

“inspiration” of the Pentateuch when they have reduced Deuteronomy to the age of Josiah, and Leviticus and Numbers to that of Ezra, as though “inspiration” could possibly mean the same thing to those who believe this and to those who have accepted the Pentateuch as they have received it. They will speak of the “revelation” of God in the Old Testament, when all the ground has been destroyed on which we can suppose that a covenant was made as the basis and token of a revelation. But I am persuaded that we shall never make real progress in our Old Testament studies till we have learnt to prosecute them without any reference to inspiration. We have no business to impart inspiration into the discussion; still less are we at liberty to use the word in a vague and indeterminate sense, as though we were all agreed upon the meaning of it. Inspiration, if it is a fact, will take care of itself: we must not allow the thought of it to influence our inquiry one way or the other. We are bound to study the Old Testament as we should study any other ancient book. If we study it fairly and honestly, without fear or favour, I believe that ultimately there is only one result we can come to, namely, that it is not like any other book. The real question is whether what the Old Testament says about itself is, or is not, to be trusted. If it is, then the result is plain; if it is not, then we may reasonably question whether after all we are studying it as we do study other books. At all events, inspiration, whatever it means, is to be arrived at inductively; it is not to be the peg upon which we deductively hang our argument. Inspiration is the net result of all the phenomena of the book when rightly and duly weighed. We must not reject the evidence of the Old Testament on every point, and then talk about its inspiration as though we had left that intact. Let us first know clearly what we all mean by inspiration, or else let us leave it out of the question altogether.

The true subject matter of our discussion is the nature and relation of the facts of the Old Testament, and that alone. For instance, this writer says (p. 353), “If we believe that the law as it grew really did represent the Divine inten-