

have already indicated, at the point where the Christian apologist has successfully completed his work. We would not discuss the doctrine with skeptics, but with those who acknowledge that there is a personal God, and that He has made a supernatural revelation of Himself to mankind, of which the Scriptures are a record historically trustworthy. We handle this question only with men who admit that we have in the Bible a supernatural revelation, recorded by writers of competent information and sterling integrity. This stops short of inspiration. Competent information is not omniscience, and sterling integrity does not exclude all prejudice, bias, and misconception. We cannot, at this stage, appeal to these books as infallible, but as trustworthy and credible writings. Were the appeal made to isolated expressions, or texts found in individual books, the evidence might not be sufficient to establish the inspiration of Scripture. For in writers of the highest character, 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 penmen for their own writings, and the manner in which they recognize it in other sacred books, are so clear, numerous, and emphatic, that we cannot regard the writers as honest, intelligent men unless in very deed the human authors of the Bible wrote under supernatural guidance, then we can construct a rational argument for the inspiration of Scripture from writings which, up to this point, have been viewed as only historically trustworthy.

In this way, even unregenerate men can find a rational basis for the conviction that God has supernaturally guided the sacred writers to put on record what He had supernaturally given them, or prompted them to write. This, without the inward work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, will not beget in them a true and lively faith; but it will, at least, put them in a better position to study with a reverent and teachable spirit the evidences of its divine origin, and to ponder the way of life which it makes known.

Robertson Smith, and those to whom we have chiefly referred in this lecture, would, perhaps, object both to our method and our conclusion. For we have seen that all they mean by inspiration is the power of the Scriptures "to lodge Christianity and its doc-