

the true theory of inspiration must be founded. If we cannot satisfactorily combine them in one system, we can at least hold them as separate articles of belief, assured, that they have a perfect harmony with one another, though the scantiness of the information communicated to us, or the imperfections of our faculties, hinder us from tracing their connexion.

The Bible unequivocally claims to itself what may be called a plenary inspiration; it is "given, by inspiration of God;" it is "the word"—"the oracles"—"the law of God." And yet they who take Dr. Johnson's definition of inspiration, which Mr. King, in the lecture before us, quotes with commendation, and apply it to the whole of the Scriptures, would seem to understand little of the composition of these writings.

According to the definition referred to, inspiration is "the infusion of ideas into the mind, by a superior power." But to what portion of inspired writ does this definition apply? Not certainly to the historical books which constitute the principal part of the Bible; nor with much propriety to those portions of it which embody direct communications from heaven. The writer of the Book of Esther for example, was undoubtedly under a divine influence when he wrote that episode as we may call it, in the history of the Jewish Church; but whether he quoted from the chronicles of the Persian monarchy as some suppose,* or drew his materials from other sources, it can in no proper sense be said that the ideas were infused into his mind in a supernatural way. Luke, the principal historian of the New Testament, speaks of his undertaking the history of our Lord's life and ministry, as though he had not been conscious of any Divine influence either moving him to it, or assisting him in the prosecution of it:—"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order, a declaration of these things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me, also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed." But, while it seemed good to him with the knowledge he had acquired of the Saviour's history, and the regard he entertained for Theophilus to write a memoir primarily designed for this friend; it seemed good also to the Holy Spirit that he should be ena-

bled so to write it, that it should become permanently useful in the Church of God.

Mr. King objects to the distinctions which some writers on this subject have made, in respect to the kind or mode of inspiration under which different portions of the Scriptures are supposed to have been written, as though these distinctions were inconsistent with plenary inspiration. But, while this is undoubtedly to be maintained, we do not see, that there is any inconsistency in holding, that the Divine Spirit has employed the faculties of the penmen of the Bible in different ways; and we think that the structure of the Bible itself, and the tenor of its own declarations, warrant us to recognize distinctions in the way in which the divine agency has been put forth. Luke recording the incidents and events of the Saviour's history from the reports of credible witnesses, was, we admit, under the influence of that Spirit who is eminently the spirit of all truth. But surely the Prophets who poured forth the visions of a remote futurity, and the Apostles who were enabled to unriddle the enigmatical institutions of the ancient dispensation, and to discern the designs and purposes of God in the incarnation of his Son, were in a somewhat different way under the teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Many of the writers of the sacred volume do not once allude to the divine impulse under which they wrote; and we see no inconsistency in the supposition, that they were unconscious of it; but David could say, and other Prophets have in effect, said the same thing—"The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. My tongue is as the pen of a ready writer;"† obedient, he meant, to the prophetic spirit, as the pen is to the hand that grasps it. Peter intimates that the Prophets were so conscious of the heavenly influence under which they prophesied, that they "searched what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand, the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."‡ And the Apostles, themselves, were not less sensible of the divine afflatus. "We have received," said Paul, "not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."§ These and similar passages, as well as the very structure of the separate

* 2 Sam. 23, 2; and Ps. 45, 1.

† 1 Pet. 1, 11.

‡ 1 Cor. 11, 13, 13.

* See Horne's Introduction, vol. iv. p. 69.