

In attending to this subject one general remark may be made in the outset, viz. : that a peculiar characteristic of false teachers in the present day, is to assume the language and phrases of orthodoxy. There is no honest assault upon the truth in our times. All the operations of the enemy are carried on by sapping and mining. So that it is now impossible to judge merely by the language employed whether a preacher or writer be orthodox or not. We will have occasion to shew this more abundantly in the sequel. We only remark at present, that it shows the insidious nature of the opposition we are called to encounter, the dishonesty of which well merits the denunciation of God's word. "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter."

I. With this general preliminary observation, I would remark, in the first place, that we are especially called in the present day to maintain the *inspiration of the scriptures and the authority of the whole word of God.*

Formerly infidelity attempted to prove the Bible a forgery, and the claim of inspiration for its authors an imposition upon human credulity. Now it has entirely changed its tactics. It now professes not only to believe in inspiration, but to maintain it in its fullest sense. But it is only such an inspiration for the writers of the books of scripture, as is possessed by men of genius in every age. According to the advocates of this system, Paul was inspired but so was Shakespeare—Isaiah was inspired and so was Milton, —John the apostle of love was divinely inspired and so was Byron, the apostle of misanthropy. This view is openly advocated by the *Westminster Review*, a publication, conducted with eminent ability and extensively circulated among ourselves. It is the view of a large class of philosophical writers and of the distinguished Litterateurs of the day. It is a favourite idea of the Rationalists of Germany, and, worse than all this, it has lately been openly avowed by clergymen of the Church of England, as Maurice, Jowett and McNaught, if not also by some leading members of the English Dissenters.*

This is not a difference about the theory of inspiration such as there has been among the Orthodox. It is in reality a denial of inspiration altogether. It is degrading the apostles and prophets to the level of mere human teachers, and making their works of no binding authority upon the consciences of men. All that we feel it necessary to do is to point out the dishonesty of this mode of speech. The advocates of this theory know that by the Bible being inspired we mean that it is a supernatural and infallible expression of the will of God, while they mean in using the same language that its various portions are the natural efforts of the human mind. Surely the very statement of this view conveys its own refutation. The inspiration for which they contend is no inspiration at all, and their whole theory is but an attempt to conciliate prejudice by admitting an inspiration.

* That we may not seem to misrepresent the views of such we will give the words of Mr McNaught himself.

"Referring Milton's *Paradise Lost* or Bacon's *Novum organon* to the man who wrote each, we describe each of these books as a book of genius; but the far truer and grander mode of speaking would be to refer the creative power of thinking to him who alone made Milton or Bacon to differ from ordinary writers, and thus to call their books works of the spirit of God written by divine inspiration. This seems to be *the Bible's own teaching*, viz. : that every thing good in any book, person or thing, is inspired, and that the value of any inspired book must be decided by the extent of its inspiration, and the importance of the truth which it well or inspiredly teaches. Milton, and Shakespeare, and Bacon, and Canticles, and the Apocalypse, and the Sermon on the Mount, and the eighth chapter of Romans are in our view inspired."