

prophets we are then told that the Spirit of Christ was in them, and He was their theme. They are further represented as searching into the substance of their own message. Nor do they merely foretell some facts or circumstances, but the characteristics of a dispensation yet future, so that hundreds of years after their time the Gospel might be studied by us in their pages. How largely, for example, is the great and singular doctrine of the Atonement enforced by us from the writings of David or of Isaiah! This Gospel the prophets did not and could not understand. They, however, searched into it. A process most reasonable, if it were the message of another; most absurd, if they were themselves its proper authors.

St. Peter not only taught others that Old Testament writers were inspired, but himself acted upon a belief in their inspiration, as is evident by the way in which he quotes them or alludes to their writings. No doubt the evidence for his second Epistle is weaker than for any other New Testament book. But after all this is only what is to be expected if the authenticity and genuineness of these documents be brought to a test, and not merely accepted upon authority. Each treatise or letter is thrown into the crucible. Who quotes it? How is it written? Does it betray itself? The answer to the first two questions will, of course, vary for each of the twenty-seven books. But the proof which is weakest may be strong enough.

We believe <sup>2</sup> Peter to be the writing of the Apostle, but even if we did not, it would still be good evidence of an *ordinary* kind for our purpose—the investigation into the nature of the prophetic gift. The writer must, in any case, be supposed to reflect the opinions of a Jew of the first century.

In this second Epistle, then, St. Peter refers to the culminating marvel of the Transfiguration, how the Father had in spoken words testified to His Son. "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Apostle regarded this utterance as a ratification of prophecy. The evidential force of the miracle was of the highest kind, and the testimony to our Lord peculiarly direct and distinct. True, those to whom he wrote had, indeed, no such wonderful experience, but