

inspiration of the collection made. No one can believe in the inspiration of the Bible who does not believe in the inspiration of the Church. But by the Church here we do not, like the Romanists, mean the pope and the councils. We mean the body of genuine believers, the majority of Spirit-taught men of God, not the organized visible Church, but the invisible. To every regenerate man true Scripture has a self-evidencing power. It speaks for itself, authenticates itself as worthy by its contents. It is accepted as canonical because it speaks to the soul with a divine might, satisfying the conscience. It has witness borne to it by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer. So there comes about in the course of time a common consent of the children of God, eliminating that which is of lower value, of a merely national or temporary character, and consecrating that which on the whole is best fitted to survive. It is a process of supernatural rather than of natural selection, because made by the Divine Spirit dwelling in the souls of holy men.

And this same process or power which has settled the greater question of the canon is the only one that can really settle the lesser questions of how this or that part of the canon, this or that particular verse, is to be understood. It has ruled out certain books from the Bible, and put others which have been admitted into a distinctly secondary position. It can also be trusted to make a distinction between certain portions of books, and say this or that, though in an accepted canonical book, cannot be the veritable word of God. But this is a different thing, be it noted, from subordinating the word of God to the consciousness of any individual; a very different thing also from making the unilluminated, unsanctified, haughty, independent reason of the natural man a judge and critic of the divine word. We do neither of these things. What we say is that the spirit-guided intelligence of the body of sanctified or Spirit-born persons is the best, highest, most authoritative interpreter of the written word that we can possibly have.

This clears up, we think, in great measure the important relation of the Church and the Word. Each supports and corrects the other. Neither can be independent of or absolutely and in all things superior to the other. The Bible is dependent for its existence and interpretation upon the Church. The Church is dependent for its development and purification upon the Bible. One and the same Divine Spirit is the creator and life of both.

These rules, we believe, are in full accord with the trend of modern biblical study which has been so rapidly advancing in the last fifty years. Out of them may be gathered perhaps a working theory as to the true place of the Bible. The Book should not be made a fetich or a despot to fetter the conscience and bind the reason of those that are conscious of being directly guided by God. There should be no bibliolatry, no blind adherence to traditional views. Room must be made for all *facts*, from whatever source they come. There has been in the past too much deifying of the letter. We are finding out that it is the Spirit which maketh alive.