. That was his position, whether or not there was any Divine sanction to his appointment. Subsequently, by a series of very marked events, which seem to have been recognised by both the parties concerned, the originally anointed king was set aside, and another designated as his successor. After an interval of years the second king is established on the throne, and the promise of continuance is distinctly and emphatically given to him. This promise is recorded at large in the Books of Samuel and Chronicles. If the history is reliable, there can be no question as to the promise and as to its nature. David was not the dupe of Samuel. Samuel is hardly to be regarded as the deceiver of David. There was a common element in which they both believed, and to which they both were witnesses, if the history

is true, and is to be understood in its natural sense. But over and beyond this we have many of the literary productions of David which bear witness to the fact of this promise, and to its existence as a factor in the life of David and in the national life of his people. These productions can only be regarded as entirely independent of the history. They cannot have produced the history, nor can they have been produced by it as a mere record of events. They are a witness to the reality of the history as a series of facts, and can be the outcome of nothing else. In some of the later Psalms—*e.g.*, the 89th—we find this hope almost extinguished. We see it struggling against the effect and influence of untoward circumstances, but even then there is no question as to the hope itself. It had been a reality, and the memory of it was fresh in the minds of men. We pass on for several centuries, and in the time of Jeremiah, at the close of the monarchy, we find him saying, "I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper." Nevertheless, Zedekiah, whose name would correspond to this prophecy, was carried into captivity, and his eyes were put out. Still, when, contrary to all precedent, the nation returned from captivity after seventy years, its leader was Zerubbabel, a prince of the house of David; and centuries afterwards it was said of Christ: "The Lord God will give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end," who was a lineal descendant of Zerubbabel and of David. Now, it is to be observed that this promise, which is attributed to the angel Gabriel, is but the echo of the others. Whatever *it* may be, the others were there for centuries before it; and the very fact that events must have seemed to contradict and belie them served all the more to render them conspicuous, and to emphasize them as failures. Consequently, if anything occurred subsequently to give them fresh meaning and significance, it would be more than ever impossible to call them in question as prophecies—at least they were not prophecies after the event, and at least there could be no doubt that in form they were prophetic. When, however, it was found, as a matter of fact, that this new meaning and significance were so striking as to give an impulse that would last, in the form of a new religion and belief, for eighteen centuries and not exhaust itself, that circumstance alone would surely place the ancient prophecies in a very different light. And this is how we see them now. For a period of nearly three times the length of that which had elapsed at the commencement of the Christian era these prophecies have blazed and shone forth with that new light, and instead of making the other dim, it

has only brought out its meaning more and more clearly. It is not open to us to say that this was its meaning; but, at all events, we can say that this would be an adequate and a worthy meaning, and that if this be not its meaning, then the known history of the prophecy till the commencement of the Christian era, and its sudden revival then, are altogether and alike inexplicable, while its subsequent history and aspect is entirely without parallel, and not to be accounted for.

Bishop Butler, indeed, does not hesitate to say that "the *apparent* completions of prophecy must be allowed to be explanatory of its meaning." But if this be so, then the argument from the apparent completeness of the prophecies concerning Christ as a whole is an incontrovertible proof that they were meant to refer to Him; and this is why the argument from prophecy was found to be so cogent and so successful in the days of the Apostles. They had then the original authority of the prophecies as an accepted and unquestioned basis to work upon, and they were able to show conclusively that the events to which they bore witness rested fitly and securely upon that basis. Nowadays our position is less favourable, for the prophecies are rejected as prophecies, and the correspondence between them and Christian fact is rejected likewise as an unmeaning accident; but it is still a valid and incontrovertible argument that the phenomena of the life and teaching of Christ have conclusively established as prophecies those Scriptures which might indeed have been questioned as prophecies had it not been for the occurrence of these events. I venture, then, to affirm that the phenomena of prophecy, thus regarded as a whole, are a strong evidence of its inspiration, because these phenomena are so numerous and so varied that the notion of their being the designed result of any one man or of any number of men is absolutely and altogether absurd. We cannot account for the features which we have before us upon any natural principles, but are compelled to admit that there were forces at work in their production of which we know nothing, and must be content to know nothing, except that they were not and could not have been natural. And thus, however gladly we may admit that in any Christian's heart there are evidences of the presence and operation of the same Spirit, it is absolutely impossible to say that there is any evidence of His presence to the same extent, and of His operation in the same way. If the Christian is under the influence of His holy inspiration, he certainly has not been inspired so as to produce results in any degree comparable to those which were produced by Samuel or Jeremiah, by Hosea or Isaiah. We only, then, confuse ourselves and others when we attempt,

from the common and vague use of the word "inspiration" in both cases, to infer that there was nothing more in the one case than there was in the other. We may not be able to define what were the elements of differentiation, but one reason why we cannot is because in our own case we have no experience of any such elements to enable us to do so. But to conclude from that reason that they did not exist is to shut our eyes to the evidence of fact, and to refuse to acknowledge that which is too patent to be ignored.

To take one more instance in proof of the reality of prophecy. As early as the song of Moses we have the very striking words, "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, His people," words which at any period of the national history, between Moses and Ezra, are not likely to have been the spontaneous expression of Jewish sentiment. Later on, we find it written in Hosea, some eight centuries before Christ, "I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy, and I will say to them which were not My people, Thou art My people, and they shall say, Thou art my God," a promise which is the more remarkable because it speaks of what is to be the individual confession of each member of the people. Again, in Isaiah, "It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation to the end of the earth." This was written seven centuries before Christ. It is true that St. John and St. Paul both recognised in these passages the promised admission of the Gentiles. The point to be observed is that it was there before they recognised it. They did not put it there; and because they found it there, it was not the less conspicuous, nor was the application inappropriate, because they made use of it; and it is yet further to be observed that the verdict of eighteen centuries since their time has only served to make their application the more remarkable, and the original declaration of the prophet the more significant and marvellous. It is nothing to the point to say that there is no connection between the facts of history and the prophecy, because that is the point to be proved, and the evidence is all the other way; whereas, in support of the contrary, there is nothing but assertion and a preconceived opinion of the improbability and impossibility of prophecy. But the question to be determined is whether the alleged evidence of prophecy is sufficient to establish the fact or not, instead of whether or not it is likely or possible that there should be such a thing as prophecy. The defection of the Jewish Church and the admission of the Gentiles, however, do not rest upon the precarious interpretation of one or two texts, but upon the

uniform testimony of Scripture, from one end to the other, while as a matter of fact we are ourselves witnesses of the remarkable way in which history has corresponded with and confirmed this testimony. It is for us to determine the direction in which these facts point; but this much is certain, that if Moses, Isaiah and Hosea wrote as we know they did many centuries before Christ came, and the history had been developed, it could not have been by any natural instinct of their own, but simply and solely because they were inspired thus to write. It is no business of ours to decide how far they may have understood the full significance of what they wrote. We have their words before us, and we have the facts of history side by side with them.

The only question is what is the relation between the two, and whether the correspondence which undeniably exists does or does not point to an over-ruling mind and providence which

Deep in unfathomable mines of never-failing skill
Has treasured up His bright designs and wrought His sovereign Will.

But if this is so, then inspiration is a fact. We may reason about its methods, its conditions, its operation, and the like, but we cannot deny its specific difference from every faculty which we ourselves can conceive. We are bound to acknowledge its reality. How, then, does all this affect such apparently mundane compositions as the Books of Kings and Chronicles?—are they also inspired? What about the genealogical lists in Chronicles? What about the preservation of a number of minute details touching the Temple and its services, which have lost their interest for any human being? The answer is a very simple one. These things are all parts of a whole; they had their place in their day—they have not wholly lost their use in our own; they are at least a witness to the degree of scrupulous care with which these things were put on record and were not left to chance or consigned to oblivion. We can check and countercheck by them, not always indeed to our satisfaction, the independent statements of other sources, while it is not to be denied that some of the very grandest cartoons of all history have been sketched for us by the writers of Kings; and the Second Book of Chronicles has preserved to us a multitude of incidents and details of the very highest interest which, but for the compilers of it, we should not have known, and which, whether or not we accept the moral reflections, which he has combined with them, are at all events fraught with lessons of their own which it is not safe to neglect. There are not wanting here, also, indications of the presence of the like power, exerting itself indeed in a

somewhat different way; but yet so as to set a broad mark of distinction between these writings and any others of a similar character. To take one instance, the verdict that is passed on the conduct of each successive king as he is withdrawn from the scene is only to be regarded as authoritative or conjectural or blasphemous. How is it possible for any ordinary man to say that such and such a king did that which was right or that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord without blasphemy, unless he has access to sources of information which enable him to do so? What English historian would be justified in so dealing with the large majority of our kings? But the writer of Chronicles has no hesitation: he knows. If this knowledge was not feigned or conjectural, it must have been authentic; but if it was authentic, then the writer must have been inspired, or at all events enlightened authoritatively to such an extent as to enable him to pass his judgment with decision and accuracy.

It is thus, then, that I use the word "inspiration," which I am not at all jealous of or anxious for, and which I cannot define, to express that unknown but very manifest power by which certain undeniable features of the sacred Scriptures have been produced. We must postulate such a power in order to account for them. We may call it inspiration, revelation, or what we please. "The meaning, not the name, I call." We may try to explain it by all the ingenuity we can command; we cannot ultimately do so. Like the other methods of Divine operation, it must ever remain inscrutable, mysterious, profound. But for all that, I maintain that it is still an entity, substantive, valid and concrete, of which the proofs are innumerable, and by no means easy to be disposed of.

"But what about verbal inspiration?" some reader may say; "you will surely not undertake to defend that?" Here again I would ask, What do you mean by verbal inspiration? Let us be quite sure that we know what we mean by the words we use. A moment's consideration will show us that, however much the phrase "verbal inspiration" may have been abused, and I am no advocate for the abuse of anything, the inspiration of any book or document must be very closely connected with the inspiration of its words. Indeed, what is a book but a collection of words, and what then is an inspired book but an inspired collection of words or a collection of inspired words? The former is the more accurate, and in some respects the preferable definition, but we shall soon see that in certain cases the one must involve the other. For instance, it will not be possible obviously to discuss any particular prophecy apart from all reference to the particular words of the prophecy. If, then,

the prophecy is inspired, the words of the prophecy must be inspired: the inspiration must, so to say, pervade the words. For the meaning of the prophecy will vary as the meaning of the words varies, and if the words are tampered with so as to alter their meaning or to deprive them of all meaning, there will be an end to the prophecy. In this sense, therefore, inspiration implies and involves verbal inspiration. Let us take an example. "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel." It is not to be denied that St. Matthew has here altered the original words of the prophet, which were "thou" or "she," thus clearly showing that he was no slave to the letter, and that the inspiration, if any, of the passage, was independent of any such verbal change. But there is another word in the passage about which controversy has hotly raged, *i.e.*, the word "virgin" and its technical meaning, and the attempt has been made to invalidate the evangelist's quotation by the assertion that this technical meaning is uncertain, if not erroneous. Now, I would even venture to say that I think we do the evangelist wrong if we suppose that he intends to rest the weight of his reference upon this single word or its technical meaning. He is drawing a parallel between the incidents of the birth of Jesus and the statement of the prophet, and he says, "now *all* this was done that it might be fulfilled." He saw the fulfilment of the promise quite as much in the name Emmanuel, *e.g.*, and the general history of the Lord's birth, as he did in the prophet's use of the word "virgin." And may we not say that, whatever encouragement was offered to Ahaz at a period of great national depression by the birth of the child Immanuel, which may be presumed to have been *not* of a virgin, a far more glorious promise of hope was associated with the birth of the second Immanuel at a period of much deeper national depression, when so many incidents of remarkable providence combined to signalize His birth. But the difficulty we have in making the prophecy correspond with the event, is one which we owe mainly to our crude, preconceived notions about verbal inspiration; for whatever may be the importance attaching to this particular word "virgin," it is, after all, of subordinate importance, because virginity is not to be predicated in the first instance, and in the second, though unquestionably it is implied and assumed, it is hardly intended to be forced into that position of solitary prominence in which it has been, as it seems to me, unduly placed.

This instance, however, though it serves to show that there may be a certain amount of elasticity in the words employed, shows also that, whatever correspondence there may be between history and prophecy, must be a correspondence dependent on

the words, and therefore, so far as inspiration is involved, it must be a verbal inspiration, for the evidence of inspiration is in the particular words used, which, within certain limits, cannot be replaced by any others, or there would cease to be even the appearance of prophecy. For myself, I may say that I cannot contemplate the various phenomena of the Old Testament without distinctly tracing innumerable instances and indications of inspiration, and these may be multiplied indefinitely according to the faith of the student. The point to be determined is whether or not the Holy Spirit spoke by the prophets in an exceptional way, and if He did we can never be sure that He did not intend us to see some mark of correspondence He may have enabled us to perceive, while we may be perfectly certain that the broad and patent features of correspondence which exist *passim* in the Old Testament Scriptures, and which may or may not have been made use of by New Testament writers, were put there expressly for our learning, and that we shall be rejecting His guidance and teaching if we refuse to note them. For instance, I cannot but believe that the words of Abraham, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering," were both spoken and recorded under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and that we, as Christians, were intended to see in them a promise that was and could only be fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. Abraham, like Caiaphas, may not have intended to prophecy, and may not have known that he did so, but I am justified in believing that there was a providence that directed the utterances of both, and that it was not by human accident, but by Divine design, that the utterances in both cases were recorded. And in this I believe I am right in tracing an evidence of inspiration. But when it is borne in mind that instances of this kind may be multiplied to almost any extent, and will continually reveal themselves to the zeal and diligence of the devout student, the inference becomes irresistible that the Bible is no ordinary book, and that that which differentiates it from all other books is the presiding influence of the Spirit of God working for a purpose, and that purpose to lead men to Christ. I may be as far as ever from knowing what inspiration is, or being able to define it. I may be very careful, as I shall always try to be, not to conceive of or represent inspiration in a manner or under conditions that will involve us in contradictions, and be opposed to facts; but that in dealing with the history and prophecy of the Old Testament and the history and teaching of the New I am brought face to face with phenomena which can be explained on this theory, and on no other, will be to me a deeply-rooted and growing conviction which nothing will be able to shake.

STANLEY LEATHES.