

was not renewed, The apostles needed the spirit of inspiration to impart to them the necessary qualification for their work. Their circumstances were such that they could not acquire, by the ordinary means of intellectual training, the knowledge which was actually called for in order to carry their commission into effect. Hence the Holy Spirit gave them instruction, in mere matters of science; communicated new truths to their minds; taught them to understand and speak languages which they had never learned, and gave them a mental discrimination in wielding and applying the truth, which, in their situation, they could have acquired in no other way. The second great object of inspiration was to furnish a written revelation which should contain all the spiritual truth necessary for the instruction and salvation of men; and which should constitute, to the end of the world, the last appeal in all matters pertaining to religion.

If these are the legitimate objects of inspiration, then the different effects of apostolic and modern preaching are not to be accounted for on this principle. The apostles were inspired because they could, in no other way, become personally qualified for preaching the gospel; neither could they have contributed their portion in filling up the canon of Scripture. But the ministers of the gospel now, with the providential facilities which they enjoy of becoming qualified for their work, and with the Bible, a permanent revelation in their hands, stand at least, in these respects, on a summit level with the apostles. Should any think, that this is saying too much, I would ask, why then are not the present race of preachers inspired of God? If such a gift is essential to great success in announcing and enforcing the message of eternal life, then we might reasonably infer, that it would have been made a perpetual qualification for the ministry. But this is not all. What valuable purpose could now be answered by the gift of inspiration? If ministers were to be inspired to teach the languages, as were the apostles at the day of Pentecost, it would cherish mental indolence; if to communicate the same truths which are embodied in the scriptures, this would supercede a written revelation; if to reveal new truths, on the subject of religion, this would bring home the charge of imperfection against the Bible; if to render revealed facts and doctrines more vivid and powerful in their appeals to the heart, this, it should be remembered, is the office of the Holy Ghost, in the ordinary work of conviction and sanctification, and not in the gift of inspiration. It would seem, then, that the spirit of inspiration is not now required; and although this qualification was necessary for the apostles, yet their peculiar success is not to be