

their definition, or trace, to any considerable degree, the necessary results which follow from it.

Like all credidists, their tendency is to dwell upon those legitimate results which harmonize with their wishes and steadily ignore all else. Thus, for example, they will naturally seize upon the Lord's prayer, as given by Matthew, and regard it with the reverence which such a belief naturally throws around it, and treat very lightly the fact that Luke, who also, according to their creed, wrote the same prayer, and under the same conditions of verbal inspiration, yet gave a different composition.

Now, to a person not hampered by implicit faith in the dogma of verbal inspiration, the difficulties brought out by this, but one of a thousand fatal objections, are absolutely conclusive against the dogma; for both evangelists profess to be reporting the words of Christ, and, according to this creed, wrote them down as dictated, word for word, by the Holy Ghost, and yet the result is not the same in both cases. If it is asserted that both were originally identical, but were not so preserved, then it may well be asked, Of what benefit is verbal inspiration if there was no power in earth or heaven which could secure the perpetuation of the words as they were given?

Then, also, this dogma accepted fully would make every command or example found in the New Testament absolutely binding upon all, whilst outside these writings there could be nothing of equal authority. Hence it would follow that all its teachings about celibacy, slavery, the Sabbath, the dress and deportment of women are, without the slightest modification, binding on the consciences of every one who has access to the New Testament. But not one of all those who profess to accept the doctrine of verbal inspiration stands by this necessary outcome of his dogma, therefore, we infer that to all, without exception, it is simply a creed accepted without due consideration, and only those parts of it which seem to be helpful for present use are adopted with even a show of faith in them.

But a much greater number accept, in

a general way, as a creed, the following, viz.: that the New Testament writers, whatever might have been their lack of inspiration during other portions of their lives, when they were writing the New Testament were directly under the afflatus of the Holy Ghost and were thus ordained by God as a special class of persons to whom alone it was given to write, with the distinct authority of the Godhead, what was to be accepted as the only, all-sufficient rule of faith for the Christian world, down to the close of time.

It will be generally admitted that thus stated we have the general creed of Christendom concerning this great subject. And further, we remark, that this creed is so absolutely accepted that not one in a thousand even suspects or cares to know upon what basis this tremendously important dogma rests. It is tacitly regarded by Protestants to be as much of the essence of heresy to even inquire concerning it as for Catholics to ask questions concerning the proofs of the infallibility of the Pope.

Hence the inquirer after the truth concerning this thing is not met with argument and plain reference to well-established facts, but the attempt is rather made to bluff him off with statements concerning the awful consequences which would follow if this dogma were not accepted.

And yet this ponderous dogma rests entirely upon a tradition—a tradition which has not even the mystery of an unknown birth to bolster up its mighty proportions, for it existed not in the first century of the Christian era, and hence its origin, as to time, can be located without having to pierce in imagination the prehistoric ages.

Christ, the Alpha and Omega of Christianity, gave not the slightest intimation that such a coterie of infallible teachers should arise, and no personal claim is put forth by the writers themselves looking to such a distinction or pre-eminence, whilst there is not a shred of proof that the first generations of Christians, to whom their writings were directed, ever regarded them in the light of this dogma, but there is much to show quite the contrary.