

great fact of inspiration. The sacred writers were not merely penmen of the Spirit, whose task was the purely mechanical one of setting down the words which were given to them. Often have they been spoken of "as penmen" and as "writing to dictation," but no church, so far as it appears, has ever held what is called the mechanical theory of inspiration; and even those who have used the expressions referred to have, as a rule, meant only to assert strongly the divine origin of the scriptures.

That the individuality of the sacred writers was not laid aside is patent to every intelligent reader of the Bible. Isaiah's language and thought are easily distinguished from those of Jeremiah or Ezekiel. Little penetration is required to discern the difference between the vehement logic of Paul and the contemplative spirituality of John, to see wherein Luke is both like and unlike Paul, or to note in the Epistle of James striking features not found in any other part of the New Testament. Paul was a learned man, and shows a good measure of Greek culture and discipline, in union with the knowledge and mental characteristics of the educated Jew. With one exception, the New Testament writers are Jews, and Jewish thought and idiom appear as certainly in them as in the prophets, historians, and poets of the Old Testament. You will find in both the Old Testament and the New compositions of the highest literary excellence, and you have others which may, without irreverence, be called homely, and even rude.

But more. Not in style and mental qualities only, but in the parts and aspects of truth which they love to present and enforce, the writers of scripture may be distinguished from one another. The perfect orb of heavenly truth is seen more clearly in one phase by one writer, in another phase by another writer. Correct interpretation shows that Jesus does not contradict Paul, but is rather the complement of Paul; yet each has his own way of looking at truth, his own special aim in the presentation of it, and each in his writing enables you to see not merely his intellectual, but his moral and spiritual habitudes and tendencies.

When God selects men as the organs of His Spirit, He seems often to have respect to their aptitudes, natural and gracious. Inspiration is bestowed in the line of these aptitudes. The moral and intellectual constitution and history of one qualify him to portray vividly the evil and danger of sin; the Spirit uses him