

But we carefully examine the claim, and establish their right to be heard and obeyed on other grounds. This being so, it is an unpardonable impertinence for any one to demand of me that I shall govern my conduct according to his inward impressions, until he has established his right to be regarded as an oracle from heaven by other than his own naked testimony. I should be sorry to be responsible for such a theory of divine guidance.

A distinction ought, perhaps, to be noted here between what may be termed the ordinary and extraordinary, the general and the special, or the rule and the exception. I have been endeavoring to expound the rule, but at the same time I must recognize the exceptions. In all departments of God's doings we trace this principle. *E.g.*, in the material universe results are usually produced by the slow and gradual operations of natural law, though it is generally conceded that similar results must, at some time, have been produced by the immediate creative energy of Jehovah. The former is the ordinary mode, the latter the extraordinary. In the history of His dealings with mankind effects have usually been produced by the operation of natural causes, yet all Christians recognize the existence of miracles. The former is the ordinary, the latter the extraordinary. In the communication of His will to mankind, what is called "the light of nature" may be regarded as the ordinary, inspiration or *special revelation* the extraordinary. So, I humbly think, in the matter of guidance God has His ordinary methods, such as I have already enumerated, and besides these, in case of extraordinary interest, extremity, or importance, He adopts extraordinary, or special methods. We see this illustrated in the case of sending Philip to join the Ethiopian's chariot; in sending Peter to the house of Cornelius; in sending Paul to Macedonia, and in many similar cases. But such cases, if they became the rule would cease to be the exceptions. It need not be denied, therefore, that in special emergencies God makes special impressions on men's minds, leading them to act in a certain way for the accomplishment of His special purposes, yet it will, doubtless, be perfectly safe to deny that He ever has made or ever will make this the common or ordinary mode of procedure, especially with reference to the trivial affairs of life. But I cannot enlarge on this point.