

"Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." In both cases the reference was almost beyond a doubt to the Old Testament writings. Much is to be said in favor of the divine authority of the four Gospels, when they are regarded as a part of a completed volume—the Divine Library, as Jerome calls it. The New Testament, taken as a whole, has a strong argument in its favor for a reverent faith, taught to believe that the Spirit of God operated in the Church, guiding it in the matter of the selection of the sacred Canon. A mosaic may bear upon its face the marks of a master's skill, which a single stone might not be regarded as possessing. The presence of "a presiding mind which planned the whole structure" is felt so powerfully that the Church has always said, "The Spirit of the Lord is here." The Council of Trent (iii. 2), no less emphatically than the Protestant Confessions, declares "God to be the author" of the Scripture.

The ground upon which a Christian faith bases its belief in the inspiration of the Evangelists is the nature and everlasting purport of their message. The purpose of God to redeem the world by Jesus Christ would seem to imply a record with infallible marks of divine authority. It is antecedently probable that the Holy Spirit would possess human agents in some extraordinary degree, so that they might become the unmistakable medium through which we should have the vision of God and His truth. John was in the spirit on the Lord's Day. Paul saw things it was not lawful for him to utter. On the day of Pentecost men spake with other tongues. And when we enter into the inner parts of the Temple of the Gospels, and gaze upon the outgoing glory of Christ and listen to the exalted sayings, we can only exclaim that there is something more than human wisdom there. These writings are from above, not from beneath. Their paternity is not of man. The same line of argument, reaching into the very essence of the thing, suggests itself as the one our Lord used when He placed before the Pharisees the alternative concerning the origin of His works, which they acknowledged to be *extra-human*, in such a way that they could not, without evident absurdity, ascribe them to any other than God, the source of good, and not to Beelzebub, the prince of evil.

No *à priori* argument—no argument from antecedent probability for the inspiration of the Gospel records—can be regarded as final and binding. Such argument, at best, can only be regarded as confirmatory. If there is, then, no claim by the Gospel writers to inspiration, and no statement otherwise in the New Testament which can be with certainty regarded as bearing upon it, the Church is left to the contents themselves and their immediate influence upon the soul, and to the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, the *testimonium Sancti Spiritus*. Upon this final and only binding test of inspiration, the Westminster Confession, in agreement with the other Creeds of Protestantism, has