

the gift. We do not even know that there was anything peculiar. The nature and conditions of inspiration are hidden from our inspection, and, while scripture declares the fact of inspiration and attests its importance, it furnishes little information regarding its essence or methods. Philosophical curiosity might be gratified by knowledge of the mystery involved, but reverent piety and confidence in the truth and excellence of scripture would not be increased.

Definitions of inspiration, more or less elaborate, have been offered, and some of them are doubtless correct so far as they go. "Inspiration," says a recent eminent theologian, "was an influence of the Holy Spirit on the minds of certain select men, which rendered them the organs of God for the infallible communication of His mind and will" (Dr. C. Hodge). Here is another well-known attempt at definition: "Inspiration is such a degree of divine assistance, influence, or guidance as enabled the authors of scripture to communicate religious knowledge to others, without error or mistake, whether the subject of such communications were things immediately revealed to those who declared them, or things with which they were before acquainted" (H. Horne). Here is a third definition: "Inspiration is an influence of the Holy Spirit upon the understandings, imaginations, memories, and other mental powers of the sacred writers, by which they were qualified to communicate to the world the knowledge of the will of God" (Dick).

The church symbols refrain from definition, though they all clearly recognize the divine character of scripture. The Confession of Faith says that "the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek are immediately inspired of God"; it calls the scriptures the "Word of God," and attributes to them "entire perfection," "infallible truth," and "divine authority." And so, in all branches of the Christian church, the Bible has been accepted as the inspired Word of God.

(1) The scriptures were written by the hand of man; the only exception, so far as we know, being the Ten Commandments, which were graven by the finger of God on tables of stone. In the New Testament we have, at least, eight different writers; in the Old Testament probably more than thirty. Each of these has his own style of writing, and his own mental characteristics; which, so far as we know, were not changed nor repressed by the