

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Revelation and Inspiration

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Bibliology (*bibliou logos*)¹ includes all the topics relating to the written revelation of God, namely, the inspiration, authenticity, credibility, and canonicity of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. As has already been observed, this division is not so strictly necessary as are the others to the integrity of a theological system, yet since theological science depends for its validity and credibility upon the contents of the Bible, it is requisite in order to comprehensiveness to devote some preliminary attention to the authority of these contents. The subject of inspiration, in particular, cannot well be omitted.

The Scriptures are entitled a revelation, and hence it is necessary first of all to define this term. It is employed in two senses: (1) general or unwritten revelation and (2) special or written revelation.

General Revelation

Revelation in its general and wide signification is any species of knowledge of which God is the ultimate source and cause. In this sense, all that man knows intuitively is revealed to him; for even his axiomatic knowledge does not originate from himself independently and apart from his Creator. All that he knows in this manner, he knows through his intellect, and this intellect is the workmanship of God. Man cognizes in accordance with the laws of human intelligence, and these laws are established by his maker.

General or unwritten revelation, consequently, includes all that belongs to ethics and natural religion. In Scripture, that moral and religious truth which man perceives immediately by reason of his mental constitution is called "revelation." For example, the knowledge of future retribution possessed by the pagan is so denominated. "The wrath of God," says St. Paul, "is revealed (*apokalyptetai*)² from heaven" (Rom. 1:18); and this wrath is subsequently described as operating in the workings of an accusing conscience (2:15). The pagan's knowledge of the unity of God and of such attributes as eternity, omnipotence, and sovereignty (*theiotēs*)³ is also represented as a divine teaching. "That

¹ βιβλίου λόγος = a word or discourse about the Bible

² ἀποκαλύπτεται

³ θειότης

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which may be known of God [in this intuitive manner] is manifest in them; for God has showed it unto them" (1:19–20). This inward knowledge is also denominated a "law written in the heart" (2:15), which has led to its being called an unwritten law. Turretin (2.1, 6) denominates it "natural revelation."⁴

Unwritten or general revelation, then, is a particular form of human consciousness that is ultimately referable to God. It is denominated by English writers the "moral" or "religious" consciousness, by which is meant a mode of consciousness that relates to moral and religious objects and truths and is determined by them. The Germans call it the "God-consciousness," meaning thereby a form of consciousness of which God is the object. As the "sense-consciousness" denotes the sum total of all the inward experience that results from the impression made upon man by the material world, so the God-consciousness denotes the inward experience resulting from the impression made by God upon the human spirit. This mode of man's consciousness not only has God for the object of it, but for the cause of it. And this in two ways.

First, the object generally is the cause of the subjective impression, by reason of the correlation between subject and object. The objective coal of fire is the cause of the subjective sensation. The consciousness of physical pain is not produced by an act of will. The man is not the author of the sensation, but the object that causes it is. In like manner, man's consciousness of God is not produced by man's volition but by God as an object that impresses him. (See supplement 2.1.1.)

Second, God is not only the object of knowledge, but he is also a personal and active agent who operates on the human mind so that it shall have this knowledge of himself. In the phrase of St. Paul, God "reveals" and "manifests" his being and attributes within the human spirit. The coal of fire is the cause of the sense-consciousness, by the mere correlation between itself and the physical sense. But God is the cause of man's knowledge of God not merely by the correlation between the two beings, but also by a direct energy operating upon man. An irrational object like a stone or a planet exerts no direct efficiency upon the cognizing mind of man; and neither does a rational object like a human person. Sensation and cognition, in these instances, result from a passive impression made by the object. But in the God-consciousness, the object actively assists in the cognition. God causes the human mind to know God by an inward and immediate efficiency, in addition to the correlation which he has established between the finite and infinite spirit. In St. Paul's phrase, he "shows," "reveals," and "manifests" himself.

The Scriptures go yet further than this and refer all the operations of reason to the author of the human intellect. Nothing in human consciousness is independent of God and

⁴ *revelatio naturalis*

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isolated. God is the “Father of lights” of every kind (James 1:17). God “shows” whatever is known by virtue of the human constitution. Even human reason, which in the intuitions of mathematics and in the laws of logic seems to be a self-sufficient faculty, is represented in Scripture as dependent. Man is able to perceive intuitively, only because the Supreme Reason illumines him. “The Logos,” says St. John (1:4, 9), “is the light of men and coming into the world enlightens every man.” “There is a spirit in man,” says Elihu who in this instance speaks truly, “and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding” (Job 32:8).

Human knowledge, then, considered from this point of view, is an unwritten revelation because it is not aboriginal and self-subsistent but derived. It issues ultimately from a higher source than the finite intelligence. Human reason has the ground of its authority in the Supreme Reason. This is seen particularly in that form of reason which Kant denominates “practical” and whose judgments are given in conscience. This faculty has an authority for man that cannot be accounted for except by its being the voice of God. If conscience were entirely isolated from the deity and were independent of him, it could not make the solemn and sometimes terrible impression it does. No man would be afraid of himself if the self were not connected with a higher being than self. Of the judgments of conscience, it may be said literally that God reveals his own holy judgment through them. “Whence comes the restraint of conscience?” asks Selden (*Table Talk*); “from a higher power; nothing else can bind. I cannot bind myself, for I may untie myself again; an equal cannot bind me, for we may untie one another. It must be a superior power, even God Almighty.”⁵

The wide use of the term *revelation* was more common in the patristic church than it has been since. The first defenders of Christianity were called to vindicate it against polytheism. They would naturally, therefore, select for defense such of its truths as were more particularly combated by paganism, such as the unity of God and the first principles of natural religion generally. This led them to point out the grounds of these first truths of morals and religion in the human constitution; so that the distinction between natural and revealed religion though recognized was not emphasized. All religious knowledge was represented as a revelation from God, partly through the light of nature and partly in a supernatural manner (Justin Martyr’s *Apology* 1.8, 18, 57 is an example of this). But when polytheism ceased to be the great foe of Christianity and deism took its place, it became necessary to lay special stress upon the distinction between unwritten and written revelation. When the skeptic himself defended the claims of natural religion and asserted the needlessness of the gospel, then the Christian apologist was compelled to

⁵ WS: See Twisten, *Dogmatics* 2.146; Shedd, *Theological Essays*, 303–4; Neander, *Book of Acts* §6: “Reconciliation.”

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discriminate carefully between that knowledge which comes to man in the structure of his mind and that which he receives through a supernatural source and in a written word, in order to show the insufficiency of the former to meet the wants of man as a sinner.

General or unwritten revelation, though trustworthy, is not infallible. This differentiates it from the special or written revelation.

In the first place, the ethical and religious teaching of God through the structure of the human mind is vitiated more or less by human depravity. (a) Sin darkens the intellect so that there is not that clear perception which characterizes the angelic intuition and which was possessed by the unfallen Adam. (b) Sin gives a bias to the will against the truth so that even when there is an accurate perception there is an endeavor to get rid of it. Men know God to be holy, but do not like to retain this knowledge (Rom. 1:28). (c) Sin weakens the power of intuition itself. Vice debilitates the spiritual and rational faculty by strengthening the sensuous nature. (d) It is a part of the punishment of sin that God withdraws for a time his common grace so that there is little or no intuitive perception of moral truth. The human mind is left to sin: God “gave up to uncleanness those who changed the truth of God into a lie” (1:24) and “gave them over to a reprobate mind” (1:28).

Second, infallibility cannot be attributed to unwritten revelation because of the limitations of the finite mind. Natural religion cannot be any more trustworthy than the human intellect itself is.⁶ But the human intellect cannot be infallible unless it is preserved from all error by an extraordinary exertion of divine power. That ordinary operation of God in the human mind which is seen in ethics and natural religion, though sometimes reaching a high degree of certainty and validity, never reaches the point of absolute infallibility. Even when unwritten revelation is rectified by written revelation, we cannot attribute to it the absolute authority of the latter because the rectification is more or less imperfect. The purest form of ethics and natural religion is to be found in Christendom, not in paganism. The ethical system of Plato is not as correct as that of Butler. But infallibility cannot be attributed to either, as it is to the ethics of the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount (see Ursinus, *Christian Religion* Q. 92).

Third, unwritten revelation is inadequate to the needs of man as a sinner because it does not include those truths which relate to redemption. Its doctrines are sufficient only for a sinless being. Natural religion is silent respecting the exercise of mercy. It reveals only law and justice: *orgē*⁷ not *agapē*.⁸ St. Paul affirms that the wrath, not the compassion of

⁶ WS: See Conybeare's "Reply to Tindal" in Shedd, *History of Doctrine* 1.208.

⁷ ὀργή = wrath

⁸ ἀγάπη = love

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God, is taught to men in the workings of conscience. This is the fatal lack in all the natural religions of mankind. Many current treatises on comparative religion are erroneous and misleading here. It is frequently contended that Buddhism and Confucianism are coordinate religions with Christianity because they teach the golden rule and other principles of ethics. But this does not prove the point. The distinguishing characteristic of Christianity is not the teaching of sound ethics, but the offer of mercy through a divine mediator and a radical change of human character. Christianity is gospel, not law; but Confucianism and Buddhism, so far as they contain truth, are law, not gospel. If it can be shown that Buddhism and Confucianism actually secure the forgiveness and extirpation of human sin, then they may be classed with Christianity. But there is no pardon and no regeneration in any religion but that of Jesus Christ: "Who is he that forgives sins, but God only?" Hence the modern Christian, like the primitive, cannot concede that Christianity is merely one among several religions, merely one of the legitimate religions.⁹ Christianity is an exclusive religion for man because it is the only redemptive religion for him (Shedd, *Theological Essays*, 374–76).

Special Revelation

In the common use of the term, revelation is employed in the restricted signification and signifies the written word of God. The contents of written revelation are as follows.

Scripture includes among its teachings those of unwritten revelation, namely, the first truths of ethics and natural religion. It assumes the validity of the doctrines of divine existence, unity of God, immortality of the soul, freedom of the will, and future reward and punishment.

But these doctrines as taught in Scripture differ from the same doctrines as taught in Plato, for example, (a) by stronger evidence and greater certainty. Immortality in the *Phaedo* is a hope and aspiration; in the Gospel of John it is the absolute assurance of personal knowledge and experience. Christ is an eyewitness in respect to the other world and the other life. The Son of Man speaks that which he knows and testifies that which he has seen (John 3:11). These scriptural doctrines also differ from Plato's (b) by freedom from erroneous elements. Morality in the Decalogue and in the Sermon on the Mount is not mixed with false ethics. Plato and Aristotle speak of, for example, the destruction of sick infants and the community of wives (*Republic* 5); the justifying of slavery (*Ethics* 1.4–8) and of abortion; and the destruction of feeble offspring (*Ethics* 8.16). Natural religion in the unwritten form is vitiated by its connection with the impure reason of man; in the written form, it is the pure reason of God. The Bible gives an inspired statement of natural religion; Plato gives an uninspired statement. The first is infallible; the second is more or

⁹ religiones licitae

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less trustworthy but not free from error. Whether polygamy is intrinsically immoral cannot perhaps be determined by natural religion as deduced from the human mind alone; but natural religion as enunciated by Christ makes polygamy to be wrong: "From the beginning it was not so" (Matt. 19:8). Christ teaches that monogamy is founded in the created nature and constitution of man. Again, the monotheism of the Bible is without error; that of natural religion is more or less vitiated—either in teaching too much severity in God (as in paganism) or too much indulgence in him (as in the deistical schools of Christendom).

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Written revelation contains many truths and facts that result from human observation and reflection. All that is historical in both the Old Testament and the New is of this kind. The narrative, for example, of the journeyings of the children of Israel is the record of eyewitnesses. The history of the rise of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah as recorded in the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles is an account drawn from contemporary sources. All that is geographical is of this kind; and all that is chronological. The natural history of the Scriptures is also the product of man's observation.

But all of this biblical history, chronology, and geography differs from corresponding matter in uninspired literature by being unmixed with error. Biblical history is not legendary like that of early Greece and Rome. Biblical chronology is not extravagant like that of Egypt, as reported to Herodotus by the priests. Here the influence of inspiration is very apparent. Moses was guided in collecting and composing the historical narratives in the Pentateuch. Herodotus was not thus preserved from error in gathering and writing his accounts of the Egyptians, Persians, and Greeks. Says Hodge (1.155):

Many of the sacred writers although inspired, received no revelation. This was probably the fact with the authors of the historical books of the Old Testament. The evangelist Luke does not refer his knowledge of the events which he records to revelation, but says he derived it from those "who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word" (Luke 1:2). It is immaterial to us where Moses obtained his knowledge of the events recorded in the Book of Genesis; whether from early documents, from tradition, or from direct revelation. If the sacred writers had sufficient knowledge in themselves, or in those about them, there is no need to assume any direct revelation. It is enough for us, that they were rendered infallible as teachers.

The written word, besides the truths of natural religion and the facts and truths that come within the ken of the ordinary human intelligence, contains a series of truths that are altogether different from these. These are the most important part of the contents of Scripture and constitute the most strictly supernatural element in the written word. Speaking generally, they are those truths and facts that relate to man's salvation from sin, namely, Trinity, creation and apostasy of man, incarnation, and redemption. The doctrine

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of sin, though a fact of consciousness and thus belonging also to natural religion, has in the Scriptures certain features that imply special teaching, since human consciousness unassisted could not discover them, namely, the account of the temptation by Satan and the fall in Adam; and a profound analysis and delineation of sin itself, such as is given in Rom. 7–8. The doctrine of sacrificial atonement for sin is also a truth of natural religion; but the Mosaic system of sacrifices, so peculiar in its features, was given by the teaching of the Holy Spirit: “The Holy Spirit signified this, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing” (Heb. 9:8).

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Nature of Inspiration

This twofold variety in the contents of the Bible necessitates two varieties or modes of divine operation upon the human mind: (1) inspiration and (2) revelation proper. The distinction between these two is important, and the neglect of it has led to confusion.

Inspiration is like revelation in that it is a superhuman influence upon the particular person selected to be the organ of the divine mind. But inspiration goes no further than to insure freedom from error in presenting that truth which has been obtained in the ordinary ways in which men obtain truth, while revelation discloses new truth that is inaccessible to the ordinary human mind. A man may be inspired and yet not reveal anything. Much of the Bible is of this kind. But a man to whom a revelation is communicated is also inspired to express and record it. Inspiration is more of the nature of superintendence; revelation is more of the nature of instruction and information.

The distinction between inspiration and revelation is an old one. Edwards (*Mysteries of Scripture*) marks the distinction in the following manner:

We ought to distinguish between those things which were written in the sacred books by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit and those which were only committed to writing by the direction of the Holy Spirit. To the former class belong all the mysteries of salvation, or all those things which respect the means of our deliverance taught in the gospel, which could not be known from the principles of reason and therefore must be revealed. But to the other class those things belong which either are already known from natural religion, but are of service to inculcate duty on man and to demonstrate the necessity of a revelation of the means of salvation; or all histories, useful to illustrate and assure us of the doctrines revealed and which point out the various degrees of revelation, the different dispensations of salvation, and the various modes of governing the church of God; all of which are necessary to be known in the further explanation of mysteries.

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Claude Frassen, a Franciscan monk and theologian of the seventeenth century, assumed three kinds of inspiration: (1) antecedent inspiration¹⁰ or the revelation of things before unknown (this is revelation proper); (2) concomitant inspiration¹¹ or the security against error in the statement of truths or facts known in the ordinary way (this is inspiration in distinction from revelation); and (3) consequent inspiration¹² or divine authority stamped by inspired men upon writings composed without inspiration, for example, the gospels of Mark and Luke approved by Peter and Paul (see Knapp, *Theology*, introduction).

Lee (*Inspiration*, lect. 1) has made the distinction with care, but he errs in contending that it is not found in the older writers. Citing Quenstedt as one who holds the mechanical theory, he quotes the following from him: "The matters which Scripture contains were consigned to letters not only through assistance and infallible divine direction, but, having been received, should be attributed to the singular suggestion (*suggestio*), inspiration (*inspiratio*), and dictation of the Holy Spirit."¹³ Here, evidently, *suggestio* denotes "revelation" and *inspiratio* denotes "inspiration." In the same connection, Quenstedt speaks of "matters altogether unknown naturally to the biblical writers; those that were indeed naturally knowable but which, nevertheless, were actually unknown; and those matters that not only were naturally knowable but which they actually knew,"¹⁴ and brings them all under the head of inspiration.

Marking this distinction, the first position to be taken respecting the Bible is that all of it is inspired. The original autograph volume of inspiration was free from error. This does not mean that every sentence or proposition in Scripture contains a truth. The words of Satan to Eve (Gen. 3:4) were a falsehood. But those words were actually spoken, and they are recorded with infallible accuracy. Some of the reasonings and inferences of Job's friends were false, but they occurred as they are related by the inspired penman.

This theory of plenary inspiration has been the generally received doctrine of the church. The following statement of Turretin (2.4.5) contains it: "The sacred writers were so moved and inspired by the Holy Spirit, both in respect to thought (*res ipsas*)¹⁵ and language, that they were kept from all error, and their writings are truly authentic and divine." Quenstedt defines in a similar manner: "Scripture is infallible truth, free from all error;

¹⁰ *inspiratio antecedens*

¹¹ *inspiratio concomitans*

¹² *inspiratio consequens*

¹³ *Res quae in scriptura continentur, non solum per assistentiam et directionem divinam infallibilem literis consignatae sunt, sed singulari Spiritus Sancti suggestioni, inspirationi, et dictamini, acceptae ferendae sunt.*

¹⁴ *Res sanctis scriptoribus naturaliter prorsus incognitae; naturaliter quidem cognoscibiles, actu tamen incognitae; non tantum naturaliter cognoscibiles, sed etiam actu ipso notae.*

¹⁵ the matters themselves

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each and everything contained in it is absolute truth (*verissima*); be it doctrine, morals, history, chronology, topography, proper names." Similarly Hollaz remarks that "matters of genealogy, of astronomy, of politics, though the knowledge of them is not necessary to salvation, are yet divinely revealed [inspired], because they serve to interpret and illustrate the truths that are necessary to salvation" (Hase, *Hutterus* §44). These theologians in these affirmations have reference to the original autograph. The statement—be it doctrinal, historical, chronological, or geographical—as it came from the inspired person himself was accurate. But they concede that some minor errors have subsequently come into biblical manuscripts from copyists and translators and that some have been introduced by critics and exegetes. (See supplement 2.1.2.)

Westminster Confession 1.2.6 teaches that "all the books of the Old and New Testament are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life" and that "our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts." The scriptural proofs of the authority and infallibility of the Scriptures are the following: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16); "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb. 1:1–2); "which things we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches" (1 Cor. 2:13); "holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21); "search the Scriptures" (John 5:39); "unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2); and "look to the law and to the testimony" (Isa. 8:20).

The theory of plenary inspiration prevailed in the patristic, medieval, and Reformation periods. Luther has sometimes been cited as adopting a different view because of his opinion respecting the authority of the Apocalypse and the Epistle of James. But he questioned the canonicity of these portions of Scripture. All Scripture that he conceded to be canonical, he held to be infallible.

The Christian fathers are sometimes said to have held a loose view of inspiration. But the view of Augustine was certainly a strict one, and it had high authority in the patristic and medieval churches. In his *Harmony of the Gospels* 1.35 he says: "Christ is the head and his apostles are the members. Whatever he wished us to read concerning his words and deeds, he ordered to be written down as if with his own hands; and he who reads the narratives of the evangelists will believe them as if he saw Christ himself writing by their hands and pens." (See supplement 2.1.3.)

Calixtus (1650), in Germany, introduced a less strict middle theory according to which the sacred writers were preserved from all error in regard to doctrine necessary to salvation but not in regard to subjects that have no such importance. His view found few

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advocates in his own day. Baumgarten (1725) reaffirmed it, maintaining that divine influence preserved the sacred writers from error only so far as the purpose of a revelation required, which is the salvation of the soul from sin; this purpose, he said, would not be frustrated by unimportant errors in chronology, history, topography, etc. During the nineteenth century, this view has gained ground, particularly in Germany. Such evangelical theologians as Tholuck, Twisten, and Müller adopt it. Dorner (*Christian Doctrine* §59) accepts it in part: “There are historical matters which stand in essential connection with the meaning and spirit of revelation. In this case, inspiration does not apply merely to nonhistoric eternal truths.” The theory is presented eloquently by Coleridge in his *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* (for a criticism, see Shedd, *Literary Essays*, 336–42). The objections to this middle theory of inspiration are the following:

1. The primary and the secondary matter in Scripture, such as doctrine and history, are so indissolubly connected with each other that uncertainty in respect to the latter casts uncertainty upon the former. If, for example, the history of the residence of the Israelites in Egypt and of their exodus and wanderings is mythical and exaggerated like the early history of Assyria and Babylon, this throws discredit upon the Decalogue as having been received from the lips of God on Sinai. If the history, geography, and chronology, in the middle of which the doctrinal elements of the Pentateuch are embedded, contain fictions and contradictions, these doctrinal elements will not be accepted as an infallible revelation from God. The same reasoning applies to the history and chronology of the New Testament. If the narrative by the four evangelists of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ is more or less legendary, it will be impossible to secure for the doctrines of Christ that undoubting belief which the church in every age has exercised in regard to them. This is clearly perceived by the skeptic. Strauss well knew that if he could succeed in proving the mythical character of the New Testament history, he would have little difficulty in destroying human confidence in the New Testament dogmas. To say that if the doctrines of Scripture are held to be infallible it is of no consequence whether the history and geography of Scripture are free from error is like Schenkel’s assertion that if the spirit of Christ is with the church it is of no consequence whether his body rose from the grave. It would be impossible for the church to believe that the spirit of Christ dwells and operates in his people if the church at the same time were denying or doubting that Christ rose from the tomb. The primary and the secondary, the doctrinal and the historical elements of Scripture stand or fall together. This is illustrated by a fact in the history of rationalistic criticism:

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[Graf] assigned a postexilic origin to the great body of legislation found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. The historical portion of this *Grundschrift*¹⁶ he still maintained to be the oldest part of the Pentateuch. But here, as Kuenen said, was the Achilles heel of his theory. Hence Riehm and others insisted that he had no right to separate the legislative from the historical portions unless he renounced the leading principles of analysis as hitherto employed. Graf then yielded and announced his conviction that the whole of the first Elohist, history as well as laws, is postexilic. This view was afterward elaborated by Wellhausen. (Chambers, *Pentateuchal Criticism*, essay 1.14)

2. It is improbable that God would reveal a fact or doctrine to the human mind and do nothing toward securing an accurate statement of it. This is particularly the case when the doctrine is one of the mysteries of religion. Such profound truths as the Trinity, incarnation, vicarious atonement, etc., require the superintendence and guidance of an infallible Spirit to secure an enunciation that shall not be misleading. Hence it is more natural to suppose that a prophet or an apostle who has received directly from God a profound and mysterious truth inaccessible to the human intellect will not be left to his own unassisted powers in imparting what he has received. Especially is it improbable that communications from the deity would be veiled in extravagant and legendary costume.
3. The middle theory of a partial inspiration is more difficult to be maintained than is the theory of plenary inspiration. Because if only a part of Scripture is infallible, it becomes necessary to point out which part it is. If anyone asserts that there are errors in the Bible, he must demonstrate them. This is an arduous task. It is more difficult to prove that the narratives of the Pentateuch are forgeries of later writers than to prove that they were composed by Moses. No one can demonstrate that the history of the exodus is legendary. The evidence for it as history is much greater than against it as fable. The arguments in favor of the scriptural chronology are stronger than those against it. If they were not, the chronology would long ago have been rejected by the majority of students of the Bible; the number of believers would have been as small as the existing number of skeptics.

It must be remembered that unsolved difficulties are not equivalent to a proof of the falsity of Scripture. Because a particular link in the chain of biblical chronology, for example, cannot now be put in, it does not follow that this chronology as a whole is erroneous. The mere absence of complete proof of the affirmative is not a proof of the negative. When there is a strong body of proof for a proposition, the mere fact that at a certain point the proof is weak or lacking is not sufficient to discredit the demonstrative

¹⁶ a basic or foundational writing

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force of this body of proof. The fact that the skeptic can ask a question which the believer cannot answer is not a proof that the skeptic's own position is the truth or that the believer's position is false. The unsolved difficulties respecting inspiration have often been palmed off as positive arguments for his own position by the unbeliever.

In maintaining the plenary inspiration of the Bible, we shall consider it first as containing matter that is revealed in distinction from inspired. All such revealed truth is infallible, that is, free from error.

Nature of Revelation

Revelation in the restricted sense, we have seen, denotes the communication of truth or facts hitherto unknown to man and incapable of being deduced from the structure of the human intellect or derived through the ordinary channels of human information. It is generally indicated in the Old Testament by such phraseology as the following: "The vision of Isaiah which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem" (Isa. 1:1); "the burden of Tyre" (23:1); "the word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the dearth" (Jer. 14:1); "then was the secret revealed to Daniel in a night vision" (Dan. 2:19; 10:1); "thus says Jehovah, Call unto me, and I will answer you and show great and mighty things which you know not" (Jer. 33:2-3). In the New Testament, St. Paul describes a revelation as a species of divine communication: "What shall I profit you, except I shall speak either by revelation (*en apokalypsei*)¹⁷ or by knowledge" (1 Cor. 14:6); "when you come together, everyone of you has a doctrine, has a revelation (*apokalypsin*),¹⁸ has an interpretation" (14:26); "I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord" (2 Cor. 12:1). The product of a revelation is denominated a "mystery": "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery" (1 Cor. 2:7); "let a man so account of us as stewards of the mysteries of God" (4:1); "behold I show you a mystery" (15:51). A mystery is a truth or fact revealed without an explanation of it. The Trinity is such. Oftentimes when a proof of a revealed truth is demanded, it is really an explanation that is asked for. The objector requires that the fact or truth be made clear to his mind, in which case the mystery is at an end.

As an example of a revelation, consider 2 Thess. 2:3. St. Paul here informs the Thessalonian church of a fact that had been divulged to him from God, namely, that the second advent of Christ to the final judgment will not occur until after a great apostasy in Christendom has taken place. He could not have obtained the knowledge from any human source. It was a secret which God disclosed to him. And it was infallible information. The future history of the world will evince that it is. Other examples of revelation are seen in the account of the resurrection of the body (1 Cor. 15:35-55), the

¹⁷ ἐν ἀποκάλυψει

¹⁸ ἀποκάλυψιν

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cessation of the work of redemption (15:24–28), and the conversion of the Jews after the conversion of the Gentiles (Rom. 11:25). The account in Gen. 1 of the order and succession of events in the creation of the world is a revelation. This is a history which is both revealed and inspired. In this respect it differs from the history of the exodus of the Israelites and similar histories in Scripture, which are inspired but not revealed. There was no human observer to witness the process of creation and to compose an account of it. The information of what was done in the six days must have been imparted by the Creator himself, who was the only actor and the only spectator. It could not have been derived from human records or human science. Again the doctrine of the Trinity is a truth not deducible by rational reflection, and therefore it is a revelation. In this respect, it differs from the doctrine of the unity of God. This latter is a truth capable of being inferred by the human intellect, as St. Paul (Rom. 1:19) teaches, from a contemplation of the works of creation outwardly and the operations of the human soul inwardly. The Trinity is a part of written revelation; but divine unity is a truth of natural religion or unwritten revelation. The doctrine of the Trinity as stated in the Bible is both revealed and inspired; the doctrine of divine unity as stated in the Bible is inspired but not revealed.

Again, the doctrine of vicarious atonement is a revelation. The doctrine of personal atonement, namely, that the transgressor must himself suffer, is a truth of natural religion; but that another competent person may and will suffer for him is a truth only of revealed religion. “The soul that sins, it shall die” (Ezek. 18:4) is natural religion. Christ “was made a curse for us” (Gal. 3:13) and Christ “is the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 2:2) is revelation. Whether God will pardon sin and in what way he will do it can no more be determined by *a priori* reasoning, than it can be determined by *a priori* reasoning whether another poet like Shakespeare will appear. It is a question of fact and of intention on the part of God; and a fact must be known either by history or by prophecy, which is history beforehand. And the only historical statement respecting the fact that God will forgive sin is that of God himself in written revelation. There may be conjectures and hopes in regard to divine mercy, but no certain knowledge except by a word from the divine lips. The exercise of justice being necessary, the fact that it will be exercised, is a part of unwritten revelation. The wrath of God is revealed in the human conscience (Rom. 1:18). But the exercise of mercy being optional and contingent upon the divine will, the fact that it will be exercised is a part of written revelation only.

To determine then how much of the Bible is revelation proper and how much is only inspiration, we have but to examine its contents. Anything in its pages that may indisputably be deduced by human reasoning or be drawn from human sources of information is not revealed. But everything else is. The genealogical tables in Matthew and Luke are not revelation. Much of the historical narrative in the Old Testament and

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New Testament is not revelation. Geographical and statistical data are no part of revelation in distinction from inspiration.

Revelation in the restricted and technical use of the term is not human education and development. When the human mind unfolds its own powers and manifests its own internal resources, the product is human. Philosophy, ethics, and natural theology are not an extraordinary communication from the Supreme Reason. They are the evolution of finite reason and the product of human inquiry and investigation. It is true that inasmuch as the human intellect is the workmanship of God and its laws of thinking are imposed by its author the result may be denominated a revelation in the wide sense of the term. But while it is an unwritten revelation, it is also a natural operation of the human mind. It has the characteristics of the human mind and is associated with the darkness and error of the fallen human mind. For apostasy has hindered the pure development of the finite reason, so that while unwritten revelation is sufficiently valid and trustworthy to render man inexcusable for his polytheism and sensuality, it is not an infallible and unerring light.

The theory of Lessing, in his tract entitled *Education of the Human Race*, that revelation, meaning by it the Christian system, is education or human development is exactly wrong. He regards the Scriptures as only anticipating what the human mind could find out for itself, only more slowly and much later. But the distinguishing truths of the Christian Scriptures are of such a nature that they cannot be deduced from premises furnished by man's intellect. They are historical, not *a priori*. They must be made known by testimony, not by reasoning. The mathematician by mathematical calculation cannot discover in what order the different species of creatures were made. The *a priori* method can do nothing here. If any man had happened to be present and witnessed the creative work, he could have reported what he had seen. But no man can in an *a priori* manner discover the way and manner in which the world was created. Similarly, no man can deduce in an *a priori* manner from the nature and structure of the human mind the doctrines of the Trinity, incarnation, vicarious atonement, and redemption. These are not an evolution of the human mind, but a disclosure from the divine mind.

For the same reason, revelation is not the product of national education and development. The Old Testament is not Hebrew literature in the sense that the *Iliad* and Greek drama are Greek literature. The whole Hebrew nation was not inspired by the Holy Spirit, but only a chosen few individuals in it. The merely natural and national development of the Hebrew mind produced the Targums and Talmud and the rabbinic literature generally, not the Old Testament Scriptures. The latter were the work of Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, and others—a small circle of Hebrews who were selected out of the Hebrew nation and supernaturally taught in order that they might instruct their own people and through

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them all other peoples. The sacred writers claim this for themselves, and it was conceded by the nation (see Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.8). That the Old Testament Scriptures are merely one of the literatures of the world, the work of the Hebrew nation and not a special revelation, is the postulate and foundation of all rationalistic criticism. Says Maurice (*Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, chap. 1):

The Old Testament is not the history of men's thoughts about God, or desires after God, or affections toward him. It professes to be a history of God's unveiling of himself to men. If it is not that, it is nothing; it is false from beginning to end. To make it the history of the speculations of a certain tribe about God, we must deny the very root of any speculations which that tribe ever had. For this root is the belief that they could not think of him, unless he had first thought of them; that they could not speak of him, unless he were speaking to them.

An error of the same general nature is found in some evangelical critics, such as Weiss, for example. In his *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* he assumes that the gospels were primarily the product of the primitive church as a whole, not of the apostolic circle exclusively. In its first form, the life of Christ was a narrative floating about in the first Christian brotherhood and not a narrative composed directly or indirectly by four apostles under the guidance of inspiration. The primitive account of Christ's words and deeds was very fragmentary and was subsequently supplemented and worked over into the four gospels as the church now has them. There was an original Mark, from which the present Mark was derived, and that original came from the oral tradition of the first Christian brotherhood: "Our Synoptic Gospels in their present form are probably of later origin than most of the other books of the New Testament, and it is possible that many sayings of Jesus have been taken up into them which were either altogether, or at least in their present shape, foreign to the earliest tradition. The Johannan tradition is altogether excluded from the earliest tradition" (Weiss, *Theology of the New Testament* §§10–11). This view makes the life of Christ to be the product not of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but of the primitive church; and this requires this church to have been divinely guided in describing the life and actions of Christ, if the description is an infallible one. Accordingly, the advocates of this view do not claim that the biography of our Lord is free from error, though truthful in the main.

But the fact in the case is that the first Christian brotherhood obtained all the knowledge it had of the life of Christ from its instructors and guides, the apostles. The Christian brotherhood came into existence only because the apostles related what they had seen and heard during their discipleship and intercourse with the ascended Redeemer. The twelve apostles were expressly commissioned by their master to prepare an account of his life and teachings and were promised divine aid and guidance in doing it (Matt. 10:5–20; John 14:25–26; 15:13–15). This important work was not left to the random method of

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an early ecclesiastical tradition—a method that would inevitably have mingled legend with true history, as is seen in the apocryphal gospels. This theory of Weiss and others is exposed to the same objection that the Protestant urges against the Romish view of ecclesiastical tradition. To go back to a fallible tradition of the first Christian brotherhood for the life of Christ, which is the foundation of Christianity and of Christendom, is like going back to the fallible tradition of the Romish church for Christian doctrine and polity.

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That the gospels had an apostolic not an ecclesiastical origin is proved by the fact that there was a *didachē tōn apostolōn*¹⁹ in which the first brotherhood “continued” (Acts 2:42). This was the common narrative of the twelve apostles respecting the life, teachings, and miracles of their Lord. This common oral account given by the Twelve, “which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word” (Luke 1:2), some of the brotherhood attempted to commit to writing (*anataxasthai diēgēsion*;²⁰ 1:1); and to prevent the errors that would inevitably creep into the life of Christ by this method, Luke under the superintendence of Paul writes the third gospel. In order that the original number of eyewitnesses might be kept full after the death of Judas, a twelfth apostle was chosen out of those who had “compared with them all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them.” Matthias was chosen and ordained as an apostle “to be a witness of Christ’s resurrection” (Acts 1:22). This testimony “with great power gave the apostles” in witnessing “of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus” (4:33). This *didachē tōn apostolōn*²¹ was committed to writing by those four of the twelve apostles to whom the four canonical gospels have been attributed by the church for nearly twenty centuries. These four evangelists put into a fixed form the oral gospel which the Twelve had been teaching in their missionary work. The four were the agents of the apostolic college, in doing what Christ commanded them to do when he promised “to bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever he had said unto them.” Justin Martyr, as early as 160, expresses the common belief of the church on this point when he says that “the apostles in the memoirs composed by them, which are called gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them” (*Apology* 1.66; see *Presbyterian Review*, Jan. 1887:164–67). (See supplement 2.1.4.)

Infallibility of Inspiration

That the Bible as containing revealed truths and facts is infallible is allowed by those who hold the middle theory of inspiration. All truths and doctrines of Scripture that are necessary to salvation are certainly without mixture of error and are the infallible rule of faith and practice. It is not therefore the fact of infallible revelation that is disputed, but

¹⁹ διδαχή τῶν ἀποστόλων = teaching of the apostles

²⁰ ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν = to arrange a narrative, compile an account (New American Standard Bible)

²¹ διδαχή τῶν ἀποστόλων = teaching of the apostles

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the fact of infallible inspiration. We turn to the consideration of this, which is the more difficult part of the general subject.

Inspiration is not sanctification. It is the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind for the purpose of conveying religious truth to mankind. It has therefore a certain resemblance to regeneration in having a divine author and source. But it differs from it in that the aim is not to impart holiness but information. Inspiration is intellectual, while regeneration is spiritual. When the Holy Spirit inspires a person, he does not necessarily sanctify him; he only instructs him and conveys truth by him. Balaam was inspired temporarily upon a certain occasion: "The Lord put words into his mouth" (Num. 23:5). And all that he said while under the influence of the Lord was free from error. Caiaphas also was temporarily inspired: "This he spoke not of himself, but prophesied" (John 11:51); and the prophecy was fulfilled. Nay more, even an animal may be employed as the organ through which God conveys truth to men, as was the case with Balaam's ass: "The Lord opened the mouth of the ass" (Num. 22:28); and her expostulation was full of sense and truth. The ass made no mistake in anything she said to Balaam. The divine message through her, as an instrument, was infallible. In the same manner, even a piece of unconscious matter like the pillar of cloud or the burning bush may be employed as the medium of a theophany and of divine instruction through symbols. (See supplement 2.1.5.)

This shows that inspiration is only intellectual illumination and is entirely distinct from sanctification. If inspiration involved sanctification, the degree of each must be equal, and infallibility in knowledge would require sinlessness in character. Most of the organs of inspiration were in point of fact good men: "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." None of them however were sinless and perfect men, and yet they were infallible. They had a perfect knowledge on the points respecting which they were inspired, but they had not a perfect character. Peter was inspired, but he was defective in character and was rebuked by Paul for his inconsistency in conduct. If we compare the result of the apostolic council related in Acts 15 with the individual action subsequently of Peter spoken of in Gal. 2:11–13, we see that the same person may as an imperfectly sanctified man recede from a position which he had taken previously as an inspired man. The decision of the council respecting the Mosaic ceremonial law was the teaching of the Holy Spirit; but the weak yielding of Peter to the demands of Jewish Christians was the working of sinful imperfection—of which Peter subsequently repented under the fraternal rebuke of Paul. Solomon was inspired to teach a certain class of truths, mainly ethical in distinction from evangelical, but his religious character, particularly in his old age, has led some to doubt his salvation. (See supplement 2.1.6.)

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The fact that inspiration is instruction, not sanctification, and that revelation is an objective information from God which does not depend on subjective characteristics in the person chosen as the medium of communication explains how it is that a volume containing the most profound views of God and man that have yet been published on earth could have been produced among a people comparatively low in knowledge, civilization, and culture. The Hebrews were inferior to the Greeks and Romans in merely humanistic characteristics: inferior in literature, art, and science. They produced very little in these provinces. But nothing in Greek or Roman theology and ethics will compare with the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The Decalogue is the highest of moral codes; but Moses was the leader and head of a half-civilized and degraded body of Egyptian slaves. Had his theological and religious knowledge been only that which his own environment in Egypt at the court of Pharaoh would have furnished, he could no more have composed the Decalogue or the account of the creation in the opening of Genesis than he could have composed *Hamlet* or the *Principia*. The immense disparity between the Old Testament as a book and the Hebrew people as a nation shows that the knowledge of God and divine things contained in the former, but wanting in the latter, came *ab extra*.²² It was communicated from on high. (See supplement 2.1.7.)

Inspiration is not omniscience.²³ The operation of the Holy Spirit does not impart all truth to the inspired mind, but only a portion of it. And it is religious truth that is principally conveyed. The Holy Spirit communicates secular truth only so far as this is necessary to the imparting of religious truth: "The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man" (Westminster Larger Catechism 5). They teach secular and scientific truth only in subserviency to this.

Again, the knowledge of one inspired man may be less than that of another. There is a gradation in imparting religious truth. In the beginning of the old economy, the Holy Spirit disclosed the doctrine of the incarnation only to that extent in which it is seen in the promise respecting the "seed of the woman." The doctrine continues to be divulged with increasing details, until in Isaiah it is greatly widened and enlarged. In the New Testament, the doctrine is as fully revealed as it will be, until the vision of the church by faith becomes the vision face to face. The Apostle John knew more than Moses respecting the preexistence, incarnation, and death of the Son of God. Yet the latter was infallibly

²² *ab extra* = from the outside

²³ WS: Immer (*Hermeneutics*, 18) argues against the infallibility of St. Paul because of the failure of his memory in regard to a certain particular (1 Cor. 14:16). Because the apostle could not remember how many persons he had baptized, therefore his teaching in 1 Cor. 15 respecting the resurrection is fallible! Upon the same principle, he should deny St. Paul's infallibility because he was ignorant of the steam engine and telegraph.

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inspired upon all points respecting which he has said anything. But he has not spoken upon as many points as St. John has. (See supplement 2.1.8.)

Inspired truth is not necessarily completely comprehensible. A doctrine or fact may be infallible and yet mysterious. Because the Bible is not level to human intelligence in all its teachings, it does not follow that it is not free from error. In 1 Pet. 1:10–11, the Old Testament prophets themselves are described as “inquiring and searching” into the meaning of the prophecies taught them by the Holy Spirit: The “sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow” are points that are mentioned.

Defining inspiration positively, it may be described as the influence of the Holy Spirit upon a human person whereby he is infallibly moved and guided in all his statements while under this influence. The general notion is that of an *afflatus*.²⁴ There is an inbreathing of the Holy Spirit upon the human spirit. The epithet employed by St. Paul (2 Tim. 3:16) is *theopneustos*.²⁵ The consequence is an inward impulse and actuation of the mind: “Holy men of God spoke as they were moved (carried along, *pheromenoi*)²⁶ by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21).

This contains (a) suggestion of matter both as to thought and language (aiding the memory is included in this; John 14:26),²⁷ (b) impulse to speak or write, and (c) direction by which the mind is preserved from error. We are aided in conceiving of the operation of the Holy Spirit in inspiration by its analogy with his operation in regeneration: (a) it violates no laws of thought; (b) it leaves the individual peculiarities as it finds them; and (c) it is thorough and all pervading. Hence it affects the language as well as the thought.

At this point, there is a difference of opinion among those who hold to plenary inspiration; some affirming and some denying the doctrine of verbal inspiration in connection with it. Everything depends, in settling this question, upon the view taken of the connection between thought and language. If words are merely arbitrary signs of

²⁴ *afflatus* = a blowing or a breathing on, an inspiration

²⁵ θεόπνευστος = God-breathed (hence, divinely inspired)

²⁶ φερομένοι

²⁷ WS: “In his extreme old age, the elder Adams was asked for an analysis of James Otis’s speech in 1761 on the acts of the Board of Trade, which was five hours long. He answered that no man could have written the argument from memory ‘the day after it was spoken,’ much less ‘after a lapse of fifty-seven years.’ Adams then proceeded to compose a series of letters on the subject filling thirty-three closely printed pages. Comparing these letters with letters written at or near the time, I am obliged to think that the venerable man blended together his recollections of the totality of the influence and doctrines of Otis during the years 1761–66. I own that I have had embarrassment in adjusting the authorities” (Bancroft, *History* 4.416). If St. John did not compose and write his gospel until A.D. 80 or 90, he certainly would have needed supernatural assistance in reporting so minutely and fully as he has the last discourse of Christ, some fifty or more years after its delivery.

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ideas, like the algebraic symbols plus and minus—mere marks having no affinity with the ideas and not prompted by them—then an idea might be suggested by inspiration without any prompting or suggestion of a word to express it. Thought and language in this case are wholly diverse and disconnected, and if words are given to the prophet by which to exhibit the wordless thoughts that have been started in his mind, it must be by dictation. Dictation is the standing objection to verbal inspiration. Upon this theory of language, it is assumed that the two processes of thinking and expressing thought can each go on by itself independently of the other and that the thought does not naturally and inevitably prompt the word. When an author dictates to a scribe, the scribe does not go through the mental process along with the author, any more than does the typesetter in setting up type or any more than does the parrot in repeating human words. The scribe does not think the author's thoughts along with him, but mechanically writes down what he hears with his ear. In this instance, the ideas and the words for the scribe are entirely separated from each other. If this be the true theory of the relation of language to thought, then verbal inspiration would be dictation.

But if it be held that there is a natural affinity and a necessary connection between thought and language, then whatever prompts thought prompts language, and an influence upon one is an influence upon the other. The suggestion of ideas inevitably involves the suggestion of words. Thought and language upon this theory are inseparable, so that when the Holy Spirit inspires a prophet, the mind of the prophet is so moved that he not merely thinks, but utters his thinking in language that is suitable and simultaneously inbreathed and prompted along with the thought. Both alike are *theopneustic*.²⁸ This is wholly different from dictation. Dictation separates thought and language; verbal inspiration unites them. Verbal inspiration is the truth if thought is prior to and suggests language; but not if language is prior to and suggests thought. The inspired writer in this latter case does not have the thought until he has had the word, and the word is dictated to him by the Spirit, not prompted in him by the inspired thought in his own mind.

That words are not arbitrary signs of ideas, having no natural connection and affinity with the ideas expressed by them, is proved ...

1. By Scripture: According to the Bible, an idea and its word are the same thing essentially. They are human thought in two different modes or forms. When a

²⁸ WS: Says Philippi (*Doctrine*, chap. 2), "While we maintain verbal inspiration (*Wortinspiration*), we do not mean the inspiration of each word separately and by itself (*Wörterinspiration*)." As he explains his meaning, it seems to be that an apostle or prophet under the impulse of the divine Spirit originated a product that as a unity and a whole was inspired both in matter and form, thought and language. But each particular word, one by one, was not mechanically and separately suggested to him. The process of inspiration was dynamic, continuous, and flowing.

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thought is in the mind, or unuttered, it is an idea. When that same thought is out of the mind, or uttered, it is a word. An idea is an internal word; and a word is an external idea. To speak is to think externally; and to think is to speak internally. Accordingly, the Scriptures denominate thinking internal speaking: “The fool has said in his heart, there is no God” (Ps. 14:1); “begin not to say within yourselves” (Luke 3:8); “afterward he said within himself” (18:4). In these instances, thinking is mental speaking, and consequently speaking is vocal thinking. With this agrees our own modern usage. In common parlance, when men utter their thoughts in words, they are said to “think aloud.” In Greek, *logos*²⁹ signifies both reason and word. Reason is internal thought (*logos endiathetos*);³⁰ word is external thought (*logos prophorikos*).³¹

2. By comparing the sounds of human language with other sounds: Human language is not mere unmeaning noise, like the sounds in material nature, such as that of falling water or of thunder. These sounds have no sense or signification for the human reason. Nor is human language like the cries of animals or the singing of birds. These sounds, though approaching nearer to human speech than do the sounds of material nature, yet contain no intellectual ideas or conceptions. They are thoughtless inarticulate cries, not language proper. But the sounds of every human language are thoughtful and waken thought. They are not mere sounds, but sounds filled with sense and meaning for the human mind (see Torrey, *Theory of Fine Art*, 236). (See supplement 2.1.9.)
3. By the fact that shades of an idea suggest varieties of words: This explains the origin of synonyms. The author of Proverbs denominates the second trinitarian person Wisdom; St. John denominates him Reason. The two phases of the revealed idea suggest the two different terms for it.
4. By the fact that men think in words: (a) If an Englishman reads or speaks the French language, his thinking is connected with English words alone, unless he has made the French language as familiar as his own and can think in it. Before he can grasp the idea, he must transfer it from the French word to the corresponding English one. Not until this process has been gone through is he master of the thought. Here, thought is necessarily connected with language. The following from a work of fiction illustrates this:

²⁹ λόγος = word

³⁰ λόγος ἐνδιάθετος (i.e., a word as it exists in the mind)

³¹ λόγος προφορικός (i.e., a word that has been uttered forth)

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Madame de Lalouve spoke very good English indeed, and her accent, especially, was all but faultless, but she had the defect of thinking in French and translating afterward into our vernacular, and hence her speech occasionally lapsed into Gallic idioms and turns of language. It was quite otherwise with that other linguist whose nickname was Chinese Jack. He was one of those polyglot talkers who are possessed of the rare gift of thinking in any articulate tongue, from Hebrew to Japanese, and therefore of expressing his thoughts as a Malay or a Persian or a Spaniard would do and not as a scholar with an elaborate acquaintance with the language would do.

(b) Intense thinking often causes audible wording or phrasing of the thought, for example, whispering or speaking aloud to oneself. (c) The mute person attempts to utter his thoughts in an inarticulate murmur or sound of some kind. His ideas struggle for utterance, implying that an idea is incomplete without its word. (d) A tribe of men without an articulate language, if such could be found, would be without human ideas. Their range of consciousness would be like that of the brutes. Sometimes a particular word is found to be wanting in a language, and it is also found that the particular idea is wanting also. The missionary Riggs reports that the Dakota language contained no word for one-quarter or one-eighth and so on because the people had no idea of such fractions. They stopped with the notion of one-half in their calculations and went no further mentally:

Only one word exists—*hankay*, half. We missionaries in writing out and improving the language can say *hankay-hankay*, the half of a half; but the tribe do not. Besides *hankay*, there is nothing but the word for a piece. But this is an indefinite word and not suited for the certainties of mathematics. The poverty of the language has been a great obstacle in teaching arithmetic. But the poorness of the language shows their poverty of thought in the same line.

5. By the fact that a peculiar kind of thought expresses itself spontaneously in a particular kind of phraseology: Poetic thought suggests and prompts poetic forms of language; philosophic thought suggests and prompts philosophic forms; etc.³²

Scripture itself asserts verbal inspiration: “I have put words in your mouth” (Jer. 1:9); “I will give you a mouth and wisdom [i.e., both language and thought]” (Luke 21:12–15); “it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you” (Matt. 10:20); “they spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4); “holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21). Words are carefully selected by the inspired mind

³² WS: On the necessary connection of thought and language, cf. Müller, *Science of Language*, 1st series, lects. 1–2, 9; *Science of Thought* 1.284–85; Westcott, *Study of the Gospels* (introduction); Shedd, *Literary Essays*, 149–68.

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under divine guidance. In John 10:35 stress is laid upon the use of the word *gods* as applied to prophets and magistrates; and in Gal. 3:16 upon the use of the singular *seed* not the plural *seeds*. The neuter is employed instead of the masculine when the idea of the impersonal becomes of great consequence; for example, *to gennōmenon hagion*³³ (Luke 1:35) and *hen*³⁴ instead of *heis*³⁵ (John 10:30).³⁶ In Phil. 2:6 *morphē theou*³⁷ is used instead of *ousia theou*³⁸ because the idea is that of a particular trinitarian person, not of the divine essence simply. In John 17:24 the Textus Receptus reads *hous dedōkas*,³⁹ and the uncials read *ho dedōkas*.⁴⁰ If the idea in the mind of the inspired writer was that of the church as a collective unity, the thought suggested the word *ho*.⁴¹ If it was that of particular individuals, the thought suggested the word *hous*.⁴² (See supplement 2.1.10.)

The objections urged against the plenary inspiration of the Bible are the following.

There are discrepancies and errors in the history, geography, and chronology. In replying to this objection, it is to be remarked in the outset that the correction of a book by itself is different from its correction by other books. There is only apparent error in the first case; in the second there is real error. If the witness himself while upon the stand explains satisfactorily certain variations in his own testimony, this does not invalidate his testimony. But if another witness contradicts or corrects him, this awakens doubt and may invalidate. (See supplement 2.1.11.)

³³ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον = the holy thing (neuter) begotten. The neuter gender is significant here because it shows that Christ derived his human nature from Mary; the neuter noun is suited to refer to Christ's "impersonal" (i.e., not yet personalized) human nature. On the other hand, the root of Christ's person is the divine Logos, the second person of the Trinity, who assumed that nature. If the reference were to his person, one would expect to find a masculine noun (see p. 629 n. 38). See *anhypostasis and enhypostasis* in glossary 1.

³⁴ ἓν = one (neuter)

³⁵ εἷς = one (masculine)

³⁶ Shedd's point is that in John 10:30 the neuter is used because a oneness of essence/being/substance is in view; hence, the meaning is "I and the Father are one thing [i.e., God]."

³⁷ μορφή θεοῦ = the form of God

³⁸ οὐσία θεοῦ = the essence or being of God. A trinitarian person is one mode or form (*morphē*) in which the divine essence (*ousia*) subsists. Thus, the word *morphē* would have reference to Christ's preincarnate personhood rather than to the essence that the three trinitarian person have in common. See *modus subsistendi* in glossary 1.

³⁹ οὓς δέδωκας = those (plural) whom you have given (to me). The plural could be theologically significant in arguing that election has reference to particular individuals rather than merely to the church as a corporate entity. Shedd, in keeping with Reformed theology generally, holds the former.

⁴⁰ ὁ δέδωκας = that which (singular) you have given to me

⁴¹ ὁ = that which

⁴² οὓς = those

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Now it is a fact that many of the difficulties of which we are speaking do not arise from a discrepancy between the Bible and other books, but between parts of the Bible itself. For example, 2 Kings 8:26 asserts that Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he began to reign, and 2 Chron. 22:2 asserts that he was forty-two years old at that time. One of these must be corrected by the other. Again, Luke relates that one of the malefactors reviled Christ, and the other did not; Mark says that “they that were crucified with him reviled him”; and Matthew that “the thieves also which were crucified with him” insulted him. These variations can be shown to be consistent with one another by comparing Scripture with Scripture, as is done in the ordinary harmonies of the gospels. It is plain, in reference to such seeming discrepancies, that inasmuch as each sacred writer knew what had been said by his predecessors, what appears to be contradiction to a modern reader must have been none for the original author. He evidently was not aware of any real discrepancy. For had he been, he would either have referred to it and harmonized it with his own or else would have avoided it altogether by verbally conforming his own statement to that of his predecessor.

The Bible then is self-rectifying. The book furnishes the materials for its own verification. This is wholly different from rectification from human sources, such as profane literature. When Scripture explains or if need be corrects Scripture, the divine explains and verifies the divine; inspiration explains inspiration; spiritual things are compared with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:13). But if Scripture requires to be explained and corrected by human authorities, then the divine is rectified by the human. In the first case, the error is only seeming; in the last, it is real.

Another preliminary remark is that minor and unessential variations are positive proofs of truthfulness in a witness. Had the gospels been forged, there would not have been even seeming discrepancies, because pains would have been taken to avoid them. Discrepancies of a certain kind are sure proof of an absence of collusion and previous agreement between the evangelists. Variations are not necessarily contradictions. The testimony of witnesses in court who agree in the general is not rejected because of some unessential diversity. If each witness exactly and parrotlike repeated the other's testimony, he would be suspected for the very reason of exact similarity. There may be too much agreement between witnesses as well as too little.

Minor variations, consequently, are not inconsistent with plenary inspiration. As they are compatible with a true account, they are also compatible with an infallible account. In saying that the Holy Spirit inspired both Matthew and John in writing a memoir of Christ it is not meant that he guided them in such a way that each related the very same incidents in the very same manner and in the very same words—that he inspired them to produce two facsimiles. But the meaning is that he guided each in such a manner that the

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individuality of each writer was preserved in the choice of incidents, in their arrangement, and in the phraseology; and yet in such a manner that neither writer attributes to Christ a parable which he did not teach, a miracle which he did not work, or describes him as concerned in occurrences with which he really had nothing to do. Luke's order differs in some particulars from that of Matthew, but this does not prove that there is historical error in either of them. A biographer may know the actual and true order and yet alter it for logical or rhetorical reasons. He may, for such reasons, throw together in one group a series of parables or miracles which were spoken or wrought at different times, and still his account of the parables and miracles cannot be charged with mistake because the grouping is apparent on the face of his narrative.

Four different persons may be inspired to relate the biography of Christ and may produce four narratives that are infallible or free from error, without mentioning the very same incidents, in the very same order, in the same degree of detail, and in the same phraseology. The objector oftentimes seems to suppose that infallibility means not only freedom from error, but such an identity of statement as would amount to a facsimile. The inscription on the cross is an example: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews" (Matthew); "The King of the Jews" (Mark); "This is the King of the Jews" (Luke); "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews" (John). Now if infallibility means freedom from error in the statement actually made, and not the exclusion of every kind of variety in the manner of stating a fact, and so the production of a mere facsimile, these four reports are infallible. Mark is not in error when he says that the inscription was "The King of the Jews." These words were in the inscription, as the other reports show. He states the truth, though not the whole truth. Had he said in addition that these were the *ipsissima verba*⁴³ and were all the words, he would have stated an error. (See supplement 2.1.12.)

From the list therefore of alleged discrepancies and errors must be deducted all such as Scripture itself enables the reader to correct. To these belong:

1. Errors of copyists: "Azaziah was twenty-two years old when he began to reign" (2 Kings 8:26) compared with "forty-two years old when he began to reign" (2 Chron. 22:2). According to 1 Sam. 6:19 50,070 men were slain for looking into the ark; 70 men probably being the number (*Speaker's Commentary in loco*). Says Rawlinson ("Introduction to Chronicles" in *Speaker's Commentary*):

The condition of the text of Chronicles is far from satisfactory. Various readings are frequent, particularly the names of persons and places which occur in different forms not likely to have been used by the same writer. Numerous omissions are found, especially in the genealogies, where sometimes important names have

⁴³ the very words, the exact words, the words themselves

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dropped out; and sometimes the names which remain do not agree with the numerical statement attached to them. But the most important corruptions are in the numbers in Samuel or Kings, sometimes unreasonably large, and therefore justly suspected. Other defects are a derangement in the order of the words and the substitution of a more familiar term for one less known.

2. Errors in translation.

3. Discrepancies which greater fullness of detail in the narrative would remove: *brevi esse laboro, obscurus fio*,⁴⁴ says Horace. A harmony of the four gospels that removes every difficulty without exception is probably not possible because of the sketchlike nature of the narrative. The gospels are memorabilia and were called *apomnēmonēumata*⁴⁵ at first. A series of memoranda, though agreeing in principal features, are generally difficult to reconcile in all particulars. The conciseness and brevity of one evangelist at a particular point sometimes makes it difficult or even impossible to show his agreement in this particular with another evangelist who is fuller at this point. But no evangelist ever differs so greatly from the others as to destroy his own historical credibility or that of the others. Differences sometimes arise from silence on the part of a writer, and these are alleged to be contradictions. Mark and John give no account of the miraculous conception of Christ by the Holy Spirit, yet both of them imply it. He is a supernatural and divine person for them both. There is nothing in Mark and John that contradicts the miraculous conception. John gives no account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, but he records conversations of Christ that involve the fact (see John 6:45–58). Two inspired narratives may be each infallible and yet one contain more information than the other. Had Matthew, for example, related two of Christ's temptations in the desert and omitted the third, while Luke related all three, both accounts would have been inerrant, provided that Matthew had not positively asserted that there were only two temptations. There would be no just ground for saying that the two accounts contradicted each other. It is not necessary that an inspired person should know all things or even report all that he does know; but only that what he does report should be true. The evangelists were permitted and thus inspired to omit some incidents in Christ's life; for it is improbable that the contents of the four gospels contain all that the four evangelists knew concerning him: "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written everyone, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25).

⁴⁴ I work to be brief, I become obscure

⁴⁵ ἀπομνημονεύματα = memoirs

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4. Discrepancies arising from a general statement by one witness and a particular statement by another and sometimes by one and the same witness: Matthew 27:44 and Mark 15:32 say that the thieves crucified with Christ reviled him. The reference here is to a class of men. Luke 23:39–43 says that one of them reviled him and the other did not. He enters into detail, as the other evangelists do not. According to Acts 9:7 the companions of Saul heard the heavenly voice but “saw no man”; according to 22:9 they saw the light but “heard not the voice.” The very same person, namely, Luke, who made the first statement made the last and was not aware of any contradiction between the two. In the first passage an indistinct sound from heaven is intended, as in Matt. 24:31 (*salpingos phōnē*);⁴⁶ in the last passage articulate words are meant. The companions of Saul saw the light, but not a human form; they heard a sound, but not intelligible language.
5. Difficulties arising from an incorrect interpretation of Scripture: The explanation of the word *day* in Gen. 1 is a marked instance. Exegetes for many years interpreted it to mean a day of twenty-four hours, thereby bringing Genesis and geology into collision. But so far as the text is concerned, there is full right and reason to explain it as a period. This was the first interpretation, because it was the most natural one. The patristic exegetes so understood the word. Says Whewell (*Inductive Sciences* 1.286):

The meaning which any generation puts upon the phrases of Scripture, depends more than is at first sight supposed upon the received philosophy of the time. Hence while men imagine that they are contending for revelation, they are in fact contending for their own interpretation of revelation. At the present day, we can hardly conceive how reasonable men should have imagined that religious reflections in Scripture respecting the stability of the earth, and the beauty and use of the luminaries which revolve around it, would be interfered with by the acknowledgment that this rest and motion are apparent only.
6. Difficulties in biblical chronology arising from the fact that the sacred writer does not give a full list of all the names in a series but only a selected list: Sometimes he omits the name of the son and passes to that of the grandson or great-grandson, whom he calls a “son.” In Gen. 46:16–18 three generations—sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons—are all called the “sons” of Zilpah. The genealogical tables of the Jews were drawn up artificially. That of our Lord by Matthew is an example. Fourteen names are selected in each of the three periods mentioned. But it would be a great error to infer that Matthew intended to teach that there were exactly fourteen generations, no more and no less, in each of these periods, and should

⁴⁶ σάλπιγγος φωνή = the voice (i.e., sound) of a trumpet

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calculate the time accordingly (Gardiner, *Harmony* 1.39). The evangelist took the catalogue of names given in the temple records and modified it to suit his purpose. This method makes it impossible for one living many centuries later to construct a biblical chronology that shall be mathematically precise down to a year or a score of years. Only an approximation was intended by the writer himself and the Holy Spirit who guided him. Sometimes in quoting, a round number is given instead of the exact. Stephen says 400 for 430 in Acts 7:6 (*Speaker's Commentary in loco*). In addition to this, there is the difference between the Hebrew text from which the modern versions have been made and that from which the Septuagint version was made. There is a difference of fifteen hundred years. Which is the original text? Only the original is the inspired text. But while the biblical chronology is only approximately, not mathematically accurate, it does not follow that it is erroneous. There can be no mathematically exact chronology. The scriptural chronology is free from the fatally damaging error which characterizes all the early ethnical chronology—namely, of attributing an immense antiquity to man and nations. The inspired writers bring all human history within a period of six thousand or eight thousand years. In so doing, they teach no error. This chronology is confirmed by the monuments and records of Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt (“Introduction to Kings” and “Hosea” in *Speaker's Commentary*; Beecher in *Presbyterian Review*, July 1881).

7. Difficulties arising from attributing to the sacred writer statements that are not his, but which he merely records: These make a large list and furnish some of the most specious objections to the doctrine of plenary inspiration. It is objected, for example, that the discourse of Stephen in Acts 7 contains chronological and other errors. Even if this can be made out, these errors are not imputable to Luke who reports the discourse. Stephen is indeed said to have been “full of the Holy Spirit” (6:5), and so is Barnabas (11:24). But neither of them belonged to the apostolic college of infallible teachers of the church. This is one of a multitude of statements in Scripture, both of fact and of opinion, whose authorship is not referable to the inspired writers who merely report them.
8. Variations in citations from the Old Testament in the New: These are neither errors nor contradictions, because the variation is intended by the New Testament writer. The statement of Davidson in the earlier edition of his *Hermeneutics* expresses the catholic opinion: “Every mode of quotation has been employed, from the exactest to the loose; from the strictly verbal method to the widest paraphrase; but in no case is violence done to the meaning of the original.” In the later editions of his work, Davidson recedes from this position and agrees with the rationalist, who affirms that the meaning of an Old Testament passage is sometimes wrested in

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quotation by St. Paul. Immer (*Hermeneutics*) so asserts. That a New Testament writer quotes an Old Testament passage by way of accommodation does not disprove his inspiration. He may be divinely guided to do this, as well as to quote strictly. The passage which he cites, even if not taken in its first and strictest sense, is yet suited to teach the particular truth which he is inspired to convey. An apostle may adapt a text to his present purpose, as a preacher may, provided the text as so adapted aids him in imparting truth, not error. The same remark holds respecting verbal variation in quoting. That a New Testament writer quotes Moses *ad sensum*⁴⁷ and not *ad verbum*⁴⁸ does not prove that he is uninspired and fallible upon the subject which he is presenting.⁴⁹ (See supplement 2.1.13.)

Respecting the difficulties in Scripture that are still unsettled, it is to be noticed that there is no alleged error in doctrine, history, chronology, and physics that has been demonstrated to be such so irrefragably that it is absurd to attempt a reply. There is no list of conceded errors in Scripture. There are perplexities remaining, but while there is not an instance in which the controversy with the skeptic has resulted in establishing the fact of undoubted error in revelation, there are many instances in which it has resulted in demonstrating its truth and accuracy. The skeptical criticism to which the canon has been subjected for a period of nineteen centuries has strengthened, not weakened, the doctrine of plenary inspiration. The discoveries in Nineveh, Babylon, and Egypt, in particular, evince this.

The infallibility of Scripture is denied upon the ground that it contains a human element. The human is fallible and liable to error. If therefore the Bible has a human element in it, as is conceded, it cannot be free from all error. This is one of the principal arguments urged by those who assert the fallibility of Scripture.

This objection overlooks the fact that the human element in the Bible is so modified by the divine element with which it is blended as to differ from the merely ordinary human. The written word is indeed divine-human, like the incarnate Word. But the human element in Scripture, like the human nature in our Lord, is preserved from the defects of the common human and becomes the pure and ideal human. The human mind alone and by itself is fallible, but when inspired and moved by the Holy Spirit becomes infallible because it is no longer alone and by itself. The written word, in this respect, is analogous to the incarnate Word. The humanity of Christ, by reason of its assumption into personal union with the eternal Logos, while remaining really and truly human, is yet not the

⁴⁷ to the sense

⁴⁸ to the word

⁴⁹ In other words, in this case the New Testament writer conveys Moses' meaning even though he does not reproduce Moses' exact wording.

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ordinary sinful humanity. It is perfectly sanctified humanity, free from sin. Similarly, when the Holy Spirit inspires a human mind, though this human mind is not freed from all sin, because inspiration is not sanctification, yet it is freed from all error on the points involved. It is no longer the fallibly human, but is infallible upon all subjects respecting which it is inspired to teach. The inspired human differs from the uninspired human, similarly as the human nature that is united with the second trinitarian person differs from the human nature that is found in an ordinary man. Christ's human soul thought and felt like a real man, but without sin. The divine-human, in this instance, is sinless. Isaiah's human mind when under inspiration thought and perceived like a real man, but without error. He was not without sin; for inspiration does not sanctify. But he was infallible; for inspiration enlightens without any mixture of untruth. (See supplement 2.1.14.)

The "human element" in Scripture means that an inspired man in perceiving and conveying truth employs his own human mind, his own native language, the common figures of speech, and exhibits his own individual peculiarities, but without misconception and error upon the subject of which he treats because his human mind is actuated and guided by the divine mind. The doctrine, both ethical and evangelical, which the human mind under this superhuman influence teaches is infallible. The history which it relates is according to facts and unmixed with legend. The physics which it sets forth contains no pantheism or polytheism. The chronology which it presents has no immense and fabulous antiquity, like that of Egypt and India.

Those who contend that the Bible is fallible because it contains a human element commit the same error, in kind, with those who assert that Jesus Christ was sinful because he had a human nature in his complex person. Both alike overlook the fact that when the human is supernaturally brought into connection with the divine it is greatly modified and improved and obtains some characteristics that do not belong to it of and by itself alone. When the Logos would assume a human nature into union with himself, this nature was first prepared for the union by being perfectly sanctified by the Holy Spirit in the miraculous conception. And when the Holy Spirit selects a particular person—Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, John, Paul—as his organ for communicating religious truth to mankind, he first makes him infallible, though he does not make him sinless. Consequently, the human element in the prophecy or the history or the dogma which this inspired person gives to the church is not a fallible element because it is blended with the divine element of inspiration and kept free from human error.

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A second objection urged against the doctrine of plenary inspiration is that there is a conflict between the biblical physics and natural science.⁵⁰ Upon this subject, the following is to be remarked:

1. The inspired writers were permitted to employ the astronomy and physics of the people and age to which they themselves belonged, because the true astronomy and physics would have been unintelligible. If the account of the miracle of Joshua had been related in the terms of the Copernican astronomy; if Joshua had said "earth stand still" instead of "sun stand still," it could not have been understood. The modern astronomer himself describes the sun as rising and setting.
2. If the inspired writers had distinctly and formally represented the popular physics of their day to be the absolute and scientific physics for all time (as they represent the gospel to be the absolute and final religion for all time), if they had endorsed and defended the Ptolemaic astronomy, this would have proved them to be fallible and uninspired. But this they never do. Except in a few places which we shall specify, the Bible does not commit itself to any system of physics. The purpose of the Scriptures, says Baronius, is "to teach man how to go to heaven, and not how the heavens go." The sacred writers employ the geocentric physics in their descriptions of natural phenomena, as Kepler and Newton do when they speak of sunrise and sunset, but they nowhere set forth this popular physics as revealed and infallible truth. Because the sacred writer (Josh. 10:12–14) describes the sun as standing still, it does not follow that he taught Ptolemaic astronomy. He had no particular astronomical system whatever in view. Kepler so understood him:

The only thing which Joshua prayed for was that the mountains might not intercept the sun from him. It had been very unreasonable at that time to think of astronomy, or of the errors of sight and sense; for if anyone had told him that the sun could not really move on the valley of Ajalon except only in reference to sense, would not Joshua have answered that his desire was that the day might be prolonged, so it were by any means whatever. (Kepler, *On Rash Citations from Scripture*; Stanley, *Jewish Church*, 1st series, 277)

Lord Bacon (*Advancement of Learning*, 2), alluding to "the school of Paracelsus and some others that have pretended to find the truth of all natural philosophy in Scripture," remarks that in so doing

they do not give honor to the Scriptures as they suppose, but much embase them. For to seek heaven and earth, in the word of God, whereof it is said "heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass," is to seek temporary things

⁵⁰ WS: See Whewell, *Inductive Sciences* 5.3.4 (the Copernican system opposed on theological grounds).

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among eternal; and as to seek divinity in philosophy is to seek the living among the dead, so to seek philosophy in divinity is to seek the dead among the living; neither are the pots or lavers, whose place was in the outward part of the temple, to be sought in the holiest place of all, where the ark of the testimony was seated. The scope or purpose of the Spirit of God is not to express matters of nature in the Scriptures otherwise than in passage, and for application to man's capacity, and to matters moral or divine. (See supplement 2.1.15.)

3. At the same time, physical science is to some extent taught by revelation and recorded by inspiration. It is erroneous to say that the Bible commits itself to no physics whatever. Certain truths and facts in regard to the material universe were revealed to some of the writers of the Bible, and these have infallibility. Most of these disclosures relating to physics are made in the beginning of the Scriptures. The Book of Genesis contains the principal of them. The Holy Spirit having revealed as much respecting the material world as seemed good to him, preparatory to his revelations respecting the spiritual world, is afterward silent. Christ himself, "by whom all things were made and without whom was not anything made that was made," makes no further disclosures than those which were granted to Moses.

The positive and distinct teachings of revelation in the opening of Genesis respecting the physical universe differ remarkably from the popular physics of the ancient world. Moses does not present a cosmogony like that of Assyria, Egypt, India, Greece, or Rome. His idea of the relation which matter sustains to God is wholly different from that of even as deep a thinker as Plato.

Among the peculiarities that distinguish the revealed physics are the following:

1. The doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, in sharp contrast (a) to the eternity of matter in atheism, (b) to emanation from the deity in pantheism, and (c) to fanciful fabrications by a multitude of gods in polytheism. If the sacred writers had been left to themselves, their physics would have been tintured with one or all of these. But there is nothing of these theories in the Bible. The doctrine of creation from nothing appears everywhere: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1); "before the mountains were brought forth or ever you had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting you are God" (Ps. 90:2); "the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old or ever the earth was. When there were no depths I was brought forth. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, and the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens I was there, when he set a compass upon the face of the

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earth, when he gave the sea his decree, then I was by him as one brought up with him" (Prov. 8:23–30); "where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" (Job 38:4); "all things were made by him" (John 1:3); "God calls those things which be not, as though they were" (Rom. 4:17); "by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible" (Col. 1:10). Mosheim, in a learned dissertation annexed to his translation of Cudworth (ed. Tegg 3.144), shows that none of the heathen philosophers taught that the world was created *ex nihilo*.

2. The absolute independence of God in relation to the universe: He is before all things and by him all things exist. This is in marked contrast to the common view in the ancient physics and in the skeptical schools in modern physics. In the physics of Plato and Aristotle, the deity is conditioned by the *hylē*,⁵¹ though a comparatively lofty and spiritual view of the deity is held. In the cruder physics of Lucretius, mind is wholly subject to matter. The deity is not a free and independent being, so far as the material universe is concerned. Material law rules everything, so that a supernatural act is impossible.
3. The absolute omnipotence of God in relation to the universe: Forces and laws of nature are under his entire control. They can be originated or altered or suspended by their Creator. This feature is also utterly antagonistic to the natural science of the ancient world (see Isa. 40:12, 15, 22; Ps. 104).
4. In the opening chapters of Genesis, the order of creation that is given is wholly different from that in the heathen cosmogonies: The Mosaic account begins with the origin of light. Had man been left to conjecture whether the principle of life was originated before that of light, he would have been in doubt which to place first in the order. Moses places it second. Even when the Mosaic account is adopted, there is a propensity to alter it. Coleridge (*Table Talk* for 30 April 1823), after remarking that the *Zendavesta* must have been copied in parts from the writings of Moses, says that "in the description of creation, the first chapter of Genesis is taken almost literally, except that the sun is created before the light, and then the herbs and the plants after the sun: which are precisely the two points they did not understand, and therefore altered as errors." A theorist having only the ordinary data would unquestionably have placed the sun in the heavens before he placed grass, herbs, and trees upon the earth. Moses would naturally have done the same if his information had been merely human. God revealed the fact to him as it actually was. And physical science now finds a geological period of warm-

⁵¹ ὕλη = matter

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water oceans, dense mists, and high temperature extremely favorable to vegetable life and growth long before the sun was able to penetrate the thick and dark vapor with its rays. Again, a theorist might very naturally have placed the creation of marine life on the third day in connection with the gathering together of the waters and the formation of the seas and oceans. The element in which fishes and reptiles live would suggest their origination. But Moses places it on the fifth day in connection with the creation of air animals and man. The order and succession of creative acts as represented by Moses evinces its originality. It is not copied from human schemes, but often runs counter to them. But this difference and contrariety proves that the biblical account of the creation proceeded from a different source from that of Egyptian or Hindu or Greek and Roman cosmogony.

The Scriptures, then, as an inspired sum total, are to be referred to God as their author. They are not a national literature like that of Greece, Rome, or England. This view, ably presented by Ewald, makes the Bible merely the development of a national mind, in which case infallibility and authority could no more belong to it than to any other national literature. But the Bible was not produced by the Hebrew nation. It was the product of a select number chosen from time to time out of the nation and specially informed and inspired by God. The Old and New Testaments were composed by a college of prophets and apostles, not by the people of Israel. Inspiration belongs to an inspired circle of Hebrews, not to the Hebrews generally. Moses and Samuel and David and Isaiah and their inspired associates were enlightened by the Holy Spirit in order that they might impart to the people to which they belonged a knowledge that was otherwise inaccessible to that people and to all peoples. It is true that the Bible is tinged with Hebrew coloring. It is not a Latin or an English book. And this, because the inspired persons through whose instrumentality it was originated were Hebrews. But this does not prove that the truths and facts which it contains were derived merely from the operation of the common national mind.

The infallibility and authority which distinguish the Scriptures from all other books are due to divine authorship. But God employed various modes in this authorship: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners (*polymerōs kai polytropōs*)⁵² spoke in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb. 1:1-2). Here, the prophets of the Old Testament and Christ, the subject of the revelation, are mentioned as the media through whom the divine mind was communicated. To these must be added the apostles of the New Testament.

⁵² πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως

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The “divers manners” in which God made the communications now included in the Bible are the following:

1. By a theophany or personal appearance of God: (a) God appears in a form and directly speaks words to an individual in his waking and ordinary condition (Gen. 18:1–17; Exod. 3:4; 19:20); (b) God appears in a form and directly speaks to an individual in a dream (Gen. 28:12); (c) God appears in a form and directly speaks to an individual in an ecstatic vision (Ezek. 8:1); it is the second person of the Trinity who appears in these theophanies and speaks words to an individual; it is in this reference that he is called the Word (John 1:1), “image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15), and the “express image of the Father’s person” (Heb. 1:3) (cf. Edwards, *Work of Redemption* 1.1; Owen, *Holy Spirit in Prayer*, 2; Martensen, *Dogmatics* §125).
2. Without any theophany or personal appearance of God: (a) by the high priest with Urim and Thummim (Exod. 28:30; 1 Sam. 28:6); (b) by the prophets under an *afflatus* (2 Kings 21:10; Rom. 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:11–12; 2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Cor. 2:13); and (c) by the apostles under an *afflatus* (1 Cor. 2:13; Gal. 1:12; Eph. 3:3; 1 Thess. 2:13).
3. By the incarnation: Christ’s communications of truth, in their manner, were like the direct utterances of God in the theophanies of the Old Testament and not like those indirect communications which were made through the prophets and apostles. The Jehovah in the theophany was the same trinitarian person who is in the incarnation. The theophany was the harbinger of the incarnation. God in the form of angel, bush, or dove prepared for God in a human form. Christ differed from the prophets and apostles in that he did not speak under an *afflatus* but from the divine nature itself. The eternal Word is the infinite fullness of all knowledge: “That was the true Light” (John 1:9); “God gives not the Spirit by measure unto him” (3:34). As Christ wrought miracles not as an agent but as deity itself, so he spoke truth from himself and not as an inspired man receiving it from God.

SUPPLEMENTS

2.1.1 (see p. 86). Under the general form of inspiration must be placed that of Bezalel. His inventive skill and knowledge is attributed to God as its source: “I have filled him with the spirit of God to devise cunning works” (Exod. 31:3–4). But more than such knowledge, coming through the natural and acquired qualities of the mind, is involved in the particular directions which Moses received in the mount respecting the general form of the tabernacle and its furniture: “Look that you make them after their pattern which was showed you in the mount” (25:40). This direction is referred to again in Exod. 26:30; 27:8; Num. 8:4; Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5. This ocular vision of the form and figure of the tabernacle and its utensils would fall under the head of special revelation, like the visions of Ezekiel and St. John.

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2.1.2 (see p. 91). Plenary inspiration is opposed to partial inspiration. It means that all the divisions of Scripture—history, chronology, geography, and physics, as well as doctrine—were composed under the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit. The inspiration is full (*plenus*). Partial inspiration limits the operation of the Holy Spirit to the doctrinal part of the Bible, leaving the other parts to the possibility of error. Verbal inspiration may be associated with either view or dissociated from either. He who asserts plenary inspiration may affirm that the language is inspired or deny that it is; and so may he who asserts partial inspiration. The assertion or denial depends upon the view taken of the nature of language and its relation to thought. He who regards the relation as natural and necessary and holds that thoughts inevitably suggest words will hold that inspired thought is expressed in inspired language. He who regards the relation as arbitrary and artificial will hold that only the thought is inspired. The elder theologians universally, like Turretin and Quenstedt, held both plenary and verbal inspiration. And those who adopt the dynamic theory of language should, logically, hold both.

2.1.3 (see p. 92). Augustine teaches the inerrancy of Scripture in explicit terms: “It seems to me that most disastrous consequences must follow upon our believing that anything false is found in the sacred books; that is to say, that the men by whom the Scriptures have been given to us and committed to writing did put down in these books anything false. It is one question whether it may be at any time the duty of a good man to deceive; but it is another question whether it can have been the duty of a writer of Holy Scripture to deceive—nay, it is no question at all. For if you once admit into such a high sanctuary of authority one false statement as officially made, there will not be left a single sentence of those books which, if appearing to anyone difficult in practice or hard to believe, may not by the same fatal rule be explained away, as a statement in which, intentionally and under a sense of duty the author declared what was not true” (Letter 28.3 to Jerome, A.D. 394). “I have learned to yield such [absolute] respect and honor only to the canonical books of Scripture; of these alone do I most firmly believe that the authors were completely free from error. And if in these writings I am perplexed by anything which appears to me opposed to truth, I do not hesitate to suppose that either the manuscript is faulty or the translator has not caught the meaning of what was said or I myself have failed to understand it. As to all other writings, in reading them, however great the superiority of the authors to myself in sanctity and learning, I do not accept their teaching as true on the mere ground of the opinion being held by them; but only because they have succeeded in convincing my judgment of its truth either by means of these canonical writings themselves or by arguments addressed to my reason” (Letter 82.3 to Jerome, A.D. 405). “The Manicheans maintain that the greater part of the New Testament, by which their wicked error is confuted in the most explicit terms, is not worthy of credit because they cannot pervert its language so as to support their opinions. Yet they lay the blame of the alleged mistake not upon the apostles who originally wrote the words, but upon some unknown corrupters of the manuscripts. Forasmuch, however, as they have never succeeded in proving this by earlier manuscripts or by appealing to the original language from which the Latin translations have been made, they retire from the debate vanquished by truth which is well known to all” (Letter 82.6). “If you recall to memory the opinion of our Ambrose and Cyprian on the point in question, you will find that I have had some in whose footsteps I have followed in what I have maintained. At the same time, as I said already, it is to the canonical

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Scriptures alone that I am bound to yield such implicit subjection as to follow their teaching without admitting the slightest suspicion that in them any mistake or any statement intended to mislead would find a place" (Letter 82.24).

2.1.4 (see p. 98). Two general answers have been given to the question respecting the origin of the four gospels. First, the oldest and most universal is that they had an apostolic origin, being composed by the four authors whose names they bear, who derived their information, two of them immediately and two of them mediately, from personal intercourse with Jesus Christ during his ministry upon earth. Two of them, Matthew and John, belonged to that company of twelve apostles who were specially called and supernaturally endowed by Christ to be the founders of the Christian church (Matt. 10:1–16; Eph. 2:20); and two of them, Mark and Luke, were secretaries under the superintendence of Peter and Paul, who also belonged to the apostolic college. That Paul was one of the Twelve is proved by Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; 9:1; 15:3; Gal. 1:1; and elsewhere. According to this traditional view, each of the four gospels has an individual origin like secular writings generally. As Plato was the author of the *Phaedo* and Thucydides of the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, so Matthew was the author of the first gospel, Peter-Mark of the second, Paul-Luke of the third, and John of the fourth. The second and latest answer is that the four gospels had an ecclesiastical origin. They sprang from oral traditions concerning Christ that were current in the first Christian brotherhood and were gradually collected and combined by persons whose names are unknown. This view has been invented by the rationalistic and pseudocritical schools in opposition to the historical and catholic and has done more than anything else to destroy confidence in the inspiration and infallibility of the life of Jesus Christ as recorded by the four evangelists. The unproven assumptions and innumerable hypotheses which have characterized the rationalistic schools of biblical criticism in Germany since the time of Semler are due to the substitution of the ecclesiastical origin of the gospels for the apostolic. So long as the life of Christ is referred to four known and authorized persons, who from Justin Martyr down are quoted by all the fathers as the inspired writers of the gospels, there is no room for fancy and conjecture respecting its origin. The testimony of the whole patristic literature can be cited to substantiate this view. But the moment it is surrendered and the gospels are ascribed to unknown and unauthorized persons who glean from the legends of the church, the way is opened for capricious conjectures and assumptions for which no proof can be furnished from the original manuscripts of the gospels or from the writings of the primitive fathers and the history of the first centuries of the Christian church and which have to be accepted upon the mere assertion and assurance of their inventors. Of late years, and particularly at the present moment, the rationalistic theory has worked itself considerably into the church and is adopted by some otherwise evangelical scholars. There is, indeed, a difference in spirit and intention between the rationalistic and the "evangelical" critics who adopt the theory of a legendary origin of the gospels—between Baur and Strauss, and Bleek and Weiss—but the fatal error of deriving the life of Christ from unauthorized, uninspired, and unknown sources cleaves to both alike. And the actual influence of the evangelical critic of this class is more unsettling upon the belief of the church than that of the rationalist and skeptic because error in a believer has more influence within the church than error in an unbeliever has. There will be no improvement in this evangelical class of exegetes until

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there is a return to the apostolic origin of the gospels. We present the following objections to the ecclesiastical origin of the gospels.

It was not the view adopted by the ancient church, which was nearest in time to the composition of the gospels. In classical philology, the consensus of the earliest ages weighs more than the hypothesis of a late critic or school respecting the authorship of the *Iliad* and *Aeneid* and the Greek and Latin literature generally. Philologists of all ages have accepted these works as the productions of the individual authors whose names have from the beginning been associated with them and not of unknown collectors and editors, because of historical traditions that are as ancient as those which ascribe the gospels to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. An attempt to set aside the traditional testimony and to substitute for it the unproven conjecture of a modern philologist—that the Platonic writings are not the work of the individual Plato but of a circle of unknown editors of oral traditions about the teachings of Socrates—would meet with no credit. The answer would be that the ancient opinion is far more probable than the modern because coming from centuries that had better facilities than the nineteenth for determining the authorship of poems and histories composed two thousand years ago.

The ancient church, with a unanimity even greater, perhaps, than upon any of the purely dogmatic questions that arose among them, believed that the gospels had an apostolic origin, not an ecclesiastical; that they were narratives of the life of Christ prepared by those persons who “accompanied together all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up” and who were “ordained to be witnesses of his resurrection” (Acts 1:21–22). The details of the proof of this cannot be given here. It was first collected and combined by Eusebius and since the Reformation has often and again been collected and restated by a multitude of learned scholars like Lardner and Michaelis. The apostolic fathers Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, and Augustine represent the opinion of the ancient church, and they uniformly ascribe the four gospels to the four biographers whose names then as now were connected with them in the church generally. These fathers knew nothing of a canonical and commonly accepted life of Christ composed by unknown persons out of ecclesiastical legends. The apocryphal gospels, which were constructed in this way, they carefully distinguished from the canonical and rejected as not authoritative for the church. Some of the fathers, like Origen and Jerome, were trained philologists, and others, like Irenaeus and Augustine, were men of strong and clear minds and competent to weigh testimony; and none of them adopts such a theory as the one in question. If there had been such editors and authors they would have been contemporary with some of these fathers and would have been both mentioned and combated in their writings.

The testimony of Irenaeus, whose *Against Heresies* was written A.D. 182–88, to the apostolic authorship of the gospels is as follows: “The Lord of all gave to his apostles the power of the gospel, through whom we have known the truth, that is the doctrine of the Son of God; to whom also did the Lord declare, ‘He that hears you hears me, and he that despises you despises me and him that sent me’ ” (preface). “We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation than from those through whom the gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public and at a later period, by the will of God, handed down in the Scriptures to be the pillar

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and ground of our faith. For after our Lord rose from the dead the apostles were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down upon them, were filled with his gifts, and had perfect knowledge [of the life and doctrine of Christ]. Matthew also issued a written gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect [in addition to his original Greek gospel] while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome and laying the foundations of the church. After their decease, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the gospel preached by him. Afterward, John, the disciple of the Lord who also had leaned upon his breast, did himself publish a gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia” (*Against Heresies* 3.1). The writer of this evidently knew nothing of a gradual origin of the gospels from ecclesiastical traditions and by unknown authors. And his view, declared within a century from the death of the last of the apostles, is without an exception that of all the Christian fathers and of the patristic church.

Says Thompson, “The quotations of Justin Martyr from the gospels are about 110 from Matthew, 14 from Mark, 57 from Luke, and 29 from John—in all, more than 200. They are of every class: exact verbal quotation, verbal quotation with some variation, and allusion with little or no verbal agreement. The predominant mode is somewhat inexact, as though the quotations were from memory” (“Introduction to the Gospels” in *Speaker’s Commentary*; see §§4–15, 32, 39, 43, 46, 52–57 for a thorough refutation of the legendary origin of the gospels).

Neither do the skeptical and heretical writers of the first four centuries take any different view of the origin of the gospels. They, too, refer them to individual authors and to the same that the church referred them. Gnostics like Basilides, Valentinus, and Marcion and skeptics like Lucian, Celsus, and Porphyry agree with the Christian fathers in ascribing them to the four evangelists. The two brief quotations from John’s Gospel (1:9; 2:4) contained in a fragment from Basilides (A.D. 110–20) found in the lately discovered treatise of Hippolytus have done as much as any one thing to refute the conjecture of Baur and his school that the gospels were the gradual production of two or three centuries, instead of being the immediate product of the apostolic college. Strenuous attempts have been made to invalidate this consensus of all classes of writers of the first four centuries by modern theorists, among whom the author of *Supernatural Religion* is as ingenious as any. The garbled treatment to which he subjects the early patristic literature, to serve the end he has in view, has been conclusively exposed by the late Bishop of Durham. That this attempt is a desperate effort on the part of this class of critics, because the testimony of the ancient church is wholly against it, is evinced by the great number of their hypotheses, the wearisome ingenuity of their conjecturing, their continual correction and contradiction of each other, and their transiency. There is no consensus among them and no permanence. They are born and die one after another. The traditional view of the origin of the gospels, on the contrary, is one and the same, harmonious and unchanging. From Eusebius down to the latest apologist there is a single strong current of opinion which is not diminished by any of the new facts arising from time to time but is increased by them.

The gospels do not wear the appearance of having been composed of legendary materials, put together by a number of collectors and editors. They read like the productions of individual authors. Each gospel has its own marked and striking characteristics, indicative of an individual

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mind. These have been abundantly analyzed and described by experts of all classes. A body of collectors and editors, especially if their work ran through two or three centuries, could not have so fused their materials and blended their mental peculiarities as to make such a single and homogeneous impression.

The gospels are represented by their authors as remembered by themselves, not as collected and received from others. The matter is described as *anamnēsis*:⁵³ “His disciples remembered that Jesus had said this unto them” (John 2:22); “the Holy Spirit shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (14:26; cf. 12:16; 15:20; 16:4; Luke 24:6; Acts 11:16). This is not the gathering up of traditions current among the Christian brotherhood, but the careful narration of what the writers had themselves seen and heard during their three years of daily intercourse with their divine Lord, who had called and separated them from all other men to lay the foundations of his church by composing for it the inspired writings which must be its foundation and by overseeing its first organization. The Apostle Peter tersely states the case: “We have not followed cunningly devised myths, when we made known unto you the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Pet. 1:16). St. Paul represents his knowledge of Jesus Christ as independent even of the other apostles and of course of the Christian brotherhood. He claims to be “an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:1); distinctly says: “The gospel which was preached by me is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:11–12); declares that immediately after his conversion he did not go “up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before him, but went into Arabia and returned again to Damascus” and that three years after he “went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, but other of the apostles saw he none, save James the Lord’s brother” and that “fourteen years after he went up again to Jerusalem by revelation and communicated unto them which were of reputation that gospel which he had preached among the Gentiles” and that in the “conference” which he had with the other apostles they “added nothing” to his knowledge of Jesus Christ or his gospel (1:17; 2:16). And, last, he boldly puts the question, challenging all denials, “Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?” (1 Cor. 9:1). When, therefore, St. Paul speaks of a tradition which he “received” (15:3), he does not mean an ecclesiastical or even an apostolic tradition, but that body of knowledge concerning Christ and Christianity which was supernaturally “delivered” to him and “received” by him in those “visions and revelations of the Lord” to which he alludes in 2 Cor. 12:1 and which he has recorded for the church in the Gospel according to Luke and his epistles.

This “recollection” by the twelve apostles of what Christ did and said during his public ministry did not include all things, for the account would have been too voluminous for the use of the church (John 21:25). It included only (a) the events that were cardinal points in the Redeemer’s life and career, namely, his conception, birth, baptism, temptation, crucifixion, etc.; (b) those miracles that were connected with these events and with the more remarkable of his discourses; and (c) the most important of his discourses. Luke 1:1 calls a gospel narrative a “digest”

⁵³ ἀνάμνησις = a recollection

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(*diēgēsis*),⁵⁴ and this term well describes them all, as does the term *Memorabilia* employed by Justin Martyr. In selecting, digesting, and arranging the materials, the four evangelists who acted for the Twelve were under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit who had been promised to the apostles collectively by their divine Lord “to teach them all things and bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever he had said unto them” (John 14:26). This Spirit does not make facsimiles. Hence, one evangelist selects some discourses and miracles which another omits and arranges them differently. Miracles and parables are grouped together because of didactic resemblance (Luke 9:12–13; Matt. 13:3–4). The synoptists dwell upon Christ’s existence in time, not his preexistence in eternity. John reverses this. The synoptists speak of Christ as having come and to come again at the end of the world. John does not enlarge upon these points, though mentioning them, but upon his divine nature as the Logos and as this is manifested in the profound discourses of his last days. The synoptists are full upon the Galilean ministry and John upon the Judean. The synoptists particularly describe the miraculous conception and birth of Christ from a virgin. John, though clearly affirming the incarnation of the Logos, omits the details which had been given to the church by the other evangelists some forty years previously and expends the main force of his inspiration upon that infinite fullness of being and knowledge which fitted Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life for fallen men.

It is important, in this connection, to remember that the phrase *twelve apostles* is employed technically in the New Testament to denote the apostolic college. In two instances, the “Twelve” are respectively thirteen and eleven. In Rev. 21:14 it is said that the foundations of the New Jerusalem had “in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.” It is not supposable that the name of St. Paul, who was second to no apostle in founding the Christian church, was omitted. Here the apostolic college is meant, which contained thirteen persons called and set apart by Christ. Again, in 1 Cor. 15:5 St. Paul calls eleven apostles the Twelve (cf. Matt. 28:16). If the Twelve may be thirteen or eleven, they may also be four. Any part of the college acting officially for the body may be denominated the Twelve. The four gospels, composed by or under the superintendence of the four to whom they have been ascribed from the very first, are thus the gospels of the Twelve and have the authority of the whole circle.

The origin of the gospels is not to be explained by the church, but the origin of the church by the gospels. The preaching of the apostles made the first Christian brotherhood; they could not, therefore, have obtained the matter of their preaching from the brotherhood. The twelve apostles on the day of Pentecost began to proclaim what they knew concerning Jesus Christ and his mediatorial work. This knowledge they did not derive from traditions that were current among the Jews and still less in the Christian church, for as yet there was none, but from their own memory, supernaturally strengthened and guided by the Holy Spirit, of what they had themselves seen and heard during the public ministry of their Lord and master. This body of knowledge was the same as that which makes the contents of the four gospels. Possibly it remained in an oral form for a time, but from the nature of the case it must soon have been committed to writing. The apostles well knew that their own lives were liable to be cut short by the persecutions and martyrdom which their Lord had foretold; that an accurate account of his

⁵⁴ διήγησις

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ministry and teachings depended upon them as his only inspired and authorized agents; and that they had been positively commanded to give this account to the world. They began to give it orally by public preaching and private instruction of their converts and disciples and ended by putting it into a written form. This is the natural method of authorship generally. An extemporaneous preacher, if he deems his thoughts to be important and valuable, always desires to reduce them, as soon as possible, to a form that will preserve them permanently. It is in the highest degree improbable that those twelve divinely inspired and authorized apostles, upon whose accurate account of Jesus of Nazareth the founding, progress, and perpetuity of the Christian religion and the eternal salvation of vast multitudes of human beings absolutely depended, would have left that account to be prepared at haphazard by their converts, who not only had no inspiration or authority for the work but who had not “compained” with Christ in the days of his flesh and could not therefore draw from their own recollections and who as imperfectly sanctified Christians were full of ignorance and liable to misconception both of Christ and Christianity. What kind of a life of Christ would have been produced among a brotherhood like that to which St. Paul addresses his two epistles to the Corinthians?

According to the pseudocritical theory, all this is reversed. This assumes that the twelve apostles composed no careful biography of their divine Lord; made no attempt to put it into a fixed form that precluded the introduction of legendary matter; continued while they lived to tell the story of the cross in a loose oral way, in company with a multitude of other preachers from among their converts and disciples, who must inevitably have mixed fancy with truth in their narrations; and, dying, left the whole subsequent preparation of the life of Christ to unknown persons who were to make it up gradually in the lapse of perhaps a century or more out of the accretion of truth and fiction which is sure to gather around a central figure. Such a dereliction of duty and such a piece of un wisdom as this on the part of such a divinely called, inspired, and miraculously endowed company as the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ is incredible.

The narrative of the life of Christ required inspiration in order to its preparation, and inspiration was confined to the apostolic college. The ministry of Christ extended over three years and a half. It was crowded with action and suffering, with discourses and miracles. To reproduce these, each in its environment, with sufficient fullness and accuracy from memory would be difficult even for exceptional mnemonic power directly after their occurrence and still more after ten or twenty years. The last discourses of Christ, recorded by John, occurred more than fifty years previous to the date which is commonly accepted for his gospel. If during all this time they had existed only in the oral discourse of the apostle and his memory had not been helped by written memoranda, how could he have reported them with such fullness after the lapse of a half century without the aid of that Spirit who had been promised to the apostles for such a purpose? And what would have been the fate of those mysterious and fathomless utterances of the God-man in that upper chamber and down the slope to Gethsemane if their preservation had been left to the random repetition and recital of the Christian fraternities from A.D. 83 to A.D. 80 or 90?

There is, furthermore, a kind of information in the gospels which the apostles must have obtained from Christ by word of mouth before his ascension or else by revelation after it, because it was not witnessed by them. Baxter (*Dying Thoughts*) refers to it: “When the disciples awaked from

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sleep on the Mount of Transfiguration, they saw Christ, Moses, and Elijah in converse. Did they hear what they said, or did Christ afterward tell them? The latter is most probable. Doubtless, as Moses tells us how God made the world, which none could tell him but by God's telling them first, so the apostles have written many things of Christ which they neither saw nor heard but from Christ who told them by word, or inspiration. How else knew they what Satan said and did to him in his temptations in the wilderness and on the pinnacle of the temple? How knew they what his prayer was in his agony? And so in this instance also. Christ's own testimony to them, either immediately on the Mount or subsequently, was needed in order that they might know that the conversation with Moses and Elijah related to Christ's 'decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.' "

And not only the memory but the judgment of the biographers of Jesus Christ required supernatural influence and direction. The selection from the great abundance of materials in that crowded and infinite life, so that each and all of the doctrines of the Christian religion should get its basis and illustration in that life, demanded an illumination from above. That very variety and diversity in the choice and arrangement, which sometimes makes it difficult to harmonize the four narratives, is really one of the signs that a higher mind than that of any of the evangelists was seeing the end from the beginning and swaying them by its *afflatus*.

The apostles were inspired both as biographers of Christ and as teachers of Christianity. Not only the narrative of the life of incarnate God upon earth but the authentic and complete statement of his doctrine was entrusted to them exclusively. No authorship can be compared with this in importance. The gospels are an infallible biography, and the epistles are an infallible theology. The epistles of St. Paul are declared to be contradictory to the gospels by rationalistic theologians, who contend that true Christianity must be sought in the latter only. But the writings of the apostle to the Gentiles, which have contributed as much as the gospels themselves to the most universal form of Christianity, both practical and theoretical, are only the full systematic statement of the teachings of Christ himself. Those "visions" and "abundance of revelations" from Christ which St. Paul asserts that he received are what gave him the analytical knowledge of the cardinal truths of Christianity contained in his epistles and his apostolic authority in the church universal. Without them, Saul of Tarsus of the year 30 could no more have become Paul the apostle of the year 50 than Confucius in twenty years could have become John Calvin by natural evolution.

The relation of the New Testament epistles to the four gospels is stated by Owen with his usual discrimination (*Justification by Faith*, 7): "What the Lord Christ revealed afterward by his Spirit unto the apostles was no less immediately from himself than was the truth which he spoke unto them with his own mouth in the days of his flesh. The epistles of the apostles are no less Christ's sermons than that which he delivered on the mount. The things written in the epistles proceed from the same wisdom, the same grace, the same love, with the things which he spoke with his own mouth in the days of his flesh and are of the same divine veracity, authority, and efficacy. The revelation which he made to the apostles by his Spirit is no less divine and immediately from himself than what he spoke unto them on the earth.

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“The writings of the evangelists do not contain the whole of all the instructions which the Lord Christ gave unto his disciples personally on the earth. ‘For he was seen of them after his resurrection forty days and spoke with them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God’ (Acts 1:3). And yet nothing hereof is recorded in their writings, except only some few occasional speeches. Nor had he given before unto them a clear and distinct understanding of those things which were delivered concerning his death and resurrection in the Old Testament, as is plainly declared in Luke 24:25–27. For it was not necessary for them in that state wherein they were. Wherefore, as to the extent of divine revelations objectively, those which he granted by his Spirit unto his apostles after his ascension were beyond those which he personally taught them, so far as they are recorded in the writings of the evangelists. For he told them plainly not long before his death that he had many things to say unto them which ‘then they could not bear’ (John 16:12). And for the knowledge of those things he refers them to the coming of the Spirit to make revelation of them from himself: ‘When he the Spirit of truth is come, he will 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. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine and show it unto you’ (16:13–14). And on this account he had told them before that it was expedient for them that he should go away, that the Holy Spirit might come unto them, whom he would send from the Father (16:7). Hereunto he referred the full and clear manifestation of the mysteries of the gospel.

“The writings of the evangelists are full unto their proper ends and purposes. These were to record the genealogy, conception, birth, acts, miracles, and teachings of our Savior, so far as to evince him to be the true, only promised Messiah. So he testifies who wrote the last of them: ‘Many other signs truly did Jesus which are not written in this book; but these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God’ (20:30–31). Unto this end everything is recorded by them that is needful unto the engenerating and establishing of faith. Upon this confirmation all things declared in the Old Testament concerning him, all that was taught in types and sacrifices, became the object of faith in that sense wherein they were interpreted in the accomplishment. It is therefore no wonder if some things, and those of the highest importance, should be declared more fully in other writings of the New Testament than they are in those of the evangelists.”

That this inspiration of the apostolic college, which fitted them to join the teachings of their Lord and master and produce a body of doctrine intended to constitute an integral and necessary part of the Christian religion, was confined to them and was not shared by the first Christian brotherhood any more than by the church today, our limits compel us to be content with a brief proof; and the burden of proof is upon him who widens the circle beyond this. To the twelve apostles alone does Christ promise the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of revelation and inspiration (John 14:26; 16:13). Them only does he command “not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4). To them alone does he say, “I will send unto you from the Father the Spirit of truth; he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you; he shall testify of me, and you also shall bear witness because you have been with me from the beginning [of my ministry]” (John 14:26; 15:26–27). Such promises as these have no kind of connection with the alleged unknown collectors and editors of legends concerning Christ that were accumulating in the early church during two or three

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centuries after his death. They apply solely to the apostolic college and to no other persons. No such promise or command was given to the “seventy” disciples who were sent out to preach the gospel and who were endowed with miraculous power. Stephen and Barnabas were “full of the Holy Spirit,” but there is no evidence that they were authorized or inspired to prepare writings that were to make a part of the New Testament revelation. The twelve apostles alone, together with the prophets of the Old Testament, constituted the foundation of the Christian church, Christ their Lord being “the chief cornerstone” (Eph. 2:20). Only the names of the “twelve apostles of the Lamb” were cut into the jasper foundations of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14). To the twelve apostles alone did the head of the church say, “You are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto me; that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:28–30).

The apostolic writings, consequently, stand in a wholly different relation to the Christian church from all others, secular or religious. The church grew out of them and rests upon them. This cannot be said of any or all of the immense body of Christian literature which has sprung from them. It has been asserted that “the gospel may exist without the Bible.” It may exist temporarily without the printed volume, as when a missionary, prior to reducing the heathen language to writing preaches the gospel orally; but this supposes that the written Bible is in existence and that from it the missionary has derived it. It is said, also, that the first Christian brotherhood had not the New Testament in a written form. Supposing this assertion can be proved, it certainly had the New Testament in an oral form from the lips of the apostles, and their oral account of Christ and his teaching was the same thing with their written record.

The composition of the gospels would naturally have been prior to that of the epistles because they were more needed in founding and extending the Christian church among the nations. The common assumption of the rationalistic critics that the epistles were early and the gospels late, dating even into the second century, is contrary to probability as well as to patristic testimony. From the nature of the case the narrative parts of the New Testament would have been required in evangelistic work sooner than the doctrinal. The first Christian brotherhood would have needed the synoptist account of the life of Christ more than it would St. Paul’s abstruse and logical enunciation of the Christian system in his Epistle to the Romans. But the date of this latter is very generally acknowledged to be about A.D. 58. The Tübingen school, with the caprice characteristic of conjectural criticism, while asserting the spuriousness of Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, concede the genuineness of Romans, excepting the last two chapters, and also of the epistles to the Corinthians. But if within twenty-five years after the crucifixion the church required such a written statement of the doctrine of predestination as St. Paul gives in Rom. 8:28–11:36 and of the resurrection in 1 Cor. 15:12–58, it would surely require within the same period such a written narrative of Christ’s birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension as the synoptists give in their gospels. If oral instruction upon predestination and the resurrection body ceased to be sufficient for the spread of Christianity, and a written statement upon these subjects became necessary, much more would this have been the case with all that historical matter connected with the life of Christ which has always been regarded in all missionary work as of prime importance. When a modern missionary prepares for the founding of a Christian church in a

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heathen tribe, he does not first translate the Pauline epistles into their language, but the gospels of the evangelists.

We have already referred to another reason for the probability that the first three gospels had an earlier origin than the Pauline epistles, namely, the importance of their being composed before the death of the apostles should make it impossible. So long as the Twelve were alive and actively at work in the fullness of their powers, a written record of the acts and discourses of Christ might temporarily be dispensed with. The personal presence and teaching of those whom the Savior had chosen and inspired to be the organs of his religion made a manuscript account less necessary. Moreover, for the first twenty-five years after the death of Christ the circle of believers was comparatively small, and the limits of the church confined. Oral instruction from the apostles and their assistants might perhaps suffice. But when the circle was enlarged and the apostles were departing from earth, the necessity for the written gospel became urgent and imperative.

The apostles themselves would naturally provide for this emergency in good season before the close of their career and while they were in possession of their vigor. Even if they had felt themselves to be at liberty to do so, they would not have devolved the important work of laying the literary foundation of the Christian religion and church upon well-meaning but unqualified members of the brotherhood. The manner in which Luke 1:1–4 speaks of “many” who had attempted a biography of Christ from the data furnished by “eyewitnesses and ministers of the word” but who were not members of the apostolic college, shows that it was an independent and unauthorized, though well-intentioned procedure. Had it been satisfactory in all respects, why should Luke have prepared his gospel, not from these same data but from the “perfect understanding of all things from the very first,” which he says he had, and why should not these “many” narrations have acquired canonical authority and been received by the church as such?

Eusebius so understood Luke’s remark respecting the “many who had taken in hand” the writing of the life of Christ: “Luke, in the beginning of his narrative premises the cause which led him to write, namely, that many others had rashly undertaken to compose a narrative of matters which he had already completely ascertained. In order to free us from their uncertain suppositions, he delivered in his own gospel the certain account of these things which he himself had fully received from his intimacy with Paul and also his intercourse with the other apostles” (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.24).

For these reasons it is both natural and probable that the apostolic college, by the instrumentality of a part of their number, prepared that threefold synoptic account of the life of our Lord which for nearly twenty centuries has been ascribed to Matthew, Peter-Mark, and Paul-Luke. These three were virtually a committee of the Twelve to perform that important service which the head of the church had solemnly committed to them alone. The historical data furnished by all classes of writers of the first three centuries justify the belief that the epistles of the New Testament were composed between A.D. 55 and A.D. 70. We have given the reasons for believing that the Synoptic Gospels were prior to the epistles, speaking generally. Matthew’s Gospel, especially if written first in Aramean, probably had a much earlier date than that of the Epistle to the Romans, namely, A.D. 58. Eusebius carries it back to A.D. 41.

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After the first three gospels had made the church familiar with the biography of its divine founder in its principal features, a fourth supplementary gospel was added by that one of the Twelve who, by natural gifts and intimate relationship to his master, was best qualified to portray those preexistent and eternal characteristics which were not so fully presented by the synoptists and to supply an account of the Judean ministry and other particulars omitted by them. This was composed near the close of the first century, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the Jewish economy and temple service.

Respecting the early origin of the gospels, Ewald contends for it in part, but as the work of unknown editors not of the apostolic college. "It is," he says (*History of Israel* 6.143), "according to the results of my inquiries, pure and simple prejudice which leads many modern scholars to the conclusion that the evangelical literature generally did not take rise until quite late. On the contrary, all closer inquiries prove that it began quite early and was developed down to the destruction of Jerusalem in the most various forms; but was then, certainly, continued for a considerable time after that event." Ewald imagines the following "documents to have been worked up into the present Synoptic Gospels":

1. the earliest gospel
2. the collected sayings (*ta logia*)⁵⁵ of Papias
3. the same work reedited
4. Mark's Gospel in its first shape
5. Mark's Gospel reedited with the use of #1 and #2
6. the book of higher history
7. the present Gospel of Matthew
8. a sixth work
9. a seventh work
10. an eighth work
11. Gospel of Luke
12. Mark's Gospel in its final shape

It is evident that such a long series of compositions and recompositions, of editing and reediting of materials, must have been a process requiring far more time than between A.D. 40 and A.D. 70, and that in saying that "the evangelical literature began quite early" Ewald means that the first

⁵⁵ τὰ λόγια

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ecclesiastical materials so began. But the process of collecting and combining them “continued,” he says, “for a considerable time after the destruction of Jerusalem.” Let anyone seriously try to find any evidence in the Christian fathers of the first three centuries and in the general history of the patristic church for the existence of most of the twelve documents Ewald here speaks of and for such an origin for the four gospels, and he will know how much value to ascribe to the scheme.

2.1.5 (see p. 99). The fact that inspiration is distinct from sanctification, as is also the power to work miracles, is of the first importance, and many of the objections to the divinity of the Old Testament revelation arise from overlooking it. Graves (*Pentateuch* 3.2) thus remarks upon it: “Let me warn my readers against adopting a preconception very injurious with unthinking minds, namely, that all the individuals whom God used as instruments for the deliverance of his people are brought to our notice in Scripture as worthy of divine favor and fit models for our imitation in the entire tenor of their lives. They generally, indeed, possessed the important and praiseworthy qualities of zeal and intrepidity in defense of their national religion and constitution and were active and effective instruments in restoring the worship of Jehovah and thus in the main forwarding the interests of virtue and religion. Hence, God frequently assisted their efforts with miraculous aid or is said to have raised them up or been with them as judges or kings of Israel. But we must by no means conceive that this implies that the divine approbation attended all their conduct. The excesses of Samson, the rash vow of Jephthah, the ephod of Gideon which proved a snare unto him and all his house, involving them in the guilt of idolatry; the easy indulgence of Eli to his profligate sons; the manner in which the sons of Samuel himself abused their pious father’s authority; the crimes even of David and Solomon: all these facts supply abundant proofs that as in the people, so in their rulers, there was a mixture of weakness and unsteadiness, an immaturity of intellect, and dullness of sentiment as to morality and religion, which, though controlled and overruled by providence, so as to prevent them from defeating the great objects of the divine dispensations which these individuals were otherwise qualified to promote, yet should always prevent us from considering them as held up by Scripture, as in every instance of their conduct favored of God and to be imitated by man. In general, indeed, this fact is expressly noted in the Scripture itself, and an immediate punishment declared to be inflicted for their offenses.

“It is said to be utterly incredible that persons raised up, aided, inspired, endowed with miraculous power at times, directed and assisted by God, should have been guilty of such crimes as David, such idolatries as Solomon, such weaknesses as Samson, such apostasies and cruelties as the Jews. To this it may be answered that it is perfectly credible that they should be raised up for a particular purpose; aided in effecting a particular object; inspired with a certain degree of knowledge; miraculously assisted at particular periods and in a special manner; and yet, that beyond this their natural character, their external temptations, their acquired habits, may have produced all the irregularities and crimes which gave so much offense. To ask why God did not prevent this is to ask why he did not exercise a greater degree of supernatural control than the purposes of providence required. On this subject I transcribe the observations of Butler (*Analogy* 2.3), which appear to me decisive. Having illustrated by a variety of examples that the system of nature is liable to objections *a priori* analogous to those advanced against the scheme of revelation; and that as the former are admitted to be inconclusive objections to natural religion, the latter are

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equally so with regard to revelation, he proceeds: 'By applying these general observations to a particular objection, it will be more distinctly seen how they are applicable to others of the like kind; and indeed to almost all objections against Christianity, as distinguished from objections against its evidence. It appears from Scripture that as it was not unusual in the apostolic age for persons upon their conversion to Christianity to be endued with miraculous gifts, so some of those persons exercised these gifts in a strangely irregular and disorderly manner; and this is made an objection against their being really miraculous. Now the foregoing observations quite remove this objection, how considerable soever it may appear at first sight. For consider a person endued with any of these gifts; for instance, that of tongues: it is to be supposed that he had the same power over this miraculous gift that he would have had over it had it been the effect of habit, of study, and use, as it ordinarily is; or the same power over it that he had over any other natural endowment. Consequently, he would use it in the same manner he did any other; either regularly and upon proper occasions only, or irregularly and upon improper ones, according to his sense of decency and his prudence. Where, then, is the objection? Why, if this miraculous power was indeed given to the world to propagate Christianity and attest the truth of it, we might, it seems, have expected that another sort of persons should have been chosen to be invested with it; or that these should at the same time have been endued with prudence; or that they should have been continually restrained and directed in the exercise of it, that is, that God should have miraculously interposed, if at all, in a different manner or higher degree. But from the observations made above, it is undeniably evident that we are not judges in what degrees and manners it were to have been expected he should miraculously interpose, upon the supposition of his doing it in some degree and manner. Nor in the natural course of providence are superior gifts of memory, eloquence, knowledge, and other talents of great influence conferred only on persons of prudence and decency, or such as are disposed to make the properest use of them.' Such are the observations of Butler; and they seem to show most clearly the unreasonableness of disbelieving the reality of divine interpositions in the Jewish scheme, merely from the crimes and idolatries of the nation at large or of some of the most remarkable persons employed in these interpositions."

In addition to the examples given on pp. 98–99 of inspiration without sanctification, the case of the "old prophet" mentioned in 1 Kings 13:11 is another instance: "He lied to the man of God" and yet "the word of the Lord came unto him" (v. 20), and he foretold the truth respecting the death of "the man of God."

2.1.6 (see p. 99). It is an error to represent the church as prior, either in the order of time or of nature, to the Scriptures. Though the gospels, for example, were not put into writing before the church at Pentecost was established, yet they were put into preaching before this. The preaching of the gospel on the day of Pentecost applied by the Spirit made the Christian church. The gospels in the memory and oral discourse of the apostles were the very same divine revelation that was subsequently written down by them. The oral truth is identical with the written truth. The Ten Commandments spoken by God were the same Ten Commandments that were cut by him in the tables of stone. The Mosaic narrative respecting the patriarchs was not written until the fifteenth century B.C., but the facts, both miraculous and natural and the truths relating to God and the "seed of the woman" recorded by Moses exerted their influence from Adam down, making the

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course of events what it was in the line of Seth and constructing the antediluvian and patriarchal churches long before the time of Moses. If revelation had not thus preceded, partly in an oral and perhaps partly in a written form, there would have been no patriarchal church. If Adam, Seth, and Noah had had no inspired teaching, but only the ethnic theology and mythological doctrine of God which Renan and others attribute to them, instead of the spiritual monotheism which the Pentateuch ascribes to them, the history of these patriarchs would have been like that of the mythological heroes generally. There would have been no "sons of God," like Seth and Enoch and their descendants, walking with God in reverence and humility, and no antediluvian church free from idolatry and worshiping a spiritual Jehovah. Moses put into an orderly form a body of truth that had been gradually revealed from heaven centuries before and had been preserved in the memory of the patriarchs and perhaps also in some written documents and added to it a body of truth partly supernaturally revealed to him and partly the result of his own observation and connected with his own mission and history.

Modern rationalism reverses the places of cause and effect when composing its own "history of Israel." Ewald, for example, represents the messianic idea and consciousness in the Israelites as producing the Old and New Testament Scriptures; whereas it was these Scriptures that produced this idea and consciousness. For if this race had been like the other contemporaneous races, destitute of a supernatural revelation through inspired prophets, it would no more have had a messianic idea and consciousness than they had. The Bible made the Hebrews a peculiar people with a peculiar idea and consciousness of redemption; and not the Hebrews the Bible a peculiar book with its peculiar doctrines of a Savior and salvation.

A similar misplacement of cause and effect is seen also in the rationalistic argument for the natural improvement of humanity by reason of its innate resources. The influence of Christianity for two thousand years in changing the moral and religious condition of the world is ignored, and the great process of Christian civilization during this time is ascribed to the workings of the human reason and will. Divine causation is thus transmuted into human causation, and human nature struts in borrowed plumes. The moral and spiritual products of the gospel are attributed to ethnic religion and the evolution of man's religious sentiment. But none of the natural religions of the globe and still less the meager religion of a deist like Hume could have originated the England and United States of today. Why did not Greece and Rome produce modern Christian civilization?

2.1.7 (see p. 99). The ethics of the Old Testament is not vitiated by such deeds as the slaying of Agag by Samuel (2 Kings 10:30) and of the Canaanites by Israel, if the circumstances of the cases are considered. Such acts as these would be obligatory and right at the present time and in all time under the same circumstances. Should almighty God command a particular person in the United States in the nineteenth century to slay a particular person, he would be morally bound to do so. If the fact of a divine command is certainly established, this constitutes an obligation; because God is the Creator from nothing of every man and has the right to dispose of the life and being of every one of his creatures as he pleases, on the principle recognized by the common law, that absolute ownership entitles to the use of the thing owned. It is on this same ground that the destruction of mankind by the deluge and Lisbon earthquakes is explained and justified. When

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so commanded by God, the father and mother of a false prophet are to thrust through the very son whom they have begotten (Zech. 13:3).

2.1.8 (see p. 100). Revelation may be without error so far as it professes to state truth, and yet it may not profess to state all the truth belonging to the subject. The disclosure of the future Messiah to Adam and Even in the first promise was inerrant, but the time when he would appear was not revealed to them to the degree it was to Daniel. Similarly, the fact of the second advent of Christ was infallibly revealed to the apostles, but the time when it was to occur was concealed from them (Mark 13:32). If they had gone beyond the teaching of the Holy Spirit that there is to be a second advent of the Redeemer and attempted by the action of their own mind to fix the date of it, as premillenarians do, they would have made a fallible statement. Some of the Thessalonian church did this, and St. Paul in the second epistle to this church by inspiration informs them that the second advent will not occur until after a certain apostasy; but when this will occur was not revealed to him, and he did not give a date for it. At the same time the apostles, in their ignorance of the exact date of Christ's second advent, together with their infallible knowledge that it would occur, represent it as an event that will come unexpectedly and suddenly whenever it does come and exhort believers to be prepared for it. This explains Paul's "the Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5) and "yet a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37); James's "the coming of the Lord draws nigh" (James 5:8); and Peter's "the end of all things is at hand" (1 Pet. 4:7).

2.1.9 (see p. 102). The homogeneity of thought and language is evinced by the fact that the vocal sound is the product of physical organs which are started into action and directed in their motion by the soul itself. Even the inarticulate tones of an animal are suited to the inward feeling by the particular play of muscles and organs of sound. The feeling of pleasure could not, so long as nature is herself, twist these muscles and organs into the emission of the sharp scream of physical agony, any more than it could light up the eye with the glare and flash of rage. Now, if this is true in the low sphere of animal existence, it is still more so in that of intellectual and moral existence. When full of earnest thought and feeling, the mind uses the body at will, and the latter naturally and spontaneously subserves the former. As thought becomes more and more earnest, and feeling more and more glowing, the body bends and yields with increasing pliancy, down to its most minute fibers and most delicate tissues, to the working of the engaged mind; the organs of speech become one with the soul and are swayed and wielded by it. The word is as it were put into the mouth by the vehement and excited spirit. And the language inevitably follows the cast of the thought. The movements of the mouth, the positions of the vocal organs and tension of the vocal chords, in the utterance of such words as *shock*, *smite*, *writhe*, *slake*, and *quench* are produced by the energy and character of the conceptions which these words convey, just as the prolonged relaxation of the organs and muscles in the pronunciation of *soothe*, *breathe*, *dream*, *calm*, and the like results necessarily from the nature of the thought of which they are not the mere arbitrary unmeaning signs, like the algebraic symbols plus and minus, but the spontaneous significant embodiment. Even when the word is not only not pronounced, but not even whispered, it is sought to be expressed by silent movements of the lips: "Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken" (1 Sam. 1:13).

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Carpenter (*Physiology* §542) describes the physiological connection between the conception and the word, as follows: "In the production of vocal sounds that nice adjustment of the muscles of the larynx which is requisite to the giving forth of determinate tones is ordinarily directed by the auditory sense: being learned in the first instance [in the case of the child] under the guidance of sounds actually produced [by its teachers]; but being subsequently effected voluntarily in accordance with the mental conception (a sort of inward sensation) of the tone to be uttered, which conception cannot be formed unless the sense of hearing has previously brought similar tones to the mind. Hence it is that persons who are deaf are also mute. They may have no malformation of the organs of speech; but they are incapable of uttering distinct vocal sounds or musical tones, because they have not the guiding conception or recalled sensation of the nature of these."

It is objected that children have to learn to speak and that consequently thought does not prompt language. The objection overlooks the difference between learning one's mother tongue and a foreign language. The latter is learned artificially by a dictionary and every word is taught separately by itself, but the former is learned naturally without such helps. As the child learns to think, he learns to talk. The latter is as spontaneous as the former. He is taught to spell every word, but not to utter every word. Children grow into speaking their native language as they grow into thinking. Technical terms, it is true, have to be taught. But even in this case the child often has an untechnical word for the thing which is suggested by his idea of it.

2.1.10 (see p. 104). That inspiration affects the language as well as the thought is proved by what is said in Scripture concerning the "utterance" of revealed truth. This utterance is represented to be a special gift of the Holy Spirit: "I thank my God always on your behalf that you are enriched by him in all utterance (*logō*)⁵⁶ and in all knowledge" (1 Cor. 1:4-5); "you abound in utterance (*logō*)⁵⁷ and knowledge" (2 Cor. 8:7); "praying for me, that utterance (*logos*)⁵⁸ may be given unto me" (Eph. 6:19); "praying that God would open unto us a door of utterance (*logou*)"⁵⁹ (Col. 4:3). A free, fluent, and precise use of language is meant when St. Paul prays that he may "open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel." It will be observed that in these passages the term *logos*⁶⁰ denotes the expression of thought, while in other places it denotes thought itself or the faculty of thought, showing that reason and "discourse of reason" are two modes or phases of the same thing.

Owen speaks thus of inward or mental prayer: "In prayer, by meditation the things and matter of prayer are to be formed in the mind into that sense and those sentences which may be expressed outwardly and vocally. So of Hannah, when she prayed in her heart 'out of the abundance of her meditation' as she said (1 Sam. 1:13), it is said that 'her lips moved, though her voice was not heard.' She not only inwardly framed the sense of her supplications into petitions,

⁵⁶ λόγῳ = in word

⁵⁷ λόγῳ = in word

⁵⁸ λόγος = word

⁵⁹ λόγου = of word

⁶⁰ λόγος = word

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but tacitly expressed them to herself. And the obligation of any person unto prescribed forms is destructive of prayer by inward meditation; for it takes away the liberty and prevents the ability of framing petitions in the mind according to the sense which the party praying has of them" (*Holy Spirit in Prayer*, chap. 8).

In his treatise "Concerning the Teacher," Augustine discusses at considerable length the connection between thought and language, maintaining that it is natural not arbitrary, vital not mechanical. One of his remarks is that "we think the words themselves [as well as the thought itself] and thus speak internally and mentally."⁶¹ This will be evident if we watch the mental action both in remembering and in reflecting. When we recall and mentally repeat a passage of the Lord's Prayer, the words of the passage are merely thought or conceived of. They are not uttered either aloud or in a whisper. The language in this instance is entirely internal and disconnected from sound and the movements of the vocal organs. But the same is true in the instance of original thinking, when there is no recalling to memory. In reflecting upon a subject the mind inwardly phrases its thoughts as it goes along, without either whispering or speaking the words in which they are phrased. The thinking itself is real and clear only in proportion as this mental expression and linguistic formation of the thought takes place. If this is not done, there is no true thinking, but only a vague and mystical mental action which does not reach the truth of the subject and does not explain it in the least. Says Augustine: "When my capacities of expression prove inferior to my inner apprehensions, I grieve over the inability which my tongue has betrayed in answering to my heart. This arises from the circumstance that the intellectual apprehension diffuses itself through the mind with something like a rapid flash, whereas the utterance is slow and occupies time, so that while the latter is moving on, the intellectual apprehension has already withdrawn itself within its secret abodes. Yet in consequence of its having stamped certain impressions of itself upon the memory, these prints endure with the brief pauses of the syllables; and as the outcome of these same impressions, we form vocal signs which get the name of a certain language, either Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, or some other. And these vocal signs may themselves be the objects of thought merely, or they may also be actually uttered by the voice. On the other hand, the mental impressions themselves are neither Latin nor Greek nor Hebrew nor peculiar to any race whatsoever, but are made effective in the mind just as looks are in the body. For anger is designated by one word in Latin, by another in Greek, and by different terms in other languages, according to their several diversities. But the look of the angry man is neither peculiarly Latin nor peculiarly Greek. Thus it is that when a person says *iratus sum*,⁶² he is not understood by every nation, but only by the Latins; whereas, if the mood of his mind when it is kindling to wrath comes forth upon the face and affects the look, all who have the individual within their view understand that he is angry" (*Catechizing the Unlearned*, chap. 3).

Augustine here notices that the vocal signs, that is, the words, may be merely objects of thought and not actually spoken; that is, they may be conceived in the mind and not articulated. This is so. If one will observe the process, he will discover that before he utters a particular word he has a notion of the sound which he means to utter and forms it mentally. He phrases his thought

⁶¹ Quia ipsa verba cogitamus nos intus apud animam loqui.

⁶² I am angry

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inwardly, and this conceived sound is suggested and prompted by the thought behind it, of which it is the symbol and with which it is connatural. We think the word before we speak it out audibly. Hence the following advice is sound: “When we write in a foreign language, we should not think in English; if we do, our writings will be but translations at best. If one is to write in French, one must use oneself to think in French; and even then, for a great while, our Anglicisms will get uppermost and betray us in writing, as our native accent does in speaking when we are among them” (Lockier, *Spence’s Anecdotes*).

Plato (*Theatetus* 190) describes thinking as inward speaking: “Socrates: Do you mean by thinking the same which I mean? Theatetus: What is that? Socrates: I mean the conversation which the soul holds with herself in considering anything. The soul when thinking appears to me to be just talking; asking questions of herself and answering them, affirming and denying. And when she has arrived at a decision, either gradually or by a sudden impulse, and has at last agreed and does not doubt, this is called her opinion. I say, then, that to form an opinion is to speak, and opinion is a word spoken, I mean to oneself and in silence, not aloud or to another.”

2.1.11 (see p. 104). The conjectural critics make misstatements to support their alleged contradictions of Scripture. Harper (*Hebraica* 5.27–29) asserts that Gen. 2:5–7 “distinctly states that when the first man was created, there was no plant or shrub in existence.” It states directly the contrary: “God created every plant of the field before it was in the earth and every herb of the field before it grew, and there was not a man to till the ground.” That is to say, when the vegetable kingdom was created man was not in being. Harper asserts again that Gen. 2:7–8 teaches that “after man came vegetation, which man was to maintain.” This can be true only upon the assumption that the “planting of a garden eastward in Eden” was the same thing as the creation of the vegetable kingdom: “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground. And the Lord God planted a garden, and there he put the man he had formed.” The Bible here teaches that the planting of the garden was subsequent to the creation of man, but not that the fiat of the third day (1:11), by which the vegetable kingdom was originated, was subsequent to this. Such interpretation of Scripture as this is either dense ignorance or willful deceit.

2.1.12 (see p. 105). Genuine and truthful accounts from two or more eyewitnesses of an event must have a certain amount of variation, because no two spectators see or can see identically the same things in identically the same way. For example, two spectators of the passage of the Red Sea by the Israelites would not have exactly the same consciousness in relation to the total scene. This would make them two machines, like two stereopticons, giving identically the same pictures of the passage. Eyewitnesses are not stereopticons. One spectator sees more of one part of a scene and less of another part; and the converse. A truthful and accurate report of what each has seen consequently shows this difference and variation. But this is not a conflict or contradiction between the two accounts. This fact is clearly stated by Torrey in an article on inspiration in *Bibliotheca sacra* (1858): “Inspiration secured the sufficiently exact report of the facts observed. We say sufficiently exact; for, from the nature of the case, facts are relative to the observer. No two witnesses can possibly look at them from [identically] the same point of view. No two reports from different sources can possibly be exactly [identically] the same. We cannot demand in the case of sacred facts a different kind of exactness from that which belongs to the true report of all

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historical facts. Variation, to a certain extent, is here the test of truth. Inspiration, therefore, cannot consist in such a miraculous infusion of light as would lead each historian to report facts differently seen and differently related by different witnesses precisely alike. Each can draw up his own report only from one point of view, and minor differences are unavoidable.”

2.1.13 (see p. 109). When an inspired person intentionally adapts a passage from the Old Testament as the best way of expressing the inspired thought which he is commissioned to utter, this is not the same thing as an error in quotation. A misquotation is not consciously intended, but is the result of ignorance or carelessness; but an adaptation supposes a clear understanding of the whole passage in the Old Testament and a deliberate alteration of it to meet the case in hand. Take, for illustration, our Lord’s quotation of Ps. 40:10 in John 13:18: “He that eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me.” He purposely omits the words *in whom I trusted*, not because he did not know they made a part of the Old Testament passage, but because had he verbally cited the whole of it would have expressed an untruth. He had not put his trust in Judas, for he “knew what is in man” and therefore did not “commit himself” to man, even his best friends (2:23–24). Another illustration is the quotation of Ps. 16:10 by Peter and Paul respectively. The former quotes it: “You will not leave my soul in hell, neither will you suffer your Holy One to see corruption” (Acts 2:27). The latter quotes it: “You will not suffer your Holy One to see corruption” (13:35). This is not misquotation on Paul’s part. He omits a clause of the original but does not alter its meaning as he understood it; because he evidently understood that “to leave the soul in hell” was the same thing as “to suffer the Holy One to see corruption”; “hell,” in his view, meaning the grave, and “soul” signifying a “dead body” (as in Num. 6:6; Lev. 5:2; 19:28; 21:1, 11; 22:4; Num. 18:11, 13; Hag. 2:13). Again, such quotations from the Old Testament (Exod. 12:46) as John 19:36 (“a bone of him shall not be broken”) are not a mistaken citation for a purpose that was not intended by the Holy Spirit, the original inspirer. The slaying of the paschal lamb was a type of Christ the Lamb of God and not an ordinary historical event that had no typical meaning. When, therefore, God commanded Moses, saying, “Neither shall you break a bone thereof,” he had in view both the present reference and the future. Both references were in the mind of the Holy Spirit, under whose inspiration both Moses and John wrote. The paschal lamb being a type of the Lamb of God was a prophecy of him as well as an emblem. All Scripture types or symbols are prophetic and are consequently both history and prophecy and may be cited as either. They have a double reference: one to the present and the other to the future. Moses in Exod. 12:46 gave the historical reference; John in John 19:36 gave the prophetic. Common historical events are not typical of the future and therefore have but one meaning or reference. But some of the historical events of the Old Testament dispensation, such as the exodus from Egypt (Matt. 2:15), the killing of the paschal lamb (1 Cor. 5:7; John 1:2), the lifting up of the brazen serpent (3:14), the Nazirite vow in the instances of Samson and Samuel (Matt. 2:23), the miracle of Jonah (Matt. 12:40), and other such passages, were types as well as history and therefore are cited in the New Testament in proof of the truth of the claim of Jesus Christ to be the Messiah thus typified. This explanation supposes that the old and new dispensations are one organic whole and that the former prepares for the latter and is prophetic of it.

2.1.14 (see p. 109). The divine and the human element in Scripture are erroneously supposed, by those who deny the inerrancy of the latter, to be merely in juxtaposition instead of blending and

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fusion. Mere juxtaposition would leave the human factor in its ordinary fallible condition, unaffected by the divine. But the mind of the prophet or apostle is represented as *theopneustos*⁶³ (divinely inspired; 2 Tim. 3:16). This inbreathing of the human mind by the Holy Spirit lifts it above its common fallible condition and frees it from the liability to error which attaches to the uninspired human. An inspired human mind is in an extraordinary state by reason of the divine *afflatus* which sweeps it along (*pheromenoi*;⁶⁴ 2 Pet. 1:21). If the relation of the two factors were merely that of juxtaposition, the Scriptures would be a mixture of the infallible with the fallible, as the rationalist asserts they are. But when the two are blended so as to fill the human with the divine, the product has in it no mixture of error. Both elements are alike inerrant; the divine originally in and of itself, the human derivatively because illumined by the divine. To suppose that the human side of the Bible contains error is to suppose the mind of the prophet or apostle to have been left in its common uninspired state when he contributed to its production. The attempt of rationalistic criticism to inject error into revelation by means of its human side can succeed only by assuming that the inspired human is the ordinary human and that the prophet or apostle writes like any common human author. This is merely the contiguity of the divine and human, not the interpenetration and inspiration of the human by the divine. On this theory the Bible is the product of the divine as infallible and of the human as fallible; in which case the errancy of the latter nullifies the inerrancy of the former. If the inerrant truth, which comes directly from the Holy Spirit, on passing through the fallible mind of the prophet or apostle becomes vitiated by the passage and is converted into error, the result is worthless. But if, while the Holy Spirit reveals the truth, he at the same time illumines and informs the human mind which he is employing as his human organ for communicating it to human beings and preserves it from error, thus making it the inspired-human in distinction from the common-human, then the product will be completely inerrant.

2.1.15 (see p. 111). The argument in proof of a conflict between revelation and science commonly closes with a reference to the persecution of Galileo and his “yet it does move.” Whewell has narrated the facts of the case with carefulness and accuracy. He establishes the following particulars:

1. The heliocentric theory was known to the ancients. It was ascribed to Pythagoras and also to Philolaus, one of his disciples. Archimedes says that it was held by his contemporary Aristarchus. Aristotle recognized the existence of the doctrine by arguing against it. Cicero appears to make Mercury and Venus revolve about the sun. Seneca says that it deserves considering whether the earth be at rest or in motion. The Hindus had their heliocentric theorists. Aryabatta (1322 B.C.) is said to have advocated the doctrine of the earth’s revolution on its axis—an opinion rejected by subsequent Hindu philosophers.
2. Copernicus (A.D. 1507) was the first to reduce the theory, held hitherto in a vague way, to a scientific form. The preface to his epoch-making treatise *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres* was addressed to the pope. His views met no resistance from the church. He

⁶³ θεόπνευστος

⁶⁴ φερόμενοι = having been carried along

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delayed their publication because he feared the opposition of the established school of astronomers, not of divines. The latter he seemed to consider a less formidable danger. The doctrine of the earth's motion around the sun when it was promulgated by Copernicus soon after 1500 excited no alarm among the theologians of his own time. Indeed it was received with favor by the most intelligent ecclesiastics, and lectures in support of the heliocentric doctrine were delivered in the ecclesiastical colleges.

3. The Copernican theory had both its advocates and its opponents for two centuries after its publication, but both classes were mathematicians and astronomers, not ecclesiastics as such. It was adopted by Leonardo da Vinci (1510), Giordano Bruno (1591), Kepler (1600), Galileo (1630), Leibnitz (1670), Newton (1680), and subsequently by the British and continental mathematicians generally. It was more or less opposed, or else doubted, even down to the close of the seventeenth century. Lord Bacon never gave full assent to it. His contemporary Gilbert was also in doubt concerning parts of it. Milton was not a mathematician, but reflects the opinions of his time, and he was undecided. So also was John Howe.
4. The martyrdom of Giordano Bruno and the persecution of Galileo arose not from their astronomical but their theological opinions. Bruno published a bitter satire on religion and the papal government, a work having no connection with the Copernican theory, and for this he was condemned to the flames. He had previously published his treatise *De universo*, in which he adopts the views of his master, Copernicus, and had been unmolested. Galileo's persecution arose from several causes:
 - a. The difference in the degree of toleration accorded to Copernicus and Galileo, respectively, was due to the controversies that had arisen out of the Reformation, which made the Romish church more jealous of innovations in received opinions than previously. Moreover, the discussion of religious doctrines was in the time of Galileo less freely tolerated in Italy than in other countries.
 - b. Galileo's own behavior appears to have provoked the interference of the ecclesiastical authorities. When arguments against the fixity of the sun and the motion of the earth were adduced from expressions in Scripture, he could not be satisfied without asserting that his opinions were conformable to Scripture as well as philosophy and was very eager in his attempts to obtain from the ecclesiastical authorities a declaration to this effect. The authorities were averse to granting this, particularly since the literal phraseology of Scripture favored the Ptolemaic theory. When compelled by Galileo's urgency to express an opinion, they decided against him and advised him to confine himself to the mathematical reasons for his system and to abstain from meddling with Scripture. Galileo's zeal soon led him again to bring the question under the notice of the Pope, and the result was a declaration of the Inquisition that the doctrine of the earth's motion appeared to be contrary to the Scriptures. Galileo was then prohibited from teaching and defending this doctrine in any manner and promised obedience to this injunction. His subsequent violation of

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his promise, together with his impatient and passionate temper, brought about his imprisonment. Had he maintained the Copernican theory on purely scientific grounds, as the church had enjoined upon him and as had commonly been done by its advocates, and not sought the authority of the church in its support and so had not fallen into collision with it when it refused its support, there is no reason for believing that Galileo would have met with any more persecution than his great predecessors Copernicus and Kepler. (For the full account of the subject, see Whewell's *Inductive Sciences* 5.1–3.)⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Shedd, W. G. T. (2003). *Dogmatic theology*. (A. W. Gomes, Ed.) (3rd ed., pp. 84–124). Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Pub.