

that the Bible is divine and human, pervaded by the influence of the Divine Spirit as no other volume or volumes, yet human literature, composed and handed down under the conditions of ordinary literature. The theory of inspiration concerns the precise relation between these, the character and degree of influence exercised by the Divine Spirit over the minds of human writers. We must not begin with that—we cannot. We cannot if we would, and we should not, if we could. The question whether the Bible is or contains the Word of God; whether inspiration be verbal, plenary, dynamic, may be very important: though, so far as I have watched such controversies, they seem too often to degenerate into mere strifes of words.

Far better begin with that which gives to this collection of books its unity, its character, its vitality, its authority, viz.: the fact that it contains the records of the revelation of the Living God—a series of revelations rather, culminating in the one consummate manifestation of God the Father in His Son Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. A long and multifarious record is given us in these books unfolding God's nature, His dealings with man, all within certain limits and for certain ends, but mainly for man's practical guidance and personal salvation; this revelation claiming to be itself supernatural, unique, complete, and all-sufficient for those purposes for which it was given. Inspiration is the name given to the special influence exercised by the Spirit of God in the preparation of that record, and it is clear that it is possible to adopt:

1. Too low a view of that influence, not sufficiently recognizing the sacredness of the substance.
2. Too high a view, which in its anxiety to preserve the sacredness propounds an untenable doctrine that defeats its own end.

But if we want to get at a satisfactory doctrine, we must not begin with that subject or at that end. It is not well to say "Inspiration *must* imply this or that." Butler has shown how dangerous it is to argue thus, how prone man is to degrade the divine by endeavoring to exalt it according to his own ideas. We must argue not deductively and *à priori*, but *à*