

exercised such a Divine superintendence over the written record, as to make it a faithful and adequate chronicle of what was originally revealed. The Bible is the product of Divine and human agency, and from this starting-point all theories of Inspiration take their rise.

One theory widely held in post-reformation times, and still openly avowed and eagerly defended by many, practically ignores the human element altogether. It is maintained that the sacred writers were mechanically passive—mere phonographs of the Holy Ghost—so that every word, syllable and letter of the sixty-six books of the Bible proceeded supernaturally from God. The fact that the style varies according to the personal peculiarity, education and circumstances of the writer in each case, is itself fatal to such a theory, and the explanation that “the Holy Ghost inspired His amanuenses with those expressions which they would have employed had they been left to themselves,” instead of removing the difficulty—proves too much, and practically surrenders the whole contention. This theory of mechanical verbal inspiration regards the Bible as a collection of texts, each and any of which may become a shibboleth or fetish, totally regardless of the fact that the book is a living whole, subject to the great law of growth and progress. Slavery, polygamy and the liquor traffic have been supported in this way; in fact there is no absurdity, no cruelty, no iniquity, no God-dishonoring belief that has ever appeared among men for which chapter and verse has not been cited by men whose intellects were in bondage to this artificial theory. As a reaction from this view many have rushed to the opposite extreme, and maintain that the Bible is inspired only as every other good book is inspired. The word of God they hold, not only came, but it still comes, and will always continue to come, to devout souls. Tennyson, as well as David; Luther as well as Moses; Pericles and John Bright, as well as Isaiah; Calvin and Wesley as well as Paul and Mark, are said to have been inspired.

“Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
Each age, each kindred adds a text to it.”