

employed by certain of the sacred writers, it might not be sufficient to establish the inspiration of the Bible. For in writers historically trustworthy we recognize the possibility of a measure of unintentional mistake, and perchance these isolated utterances might be the result of honest mistake or slovenly writing. But if it can be shown, as we think it can, that the claims to inspiration, direct and indirect, put forward by the sacred writers are so clear and numerous, and the testimonies to the infallible truth and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures so emphatic and various that we cannot regard the authors as honest and intelligent men unless in very deed they wrote under supernatural guidance, then we think we can construct a rational argument for the inspiration of Scripture from writings which, up to this stage, have been viewed only as historically trustworthy. We readily acknowledge that the supernatural or miraculous should never be admitted as a fact until proper evidence is adduced. Whoever asserts the existence of any special manifestation of the supernatural may be reasonably asked to prove it. But should any one feel inclined to lay stress upon this general presumption against the supernatural it is well to remind him that in the case before us it is counter-balanced by a presumption springing from the existence of a supernatural revelation. If God has made a supernatural revelation of himself to man, as all with whom we conduct this discussion admit, there is surely a strong presumption that He would guide the sacred writers to put it correctly on record. The revelation was not designed merely for the private benefit of the prophet who originally received it; it was intended for others who could have access to it only in the Holy Scriptures. And surely it does not look like divine wisdom and benevolence to give a supernatural revelation to man, and then permit it to become so mixed with error in the record of it that we shall ever be in danger of mistaking human blunders for divine revelations. We submit, therefore, that the presumption is in favor of a supernatural record of a supernatural revelation.

Passing from the presumptive argument to the evidence, we confess to a difficulty which we feel, but it is not the difficulty of discovering evidence, but of arranging and condensing it within reasonable compass. It has been well remarked that "for the most part, if not universally, the penmen of Scripture were clothed with a public and official character, sufficiently known to those for whom they wrote, and implying both a divine commission and an extraordinary inspiration."—(Bannerman on Inspir., p. 288.) It was not, therefore, necessary that they should indulge very frequently in direct assertions of their own inspiration. We shall see, however, that occasionally, when circumstances seemed to demand it, they did make explicit statements. A large proportion of the most striking evidence for the inspiration of Scripture is found in indirect and incidental testimonies which do not admit of very compendious exhibition. Notwithstanding this difficulty, we hope, even in this lecture, to adduce sufficient evidence to show that "the prevailing popular view of the authority, the inspiration, and the infallibility of the Bible" has not "been superstitiously attached to it," but on the contrary, is required by a fair dealing with the contents of the Holy Scriptures.

The phenomenon of inspiration is undeniable. This is our first position. Many who deny that the whole Bible is characterized by infallible truth and divine authority readily admit that certain portions of it are distinguished by plenary inspiration. But apart from such concessions, we think it is impossible for those who recognize the credibility of the sacred writers to maintain successfully that there have been no examples of such inspiration as we claim for the Holy Scriptures. It must be conceded that the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, as spoken by him, were distinguished by infallible truth and divine authority. We do not speak of the record of His discourses in the pages of the Evangelists, but of the words as they fell from His lips. If we accept the writers of the New Testament as the credible historians of a supernatural revelation, the view which they give of the person of Christ, and of the manner in which He was endowed with the fulness of the Spirit's gifts, renders it certain that error could not have mingled with His words. They are an example, unique no doubt, but still an example, of human words clothed with infallible truth and divine authority. This, however, is not the only example of the phenomenon which admits of no reasonable question. There are many special oracles

which are introduced in a manner, or run in a style, which places their plenary inspiration beyond dispute. We are forced either to accept their inspiration or to maintain that the writer is not trustworthy. When we find Jeremiah describing his book as "The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah * * * * * To whom the word of the Lord came," etc., and introducing his message by the statement, "Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying," v. 4, and commencing a second message with the words, v. 13, "And the word of the Lord came unto me a second time, saying"—can we suppose Jeremiah to claim anything less than that the words which he has written are at least in these particular instances the words of the Most High. In the 36th chapter Jeremiah is instructed by God "to take a roll of a book and write therein all the words which I have spoken against Israel," and when the prophet has obeyed we find the product referred to interchangeably as "the words of Jeremiah," and as "the words of the Lord," vs. 10-11. Can any one who regards Jeremiah as a thoroughly trustworthy writer fail to recognize this as an example of plenary inspiration? And if we repose confidence in the integrity of the sacred writers, how can we refuse this character to oracles introduced with the familiar formula, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts," or confirmed with the declaration, "For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Numerous examples will readily occur to the readers of the Bible where at least certain passages are so marked out that no fair dealing with the language can eliminate the idea of plenary inspiration from them. We think that it is important to emphasize the position that the phenomenon of inspiration is undeniable. For whenever it is made clear that in certain instances, at least, "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," then a very large proportion of the objections commonly urged against inspiration falls to the ground. When inspiration is established as a fact it is a very bootless task reasoning against it, either as improbable, impossible, or as inconsistent with the individuality of the sacred writers. It only remains to ascertain the extent to which inspiration can be predicated of the Holy Scriptures.

Inspiration can manifestly be predicated very extensively of the Old Testament. This appears from the prophetic authorship of its books and from the claims which its writers put forth. It is certain that most of the books of the Old Testament were written by prophets; and while we cannot adduce direct evidence to show that all the books of the ancient canon were written by men of this order, there is at least manifestly a high degree of probability that they were all, as the ancient Jews believed, written by prophets. At present we do not lay stress on this probability, but confine ourselves to what is capable of clear proof. There are marks of the existence throughout the whole period during which the Old Testament was produced of an order of men honored to hold special intercourse with God and receive supernatural revelations from Him, and who were formally accredited by the Most High as His agents, whom he authorized, in their official character, to speak and act for Him. The relation which Aaron is represented as sustaining to Moses brings out distinctly the relation in which the prophet stood to God, and the authority due to his words, whether spoken or written. When Moses was unwilling to bear the divine message to Egypt, the Lord, having reminded him that his brother Aaron could speak well, said to him, "Thou shalt speak unto him and put words in his mouth." * * * * "He shall be thy spokesman unto the people, and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God."—Ex. iv. 15, 16. Again we read, "And the Lord said unto Moses, see I have made thee a god unto Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet."—Ex. vii. 1. What Aaron said to Pharaoh had the authority of Moses, and so what the prophet, in his official capacity, said to the people had the authority of God. He spoke as God's mouth. God made Himself responsible for the prophet's utterances. When it was known that the prophet stood in this relation to God, all that was necessary to certify men that a book was given by inspiration of God was the assurance that it was the official work of one of the prophetic order. We assume that God did in various ways give public sanction to certain men as prophets by which their cotemporaries could be assured of the genuineness of their prophetic character, and thereby of the divine authority of their writings.

That the vast majority of the books of the Old Testament were written by prophets can be easily shown. They were all familiarly referred to and quoted by Christ under the well-known Jewish divisions, Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms, Luke xiv. 44. That the Pentateuch was, with very trifling exceptions, written by Moses nothing that modern destructive criticism has been able to adduce need make us doubt. And that Moses was a prophet cannot be denied in face of the express language of Scripture, "And by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved."—Hos. xii. 13. And the whole record of his legislation and life bears ample testimony to the sobriety of the statement with which it is closed, "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."—Deut. xxxiv. 10. That the second division, which is expressly called "the prophets" by Jesus Christ, was written by prophets can scarcely be successfully denied. What God said to Jeremiah might have been said from any of them from Joshua downwards, "Lo, I have put my words in thy mouth."—Jer. i. 9. Shall we then refuse to acknowledge the prophetic character of that division named from its first book, the Psalms? The apostle Peter expressly testifies that David was a prophet, Acts. ii. 30, and he affirms that the Scriptures must needs be fulfilled which the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of David, Acts i. 16. It is true that we cannot adduce direct evidence that all parts of the Hagiographa, as this division was frequently called, were written by prophets; but we find that Asaph and Daniel are both ranked by our Lord as prophets, Matt. xiii. 35, and Matt. xxiv. 15, while in Hebrews iii. 7, 9, an anonymous Psalm is ascribed to the Holy Ghost. And not only are the Proverbs of Solomon repeatedly quoted in the New Testament with usual formula, "it is written" (Rom. iii. 15, and Rom. xii. 19, 20), but once in terms that show that the words are the very words of God, James iv. 10. To this we may add the fact that the Apostle Paul, on one occasion, refers to the Old Testament Scriptures generally under the title of "the prophetic Scriptures." Rom. xvi. 26. It was doubtless very largely due to the evidence for the prophetic authorship of the books of the Old Testament that the Jews, in the time of our Lord, believed universally in their inspiration. The writers of the Old Testament repeatedly use language which involves a direct claim to inspiration. This claim is advanced in many forms, and in terms so general that no reason can be assigned why it should be restricted to any particular portion of their writings. How often do we find such language employed by them in reference to their own statements as this. "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," "Thus saith the Lord," "Hear the word of the Lord?" Nearly all the prophets again and again employ phraseology which indicates that the Lord spoke by them. "The word that Isaiah, the son of Amos, said concerning Judah and Jerusalem." "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying," "Jeremiah, what seest thou?" "The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel, the priest, the son of Buzi," etc. "The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea." "The word of the Lord that came to Micah." And almost the entire legislation of Moses has the Divine authorship stamped upon its language with equal distinctness. As we read the Pentateuch we encounter continually the words, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying." It is true that there are books of the Old Testament in which no such direct claims to inspiration as we have cited are put forth. But there is a silent tone of authority pervading even these which is compatible only with the idea of their inspiration. In addition to this, the fact that they were written in the Sacred Collection, which the Israelites guarded with such jealous care, is itself a tacit claim to the same character as distinguished the other portions of the ancient canon. If the writers who put forward these claims are regarded as the credible historians of a supernatural revelation, we cannot avoid the conclusion that a very large portion of the Old Testament was given by inspiration of God. Advancing now another step we remark, the testimony of the New Testament establishes the inspiration of the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures. This includes the testimony of Christ Himself, which, with all who admit His divine character and mission, should be decisive. It includes also the testimony of the writers of the New Testament, which has a two-fold character and value—(1) It may be regarded as presenting the doctrine of their Master at second-