

Bible Authorship and Fraternal Fellowship

**By J.J. Andrew and Robert Roberts
1885-1886**

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Letter to the Editor 1

BY BRO. J. J. ANDREW, OF LONDON.

London, Oct. 26, 1885.

DEAR BRO. ROBERTS,—About Midsummer last year, when speaking one Sunday morning on the truth as an unerring test of human nature, the writer pointed out that all the children of God must be tested either individually or collectively, or both, in the course of their probation. The brethren were therefore exhorted to thoroughly ground themselves in the Scriptures that they might be able to stand against any wind of false doctrine that might blow across their path. Little did he think that such a breeze was so near. And yet within four months, there appeared a cloud no larger than a man's hand which has since covered the whole ecclesial sky.

When the article entitled "Theories of Inspiration" was published, it did not appear to contain the elements of a test for the brotherhood. There was such an utter absence of evidence that it was difficult to imagine its finding much favour among those who had accepted the Bible as their sole guide and authority. But the events of the past twelve months have ruthlessly cut down this misplaced confidence.

It is well to inquire how this has been effected. Judging from those with whom I come in contact, there is reason for concluding that if the article in question had been unnoticed, it would have proved a dead letter. On the contrary, you found it extolled in some quarters, and therefore antagonised it. That it was a legitimate object of attack should be conceded by all who have not endorsed its conclusions. This being granted, the question arises as to whether the mode of attack was a wise one. You already know my mind on this aspect. From more than one point of view, I should not hesitate to describe it as a grave mistake. Indeed it would not be too much to say that the action of Brother Shuttleworth and yourself in the first onslaught, if applied to any organisation not based on the truth, would be enough to ruin it. You created for the opposite side a sympathy in some quarters where previously there was no such link of connection, and you alienated many who were at one with you in the main. Moreover, the great prominence given to the subject had the effect of spreading the disease which your drastic measures were intended to cure.

Your motives for this course of conduct I have never questioned, though it is not surprising that some have done so; I have, however, impugned your judgment, and I cannot think that your subsequent reflections would admit of a complete defence.

Those who know you should have no difficulty in accounting for that want of judgment. On the positive side, they should place an exuberant zeal for the truth, a superabundant energy and an impulsive temperament; and on the negative

side, a want of caution and self-control, combined with a defective intuition of human character. Zeal in a right cause is good; zeal combined with discretion is better; but they are seldom equally mated. Either zeal overshadows discretion, or discretion takes the life out of zeal, and of the two evils, it is not difficult to say which is to be preferred.

Recognising that in the Providence of God, all the Members of the One Body have their allotted places, reflective minds will be inclined to ask why its Head has placed in your position one who possesses such a singular combination of strength and weakness. They will have no difficulty in explaining the presence of the strength; there was a work to do on God's behalf, and it required a vigorous mind to do it. But why the weaknesses? Why did not God select some one in whom they were less marked? The most probable answer would assume a two-fold phase; first, in reference to yourself, and 2nd in reference to others. Your comparative isolation from the troubles of a business career relieves you of many of the worries and frictions experienced by those of us who are engaged in the various avocations of commercial life. [There are more business troubles than you know of, dear brother.—ED.] We all need refining, and God provides a crucible adapted for our several needs. The materials of which your crucible is formed are almost wholly confined to the circle of the truth's operations. Oftentimes those materials consist of fleshly manifestations against righteous conduct; but at other times they may be traced to ill-advised words or actions of your own. The course pursued in regard to the inspiration question is an illustration, and I have an impression that you already recognise this to have been the cause of some of the labour and suffering you have endured in connection with it. I am not the only one who indulges in the hope that this bitter experience may be a valuable lesson for future guidance.³ In regard to others, your defects help to test their fidelity to the truth and to one who upholds it in its integrity. Those who give undue prominence to subordinate matters, or neglect the Scriptural injunction to cover their brethren's imperfections with love, are very apt to commit greater mistakes than are the subject of their own condemnation. "First cast out the

³ We bow to this rebuke on the principle of Psa. 141:5. At the same time, we are sure brother Andrew will not deny us the hope of a more lenient verdict at the Lord's hands than his sentences seem to imply. The actions in question depend for their character on the subjective point of view, which can only be fully known to the Lord and to the person performing them. In the possession of this knowledge, while fully admitting our deficiencies, we have been unable, on repeated and anxious reviews of our course on inspiration, to feel that, in all the circumstances (some of which were not visible to the spectator) we could have acted very differently from what we did. We say this, without finding fault with the judgment of those who think otherwise. They can only judge of what is before them. We wait the Lord's judgment in which we are sure demurring brethren will coincide whatever it is. If he condemn us, we are undone, unless he forgive, which we pray. If he approve, then the unfavourable judgment of those who condemn will doubtless be forgiven as an honest mistake inseparable from the defective conditions of the present state of existence.—ED.

beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye (Matt. 7:5) is a divine command which needs greater attention than it receives. No further evidence is required than that which is furnished by the present conflict. Who have the most right to reprove you for any mistakes you have recently made? They who are at one with you as to the authorship of the Bible; and for this reason,—that your course of action has increased the difficulty of co-operating with you. But who are the loudest in their complaints? They who have made a greater mistake than any which can be charged against you. You have compromised no vital principle of divine revelation; but they have. Let them first cast out this “beam,” and then I doubt not you will listen to them in reference to your own “mote.”

There appear to be few who realise the difficulties of the position which you fill. An editorial chair—especially in connection with the truth's operations—is far from being cushioned with velvet, Whoever fills it works in a glass hive; and all that he does, or omits to do, is necessarily subject to a great amount of criticism. He is sure to make mistakes of some kind, either in major or minor matters. The fallibility of human nature precludes perfection, and the evil in human nature would prevent even an angel from heaven giving universal satisfaction. Others who have essayed the task have no doubt realised the truth of these words. In some cases, their flagrant mistakes, if self-realised, would cause them henceforth to hide their heads in shame.

Not only have your opponents blundered in reference to a vital matter, but most of those who have committed themselves to print have adopted the same style of writing or even a worse than that for which you are condemned. And those from whom you have lately separated yourself in your own town have committed mistakes quite as great—to use no stronger term—as those with which they charge you. To agree with a resolution which did not correctly express their belief, and then to violate its spirit, is conduct for which there can be no adequate defence.

Having animadverted on the actions of those who have played a leading part in the present conflict, I should like now to invite attention to the lessons which they teach. It may sound strange to some, but it is nevertheless true, that the world is governed by mistakes, or to speak more accurately, that God makes use of man's mistakes to carry out His purposes. A little reflection will show that it must be so. If it were not for the short-sightedness, miscalculation, or ill-balanced judgment on the part of one or more minds, how could the political chessmen be often thwarted in their schemes, or how could they be made to attain an end different from that which they arrived at? If all men were infallible, they would never make mistakes; they would never act in opposition to each other, and never in antagonism to God.

The latest and most notable illustration in the political world is the action of the Liberal Cabinet in reference to Egypt. It aimed at getting rid of this national

encumbrance, but through its blunders, Britain and Egypt became more closely allied than ever. And on whose shoulders rested the chief blame of the Franco-German War? Napoleon the Third's. Through an over-weening confidence he rushed into a war for which the military resources of the nation were utterly unprepared, in the hope of regaining his waning authority over his subjects. Further illustrations might be adduced, if needful, *ad infinitum*.

We acknowledge that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men." Shall we doubt or deny that He ruleth also in His own household? Should we not rather contend that His rulership of His sons is even more absolute than His rulership of the children of men? The apostolic statement, "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8:28), cannot be affirmed of individuals without being true also of the community which contains them. God is the creator of the one body, and Jesus Christ is its head. This relationship alone should suffice to show that its development is under divine guidance and control. The intimate connection in the natural world between the head and the body finds its parallel in the spiritual; nothing can affect the body of Christ without its head knowing and feeling it.

These truths suggest a question: can there be such a conflict as that of the last twelve months without a cause and an object known to its Head? To answer this question in the affirmative requires, I must confess, more credulity than I am possessed of. I trust that there are many more like-minded.

Why do I call attention to this phase of the question? That those who are not yet in the Laodicean state described in Revelations 3:17, may turn their eyes from the human to the divine side of the present ecclesial tribulation. And if they are not in need of the "eyesalve" of the Spirit, I have little doubt that they will be able to see the hand of God therein. No inspiration is needed to see this; it is but necessary to apply inspired statements to the facts before us. Those who have not yet taken up the right attitude will find that their perception of this aspect will help them; and those who have already done so will find in it comfort and strength.

Does this conclusion condone in any way the actions of one and another deserving of condemnation? Not at all. If you were guilty of all that your opponents charge you with—or even more—and if they were as bad as they allege you to be, I should still contend that God had thrown this apple of discord into our midst. The actions which have brought it about are not the result of collusion, but of antagonism. As far as my observation goes, no one concerned in the present complication sought to produce any of the results now witnessed.

By a chain of unpremeditated events, the whole brotherhood is being tested. Two large ecclesias having come into variance on a vital point, and occupying different platforms in the same town, it becomes impossible for ecclesias elsewhere to ignore the question. Both cannot be fellowshiped, and to remain

neutral is equivalent to taking the wrong side. "He that is not with me is against me," said Christ (Matt. 12:30). It is well for each member of the brotherhood to enquire what is the precise nature of the test now applied? On the conclusions arrived at, and the consequent action, may depend issues of the most momentous character to everyone.

About twenty years ago, the brethren were tested as to their individual relationship to the Judgment Seat of Christ; twelve years ago, they were tested in reference to the nature and sacrifice of Christ; at the present time, we are being tested concerning the authorship of the Bible and the character of God. Every item of revealed truth has, in present and past generations, been the subject of attack and defence, and now the battle-ground is the scope and character of revelation itself. Practically speaking, the whole book is at stake, and this fact, as one brother has remarked, may indicate that it is the last theological conflict of the Church Militant. When reviewed in connection with the signs of the times, this suggestion carries with it considerable force. The symbolic Euphrates is rapidly drying up, and the whole sea of nations is in a state of agitation. Both home and foreign polities lend countenance to the thought that England's destinies may, for some time to come, be wielded, under God's guidance, by a Conservative Government; but whether Liberals or Conservatives are in office, God's plans will be furthered. Never has it been more necessary to give heed to the warning, "Behold I come as a thief; Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15).

The present age is one in which everything hitherto accepted is disputed or denied. In scientific matters, the spirit of analysis has, in some directions, been productive of good results; and to a still more limited extent, the same may be said of the spirit of inquiry in matters religious. But, on the other hand, that negative criticism which is so often fascinated by improbabilities, has led to a wide-spread scepticism in divine things. To preserve the body of Christ from the contaminating influence of this deadly poison, or to check any existing tendency to it, is obviously a matter of paramount importance. And it is difficult to conceive of any method more effectual than an agitation respecting the authorship of the Bible. The contention for a fallible authorship of some parts is the germ of a spiritual disease, which, if not stopped, would gradually eat out all vitality. The effort to eliminate this disease-germ has produced in the One Body a violent fever which must apparently pass through its various stages before convalescence can be experienced. It is comforting to know that its treatment is under the direction of the only Infallible Physician, and hence the certainty that it will issue from the struggle, if of smaller dimensions, more healthy in constitution.

Some fifteen or more years ago, a brother older in years and older in the one faith than myself, remarked in conversation that something would no doubt occur a short time before the Lord's appearing to stop the progress of the Truth, that those who were the last to embrace it might have an opportunity of manifesting themselves. That observation made a deep impression which has never been

effaced, and I cannot refrain from thinking of it in connection with the circumstances in which are now placed. No religious controversy could be much more difficult; none could cover a wider field; and when to this is added the question of fellowship, it would seem that we have entered upon a warfare of considerable duration, which cannot but check numerical increase. In some respects this is not to be regretted. The building up of the body needs more attention than has been given to it of late years, and wise will be those members who, having discharged their duty to God in the present crisis, devote their attention to filling their minds with His word in all its wisdom and spiritual understanding.

The Scriptures furnish several illustrations of a temporary disagreement succeeded by reconciliation, such as Joseph and his brethren, Paul and Peter, and Paul and Mark. I would fain hope that the inspiration controversy might add another to the list. The first requirement is obviously a recognition of the vital principles at stake, followed by a right attitude in relation to them; and second, an adequate combination of confession and forgiveness on all sides in reference to real or imaginary wrongs. Such a result would be a moral victory worthy of any sacrifice of feeling; it would exhibit the power of the truth in a more signal manner than the present generation of believers has yet witnessed. A Peter-like repentance would impart new zeal in the service of God, and an acknowledgment of His mighty hand in the present distress would be conducive to that humility which is a necessary preparation for exaltation in the day of glory. A repetition on a large scale of the tearful, but joyful, fraternal meeting in the palace of a Pharaoh nearly four thousand years ago—the perusal of which even now moistens the eyes of old and young—would be worthy of the pen of an inspired historian of the future age. Such a meeting will shortly take place in Jerusalem between Christ and his brethren after the flesh; would that it were to cast its shadow at this time on Christ's brethren after the spirit. Is it impossible?

Having given expression to these reflections on the circumstances attending this controversy, I now propose to deal with the subject itself, and, for this purpose, I will take as the basis, a series of propositions formulated by some of us in London, who have jointly considered the subject.

1. *That Divine Inspiration involves infallibility in what is spoken or written under its influence—so controlling the speaker or writer as to exclude error.*

One of the attributes of the Deity is infallibility, which is defined as the “quality of being incapable of error or mistake; entire exemption from liability to error.” Whatever therefore comes from Him must be infallible, or free from error. This is one of those self-evident truths which needs no demonstration. The principle on which it is based is recognised by mankind in reference to the diversified members of the human family. When the character of a man is known it is usual to conclude that whatever comes from him will be in harmony therewith; if cautious and truthful, anything he may write will possess these qualities. God

teaches men to judge each other's actions by this rule:—"The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright" (Prov. 15:2); "The words of the pure are pleasant words" (Prov. 15:26); "The tongue of the just is as choice silver" (Prov. 10:20); "The mouth of fools poureth out foolishness" (Prov. 15:3). And do not these illustrations by parity of reasoning invite human nature to judge of its Creator and His workmanship on the same principle? A rejector of the Bible shuts himself out of the only source from which a complete knowledge can be obtained. But the present contention does not go this length; and therefore scriptural quotations not in dispute may be adduced as evidence.

"Ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the rock, HIS WORK IS PERFECT." (Deut. 32:3-4). Perfect in great things, perfect in small, perfect in outline, perfect in detail, perfect in creation, perfect in preservation, perfect in miracle, perfect in providence, perfect in nature, perfect in revelation, perfect in inspiration, in all its "divers manners." In no part of the divine workmanship is there imperfection; it may appear so to fallible mortals, but the defeat is in the onlookers not in the worker.

The inspired word is not silent in reference to its own character:—"As for God, *His way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried*" (or refined, marg.) (Psa. 18:30); "*the words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times*" (Psa. 12:6); "*every word of God is pure*" (Prov. 30:5). No other literary production can be so described; all of human origin are more or less impure. The word of God bears to them a similar relationship to that existing between precious stones and the commoner products of the earth. Nay more; the inspired Psalmist says, "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name" (Psa. 138:2). Could anything occupy a higher position in the estimation of Jehovah? Consider for a moment what it involves. The name of the Lord is "holy and reverend" (Ps. 3:9); it dwelt in the Tabernacle of Israel (Deut. 12:5); in a national sense it was bestowed upon the Twelve Tribes (Num. 6:27); in a spiritual sense it is the "strong tower" by which the righteous are saved (Prov. 18:10); it has been deposited in an angel (Exod. 23:21); and it has, at two stages, been given to Jesus Christ. Have not all these been highly exalted by God? And yet His word occupies a higher place. Why? Because it was before all these; it was indeed the origin of them.

The sacredness of the Israelitish Tabernacle is familiar to us all. The Ark, which was its central emblem, if treated with profanity, brought plagues (1 Sam. 5:8, 9), or death (2 Sam. 6:7). The word of God is even more sacred. Of Israel it is said, "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye" (Zech. 2:8); and we know the punishment which that involves. The word of God is more tender than Israel. The doctrine concerning Christ is supremely important. The word of God occupies a higher position.

Jehovah is "a jealous God" (Exod. 20:5), and all that pertains to Him is the subject of His watchfulness. His action towards those who have maltreated the

Ark of the Covenant, the nation of Israel, and the person or character of Jesus Christ is sufficient evidence of the fearful danger of tampering in the slightest way with His inspired word. "Add thou not unto His words," says the man of wisdom, "lest He reprove thee and thou be found a liar" (Rev. 30:6). To take from His words is obviously attended with as great danger. of the last book of the Bible—the Apocalypse—it is expressly stated that "if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life" (Rev. 22:29). That which is true of one part of the Word that has been magnified above Jehovah's name, is necessarily true of every other part. One illustration of this is to be found in the attitude of Edom towards Israel. Addressing the Edomites as "Mount Seir" the prophet Ezekiel writes, "Because thou hast said, these two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it; whereas the Lord was there, therefore as I live saith the Lord God I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy, which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them; and I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee." (Ezeh. 35:10–11). Edom's sin consisted in claiming Israel's territory as its own, and for this sin "Mount Seir" was made desolate. The claim set up by Edom was practically a denial of God's word, and therefore it is denominated blasphemy:—"I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying they are laid desolate, they are given us to consume. Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me" (5:12–13).

There are many ways in which the Word of God can be virtually denied. The Apostacy is guilty of it, in teaching false doctrines, and for this reason it is described as full of "names of blasphemy." It grafts human ideas on the Tree of Wisdom, and thus prevents the development of the blossoms and fruits of the Spirit. This evil has its degrees, but the principle is the same throughout; the authority of the Word of God is nominally recognised, but things are affirmed which practically make it of non-effect. It is difficult to say whether this evil principle is less or more God-dishonouring than that which rejects a portion of His Word, by attributing to it a purely human authorship; the result when logically worked out is virtually the same. But there can be no such difficulty about the affirmation that Divine inspiration admits of fallibility; it is nothing short of blasphemy. The writer of "Theories of Inspiration," doubtless recognised this, and hence his statement that inspiration and "error of any kind" are "mutually exclusive terms."

The fact of the inspired word having come to us through a human channel is an obstacle with some to the recognition of its absolute infallibility. They think that an imperfect channel admits of an imperfect result. But why should it? The thought cannot for one moment be entertained that the channel of communication is stronger than its source. Then wherein lies the cause of the alleged imperfection? It can only be attributed to a deficient exercise of divine power. But why should there be any such deficiency? It must, on such a supposition, be through an imperfect manifestation of will or wisdom. Are the

believers of a fallible inspiration prepared to affirm that it is either? If not, on what ground do they doubt or deny the infallibility of divine inspiration? Is it for want of proof? What is proof? When the sky is covered with clouds at noonday, what proof is needed that the light comes from the sun? The clouds lessen the sun's brilliancy, but they do not destroy its rays. So also with the light of divine revelation. Man is not adapted for hearing the full strength of God's voice; an illustration was given at Mount Sinai, but the people begged that it should not be repeated. "They said unto Moses, speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us lest we die" (Exod. 20:19). For this reason God has generally spoken through a medium adapted to the weakness of man. This method does not impair the character of the communication, it diminishes the awful intensity, but it increases the effectiveness of the revelation for instructing beings of a limited capacity. God is perfect in all His ways.

There is a human element in the Bible only as there was a human element in Jesus Christ before crucifixion, in each case it is subordinate to the divine. This combination gives to both that charm which has fascinated every shade of mentality in the various ages of the world. At the same time, the depravity and imperfection of man have grossly perverted it. The human element has either been ignored or unduly exalted, resulting in a corresponding misplacement of the divine. Hence the belief concerning Jesus Christ consists of a graduated series of doctrines, commencing with a perfect God and ending with a mere man.

The question of Inspiration, though not giving rise to such diversity of view, has not been free from conflicting conclusions. Their varied shades or degrees it is not now necessary to discuss. The fundamental feature requiring recognition is, that the human element is so controlled by the divine as to preserve it from error. Any definition which does not embody this as a vital principle is a slander on the Most High. Better never to have been born than to insult the all-wise and all-knowing Creator by countenancing the thought that His inspired communications are fallible.

2.—That the recording under Divine Inspiration of uninspired utterances, does not, unless otherwise indicated, do more than guarantee an accurate record of what was uttered.

The expression "uninspired utterances" applies to such things as the words of the serpent, the speeches of Job's friends, the King of Assyria's message through Rabshakeh, the decrees of the Kings of Babylon and Persia, the statements of the Scribes and Pharisees, &c., &c. All these are recorded by the inspired writers simply as facts to enable the reader to understand the divine action in relation to them. Their accuracy should be recognised as essential to inspired history, but nothing more. An uninspired utterance endorsed by an inspired writer is found in Titus 1:12 13, "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, the Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This

witness is true.” Here there is something more than a quotation from an uninspired source; the apostle describes it as “true.”

3.—*That the incorporation, under Divine Inspiration, of human with inspired writings (if such incorporation has taken place) would constitute them of equal authority.*

The principle embodied in this proposition is precisely the same as that in No. 1. If it be granted in the one case it cannot logically be denied in the other. The divine perfection which produces infallible inspiration would necessarily result in infallible incorporation. If a human writer of the highest order adapts any existing record he is as careful to verify its facts as if it were his own production. Who will dare to place God below the level of man?

The portions of Scripture supposed to be of human authorship and to have been the subject of inspired incorporation, are some genealogies and fragments of history, But there is no evidence of this; it is a gratuitous assumption for the purpose, apparently, of accounting for alleged errors and discrepancies. The only incorporation, if such it can be called is that which has been defined in proposition 2.

4.—*That the existing evidence of the divine authority of the writings composing the Bible, and the absence of any to the contrary, justifies the conclusion that they have been produced or incorporated under divine inspiration.*

The existing evidence is twofold, first, internal; second, external. To adduce it all would be a formidable task, far exceeding the limits of this communication. An outline must therefore suffice. For the Old Testament it is but necessary to quote the testimony of Christ and the apostles; their allusions are of such an emphatic character as to leave no doubt concerning its authorship. Christ describes it in the threefold division recognised by the Jews:—“All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me” (Luke 24:44.) He evidently alludes to the same writings when he says, “Search the Scriptures (or ye search the Scriptures) for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me (Jno. 5:39.) The “all things written concerning Christ are contained in the Scriptures” which testify of him, and hence those Scriptures consist of the three divisions, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. There can be no question as to these documents having been given to the Jews. When, therefore, Christ says, “If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken” (Jno. 10:35.) he, in effect, describes those writings as “the Word of God.” When to this is added, the expression in prayer to his Father, “Thy word is truth,” the testimony of Christ becomes conclusive as to the divine authorship and consequent infallibility of the Old Testament.

The apostles are in harmony with their master. Peter, referring to “prophecy of the Scripture,” says that it “came not in old time (or, at any time—see margin) by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:20, 21). Paul in writing of Israelitish history says, “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples (types see margin), and they are written for our admonition.” (1 Cor. 10:11.) The authorship of the record, although not stated, is clearly implied. The “things happened,” involved divine action; they could not have been “written” for the admonition of future generations as the result of mere human volition; uninspired men would be ignorant of the moral needs of generations then unborn, and they would have no authority to write for such. The knowledge, desire, purpose and power, necessary for recording events for the instruction of subsequent ages, in regard to the way of salvation, reside only in God. Therefore the things which happened unto Israel were written for the admonition of Apostolic believers under divine control.

The events which Paul mentions in the first ten verses of 1 Cor. 10. chap., are confined to the journey through the wilderness; a fact which may suggest to some that only this portion of Israelitish history is of divine authorship. Such a conclusion would be most unreasonable. The wilderness condition was a very important one, by reason of its many manifestations of divine power. But was the nation’s subsequent state not important? The divine arm may not have been so frequently unbarred, but it was there all the time. Israel’s typical existence did not cease when they entered Canaan: it continued until the Seed of David and the Greater than Solomon appeared in their midst. The wilderness life of Israel typified the probation of believers in the present dispensation; and the kingdom was a type of the age to come. In view of this, is it reasonable to suppose that God would inspire the record of the former, and leave the latter to mere human volition? The typical kingdom was superior to the typical wilderness, and their respective antitypes present even a greater corresponding divergence. Surely, therefore, an inspired record of Israel’s kingdom was, to say the least, as necessary as that of their wilderness wanderings. If not fully appreciated by Gentiles, it has been highly esteemed by the Jews, and will be more so when the kingdom is restored to Israel. As we now find instruction in the Wilderness events, so they then will learn lessons of wisdom from the things related of their past kingdom. And even though there be no express statement to that effect, it is certain that they will in that day realise that the divine actions in reference to that kingdom happened unto the forefathers for ensamples or types; and that, consequently, those events were written under divine guidance for their admonition.

From this point of view it must be obvious that as the whole of Israel’s history, from the sojourn in Egypt to the restoration from Babylon, has embodied practical lessons for future generations, the record of them must have been inspired. We have no other perfectly reliable narrative than that which is given in the Old Testament Scriptures. The presumption, therefore is, that that narrative has been written under the Holy Spirit’s guidance; the New Testament allusions to some of

its incidents—viz., David eating shewbread (Matt. 12:3); Elijah and the famine (Luke 4:25); Elijah and Baal (Rom. 11:3); Elisha and Naaman (Luke 4:27); and Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (Luke 11:31)—transform that presumption into something more than a probability; and the authoritative statements of Christ and the Apostles concerning the Old Testament “Scriptures,” supply what remaining evidence we require to describe it as a certainty. Of sacred history, therefore, as well as prophecy, it may be said that “it come not at any time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

There are two more apostolic statements concerning Old Testament writings on which it is advisable to make a few observations. The first is in Rom. 15:4—“Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” The comprehensiveness of this statement precludes its being confined to any portion of Israel’s history, or to any part of the Old Testament. The “things written” “were written” in “the Scriptures”—those Scriptures which testified of Christ, and which he defines as “the word of God;” “they were written for our learning” centuries before apostolic believers were born, and therefore “written” by divine inspiration, “that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” If of fallible authorship, they could give no “comfort,” and furnish no solid “hope;” these can only exist where there is a positive assurance that the writing is divine. From this point of view alone it should be evident that the divine authorship of all the Old Testament is essential to the foundation on which they are built. On this our “hope” is based; take any portion away, and the foundation is to that extent weakened. History, prophecy, and doctrine are so interwoven together that it is impossible to confine the basis for the “hope” to any one part; the whole must fall or stand together. The contention that some can still stand, after the loss of a small part, is no justification for allowing it to be taken away. It is not a question as to the effect on a few isolated cases, but on the whole community. If one be allowed to pull a stone out here, and another there, the effect before long would be the disappearance of the whole foundation. Where, then, would be the “comfort” and “hope” of those who constituted the ruins of the superstructure? They would vanish like a dream long before the few remaining stones had crumbled to decay.

The next apostolic testimony is in 2 Tim. 3:15, 16, “From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

This passage resembles somewhat the Hebrew parallelisms of the Old Testament; the expression “Holy Scriptures” is synonymous with “all Scripture,” and the phrase “these unto salvation” is equivalent to “profitable for doctrine, &c.” If this be not recognised, the passage is sure to be misunderstood, and probably

perverted. The “Holy Scriptures” with which Timothy was acquainted from a child, received that title because they were given by “Holy men,” who spake “by the Holy Spirit”; of no other kind of writings can it be said, that they “are able to make wise unto salvation.” Those “Holy Scriptures” were none other than the Old Testament; therefore we have in this passage an authoritative statement as to its complete inspiration.

The revised version of verse 16 is preferred by some; it reads, “Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable, &c.” The contention which favors this rendering is, that Paul is merely giving utterance to an abstract statement concerning every Scripture, wherever it may be, that is inspired. Only by severing the passage from its context can this be maintained. If the phrase “every Scripture” does not cover the Holy Scriptures of the preceding verse, it must apply only to a portion of them; an interpretation which would lead to the extraordinary conclusion that there are “Holy Scriptures” of fallible authorship, and that they “are able to make wise unto salvation.”

The external evidence concerning the Old Testament takes as its starting point an inspired statement in the New Testament:—“*Unto them (the Jews), were committed the ORACLES OF GOD*” (Rom. 3:2).

For what object were they so committed? For the same as that for which the Twelve Tribes of Israel were separated from the rest of the nations; to preserve God’s revealed truth. In the early days of the human race it was not so confined; and the result was its universal corruption (Gen. 6:5). Therefore, God selected one man and his descendants to be the special recipients of His favor. When they became sufficiently numerous to be constituted into a nation: he gave them commandments written with His finger (Exod. 31:18); and by the awe-inspiring manifestations of His power on that occasion, with subsequent miraculous interpositions, He instilled into them a reverence for His law which, though often accompanied by superstitions, has retained a strong hold on them to the present day. If Jehovah’s purpose with them were now at an end, these facts would not be without their force. But, when it is remembered that they are again to be His people, to obey His commandments; that their kingdom is to be restored, and their typical past to find its counterpart in an antitypical future, the foregoing circumstances are invested with an incalculable significance. They warrant the conclusion that God committed His oracles to the Jews not merely for the fifteen centuries which covered the validity of the Mosaic law, but for the eighteen centuries since its abrogation; and also for the ten centuries which will succeed their restoration. They are, therefore, living witnesses as to what writings constitute “the oracles of God” prior to their rejection of His Son. What, then, are the recognised facts?

About five centuries before Christ the Pentateuch (or five books of Moses) was copied by the Samaritans, “who, after the Babylonish captivity, became the rooted enemies of the Jews.” When that antagonism had once been established,

it would render impossible any collusion in maintaining harmony between the two copies. Those who have examined the Samaritan version declare that it agrees substantially with the Pentateuch in our Bible.

About three centuries before Christ Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt, was engaged in the formation of the Alexandrian Library; and his librarian, Demetrius Phalerius, suggested the advisability of procuring a translation of the sacred books of the Jews. The King approved of it, and sent a letter to Eleazer, the high-priest asking for a copy and for interpreters to translate it. The request was complied with, and seventy-two Jews, six out of each tribe, were sent to Alexandria for the purpose. This resulted in a translation of the Old Testament into Greek, commonly known as the Septuagint version, a name derived from the number of the translators being seventy, or to be accurate, seventy-two. When compared with our Bible it is found to substantially agree with that portion extending from Genesis to Malachi. No book is omitted; and the only real variation in titles is in the books of Samuel, which are called Kings 1 and 2, the ordinary books of Kings being called Kings 3 and 4.

This is the version that was in general use in the days of Christ and the Apostles, who sometimes quoted from it. They did so, doubtless, because it was a recognised authority without, thereby, implying that it was an accurate translation throughout. In this respect we do the same with the Authorised version.

The Hebrew Bible, in use among the Jews at the present time, is substantially identical with our Old Testament. In addition to the argument already presented on this point, it is of importance to direct attention to the fact that the Jews are the frequent subject of divine condemnation in the writings they have preserved. They cannot, therefore, be charged with retaining them simply for the purpose of self-gratification. It would, indeed, have ministered to their personal comfort and advancement if they had repudiated the divine oracles. But this, in the purpose of God, could not be; He had implanted in them too strong a love and adoration for His inspired word to permit of such an act of sacrilege. Pervert that word they might do, and did; but to consign it to the flames, NEVER. To alter its letter was attended with severe penalties; they would, according to Josephus and Philo, suffer any torments, or endure death itself, rather than change a single point. Hence, as has been frequently pointed out, "though Christ frequently charged the Jews with making the Word of God of none effect by their traditions, he never accused them of corrupting the text."

Josephus describes the Jewish sacred writings as 22 books . . . which are justly "believed to be divine." He attributes five to Moses, thirteen to the time extending from Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes, and the remaining four, he says, contain hymns to God. Although the number in our Old Testament is reckoned as 39, this is no proof that Josephus omits 17 or any smaller number of them. The Jews were addicted to numerical systematizing, and this, doubtless,

accounts for their sacred writings being described as 22, which is the exact number of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet. They united under one name books which we reckon separately, such as Samuel 1. and 2., Kings 1. and 2., Chronicles 1. and 2., &c., and by this means the 39 can be reduced to 22. The discrepancy between these numbers is too great to admit of such a wide difference between the Holy Scriptures in the days of Josephus and writings of the same character now in use among the Jews. It is important to notice that the time to which he limits their production is precisely the time covered by Old Testament inspiration, viz., from Moses to Artaxerxes. It was in the reign of this Persian King that Ezra and Nehemiah performed their work of restoration, and the prophets associated with that work are generally recognised to have been Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. From that time to John the Baptist the voice of God was silent in Israel. If the Jewish Scriptures of the present day contain nearly twice as many books as the Scriptures acknowledged by Josephus and his contemporaries, there should be some evidence as to which they are, and what was their origin. Where is it? Not to be found. On the contrary there is the evidence already adduced, that the Jewish Scriptures are the same now as they were 2,000 years ago.

In the days of the Apostles, those Scriptures were read in the Synagogues: "Moses of old time hath in every city those that preach him, being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath day," (Acts 15:21); "after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the Synagogues sent unto them," (Acts 13:15). This practice was in vogue prior to Christ's birth, probably from the time of Ezra; for, as Sir Isaac Newton points out, God sent prophets "till the days of Ezra; but after their prophecies were read in the synagogues, those prophecies were thought sufficient."

Since the dispersion of the Jews among all nations, another feature has assisted in maintaining the completeness and accuracy of the Jewish scriptures, viz., the work of the Masorites. After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the Great Council of Rabbis established at Tiberias revised the sacred text, and issued the Masora, or Tradition, containing a digest of Rabbinical writings on the Hebrew Bible. But notwithstanding the great mass of Rabbinical writings, the Jews have never embodied them in the inspired word. This can only be explained by what Josephus says, that, "No one has been so 'bold' as either to add anything to them, or take anything from them, or make any change in them; but it becomes natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem those books to contain divine doctrines and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them." It was this national characteristic which led the Masorites, whose work is attributed to the 4th or 5th century after Christ, to divide the books into verses, and to count the words and letters in each book, their object being to prevent interpolation or omission. They are also credited with inventing the Hebrew vowels or accents, and making them throughout the Hebrew Bible.

With these facts before us, there should be no doubt as to the Old Testament writings having come to us intact through the Jews. If this were the only channel, it would be ample, but there is another; as the result of the apostolic labours, the Old Testament Scriptures were adopted by the Christians and read in their assemblies. Between Jews and Christians there has always been greater or less antagonism, but notwithstanding this, the Jewish Scriptures, handed down through both channels, are the same; neither version omits a single book.

This reminds me that the Song of Solomon is a difficulty with many; and not without reason. The man who can fully expound it is not now in the flesh. But is this a reason for denying its inspiration? Not at all. The evidence for its having formed part of the Holy Scriptures eighteen hundred years ago is too strong to be refuted. If this be recognised, it will exclude any doubt or denial of its inspiration, and induce a suspension of judgment as to its meaning. Its language, it must be remembered, is Eastern, and therefore, somewhat unfitted for the prosaic Western mind; and if, as generally admitted, it describes the relationship between Christ and his Bride in the future life, the difficulty of understanding it is not confined to the language, but extends to the subject itself. One thing is certain; growth in the truth makes it more intelligible. Probably immortality will be necessary to completely comprehend it.

The New Testament

The evidence for the Divine Authorship of the New Testament is somewhat different from the evidence for the Old Testament, though alike in principle, viz., internal and external. All its books but three are admittedly written by Apostles; and as there is no question about their receiving the Holy Spirit, the inspiration of their writings does not, on the present occasion, require any further proof. The Spirit was given to them to record the life of Christ and to expound the things concerning his name. The authority to write the former was implied in the promise Christ made to them before the crucifixion:—"The comforter shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (Jno. 14:26). The quickening of their memory was not simply for their own edification; it was for the instruction of others; and the result of this we see in the gospel narratives. But an objection is raised that two of the Gospels, Mark and Luke, were not written by apostles. This may be granted. What does it prove? That, therefore, they are not inspired? Not at all; such a conclusion would involve the assumption that none in the first century had the Holy Spirit except the apostles. Was it so? During Christ's ministry, there were seventy disciples in addition to the twelve endowed with the Spirit for miraculous purposes (Luke 10:17-20). Their names not being given, who can say what further Spirit work they performed—by act, speech, or pen—after Christ's ascension to heaven? No one. Then it is not safe to exclude any writing simply because it does not bear an apostolic name. Christ not only promised the Holy Spirit to the apostles, but he said, "I will send unto you prophets, and wise men and scribes." (Matt. 23:34). Some of these "prophets" are mentioned in Acts 21:9, and 1 Cor. 12:10. The "wise men" were the recipients, through the spirit, of "the word of wisdom," and "the word of

Knowledge,” (1 Cor. 12:8). The impartation of the Holy Spirit to the “prophets” and “wise men” implies the same in regard to the “scribes.” And for what object? It could be for nothing but writing about divine things. It is reasonable to conclude that their writings, or some of them, would be intended for other generations besides their own. This would necessitate their preservation; but in what way? Surely in conjunction with the writings of inspired apostles. We have some non-apostolic writings in the New Testament. Then should we not, in considering their source, exhaust Christ’s promise of inspired “scribes,” before formulating the assumption that they must necessarily be of human origin? The existence of such writings is clearly evidence of the fulfilment of Christ’s prediction; if there were none, we should be in the dark as to whether, and in what way, it had been fulfilled. But now we are not.

Mark and Luke, the “Scribes” referred to, were close companions of the Apostles. Who, then, were more likely to receive the spirit for writing purposes than they? Certain of the Corinthian believers had the power of revealing (1 Cor. 14:30); a gift quite as great, if not greater, than that of recording divine history.

In regard to Luke, it is contended that he does not claim inspiration, and that, therefore, his Gospel is not inspired. The absence of a claim is not in itself proof. There must be an actual disclaimer before non-inspiration can be admitted. The expression in the preface—“It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first to write unto thee in order,”—is not equivalent to saying that he had not the spirit. He might have previously had communicated to him by the spirit for the purpose of instructing those to whom he personally ministered, the things he afterwards wrote; or, he may, as a faithful disciple of Christ, have had a desire to write an account of his Master’s life, and that desire may have been used by God for His own purpose and under His own guidance. It would not be the first time that God had so acted; Solomon’s temple had its origin in the desire of David to build a house for the Lord to dwell in. “Go, do all that is in *thine heart*; for the Lord is with thee,” said Nathan the Prophet (2 Sam. 7:2).

The contention for the non-inspiration of Mark and Luke, if consistent, will affirm the same for Matthew and John; there is no logical stopping place. If Luke, could write Christ’s life without the aid of the Spirit, Matthew could; and if Matthew needed the Spirit for that purpose, Luke could not do without it. Luke may possibly have been one of the seventy or of the other non-apostolic disciples who accompanied with Jesus, as indicated by the expression, “having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first.” If so, he was in precisely the same position as Matthew. The latter admittedly required, and received, the Holy Spirit to bring to his remembrance the things which he saw and heard. On what principle can it be contended that Luke did not? If Luke was not a companion of Christ during his ministry the argument that he was not inspired involves an even more flagrant assumption.

Apart from the foregoing arguments is there not evidence of an internal character that Luke's Gospel is inspired? It is written in a very similar style to that of Matthew; it records many of the same events; and it records some not given by any of the other evangelists. These include the birth of John the Baptist, the appearance of the angel to the shepherds, the circumcision of Christ, his presentation in the Temple and subsequent discussion with the doctors; the mission of the seventy; the curing of a woman diseased eighteen years, the curing of a man afflicted with dropsy, cleansing the ten lepers; the parables of the lost sheep, the lost piece of money, the prodigal son, the unjust steward, the rich man and the beggar, the nobleman receiving a kingdom, and the Pharisee and Publican; particulars about the two thieves; journey of the two disciples to Emmaus; and the circumstances of Christ's appearance to the eleven after the resurrection.

Are these important incidents in the life of Christ? Are they such as to render inspiration a superfluity? If so, on what grounds? In what respect do they differ from the other incidents—say in Matthew or John, and not given by Luke—which are admittedly of inspired record? If there be no material variation, then it follows that if one series of events in the life of Christ can be narrated by inspired man, another can also; and thus by degrees the whole of the Gospels would be rejected as not of divine authorship.

It is impossible for the Evangelists to have seen and heard all that they record, such as the events prior to Christ's baptism, and those occasions when they were not in the company of Jesus, such as the temptation in the wilderness and the transfiguration. How were they able to give an account of such incidents except under the guidance of the Holy Spirit? Christ narrated them, it may be suggested, during his ministry. Of this there is no evidence, and therefore it cannot be entertained. The conduct of the Apostles when their Lord and Master was taken captive by the priests is an argument against their knowing everything connected with Christ's career; then the probability is that they did not, until after the ascension of Christ. Inspiration, in that case, would constitute their only source of knowledge.

It is most improbable that Luke was present at the appearance of the angels to the shepherds, or with the eleven when Christ appeared to them after resurrection. Where did he get the knowledge of these incidents? From others who knew them? If so who? How do we know that their account was reliable? And if it was, what evidence have we that Luke gives it accurately? We know how the ordinary incidents of every day life get distorted as they pass from one mouth to another. How comes it that Luke is an exception to this tendency? Do we know that he is? What means have we of verifying those incidents recorded by him not given by the others? None at all. Then they may be fables; and, if not of spirit-authorship, there is no justification for making any use of them.

The evidence and arguments in regard to Mark and Acts are similar to those concerning Luke, though, if anything stronger; but it is not necessary to deal with them on the present occasion. Luke is claimed to be the strongest tower of the New Testament partial inspiration castle; and if that be knocked down the remaining ones will quickly follow.

The external argument concerning these books is, we are told, mere tradition. Assuming that it is, what does that prove? That the tradition is untrust worthy? That it is to be treated as an idle tale? Or, that the Scriptures prohibit our relying upon such evidence? If these be the grounds for casting it on one side, let it be plainly declared. But, in that case, consistency will require the same rule to be applied to other things not in dispute. How, for instance, has the authorship of the classical writings of ancient Greece and Rome been transmitted to us? By tradition. Is that in itself a reason for doubting or denying that Cicero, Plato, Livy, Ovid, or Herodotus, &c., were not the authors of the writings attributed to them? Any man in the literary world who suggested such a shallow reason would be the recipient of epithets more forcible than agreeable.

The Scriptures do not exclude a certain amount of reliance on the testimony of uninspired men, even if they be destitute of responsibility to future judgment. God takes notice of the "report" of His dealings with Israel, which would be heard by the surrounding nations (Deut. 2:25); it was a "true report" which brought the Queen of Sheba to Solomon, "to prove him with hard questions" (1 Kings 10:1–6); the "report" concerning the fall of Egypt and the destruction of Tyre are described as the cause of pain to the people around; the King of Babylon, it was predicted, would become feeble, when hearing the "report" of the approach of the Medo-Persians (Jer. 1:43). One of the qualifications for filling the office of a bishop is that "he must have a good report of them that are without" (1 Tim. 3:7); and we are commanded to "think on whatsoever things are of good report." (Phil. 4:8). The true standard by which to judge of the report concerning any matter from those who "are without," is as to whether the report be good or reliable? To answer the question, we have to inquire, What is the character of those who bear testimony? What is their motive in so doing? Is it one from which they derive some benefit? Are there reasons for concluding that their judgment is disinterested and impartial? Or, furthermore, that they themselves are, by their testimony, unknowingly condemned? A consideration of these points will prepare the mind for dealing with the external evidence concerning the New Testament.

Not only are we condemned for relying upon tradition, but upon Papal tradition; and the addition of the adjective is evidently thought to add force to the statement. How does this operate in regard to the classical writings already referred to? Have not they been transmitted chiefly by Papal tradition? And are they ever questioned on that account. I trow not. And why? Simply because they do not impose any obligations upon those who study them. The Holy Scriptures are the best attested writings handed down from ancient times; and yet the most

disputed. If they were not of divine origin, or did not contain that which was contrary to human nature, they would be accepted without any doubt.

Credulity and incredulity though describing opposite mental conditions possess a strange similarity. He who is incredulous of good is very credulous of evil. The slightest ground for suspicion presents the appearance of powerful evidence and not until the production of undeniable facts to the contrary does the credulity disappear. The weak point of those who are credulous of good, is incredulity of evil; and the evidence required to convince them is not a whit less than that of the opposite mental characteristic.

The evil in human nature predisposes men to be incredulous of anything coming from God. They accept that which comes from members of their own race without a question; but that which comes from their Creator is criticised and contested at every point. "Evil news flies fast;" whereas the report of an exceptionally good action is rejected unless attested by undeniable witnesses.

The relationship of the papacy to classical writings on the one hand, and to New Testament writings on the other involves an argument applicable to both. Papal religion is a combination of paganism with apostolic teaching. The papacy does not recognise this; but its truth is not thereby affected. The written documents it has assisted in transmitting contain the proof; the classical writings bear witness to its paganism, and the Christian to such parts of apostolic teaching as it has adopted and perverted. The former stop here; not so with the latter. There is not a book of the New Testament which does not, directly or indirectly, condemn the teaching or practice of the papacy. And yet this system of iniquity has handed down to us every one of those books. It may have, and doubtless has, corrupted a few passages, but that does not invalidate its testimony in support of their origin. Is there no divine hand in this? Is it a matter of chance? Does God never use the wicked for his own purpose? Can He not, through their blindness, cause them to preserve witnesses against themselves? He has done it in the case of the papal system; and hence its testimony for the New Testament is, in this aspect on a par with that of the rebellious Jews on behalf of the Old Testament. Both have tenaciously held fast to documents which describe their wickedness and record the divine sentence against them

The evidence does not rest here; it is to be found to an abundant extent prior to the existence of the papacy. Before the assembly of any Papal Councils for the purpose of deciding upon the Canon, the books composing the New Testament were, almost by universal consent, accepted as of divine authorship. "Between A.D. 200 and 400 fifteen catalogues were published. Six of these agree with our present Canon, and three omit only the Book of Revelation." For all except the last books of the New Testament there were, therefore, nine out of fifteen which were identical.

The historical books, that is, the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, are quoted as of divine authority by a series of writers commencing with the close of the apostolic age, and running through the second and third centuries. Commentaries on some of the New Testament books were also written during that period. They were accepted not by one section of “Christians,” but by all—the alleged orthodox and supposed heretics alike. Even enemies of Christianity recognised the historical books to be authentic records of the events on which the early church was founded. And it has been ascertained that all but a few verses of the New Testament are quoted by the various theological writers during the early part of the Christian era. The details of these facts are to be found in Paley’s *Evidences* and other books of a similar character. Whence came this general recognition of the writings in question? Was it a delusion on the part of men of every variety of mind, experience, circumstance, creed, prejudice, occupation, and country? Were Jews, with all their traditional reverence for the Law of Moses, likely to discontinue its practice without satisfactory evidence of the divine authority of the writings which taught the abrogation of that law? Were Pagans who had from their childhood been taught to conform to the State-religion of the Roman Empire, and whose temporal interests favoured a continuance—were they likely to change their belief without conclusive proof that the writings which they were invited to accept bore the stamp of authenticity, and had been transmitted through a reliable channel? The great contrast between the elaborate ceremonials and magnificent temples of idolatrous worship, to which they had been so long familiar, and the severe simplicity of the Christian assemblies, meeting often in houses, public halls, or secluded hiding places, would naturally lead to a close scrutiny of the chain of evidence on the basis of which they were invited to repudiate the generally recognised religion, for an apparently new-fangled sect devoid of influence, and insignificant in numbers.

To palm off a spurious document as a genuine one is no easy matter. We had evidence of this only a year or two ago in what was known as the Shapira Manuscript. It was supposed to be a very ancient portion of the Bible, and at first obtained credence, but after close scrutiny it was discovered to be a clever but modern forgery; and the impudent owner, who had asked a fabulous sum for it, was told that its intrinsic value was nil.

On the basis of the foregoing evidence, there should be no difficulty in concluding that the writings composing the Bible are of divine authorship. Against it what is to be said—that is, in the way of evidence, absolutely nothing. Recent years have not brought to light the slightest proof to counterbalance the accumulated historical demonstration of eighteen centuries. Of ingenious arguments, plausible theories, doubts, and denials, there has been an abundance, but the forces of unbelief have aimed their missiles in vain. That which comes from God is founded upon a rock, and though hand join in hand against it, they only break their weapons, waste their puny strength, make manifest their impotence, and endanger their very existence. Thus is it with the incorruptible structure erected by divine inspiration, and known as the Bible.

5.—*That any errors found in the Bible as we now have it are not attributable to the original writers, but are either mistakes on the part of copyists or translators, or designed alterations, omissions or interpolations, but they are unimportant, and do not impair its reliability.*

This proposition is the sequel of those which have preceded it. The authorship being infallible it necessarily follows that any mistakes, of whatever kind, in the copies in our possession are errors of transmission. It is contended that to admit errors in the copies is as bad as attributing them to the autographs. This argument is evidently an ingenious device for shielding an untenable position. Between autographs and copies there is as much difference as between an author and a printer. Errors in the Bible autographs would affect the character of God; errors in the copies do not. Inspiration is not claimed for copyists and translators: for their mistakes, therefore, God is not responsible. But why not, it is said? Is it not important for the copies we possess to be equally as perfect as the originals? Yes, in regard to all matters that are essential to us; and they are so. Then what practical difference would it make for the autographs to be erroneous in precisely the same items as are the copies? All the difference between a fallible and an infallible authorship; and to those to whom the autographs were first given all the difference between unreliable and perfectly reliable documents. Items which seem of little importance to us may have been of great moment to them; we know it to have been so in some things, and it must have been so in others. Perfect accuracy in details with which they were acquainted would be absolutely essential for the autographs to be accepted by them as divine. The object of those documents was to introduce and establish divine authority among men for their instruction, reproof and salvation. Is it reasonable, to use no higher argument, that God would risk their rejection on first seeing the light, simply for want of accuracy in detail? Nay more, is it consistent with His handiwork in other directions? Behold the detailed perfection of the flower or of the most minute insect. These, and many other specimens of Creative skill cannot be analysed by the naked human eye; a microscope is requisite to perceive their detailed perfection. Man's capacity for detail is great, but it is as nothing compared with that of his Creator. The psalmist says, "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see." (Ps. 94:9). And we with equal force can say, He who gave to men the capacity for detail, shall not He attend to detail? He has done so in innumerable instances; on what ground should He be charged with neglect in others? He who changed the name of Abram by the addition of one letter, and the name of Sarai by the alteration of a letter, does He make mistakes in names or genealogies? He who "determined the times before appointed" (Acts 17:26), and "changeth the times and seasons," does He record wrong dates? They who are not prepared to answer these questions with an emphatic negative, should carefully ponder the 38. and 39. Job, giving special heed to Jehovah's concluding sentence, "shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God let him answer it" (ch. 40:2). And if this sublime and powerful expostulation from the Deity produces the same effect

as on Job, they will each be ready in shame to say, "Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth" (5:4).

Between errors in the autographs and errors in the copies, there is a further important difference. There are means for detecting the latter, but not the former. By comparing the various manuscripts, errors which once were difficulties have been removed. And as one non-Christadelphian writer on the subject observes, "the different readings of the text, though large in number, are almost without exception, unimportant in character; and the fact that recent critics—Tischendorf, for instance—have now adopted the received text in many passages where they had previously rejected it, appears to intimate that the possible round of critical research has pretty well been exhausted, and that we have as nearly as possible acquired the perfect text of the original autographs. At all events, this question does not really touch the doctrine of inspiration, since it is only when the critical inquiry is completed that we assert for the autographs a divine authority. For instance, the rejection of the debated passage, 1 John 5:7–8, does not detract anything from the inspiration of the canonical Scriptures, but only amounts to the assertion that the passage rejected constitutes no part of them."

Great stress has been laid, during this controversy, on the discrepancy between the 23,000 and the 24,000 in Num. 25:9, and 1 Cor. 10:8. It has been said that there was no means of accounting for it, either by variations in MSS or any other method. The following extract from Bagster's Comprehensive Bible ought to be accepted as a sufficient solution:—"Num. 25:9. 'St. Paul reckons only 23,000; though some MSS and versions, particularly the later Syriac and the Armenian, have, as here, twenty-four thousand. Allowing the 24,000 to be genuine, and none of the Hebrew MSS exhibits a various reading here, and the 23,000 of Paul to be also genuine, the two places may be reconciled by supposing, what is very probable, that Moses includes in the 24,000 the 1,000 men who were slain in consequence of the judicial examination (5:4) as well as the 23,000, who died of the plague; while St. Paul only refers to the latter.'"

In reply to such observations as these, it has been asserted that there are discrepancies which cannot be explained by any manuscripts in existence; and on this ground it is contended that there may have been errors in the autographs. A more slender basis for such a tremendous assumption could not be found. In one scale is placed the omnipotence, omniscience, and perfect wisdom of God, and in the other, these alleged discrepancies in the oldest known manuscripts; and the latter scale is said to be the heavier of the two! An infallible God charged with inditing errors! The Bible wholly inspired, but the inspiration defective in "unimportant details!" Though there are discrepancies which have been proved to be errors of copyists, this is no reason for attributing any unproved errors to the same source! Man makes mistakes, but God makes none; and yet because certain supposed errors cannot be traced to fallible men, we are seriously asked to charge them to the infallible and only wise God! To this we reply with an emphatic negative, declaring that rather than countenance it, we are prepared to

lose the right hand. O vain man! thou wouldst be wise though born like a will ass's colt! Thou art by nature but an infinitesimal fraction of the "all nations," which are "counted to God less than nothing and vanity. To whom then wilt thou liken Him?" (Isa. 40:17–18.) He declares that "His work is perfect; His way is perfect; and all His works are done in truth." "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" (Rom. 9:20). "Where wast thou when he laid the foundations of the earth?" (Job 38:4). In a state of nothingness. And canst thou expect anything more in the eternal future if thou thus dishonourest thy Creator, thy Preserver, thy would-be Saviour, and shall we, in shame, add thy acknowledged "Father in heaven, who is perfect?" (Matt. 6:48). Pray retrace, without delay, thy erring steps, ere it be too late. "For the Lord thy God is a jealous God," and "a consuming fire" (Deut. 4:24).

The phrase "unimportant details" involves an unwarrantable assumption. It affirms that there are details in the Bible which are not important. In this we have an illustration of the strange perverseness of the human mind, which, to escape one position alleged to be unsound, rushes into another of its own devising. That the contents of the Bible are not all of equal importance, may, without any dishonour to it, be admitted. But to describe them of relative importance is very different from saying that any are unimportant. Though there be some details which we do not deem to be important, are we to conclude that they are so esteemed by Jehovah? Is He to be charged with a work of supererogation? Is our standard of importance that by which He is to be guided? Is our fallible apprehension of His infallible work to decide that there is any item, however small, which might have been left out? Are we to be so arrogant as to assume omniscience, and to say that any item which does not appear to us to be important, can be of no possible importance to anyone else? The Bible has been given, not for one man, but for many; not for this generation only, but for a hundred or more in the past, and we know not how many in the future; not for an age, but for the duration of the human race. Many things which seem unimportant to us may have been of no small importance to those to whom the writings were first given; nay, it is not merely may, but must have been. And, how often have not little items, apparently insignificant, and passed over by the many, been shewn to have a meaning and an importance not previously noticed? Where, then, is the fallible being prepared, in all reverence, to affirm upon sound evidence, that this list is exhausted? Until a demonstration to this effect appears on the scene, it would be well for those who desire to be clothed with humility and wisdom, to cease contending for "unimportant details," erroneous or otherwise.

6.—*That, in view of the length of time which has elapsed since the production of the autographs, and the extent to which difficulties in existing copies have been removed, through modern discovery and research, we are justified in attributing any others to insufficient information.*

It is an item of general knowledge that within the last half century, Biblical difficulties of various kinds have been removed—in some cases by ancient manuscripts coming to light; in others by accidental discoveries and systematic researches in Bible lands; and in a further class, by a fuller acquaintance with other parts of the Book.

It would appear as if God had kept some of these witnesses hidden for centuries that they might be brought forth in these the closing times of the Gentiles, to testify to the exactness and veracity of His Word. Never was there a time when the divine authorship of the Bible was more questioned than at present, and never was there a time when the testimonies in its favour were more numerous and powerful. The one condition of things is adapted for the other, and doubtless, consequent upon it. Notwithstanding the ingenuity of man in collecting weapons wherewith to attack the Book of books, God can, by an occasional arrow from His inexhaustible quiver, inflict a deadly wound upon the assailants. Nay, He can do more; He can, as He has done, in the cases of Gibbon, Volney, and others, use infidelity to defeat itself.

With these facts before us, shall we be so presumptuous as to say that any remaining difficulties are inexplicable? Surely humility alone would teach us to wait for further light; but when we consider what has been given, reason and reverence command us to look in the same direction for the solutions we seek. To solve them by suggesting a fallible authorship is to attempt escape from one difficulty by rushing into a greater.

That the human mind should have difficulties concerning the contents of the Bible is inevitable from the very nature of things. God's thoughts and ways are so much higher than man's that it is impossible for the Creator's handiwork to be easily comprehended. There are difficulties in science, but is that a reason for denying the existence of the originator of science, or of saying that He has made scientific mistakes? This argument is equally applicable to the Bible; for the author of one is the author of the other.

It has been admitted that our apprehension of God's word is fallible: all the more need then, of a complete recognition of its infallibility. To arrive at this conclusion it is not necessary to understand and be able to explain every item it contains. All that is required is an acquaintance with its main features, and the leading links of the chain by which it has been transmitted to us. These are amply sufficient, without an exhaustive examination, to enable anyone with a love for divine things to arrive at a conclusion as to its authorship. If such were not the case, what chance would there be of a single person being saved? Once admit the principle that all difficulties must be solved before acknowledging its infallible authorship, and the preaching of the Gospel becomes the act of a madman. Had Dr. Thomas adopted this fallacious principle, he could not have believed in the inspiration of the Apocalypse until he had obtained a satisfactory explanation of everything in it. Is not this evident from the way in which it is generally treated? It

is no uncommon thing for professedly religious people who cannot understand its meaning, to doubt or deny its inspiration. And it is a fact in history that for this very reason, it ran the risk of being excluded from the New Testament Canon. Indeed, every book in the Bible has been rejected by one and another for the simple reason that it did not square with human ideas. If brethren of Christ imitate this vicious example, in regard to one part, they cannot logically resist it in reference to every other; and thus, the solid rock will be gradually transformed into a shifting sand. As one brother has truthfully remarked:—"Those who adopt the doctrine of a fallible authorship will gradually bend the word to their minds instead of moulding their minds by the word."

Nov 19 1885.

Letter to the Editor 2

BY BRO. J. J. ANDREW, OF LONDON

(Continued from last month)

In January last, I received twenty printed questions on the subject of inspiration, in reply to which I said I believed that the Bible, when correctly translated, was the word of God—subject to the excision of such passages as could be clearly demonstrated to be interpolations, and the correction of those words and phrases which there was good reason to conclude had been incorrectly copied. But these I believed to be very few, not in any way affecting the vital parts of the truth. I at the same time expressed the hope that the present controversy would lead to increased reverence for that word which Jehovah had magnified above all His name.

The belief here expressed (that the Bible is the word of God) dates back to childhood. It was nurtured by listening to interesting Scriptural narratives from a faithful servant in the home of Methodist grand-parents; by daily family-reading, and prayer in the home of Baptist parents; by day-school lessons in Old Testament history from a Congregationalist schoolmaster; by weekly attendance at a Dissenting chapel; by the perusal in youth of books and publications dealing, more or less, with Bible matters; by induction at 18 into the Baptist community; and by being placed, when 23, upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20). Twenty years' experience in the "one faith" has both deepened and widened this conviction, though it is due almost wholly to increased familiarity with the Book itself. Outside facts and arguments, though recognised as useful, have not been deemed a necessity; and for works on Christian evidences, there was never any desire. Indeed, it has been a frequent remark that if an acquaintance with the Bible did not satisfy anyone that it was of Divine origin, nothing else would. Hence no special effort was made to formulate a complete argument on the subject; such

evidence as was casually met with was recognised as confirming a belief already so strong as to feel no need of further testimony.

It will readily be seen that a mind of this cast is not well adapted for dealing with those of a sceptical tendency. The impression produced on it by the inspired Word is of that character which cannot, in the very nature of things, be transferred to the mind of another. One who has had doubts is the best fitted for conflict with the unbeliever; he has learned by experience how to wield with skill against another the weapons by which his own incredulity was slain.

From one point of view—that of aiding others and resisting the enemy—the omission to work out a demonstrative argument in support of the divine authorship of the Bible, was a mistake. But it is one capable of rectification; and this has been done by God's providential hand in a more effective manner than mere reading and study could have accomplished. For this I thank Him; I thank Him for the inspiration question having been introduced into our midst; I thank Him for providing two brethren to take the lead in antagonising a false doctrine concerning it; I thank Him for the long though painful controversy which has followed; and I hope yet to be able to thank Him for the conversion—in this matter—of many from the error of their ways. If so, the praise will be all due to Him from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift.

From some cause or other, you have been led to give your mind to the evidence necessary for establishing the divine origin of the Bible. Your conflict with scepticism was an outcome of this, and at the same time a stimulus for further thought. Until recently, I looked upon that conflict as a mistake; and for the simple reason that one who rejects the Bible, demands outside evidence which he is not in a fit state of mind to weigh, and debars himself from the influence of the strongest proof, viz., the internal evidence. It is now apparent that that conflict had some advantages; it had a share in your equipment for dealing promptly and energetically with a false theory of inspiration.

When you had taken the first step, you will remember my writing to point out that the course adopted would have the effect of rousing the feelings of the brotherhood, and thus blinding the judgment to the real issues. I further expressed an opinion that the wisest course would have been to confine your attack to argument and evidence, for the purpose of giving instruction. If such a plan had been adopted, the evil doctrine would, in ordinary circumstances, have been very circumscribed and then might gradually have disappeared; in that case we should have been spared all the disagreeable turmoil since experienced.

This is the course which would have been favoured by most minds. It would have maintained internal peace, which we all naturally prefer. The work of the truth would have continued to grow to even a greater extent than hitherto; for every addition introduces the Gospel of Salvation into a new centre: small meetings would have become large, and large ones, larger, But, would this have

been the best result in the end? Is the gathering together of mere numbers the chief end of our labours? Has God visited the Gentiles (Acts 15:14) for the purpose of taking out so many mere units to become the incorruptible inheritors of His kingdom? If this be all, He could accomplish it by a much simpler process. John the Baptist declared that out of the stones, God could raise up mortal children to Abraham (Matt. 3:9). With equal truth it may be said that out of the same material God can raise up the immortal and multitudinous seed of Abraham. A mechanical process such as this would not, however, meet the Divine purpose. God's workmanship in preparing His sons for future glory is slow but perfect; and it includes considerable bruising. Their Elder Brother was made "perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10), and they likewise must be the subjects of Divine "chastisement" (Heb. 12:8). They "must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Christ, their "passover," requires to be eaten, not only with the "unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:7-8), but with the "bitter herbs" (Exod. 12:8) of a father's chastening love.

Why should this discipline come in the form of ecclesial conflict? To benefit and purify the One Body in its collective form—not merely a section of it. Similar controversies in the past have produced lasting and beneficial results—notably so in regard to the Judgment and the nature of Christ. All the facts and arguments which can be adduced on either side are subjected to a sifting process, which eliminates the chaff, and retains only the nourishing wheat. By the food thus provided, the One Body becomes stronger and more healthy; and the difficulties under which the precious boon comes increase the tenacity with which it is retained. "Experience is the best teacher" in spiritual, as well as in natural, things.

These considerations suggest the inquiry; Is it desirable for the brethren of Christ to be well instructed in the evidence on which the infallible authorship of the Bible is based? To this question there can be but one reply. If any doubt should exist concerning the foundation of their hopes, their faith cannot be of that robust, sterling character which alone will stand the fiery trial of purification (1 Peter 1:7). It is a law in the organic world that where there is perfect health, disease can with difficulty obtain a lodgment; but, when the vital forces are reduced below par, the organism becomes a prey to the enemy in the most insidious form. The same law is in operation in the moral world: where there is strong conviction based upon knowledge, unbelief can find no place; but if weak, the outside forces will soon overcome it. *Convince* and *conviction* are derived from two Latin words, viz., *con*, together, and *vinco*, to conquer. The state of mind which they represent is one, not only of resistance, but of attack. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 Jno. 5:4). An enemy cannot be overcome without effective weapons; and in relation to the things of God, those weapons must be of divine providing. The armoury containing them is the Bible. In human warfare, the repository for holding weapons of attack or defence is carefully guarded. How much more important to shield the divine armoury from the least encroachment! It contains "the weapons of our warfare,

which are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;" they are devised for the purpose of "casting down imaginations (or reasonings, Marg.), and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4–5).

From this aspect, what do the events of the past year teach? That the soldiers of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:3) were so completely equipped with "the whole armour of God" (Eph. 6:13) as to need no addition? That they were so skilled in using the weapons of their warfare as to require no further instruction? That their loins were firmly "girt about with truth?" That they were securely covered with "the breast-plate of righteousness?" That their feet were adequately "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace?" That they were so protected with "the shield of faith" as to "be able to withstand in the evil day," and "to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked?" That their heads were so sheltered by "the helmet of salvation" as to be in no danger of the missiles of destruction? And that they were able to wield with dexterity, in offence and defence, "the sword of the *Spirit*, which is the *Word of God*?"

If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, how is it that so many have allowed their principal weapon, "the sword of the Spirit," to become tarnished with a human, and, therefore corruptible element? Does it not prove that something was needed to drill them more perfectly in the duties of their military service? And what could have been more effective than the agitation through which we are now passing? Could any amount of research and reflection have elicited such a variety of conclusive evidence? Could any calm discussion have produced so deep an impression on this generation of Christ's brethren? Their principal weapon is, the sword of the Spirit. If that becomes blunted, will not the other parts of their armour soon become useless?

It is true of adult, as well as of juvenile, children, that "The rod and reproof give wisdom," and "That a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Prov. 29:15). The "mother" of God's children (Matt. 2:19) is "wisdom" who "hath builded her house" and "hewn out her seven pillars" (Prov. 9:1). Her "law" they are exhorted not to "forsake" (Prov. 1:8). She crieth to them, and uttereth her beseeching voice in the following language:—"How long, ye *simple ones*, will ye love simplicity? And the *scorners* delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold I will pour out MY SPIRIT unto you, I will make known MY WORDS unto you." To those children who reject this exhortation, she says: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. But ye have set at nought all *my counsel*, and would none of *my reproof*; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated *knowledge*, and did not choose *the fear of the*

Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For *the turning away of the simple shall slay them,* and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them” (Prov. 20:32). The “simple” or deceived ones who “turn away” are they who do not “understand wisdom” (Prov. 8:5). They refuse to listen in times of calmness, to the “knowledge,” “counsel” and “reproof” expressed in the varied “words” of the Spirit; and their “turning away” is the means of “slaying” those of like mind whom the wisdom of the Spirit describes as “the scorers” that “delight in their scorning” and “the fools” that “hate knowledge.” Divine “reproof” is not confined to plain injunctions and interdicts. It comprehends all the “things” “written aforetime” “for our learning” and “admonition” (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11). Whether by inspired “prophets,” “apostles” or “scribes”; in other words “the Holy Scriptures,” which, from Genesis to Revelation, are “profitable for doctrine, for *reproof*, for *correction*, for instruction in righteousness” (1 Tim. 3:15, 16). Inspired history and biography present divine “reproof” in a practical form; and this we know, from our acquaintance with human affairs, is a most powerful deterrent in enforcing the laws of a nation. The Government may frame enactments, but only by the law-abiding citizens will they be regarded. “Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil” (Rom. 13:3); and only to “the evil” when they see that the ruling power “beareth not the sword in vain” (ver. 4). Human statutes, if not supplemented by practical examples of their application, soon cease to be operative. A legislature, elected or hereditary, may devise the most elaborate code of laws, but if there are no officers of state to put them into execution they will be as worthless as the paper on which they are written. The Law Courts, Prisons and Scaffolds, are analagous to the administration of Divine Laws towards individuals and nations as recorded in the historical portions of the Bible; all of which are “profitable for reproof” or “correction.” In like manner the examples of divine commendation are of inestimable value “for instruction in righteousness;” none—either warnings to avoid or patterns to imitate—could be dispensed with; all are necessary “that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (1 Tim. 3:16, 17). Would man of his own volition have recorded these? He might have done so in respect to the marks of approval; but would he voluntarily have chronicled for the information of future generations his own misdeeds, and the divine judgments they incurred? We have only to look at current literature to obtain an answer. “Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness, but a faithful man who can find?” (Prov. 20:6). It requires, indeed, a mind strongly imbued with divine principles to give publicity even to a mild reproof.

The present is not a time when God’s judgments are so manifest to the natural eye as they were in the days of Israel’s nationality. They are in operation, but to a limited extent, and are visible only to the eye of faith. They affect both nations and individuals, and the measure of their application is dependent on the degree of relationship toward the things of God. The divine condemnation of Israel expresses this in a most striking manner. “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities” (Amos 3:2).

The community of which Israel was a type must not expect to escape; it is as true now as in the apostolic days “that judgment must begin at the house of God” (1 Pet. 4:17). The ecclesias at Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea (Rev. 2. and 3.) were exhorted to repent of their sins of omission and commission. The warnings given to them are for the admonition of all succeeding generations of saints. “He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,” is the *Nota Bene* of each epistle. The voice of inspiration is now silent, but its author can, by events, cause its past utterances to make a deeper impression than hitherto on the minds of wisdom’s children, and this will unquestionably be one result of our present tribulation. Those who are of a “poor and a contrite spirit, and tremble” at Jehovah’s “word” (Isa. 66:2) will be led to inquire what more they can do, as “followers of God” (Eph. 5:1) in attaining to the perfection of their heavenly Father (Matt. 5:48).

“The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth” (Ps. 33:14); and “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13). The controversy concerning inspiration is an illustration of these statements. Prior to its commencement, it was within the knowledge of few, if any, that there existed in our midst some who were inclined to accept a false doctrine concerning the authorship of the Bible. It was known, however, to “Him with whom we have to do.” The Creator and also the Head of the One Body perceived that which was hidden from its members. Hence the necessity for a chain of circumstances by which it should be developed. Without at the time knowing it, you were one of its links. If the course of action which, in the initiatory stage, commended itself to my mind, had been pursued, such a disclosure would probably not have been made. What, then, is the obvious conclusion? That it was not in accordance with the divine purpose at that time, and that you were providentially roused up to be an instrument for bringing to light that which was in the sheol of human thought. If asked what was the most powerful factor in setting your executive machinery in motion, I should probably hit the mark if I pointed to the suggestion that the only effective way to defend the Bible was to recognise a fallible element in its authorship. This device, however well meant, you rightly judged to “savour not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matt. 16:23). Your love of God and reverence for His word would not permit the adoption of such a false principle. Hence the fierceness with which you showed fight. Some of the weapons used may be open to question, but your dauntless courage none can deny. Even the opposition must admit that brother Shuttleworth and yourself have displayed an amount of self-sacrifice and fortitude worthy of no little praise.

In alluding to some defects of conduct, I presume not to anticipate the verdict of Christ. I hope they will not in his eyes mar a long course of unswerving fidelity to him,—extending back to the time when his disciples were far more insignificant in numbers and influence than they are now. I cannot think they will, for if one who has so faithfully expounded and defended “the word of truth,” amid “honour

and dishonour,” in “evil report and good report” (2 Cor. 6:7, 8), should fail to receive “a crown of life,” what chance, we may each ask, is there for any of this generation entering the kingdom of God? We all have our faults—more marked in some than in others—yea, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). It therefore behoves each of us to “look to ourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward” (2 John 8 ver). It is true of sins as of divine knowledge that they may become in some “a savour of death,” and in others “a savour of life” (2 Cor. 2:14–16). If unrepented, they harden the heart, but in a contrite mind, they may exert such a subduing influence as to be the means of increasing righteousness. Impetuous, erring Peter was all the better for the bitter penitence which followed the denial of his Master; and so may it be with some of this generation who have disbelieved the infallibility of the Word of God.

“Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (Matt. 7:1–2), are words of wisdom which forbid us to pronounce judgment concerning the everlasting result of each one’s probation. And when we judge in regard to any individual action, it behoves us to “judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). “Every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way” (Rom. 14:12–13). Each one should be able with our beloved brother Paul, to say, “It is a very small thing that I should be judged of man’s judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing against (Rev. ver.) myself, yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart, and then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Cor. 4:3–5). Until that day the divine verdict cannot be known. Therefore none should indulge in self-glorification. “But he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth” (2 Cor. 10:17–18).

All the wholesome lessons which will be either learned or emphasised by means of the present disruption it is impossible to foresee, probably more than any of us dream of. Increased acquaintance with, and reverence for, the inspired word cannot but have a powerful effect in deepening and extending the application of its immutable principles. Thus that which would be the destruction of a mere human organisation may, under God’s guidance, work out the salvation of His household.

In addition to this internal benefit—the extent of which it will be impossible to measure—there is an external one not unworthy of notice. By the devotees of Papal and Protestant superstitions the truth has been stigmatised as “infidelity.” And the fact of an occasional adherent going over to the ranks of scepticism has,

in some religious minds, confirmed their estimate of it. The reply, of course, has been that infidels are no where to be found using the Bible as Christadelphians do. In future there will be an additional argument. Reference can be made to the fact that false teaching concerning its authorship was stoutly contested and repudiated by those who were determined not to be drawn into a path which logically ends in the total rejection of the Bible.

In a letter to the *Light-stand* of July 11th, the writer stated that impaired health and the full occupation of his time in business and the work of the truth, had prevented his taking part in this controversy. To this may be added the formidable nature of the labour for one who felt disqualified in various ways for undertaking it in an efficient manner. Moreover, past experience of such conflicts and further acquaintance with God's ways, has suggested greater calmness and deliberation in dealing with them. Since the time referred to, God has, in several directions, prepared the way for doing that which at one time seemed impracticable. Otherwise this task could never have been attempted.

For some months the discussion revolved round the question of partial *versus* whole inspiration, but in the spring, the idea of erring inspiration was introduced—a new and startling feature, more dangerous even than that which had preceded it. This development, coupled with ecclesial divisions in the provinces, afforded evidence of an unmistakeable kind that the disease was becoming more virulent, and that steps must be taken to ward off its contagious influence by such as desired to maintain a healthy constitution. Accordingly, on June 5th, some eleven brethren connected with the Islington and Westminster ecclesias met to consider what was the best course to pursue. At the suggestion of one—not the writer—it was decided to commence a correspondence for the purpose of ascertaining whether the controversy could be stopped at the fountain head. The basis on which the communications were conducted consisted of the fundamental principles set forth in the six propositions already elaborated. Before the end of August, it became evident to others as well as ourselves, and without a word from us, that that effort was a failure. The burden, therefore, of taking some ecclesial action still remained. Accordingly the question in dispute was considered and the propositions embracing its various aspects were completed in the form already presented, to the satisfaction of three-fourths of our unofficial gathering. The meetings numbered about twenty, two-thirds being occupied with correspondence, and the remainder in the manner already described. They were held as circumstances required, at no small inconvenience, after the day's business was over, during the months of June, July, August, and September. They represented an earnest desire to perform, without fear or favour, partiality or prejudice, a duty to God in the stewardship of His truth; accordingly His guidance was sought in prayer at the commencement of each evening's deliberations. They realised in one direction the desire of the writer, as expressed in the *Light-stand* of July 11th, that before action was taken there should be “a properly directed effort to produce harmony.”

In the light of these facts what is the obvious conclusion? That the effort to terminate the controversy at the fountainhead was not in accordance with the Divine will. The only course then open was to take such action as the obligation of the situation imposed. The details thereof will be duly recorded in your ecclesial intelligence columns.

Some brethren have been blamed for hasty action, and others for tardiness; but, rest assured, it will be seen, ere long, that both have had their use; that, in fact, the deficiencies of one and another from the very inception of this controversy, have helped to produce the results intended; and that consequently, however imperfect the instruments used by the Most High, the work wrought through them, whether by inspiration or providence, is infallibly perfect. We may even yet see alienation give place to firm friendship, discord to harmony, war to peace, division to unity, sadness to exultation, condemnation to praise, tribulation to comfort, the thoughts of the flesh to the thoughts of the Spirit, the words of man to the words of God, and human action may become a more complete reflex of its Divine Model.

If such a blessed result should be realised, it will demonstrate on a large scale that which has been experienced individually, that divine “chastening,” though “grievous for a time, afterward yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Heb. 12:11), and it will lead many to exclaim in language similar to that which Joseph addressed to his brethren (Gen. 65:5–7–8), it was God who did it. We might then see a repetition of that fear of God which in the early days of the apostolic age was visibly expressed in “breaking bread with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people” (Acts 2:46–47).

The formulating of propositions concerning the Bible, such as those already elaborated, has been described as “artificial buttressing.” The Bible, it is said, can stand by itself and does not need any human support; the truth being “a natural fortress whose defences are impregnable”; and “those who think otherwise are making manifest *how little faith they have in the truth*, and how much they have in measures of their own devising.”

This is a serious charge and, if true, convicts every one who contends for the divine authorship of the Holy Scriptures, of fulfilling, in so doing the dictates of the flesh. What an extraordinary conclusion! The Bible is admitted to be from God, to be a revelation of the mind of Him whose “thoughts are not” as man’s “thoughts” (Isa. 55:8), and to be the only writings “able to make wise unto salvation”; and yet, to so describe it, to contend for a belief of this as essential to instruction in its contents, and to refuse fellowship to those who believe in the fallible authorship of some parts, is to give way to the prompting of sinful flesh! God’s ways are not as man’s ways (Isa. 55:8), and yet to uphold His inspired record of them, is one of the “works of the flesh” (Gal. 5:19)! We may, like Paul, occupy ourselves in “the defence of the Gospel” (Phil. 1:17), but, we must not defend the Book of the

Gospel! We may, as admonished by the Spirit, “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude ver. 3), but, to carefully guard the holy writings which contain the gradual unfolding of the “one faith,” is to manifest a want of faith! We may exhibit that love which “rejoiceth in the truth” (1 Cor. 13:6), we may seek in all things to “obey the truth” (Gal. 3:1), and to faithfully “walk in the truth” (3rd Jno. 3), but we must not practically vindicate “the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15)! To do so is to give heed to the “commandments of men that turn from the truth” (Tit 1:14)! to indulge in “unnecessary agitation!” to further weaken “the feeble knees” (Heb. 12:12)! to “hinder the progress of the truth!” and to “depart from” its “simplicity!” The Jews suffered torture and death at the hands of enemies in defence of their sacred writings (Josephus against Apion 1:8), and many claimants to the name of Christ have been martyred rather than repudiate it, or abjure what they believed it to teach, but Christadelphians must not by word and action repel an attack on its divine origin and complete infallibility! They who do so are described as “joined to their idols!” They are guilty of idolatry! and are therefore classed with those who exhibit “rebellion, witchcraft and stubbornness” (1 Sam. 15:23)! They are on a par with adulterers, fornicators, murderers, and drunkards; and are no better than the promoters of “hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings”—of all whom it is declared they “shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19–21)! Being guilty of idolatry they are deserving only to have a “part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8)!

O tempora! O Mores! O shades of the benighted past! Will ye not rise up in judgment against the boasted lights of the present? Is this the climax to God’s revived witnessing for Gospel truth? Is this the fruit of “God’s husbandry” (1 Cor. 3:9) in the present generation? Is this the top stone of “God’s building” in the latter half of the nineteenth century? Is it a part of divine teaching that the “stones” (1 Pet. 2:5) should find fault with the “hammer” (Jer. 23–29) by which they have been “hewn?” Are they authorised to ascribe defect—even in small things—to the “foundation” (Eph. 2:20)? Is it possible that they who when emerging out of darkness “searched the Scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11) for infallible truth, now describe some parts to be of fallible authorship? Is this the divinely appointed method of “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15)? Was this the way in which a well-known but deceased “workman that needeth not to be ashamed,” effected the disentanglement of the truth from fables? The prospectus of his “Apostolic Advocate,” published over fifty years ago, set forth as a part of its object, “the defence of the Holy Scriptures against all creeds, confessions of faith, commentators and system makers. The “Holy Scriptures,” of his belief, as shewn by his numerous quotations, were the inspired writings known as the Bible. On that basis the work of nearly forty years was begun, continued and brought to a close. It was divinely blessed, and we are reaping the fruit of his arduous, but single-handed labours.

Read again, ye who claim to be “the most intelligent brethren,” and those having “largest and most matured experience in the truth,” the account given by

our beloved brother, Dr. Thomas of the ten day's tribulation under the fifth seal. By a decree of Diocletian all who bore the name of Christian were subjected to a fierce persecution. They were prohibited from meeting for religious worship and were ordered to "deliver all the sacred books into the hands of the magistrates" to be burnt. "The fellow-servants and the brethren who cheerfully submitted to the stripping of their edifices resolved not to interrupt their religious assemblies, nor to deliver their sacred books to the flames. It was not long before this resolution brought upon them the punishment of death. Many were added to the souls underneath the altar; but there were likewise multitudes who saved their worthless lives by discovering and betraying the Holy Scriptures into the enemy's hand. A great number of catholic bishops and presbyters acquired, by this criminal compliance, the opprobrious epithet of *Traditors*; and their offence was productive of much present scandal, and of much future discord among the professors in the Roman Africa. The copies, as well as the versions, of Scripture, were already so multiplied in the empire that the most severe inquisition could no longer be attended with any fatal consequence; and even the sacrifice of those volumes, which, in every congregation, were preserved for public use, required the consent of some treacherous and unworthy professors. It was preeminently a war upon the "word of the Deity," which "he has magnified above all his name." Treachery to this was therefore the high crime against him. If all had been Traditors, Jupiter and Hercules would have triumphed; and in these times we should have been groping in the darkness of heathenism and in the shadow of death. But thanks be to the Deity and the faithful "brethren," who by their "little strength" were enabled to circumvent "the devil and satan." These preserved the Holy Scriptures of the apostles, transmitting them to us through "the Remnant" which succeeded them. This remnant performed against the papists, who in after ages tried to exclude men from the Word, the same services as the brethren against the pagans; so that we have received "the revelation of the mystery," not by the favour of Catholics, but in spite of traditors and heathen who were reckless of its fate" (*Eureka II. pp. 255-7*).

In again referring to this historical incident Dr. Thomas says, "The effort made 'in the Diocletian and Galerian persecution of the fifth seal period to destroy every copy of the Holy Scriptures that could be found, while it failed, served to endear these writings to the faithful, and to stir them up to a more diligent study of their contents. The Satan perceived that "the truth as it is in Jesus" could not be extinguished so long as a single copy of the writings of the apostles and prophets remained in circulation. It has been the satanic policy, therefore, of all the ages and generations either to suppress the Scriptures by destroying them, or forbidding people to read them; or to persuade readers of them, that their true meaning is too recondite and obscure to be "seen" by any but a highly educated and learned few. This has been the policy of pagan, catholic, papist, and protestant; a policy that has been circumvented by "the Brethren" by all means within their reach. They are devoted students of the 'Scriptures themselves, and earnest in their endeavours to induce all within the sphere of their influence to study them also; and to enable them to understand them that they may believe

and obey the truth; for they believe with full assurance of faith, the saying of Paul, that “Every Scripture divinely inspired is also profitable for teaching, for conviction, for the instruction in righteousness; that the man of the Deity may be perfect, completely fitted for every good work”—2 Tim. 3:16. (*Eureka II.*, pp. 284–5.)

In writing about “the efforts of Constans to induce the Donatists to coalesce with the Catholic Church,” Dr. Thomas further says, “The idea was odious to them of a coalition with those, who in the Diocletian persecution and distress, in order to avoid martyrdom, had delivered up the Holy Scriptures, the best gift of the Deity to man. The zeal for the word was a remarkable characteristic of the woman’s seed. It underlaid the whole controversy between the Catholics and Dissenters of the period. The Catholics very lightly esteemed the Scriptures, and were daily withdrawing the people’s attention from them more and more, until at length they came to legislate against the use of them by “the faity” at all. Not so their opponents, with whom the sacred writings have always been a tower of strength against their enemies. To the fugitive woman was providentially committed the custody of the Divine Oracles, for it is the remnants of her seed which are testified to have held the testimony of the anointed Jesus, which is to be found only in the Holy Scriptures. No wonder, therefore, that these worthy and excellent people turned a deaf ear to every overture of reconciliation with the Word—neglecting adherents of the tyrannical church of Constans.”—(*Eureka III.* p. 123.)

These extracts furnish information from which several useful lessons may be learned. They show us what was the belief of the author of *Eureka*, whose “intelligence” and “matured experience in the truth” none can question. The “Holy Scriptures” were to him “divine oracles,” “divinely inspired,” and therefore “the Deity’s word;” they are described as containing “the testimony of the anointed Jesus,” a definition applicable to all the writings comprised in the Old and New Testaments. Is it likely that he who styles them “the best gift of God to man” would have admitted that any portion was a gift from man to man? that it consisted partly of God’s word and partly of man’s word? that “divine oracles” were partly composed of human oracles, or, worse still, that divine inspiration was fallible, and that its erring product had been magnified by Deity above His name? in other words, that anything coming from the flesh could be the subject of divine glorification! The mere suggestion that Dr. Thomas would entertain such religious lies could only emanate from the brain of one to whom he was utterly unknown.

Read again ye “intelligent brethren,” who claim to be “of largest and most matured experience in the truth,” his scathing denunciations of the flesh, and then ye can judge for yourselves as to the way Dr. Thomas would have treated the invitation to ascribe a human authorship to any part of the Holy Scriptures. Would he who describes them as “a tower of strength” have advised his brethren not to defend them? He who commends the remnant of the woman’s seed for

preserving the Holy Scriptures at the risk of life—would he also have approved of a compromising attitude towards an attack on their sacred and infallible character? He who describes the surrender of manuscript copies to an idolatrous enemy as “the high crime” of “treachery against the Deity”—what would he have denominated a concession to blind unbelief concerning the authorship of the autographs? He who endorses the action of the “worthy and excellent people” who “turned a deaf ear to every overture of reconciliation” with those who had proved traitors to the Deity’s word—would he have consented to fellowship the doctrine of a fallible authorship?

The day is fast approaching when they who, under the fifth seal, “were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held” (Rev, 6:9) will rise from the dead. How shall we who live under the sixth vial meet them? And how will they receive us? As fellow-companions, though living ages apart, in fidelity to the word of Jehovah? Suppose they were now to awake from their sleep what would they say to us, and we to them? The following imaginary conversation will be a sufficient indication:—

Fifth Seal Martyrs for God’s Word.—“Ye highly blessed ones; ye who have in your homes complete copies of the Holy Scriptures, who possess them in such a portable form that ye can carry them in the hand, who can at any time refer to them or read them, without fear of bodily harm, who can hear them expounded in your assemblies without danger of molestation, ye blessed ones, ye should highly value your privileges. When we laboured to “keep the commandments of God” (Rev. 12:17) we had no such convenience and immunity from fear. Copies of the Holy Scriptures were too rare and expensive to be owned by each of us. They were mostly kept at our places of meeting, whither we resorted to hear the reading of their precious words; to retain them in memory was our earnest aim, and much envied were they who were able to procure but a written fragment of God’s Word. Even these boons were the object of envy and hatred by our idol worshipping contemporaries. Our refusal to enter their temples was a practical condemnation of their religious superstition; our numbers were on the increase and theirs on the decrease; fears were excited that our religion would supplant theirs; to prevent this, it was thought but needful to deprive us of our sacred writings; hence the decree that all should be burnt; for that purpose we were required to surrender them: we absolutely refused, but some among us acted a treacherous part; they discovered to the enemy the place where our ecclesial copies were hidden. They thereby saved their lives, but we fell victims to the malice of the Pagan Dragon.”

Sixth Vial Defenders of Infallible Authorship.—“We heartily commend you for so nobly defending the Holy Scriptures. You shewed thereby an unalterable conviction that they were from God, and that they were a priceless boon to all to whom they come. You lost your lives for Christ’s sake to save them in the day when He who is our life shall appear. Not so with your perfidious brethren; they saved their frail lives for a time, and then passed into the abode of darkness

where ye have dwelt, to lose eternal life when called forth by the Judge of quick and dead. Five to fifty years at most in this sinful world preferred to a life of endless bliss! Poor deluded ones! Victims of present fear and feeling! Led by the seen! Blind to the unseen! Afraid of man but without the fear of God! Sowing to the flesh, of the flesh they reap.

We rejoice that ye were faithful, though mid the faithless found. Ye gave an example for all time—an example which has not been lost. Others have followed your steps. To you and them we owe an untold debt. The written word has thereby been preserved, and now 'tis seen in every land and clime. 'Tis true that lives no more are slain in its defence. That mode of persecution has for ever gone. The words of men now take the place of swords. We live in days when human thought is free—free to bless, and free to curse; free to preach the word of truth, and free to teach a lie. And O, such lies—lies presented in the garb of truth, partly fact and partly fiction; beguiling lies, which fascinate unstable minds with things of nought. From every class they come; from those who have no hope in God, as well as those who have; from unbelief in all its shades; from superstition's many-sided forms; and, as in days of yore, from those who claim the name of sons of light. With these we have to fight—to fight for each and all the truths of 'Holy Writ, and now to fight for that in which they are found. That written word we have been told doth come in parts, but not in whole, from God; or if from God. He hath in some things made mistakes. We this reject, and cannot bid God-speed to those who claim to be His sons, and will not do the same. But let them speak; hear what they say; and give the hand to those with whom ye deem it right in fellowship to meet."

Sixth Vial Apologists for Fallible Authorship.—'Ye well-meaning but unwise and mistaken brethren of the fifth seal, why need ye have been martyrs in the way ye describe? 'Twas through a "mere mechanical test." The manuscripts ye sought to preserve were only copies, they were not autographs. And how did ye know that they were correct? Nay, what proof had ye that the autographs were infallible? The writers may have been inspired, but what proof is that that in nothing they did err? May they not have made mistakes in things where doctrine plays no part? In treating only of salvation's way could ye have guarantee of absolute perfection. In other things they might not give more solid ground than writings uninspired. And was your faith in God so slight that ye would risk your lives for parchments such as these? Ye must have known that everyone could not be burnt; that Pagan satan's evil work must fail; that God, apart from any strife of yours, would keep or reproduce for future use the sacred scroll which taught the way of life. If ye had truly known that way ye would have felt its vital force, and need no longer trust in words which merely clothe divine ideas. Ye say those words had found a lodgment in your minds: what more then did ye need? If ye had sucked the honey, why cared ye for the comb? Could ye not have copies made of needful parts and left the rest? Why throw away your lives on rolls of skin which once were things of naught, and soon must waste away? Ye were self-made martyrs for mere corruptible matter and a mere theory. The truth is in

itself so strong that none can break it down; the forces of a mighty host no breach could make wherewith to pass its adamantine walls; it is its own natural fortress and needs no buttress of man's design. Your martyrdom was not for God's pure truth, but for parchment scrolls in which that truth was found; ye lost your lives through folly's own device. Consider your mistakes—what harm ye did to that grand cause which ye had sworn to serve. If ye had not demurred to Satan's first demand, his fury would not long have lived, and then your course had been quite free. Ye added fuel to the fire, and caused the flames to spread. The more ye did resist the fierce decree so strong became the will to give its hatred fullest vent. Consider what effect your conduct had within the church's pale. 'Twas ye who formed two parties there; 'twas ye who placed a stumbling block before the weak; 'twas ye who threw on them the weight of bearing with the strong; 'twas ye who interrupted peace, and stayed the progress of the truth. Alas! alas! for such a flock of foolish wayward sheep from simple paths of truth to stray."

Fifth Seal Martyrs for God's Word.—'Ye sixth vial Laodiceans! Is this the cold-blooded way in which ye measure our zeal for God? Our self-sacrifice for His Word? Have ye so little love for Him whose name ye bear that ye would not lose all ye have for safety of His Word? Are ye not sons of God and children of the light? How can ye cause the light of truth divine to shine without the word in which 'tis found? And how can ye hold forth "the word of life" (Phil. 2:15, 16), unless ye have a transcript of that written word? How can ye yourselves in this dark world "walk circumspectly" (Ephes. 5:15), (Ephes. 6:12), without the Spirit's "lamp" to guide your "feet" (Ps. 119:105)? How can ye measure righteousness with unrighteousness unless ye have the rule by which to measure (Lev. 19:35)? How can ye "weigh actions" (1 Samuel 2:3) like your Father in heaven, without the scales and weights of His providing? Know ye not that "a just weight and balance are the Lord's" (Prov. 16:11), and that "divers weights and divers measures," which many-sided human nature doth provide for its own acts, "both of them are alike abomination to the Lord" (Prov. 20:10)? Are ye so "perfect" that ye "offend not in word" (Jas. 3:2) and need no further "reproofs or instructions" wherewith to walk "the way of life" (Prov. 6:23)? Are ye so "undefiled" (Ps. 119:1) in thought and deed that ye no longer need "the word" in "spoken" (Jno. 15:3) or in written form (Ps. 119:9) wherewith to "cleanse your hands" and "purify your hearts" (Jas. 4:8; Ps. 24:4)? Are ye so well able to "keep in memory" (1 Cor. 15:2) "the statutes of the Lord" (Ps. 19:8) that ye can at all times, without fail, "put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean" (Lev. 10:10) Are ye so faultless in keeping Jehovah's "covenant and his testimonies" (Ps. 25:10) that ye need no "book of the covenant" to remind you of the terms thereof? Are ye so "filled with the knowledge of God's will" (Col. 1:9) that ye can for "increase" (ch. 2:19) find no room? Have ye partaken of so much spiritual "nourishment" (Col. 2:19) that "hunger" (Luke 6:21–25) and ye have parted? Can ye keep your minds "alive unto God" (Rom. 6:11) without an "everyday" supply of "bread from heaven" (Exod. 16:4)? And have ye even now so freely drunk "the water of life" (Rev. 21:6) that ye have ceased to "thirst" (Matt. 5:6).

If ye can answer Yea to each and all of these, we must express surprise and doubt, and plainly say that ye are self-deceived, and know not that ye are “wretched” in the extreme, “miserable” beyond compare, the poorest of the “poor,” “blind” to things outside the natural sight, and “naked” as the sinning pair who lost the right to Eden’s “tree of life” (Rev. 3:17; Gen. 3:11, 22). If such be your state, we “counsel” each of you to buy the Spirit’s “gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with” the Spirit’s “eyesalve, that thou mayest see” (Rev. 3:18).

“When we were pilgrims in the “narrow way” that “leadeth unto life” (Matt. 7:14,) we felt the need of that “staff” (Ps. 23:4,) which once did “comfort” him who always sought his “Father’s will” (John 5:30). We desired like him to “meditate” on Jehovah’s “law” “day and night” (Ps. 1:2.) “The word of the Lord was precious” to us; for, as in “days” of youthful Samuel, “there was no open vision” (1 Sam 3:1.) “The words of his mouth” were to us as unto Job “more than necessary food” (Job 23:12.) Like Jeremiah we “did eat them” for they were the joy and rejoicing” of our “heart” (Jer. 15:16.) We had learned that by them alone could we be “kept from the paths of the destroyer” (Ps. 17:4); and though man might “kill the body” we feared him not, but we feared One who “is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna” (Matt. 10:28). Yea, we not only feared Him, but we loved Him with all our “heart,” with all our “soul,” and with all our “mind” (Matt. 22:37); and our ardent desire was to “see God” (Matt. 5:8); to be made “pillars” in His “temple,” to receive His “new name,” to form part of the glorified throng, which includes them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and *for the word of God*” (Rev. 20:4), to be wedded to him who is “altogether lovely” (Cant. 5:16), who, in reflecting on the past, is able to say, “I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk” (Cant. 5:1).

Can ye wonder that we loved so well the parchment scrolls on which these good things were inscribed? We cherished them as means unto an end—the only means by which that end could be attained. ’Twas this, and this alone, that stirred our souls from inmost depth and bade us use what strength we had to keep within our grasp such precious pearls. “All that a man hath will he give for his life” (Job 2:4) it hath been said by even one who spake not always truth. We fought for life—not a vapour life which after “a little time” “vanisheth away” (Jas. 4:14). We fought for that unending “life hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3). “The good Shepherd” had given “His life for the sheep” (Jno. 10:11), and we could do no less for him. It devolved upon us, “not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Phil. 1:29), and to “lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jno. 3:16)—the brethren of our age, and of ages to come. At the call of duty we offered ourselves on the altar” (Rev. 6:9), of Christ’s love.

“Ye say our scrolls were only copies. What else could we expect to have? How could each enlightened Son of God possess an autograph? He might as well receive the truth direct by God-breathed power. Doth special virtue dwell in

writings first produced? How many things have ye not read from human pen of which ye never saw the autograph? Ye read from copies and asked for nought beside. Aim ye to be as perfect copies of your Master and your Head as those decaying scrolls for which we lost our lives.

Ye say we were victims to a mere theory, and could not be certain that inspiration's record was free from error. We do not understand such Ashdod talk, and must leave it to the brethren who have greeted us with words refreshing to the man of God. We knew that "every good gift and every perfect gift was from above," and that it came "down from the Father of lights," who "of His own free will begat us with the word of truth" (Jas. 1:17, 18) We knew that "word" to be a "gift" from God and therefore "perfect," and that words which come from Him must be like Him. We knew that such portion of that "word" as was on Israel's race bestowed had been, when they were "broken off" transferred to those "grafted in," that "of the root and fatness of the olive tree" the Gentiles might partake (Rom. 11:17). We knew that of the rest, it had been cared for with the utmost care by those to whom it "came" in apostolic days (1 Cor. 14:36), and by those who followed in their steps for twice one hundred years. Its writers were "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4:1), to whom was "committed the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19). When that "word" was transferred to writing all who received it became stewards thereof, and it is "required in stewards that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2). We esteemed it as a most important part of the "talents" for which we should have to account when our "lord" returned from the "far country." Without it the remaining "talents" would have been useless. We could not, therefore, allow it to be wrested from our grasp without a struggle. We dare not betray our trust. If we had, what hope that we should hear the much longed-for verdict? "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things. I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of the Lord" (Matt. 25:14–21).

"Ye sixth vial apologists speak much like those by whom the sacred scrolls which we esteemed so much were given to the foe, for which we called them Traditors. They acted thus because they did not prize enough the God-breathed words inscribed thereon. We fear it is the same with some of you, and therefore pray that you may soon repent your godless talk and receive "the Word of God" not as an imperfect, but a "perfect gift," and "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thess. 2:13). Until then we are in sorrow but in duty bound to decline the hand of fellowship; when next we meet we hope your change of mind will permit us to say God be with you."

December 14th, 1885.

Letter to the Editor 3

BY BRO. J. J. ANDREW, OF LONDON

(Continued from last month.)

Three important facts are noted by Dr. Thomas concerning the events of the fifth seal. First, that the action of the *Traditors* “was productive of much present scandal and of much future discord;” second, that they and their followers “lightly esteemed the Scriptures;” and third, that the attempt to “destroy every copy of the Holy Scriptures served to endear these writings to the faithful.”

History often repeats itself; the same principles produce like results in whatever age they operate. Too low an estimate of the Holy Scriptures is as certain to produce “scandal” and “discord” in the nineteenth century, as it did in the fourth, and the effort to impair their authority will “endear these writings to the faithful and stir them up to a more diligent study of their contents.”

Behold, then, a warning and a consolation; a warning to the Apologists of a fallible authorship, and a consolation to the uncompromising defenders of an infallible Bible. It cannot be denied that the former contention comes from those of the apostacy who do not rightly appreciate the Word of God, and that, however it may for a time deceive some earnest brethren, it has been welcomed by many who, in some respects, had already departed from the truth, not to speak of others who have previously stumbled and subsequently recovered from their fall. Facts such as these, although no basis for argument, more than counterbalance the weight of those who claim to be “the most intelligent brethren,” and “of largest and most matured experience in the truth.” Intelligence is useful when regulated by divine wisdom, but without such control, it becomes a snare instead of a guide. It is necessary to remember, as Dr. Thomas points out, that the Scriptures have, in all ages, been suppressed or perverted by “a highly educated and learned few.” From whom does false teaching nearly always arise? Is it from those whose mental endowments are below the average, or from such as have been highly gifted with natural talents and specially favoured with the means of cultivating them? History and experience point to the latter. There is far less to fear from some obscure brother whose knowledge of his mother tongue is so defective that he cannot put together a dozen consecutive sentences than there is from one who is able to use either tongue or pen in an attractive manner. Ability is no guarantee of stability; neither do learning and intelligence ensure skill in the elucidation of divine truths. Both human and divine knowledge may have the effect of puffing up (1 Cor. 13:4). The greatest desiderata are love for God and faith in His word, combined with a reverent and childlike humility toward the voice of wisdom. When these exist, either in learned or unlearned minds, they produce men of God, “thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” “If any man will do his will, “he shall know of the doctrine, whether “it be of God, or whether I (Jesus Christ) “speak of myself” (John 7:17); “The “secret of the Lord is with them

that fear “him, and he will show them his covenant” (Ps. 25:14); “The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from “evil is understanding” (Job. 28:28).

Ye “most intelligent” and “matured brethren” describe our action “in the matter of fellowship” as a “mere mechanical test.” If by this ye mean that it is wholly confined to a mechanical act, ye are labouring under a delusion. If ye mean that fellowship has nothing to do with a “mechanical test” ye are equally in the wrong. What action is there in this life which has not its “mechanical” or physical aspect? Is there one? If ye meet a friend, ye make use of the mechanism of your hand and arm to greet him; if he does likewise, your intercourse is agreeable; if he refuses, the result is the reverse: the attitude ye take towards each other is thus dependent on a “mechanical test.” And has not fellowship in the truth a mechanical aspect? The bread and the wine cannot be partaken without bringing into play some part of the bodily mechanism. Neither can the mind express itself by speech or pen without mechanical action of some kind. When, by this means, two or more minds are found to be in harmony in their scriptural belief, they go through the mechanical process of eating bread and drinking wine, and this becomes to them a test of fellowship. If such a course be right concerning that which the Bible teaches, how can it be wrong when applied to the authorship of that which is taught? If it be permissible to say that some parts are of erring authorship, on what ground can ye refuse fellowship to any who describe it as embracing a foolish authorship? If God permitted error in the work of inspiration, what guarantee have ye that He excluded folly? Or malice? Or injustice? Or falsehood? Or any other of the positive or negative defects of sinful flesh? If the control of the Spirit of God was inefficient in one thing, why not in another? If it allowed man’s ignorance to prevail, why not his passions? They both “alienate from the life of God” (Eph. 4:18; Rom. 8:13), and they are equally obstructive to the light which comes from Him. To describe the contention for infallible inspiration as a “wrangle over its mechanical construction,” and fellowship action in connection therewith, as a “mere mechanical test,” is to adopt misleading phrases, which obscure the vital issues involved. Appearance at the judgment seat has its mechanical and physical aspects, and yet the correct belief is admittedly of great importance, and a test of fellowship.

I remember twelve years ago a brother, of no small intelligence, declare on one occasion, in connection with the agitation about Christ’s nature and sacrifice, that he did not fellowship doctrines, and on another, that he did not fellowship bodies. When asked what there was left to fellowship, he was non-plussed. That brother has since then so logically applied this principle of negation that he is now in the condition of believing and fellowshiping “nothing and nobody.” A similar end may await some of those who slightly use the word “mechanical” in reference to the character of inspiration, and the fellowship arising from it. If so, it will be but the logical and consistent outcome of such a mode of treating a question of vital import.

When a king signs the death-warrant of one subject, or the pardon of another, he performs a “mechanical” act which to the individuals concerned, is all-important. When one emperor signs a declaration of war against another, it is a “mechanical” act, but fraught with momentous consequences to thousands or millions of human beings. When the Queen signs a dissolution of Parliament she goes through a “mechanical” act; but it results in a political upheaving of the whole nation. Why is this necessary every few years? To enable the voting part of the population to go through the “mechanical” act of putting a piece of paper into a “mechanical” structure called a ballot box; to enable the members elected—by a mere arithmetical majority—to go through the “mechanical” act of sitting on a bench in the House of Commons; to enable them to perform the “mechanical” action of walking through the division lobby to vote for a new law; to enable the members of the House of Lords to do likewise; and, finally, to enable the Queen to do a “mechanical” act in affixing her sign-manual to the said law. Without all these important stages, and numerous subordinate ones, we cannot have the benefit of any new Act of Parliament. The collective voice of the people inspires the Members of Parliament, and the Lords and Commons inspire the Queen, and the result is a mandate, the application of which no one can resist. There may be, and often is, controversy as to its meaning, but its authorship and authority cannot be contested without involving a charge of rebellion or treason. Similar conduct in relation to laws or communications from heaven can be described in no other language.

When the rules or regulations of any society have once been made, it is recognised that they cannot be abrogated, except in the prescribed way, by the organisation which brought them into operation. Thus the articles of association of a public company cannot be rescinded or enlarged unless the shareholders in meeting assembled so decide. But if there be no flaw in the process, neither the original nor altered clauses can be disputed; they are often found fault with, but their authority is not questioned; and the infraction of some of them is attended with legal penalties. If man-made regulations require such safeguards, how immensely more important that those of divine origin should be jealously protected by the individuals for whose benefit they have been enacted.

The legal profession is related to the laws of the country in a similar way to that which exists between the sons of God and statutes from heaven. The members of that profession deal with the laws as they find them. Though taking antagonistic views as to their meaning they do not question the authorship or authority. Imagine the dismay of a judge on the bench if a barrister not only discussed the meaning, but disputed the authorship of any Act of Parliament. And how would the three estates of the realm—Queen, Lords, and Commons—treat a writer or speaker who publicly declared that certain of their decrees were invalid? The recent special legislation for Irish disloyalty supplies an answer. If human rulers are so justly sensitive to the treatment of their administrative acts, how much more jealous must be the Ruler of heaven and earth respecting all writing in which His statutes are embodied. Those statutes are not confined to

simple commands and interdicts; the principles on which they are based are presented in great variety of form that they may be interesting to, and comprehended by, every kind of mental organisation; that which is not appreciated by one mind is highly valued by another. To allow any one section to be taken away is to mar the perfection of the whole, and interfere with the object for which it was given.

Ye “most intelligent” and “matured brethren” define the truth to be “a natural fortress whose defences are impregnable.” What mean ye by this? And where did ye learn it? By what “natural” forces has the truth been elaborated? Is it by some kind of Darwinian process? Have ye discovered in reference to the truth some new theory of evolution? Know ye that one of the latest Biblenullifying pamphlets issued from the press—whose author prefixes “Rev. Dr.” to his name—is entitled, “The Evolution of Revelation?” It teaches that “the Old Testament Revelation is specifically a revelation of *hope* in God’s redeeming grace,” and theorises of “revelation by a development, in which divine truth is certified to us as such, not by mere documentary statements, sometimes fallacious, but by our moral consciousness, contemplating both the historical *process* of its progressive disengagement from the errors sometimes confounded with it, and the historical *outcome* of its evolution in the manifestation of the divine Christ.” To identify “the moral energy of inspiration with an intellective accuracy that is exempt from error,” is described as a fallacy, and the Bible is defined to be “not really a written revelation, but a *revelation* that has been written about.”

These statements are cordially approved by a religious newspaper whose editorial intelligence cannot be questioned, and whose numerical circulation has probably no equal. Some of them read very much like the resolutions and reasonings of Christadelphians who countenance fallible authorship, and others are but a fuller application of the false principles recently enunciated. Beware, ye “most intelligent” and “matured brethren,” that ye be not driven from your present unsafe moorings on to a quicksand where no anchor can secure you. Or, if ye succeed in holding fast in spite of a broken chain, take heed lest your bad example does not cause others to make “shipwreck” of the faith (1 Tim. 1:19), and their ruin be ascribed to you.

How is it that some of you “intelligent” and “matured brethren” are willing to “resist evil,” contrary to Christ’s command (Matt. 5:39), when directed against yourselves, but refuse to resist an evil attack on the Word of God? Have ye forgotten that your Father hath said, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5)? And is your faith in His protection so small that you cannot, in deed as well as in word, say, “The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me?” (ver. 6.) How is it that ye are so ready to excuse yourselves from defending God’s Inspired Word, on the ground of your superior faith in Him? Do ye not recognise that ye, like the apostles, are “stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor. 4:1), as revealed through holy men? that your stewardship requires you

to protect the Book which is the only divine revelation of those “mysteries”? and that “it is required in stewards” that they “be found faithful” (ver. 2)? See ye not that ye relegate to God a duty which has been specially assigned to you, and that ye take upon yourselves that which God has expressly reserved for His Fatherly “care” (1 Pet. 5:7)? See ye not that faith is misapplied in leaving God to defend the authorship or teaching of His word, and that it is defective faith which leads you to set aside the divine law of protection and resort to human powers for deliverance?

An illustration of stewardship pertinent to the subject is seen in the office of Librarian, whose duty it is to protect from mutilation the books under his care. The Bible is a series of books by one Author, but different penmen, a library, in fact, of divine inspiration. It has been given by God to His stewards:—“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and unto our children for ever” (Deut. 29:29). That which is true of outward Jews is no less true of inward Jews. Those revealed “secrets” or “mysteries,” “the wise” only can “understand” (Dan. 12:10). They have all been given, like the Apocalypse, “to shew unto God’s servants” the divine mind concerning everything which they comprise, whether facts or predictions, doctrines or commands. What is the duty of “God’s servants” in reference to a revealed Word given for their special benefit? To protect it from corruption (2 Cor. 2:17). This is admitted as to the teaching. Why not as to the authorship? Is not the latter equally important, nay more so, than the former?

The “good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10), will, from their appreciation of the divine favour, carefully guard everything relating to its gradual development from the first announcement in Eden (Gen. 3:15), to the closing invitation, “Let him that is athirst, come” (Rev. 22:17). They will object to additions or erasures by uninspired man. They will not, for instance, allow the word *sky* to be inserted before “kingdom;” the word *immortal* before “soul;” the word *Triune* before “God;” the word *impersonal* before “coming of Christ;” the word *superhuman* before “Devil;” neither will they knowingly permit *sprinkling* to be substituted for “baptism,” *heaven* for “earth,” *torment* for “punishment,” nor *happiness* for “life,” and they will object to the pen being drawn through the promises to Abraham, the offer of immortality, the predictions of Israel’s restoration, or the descriptions of the millennial age. Any one of these alterations would seriously impair the character of God’s “manifold grace” or revealed favour. Is not the title-page as much within the scope of their protection as are the pages which follow? If so, how can they be faithful to their trust if they allow the word *human* to be coupled with “divine,” *uninspired* to be associated with the word “inspired,” or *fallible* to be joined to “infallible” before the word “authorship?” The library of which they are the custodians has written over its entrance, All these books have been given by inspiration of God (1 Tim. 3:16); they are not the word of man but the word of God (1 Thess. 2:13); and woe be to him who adds to (Prov. 30:6), or takes away what is written therein’ (Rev. 22:19). Of this inestimable collection of books the sons of God are all librarians, and it depends

on their fidelity to this trust whether their names continue in, or are blotted “out of the book of life” (Rev. 3:5). Addressing the rich Pharisees, Christ says, “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?” (Luke 16:10, 11). This principle is of wider application. Faithfulness in dealing with God’s revealed word, in all its aspects, will be the test of our acceptance in the day of judgment; if unfaithful in our treatment of “the word of life,” how can we expect to receive the “life” itself? (Phil. 2:16).

Ye “most intelligent” and “matured brethren” describe our propositions about the Bible as “artificial buttresses.” Have ye not heard of the theses of Martin Luther? Know ye not that by his propositions, the Monk of Erfurth shook religious Europe to its foundations and rescued the Bible from its long-buried obscurity? And with what result? Was it not that of substituting in the minds of many an infallible Book for an “infallible Church?” And did not the like result ensue through similar action on the part of the Hussites in Bohemia, the Waldenses in the Alpine valleys, the Wycliffites, Lollards, and Puritans in England, and the Covenanters in Scotland? Was not the basis of their action a strong conviction in the infallibility of the Bible? The fact that some of them went a step too far in the use of physical force, in no way detracts from the principle for which they contended.—History shews that previous to their appearance on the scene, the world was enswathed in intense darkness: that they brought forth from under the ecclesiastical bushel of Popery the only light which could lead men to God; that they held this light up aloft as a beacon on a hill, for all to see; that through their action we now enjoy unprecedented religious liberty, together with all the civilising influences which have sprung from a widespread circulation of the Bible; and that we are indebted to them for having prepared the way for the revival of the unadulterated truth in the present century. Had they reasoned as ye “matured brethren” do, they would have said, “Why ‘need we trouble ourselves to defend the ‘Bible? It is God’s book; if He wishes ‘it to occupy a more prominent position ‘in the world, He will see to it. If we ‘interfere we shall take upon ourselves a ‘duty not imposed upon us, and shew a ‘want of faith in God. The Bible has ‘been hidden by the “Mother of Harlots;” ‘God foresaw this, for He predicted ‘it through the Apostle John; the time ‘for her supremacy to end has not yet ‘come; when it arrives, God will take ‘care that the Bible supplants the Church ‘now dominating the world. In the meantime, ‘we will content ourselves with the ‘knowledge we have obtained of its contents, ‘and let other people remain in ‘that state of darkness which is evidently ‘attributable to the fact that God has ‘taken no action to enlighten them.”

It is not too much to say that if reasoning such as this had prevailed during the past five centuries “we should have been groping,” to adopt the language of Dr. Thomas, “in the darkness of” Romish superstition “and in the shadow of death.” To what conclusion do these facts lead? That the principle of action by which the Bible has been rescued from oblivion is required to maintain its ascendancy. The

establishment of a powerful antagonist to the Papacy, and the universal circulation of the Bible, by means of the printing press, do not in the slightest degree lessen this duty. The Bible is now hidden, not by being suppressed, but by perversion of its teaching. Human reason has displaced ecclesiastical decrees; diversified interpreters have superseded Papal councils; and individual presumption has taken the place of an arrogant church. Imaginary ideas assail the Book from every quarter, in relation both to its origin and its meaning, and if not refuted and rejected, the truth cannot be preserved pure. There is such a strong dislike in the human mind to the restrictions and obligations imposed by God's word, that the most ingenious efforts are made to lessen its authority even by those who exhibit a deferential regard for it. From these false reasonings, it is impossible for the brotherhood of Christ to be kept free. Hence the necessity for occasional conflicts to eliminate elements of corruption. The wave of scepticism which, since the publication of the *Essays and Reviews*, has for twenty-five years been gradually washing away the foundations of even Church and Dissent, appears to have made some inroad among the only community which can claim to be built upon the Rock of the Truth. In such circumstances "buttresses," whether "artificial" or otherwise, become both useful and necessary to prevent the structure being completely undermined and the occupants transferred to a watery grave.

Ye "most intelligent" and "matured brethren," contend that no theory should be made a test of fellowship. Know ye not that ye have already done this? What is immortal-soulism but a mere theory? Is not a super-human devil a mere theory? The belief in heaven-going is the result of a mere theory. Eternal torment is nought but a theory. And is there not very much theory in the teaching concerning a Triune God? Each and all of these theories ye have already refused to fellowship. And why? Is it not because they militate against a vital element of God's word? And do ye not act thus, because ye believe the teaching of that word to be infallible? On what evidence is this belief based? Where is your proof? Have ye any? If so, produce it. If not, on what ground do ye reject the theories in question? If the teaching which they subvert be not infallible, ye have made a great mistake. Ye cannot in that case be certain that what ye believe is true; for ye have merely selected one set of theories in preference to another. And with what confidence can ye appear before the public, and expound your belief? If unable with full assurance to affirm that it is founded on infallible documents, your hearers would be justified in describing what ye hold as mere opinions, and in rejecting them, they would act quite consistently with your untenable position. If what God hath spoken be fallible, we are fools to stake our eternal destiny upon it; but, if infallible, as it must be, it is at our peril that we reject any part of it.

If ye admit that God's Word is infallible in regard to the way of salvation, by what extraordinary process of reasoning do ye arrive at the conclusion that in other matters it is fallible? Where is your evidence of this distinction? Ye make an assertion; where is your proof? See ye not that ye oppose what ye call a theory

by what, if consistent, ye must admit to be but another theory? And, moreover, a dangerous theory. For if ye once allow any part of God's Word to be described as fallible, ye will be unable to erect a barrier to the whole being brought within the same category. If the record of things within human knowledge be erroneous, what guarantee have we that those things outside human knowledge are even true? If that which man can test be false, how can we be sure that that which is beyond sight is a reality? Is it reasonable to say the least, that God would jeopardise the acceptance of His proffered mercy by allowing the men through whom it came to state things which the intelligence of His own creatures could demonstrate to be erroneous? If so, ye unfortunately possess a very low estimate of the love which induced Him to put forth "the arm of salvation," and to send "His messengers, rising up betimes, because He had compassion on His people" (2 Chron. 36:15.) See ye not that ye are but imitating the house of Israel when it said "The way of the Lord is not equal" (Ezek. 18:25.) The degenerate Jews ascribed inequality to God's judgments, and ye attribute inequality to the authorship of the word which records them. The divine reply in the one case is applicable to the other: "Is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal?" Do ye judge God by yourselves? "To whom will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" (Isa. 40:18.) Think ye that because human historians make mistakes in names, dates, &c., that the divine historian does likewise? Are ye so addicted to finding fault with the work of man that ye cannot lay aside the habit when ye deal with the work of God? And how is it that ye are so censorious about minor flaws in human expositions of the truth, and so tolerant of the contention that there are errors in the inspired Word of truth? "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see" (Isa. 42:18).

Ye recognise, by your past actions, that certain false doctrines should be excluded from fellowship; but object to do likewise with a false theory. On what ground do ye make this distinction? When any false theory is the subject of teaching, does it not thereby become as false doctrine? Does it not, whether taught or believed, nullify the truth to which it is opposed? And does not action depend on the nature of the thing believed and its effects; not on that by which it may be accidentally called? What's in a name? Sometimes much, sometimes nothing. Men of intelligence and maturity of mind are not generally satisfied with the outside appearance of things; they look below the surface, and endeavour to get at the roots—especially of words, phrases, principles, &c. If ye decline to fight on the right side in this conflict, on the ground that the point in dispute relates to a mere theory, ye are entrenching yourselves behind a "fortress" of your own devising, and bolstering up a false position by means of "buttresses" of the most flimsy description. O ye "most intelligent brethren . . . of largest and most matured experience in the truth," and ye who plume yourselves on your knowledge of Greek or Hebrew, despising the illiterate of Christ's flock—is it thus that ye beguile yourselves by the misuse of your native tongue? Is this the result of your "aim to acquire exact knowledge of the truth?" Take heed that ye be not among those whom the apostle described as "deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13). "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be

wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise" (1 Cor. 3:18). When ye stand before the judgment seat your intelligence, experience, and maturity will be of no avail unless they have been completely sanctified to the service of God. Know ye not that "When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness . . . all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die" (Ezek. 18:24). "Examine yourselves;" "Prove your own selves" (2 Cor. 13:5). Test whether your attitude be the result of intelligence or feeling. Are ye quite sure that ye have not been governed by partiality for one brother, and prejudice against another? Imperceptible influences such as these often blind the intellect and warp the judgment. Will ye allow yourselves to be "taken captive" by such fleshly snares? (2 Tim. 2:26). If so, "when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Heb. 5:12). Those "first principles" teach us "not to respect persons in judgment" (Deut. 1:17). To do so is to "commit sin" (Jas. 2:9). It matters not by what human instrumentality this controversy has been brought about. our duty in relation to it is the same. If all were angels or all were devils, it would still impose upon us the individual obligation of weighing calmly and deliberately the evidence presented, and of taking that side which has the preponderance. Will ye allow human mistakes and failings to interfere with your duty to God? Will ye allow yourselves to be frightened by the bugbear of "consistency" falsely so called? Because ye have not previously done that which ye are now invited to do, will ye refuse, that ye may maintain a consistent career? Know ye not that we are called upon to increase in knowledge and wisdom? That, if we do this, the actions of early life are not in accord with those of riper years? And that if we do it not, the mind becomes a fossil, and unable to fully grasp "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of divine things? Be consistent by all means; but let your consistency be on the right basis. Let it take for its starting point your divine sonship. Ye would defend the character, writings, or heirlooms of an earthly father: will ye dare to act otherwise toward your Father in heaven? If ye do, ye are chargeable with the grossest inconsistency, your practice being out of harmony with the name ye bear.

If your self-searching does not result in the discovery of any wrong influences connected with persons, ye would do well to turn your scrutiny in another direction. Ye may find it in a deficiency of faith. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief" (Heb. 3:12). Remember that "the heart is deceitful above all things" (Jer. 17:9), and that "it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace" to prevent being "carried about with divers and strange doctrines" (Heb. 13:9). That "grace" comes through humility towards our heavenly Father:—"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (Jas. 4:6). When Israel's "heart" was "lifted up" he forgot God (Deut. 8:14); "When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died" (Hosea 13:1). The unbelief of Israel has been a standing warning to all subsequent generations, and it is apparently still necessary to call attention

to it. The Psalmist refers to it thus: "They rebelled against the *words* of God, and contemned the *counsel* of the Most High" (Ps. 10:7, 11); "they believed not His *Word*, but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the *voice* of the Lord" (Ps. 106:24, 25). On this account God "gave them up unto their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own counsels" (Ps. 81:12). They followed one device after another until they became confirmed idolators. And what is idolatry? "An idol is nothing in the world," says Paul (1 Cor. 8:4). It is the offspring of the imagination, a pure human invention. When the Israelites "joined themselves unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead, they provoked God to anger with their *inventions*" (Ps. 106:28, 29). It matters not whether the "many inventions" which men have "sought out"—(Eccles. 7:29)—are transferred from the realm of mind to the world of matter, they are idols. Thus "covetousness is idolatry" (Col. 3:5). To this and other forbidden practices the Apostle John doubtless referred when he said, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 Jno. 5:21).

The statement implying that our propositions and resolutions concerning the Bible are "idols" is a charge which, if carefully examined, will rebound upon those who originate and endorse it. In effect, it says that the divine authorship and consequent infallibility of the whole Bible is a myth, a thing of nought; "nothing in the world;" that those who contend for it are substituting an invention of their own for that which God has designed; or that they are asserting the divinity of that which is purely human; that they are ascribing to God that of which He is not the author; or, that they are attributing to that of which He is the author a quality not imparted to it. If these assumptions be granted, the charge founded on them is a correct one; and as false principles always work out a bad result, they must have the effect of leading their supporters further away from God and His word. Could a more glaring anomaly than this be propounded by unintelligent, inexperienced, or immature minds?

On the other hand, if these assumptions be refuted, what follows? That they who adhere to them describe as human that which is divine; that they attribute to man that which has come from God; or that they deprive God's word of one of its essential characteristics; that, in fact, they "rob God" (Mal. 3:8), "steal Jehovah's words" (Jer. 23:29), and substitute the flesh for the spirit.

The issue before us is thus a very distinct one. It affects our relationship to God in its most intimate aspect. It is written, "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2:30). In no other way can we "honour" God than by upholding and obeying His word; and to lightly esteem it is to "despise" its Author. Israel's disobedience is attributable to their having "despised Jehovah's judgments," and "abhorred His statutes" (Lev. 26:43); "Thou hast despised," says he, "mine holy things" (Ezek. 22:8). Of him who "doeth ought presumptuously" it is said "he hath despised the Word of the Lord" (Num. 15:30, 31). What can be more presumptuous than to say that an inspired writing is not inspired, or that divine inspiration does not involve

infallibility? When Christ commissioned the seventy he said to them “He that heareth you heareth me; and ‘he that despiseth you despiseth me, ‘and he that despiseth me, despiseth ‘him that sent me” (Luke 10:16). To despise these Spirit-endowed disciples is to despise Christ, and to despise Christ is to despise God. The same is true of the apostles. Hence we find Paul saying in connection with his declaration that “God hath not called us unto uncleanness ‘but unto holiness,” “He therefore that ‘despiseth, despiseth not man but God, ‘who hath also given unto us His Holy ‘Spirit” (1 Thess. 4:8). That which is affirmed of the apostles must also be true of the prophets, for all spake by the same authority. We are called to holiness by means of the Holy Spirit in them, and all that we think and do must be in harmony with our “holy calling” (2 Tim. 1:9). To define any portion of the Spirit’s teaching to be the writing of man, is the first step to despising it; it degrades to our own level that which is of God. It is written, “Whoso despiseth the *word* shall be destroyed” (Prov. 13:13).

When the Jews charged Christ with having “a devil” (Jno. 8:48) they judged “after the flesh” (ver. 15). In like manner those who attribute error to the word of God “judge after the flesh;” they either transfer to God that which is a characteristic of diabolos, or they ascribe to diabolos that of which God is the author. The reply of Christ, when denying the charge brought against him, is equally applicable to the indictment of fallibility against the word of God: “Ye do dishonour me” (Jno. 8:49). The command has been given that “all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father” (Jno. 5:23). To dishonour the Son is to dishonour the Father; and, in like manner, to dishonour God’s word is to dishonour God. “Give unto the Lord the glory (or honour, marg.) due unto his name” (Ps. 29:2). Honour to the less requires honour to the greater; God’s word has been “magnified above” that “name” (Ps. 138:2). We are called upon, therefore, not merely to refrain from anything which dishonours God’s word, but to do those things which tend to its exaltation. “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? And if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that *despise my name*” (Mal. 1:6). Can there be any question as to which side of the present contention fulfils this requirement as far as it relates to the authorship of God’s word?

The issue placed before us is, whom will ye honour—God or man? If God be the author of the Scriptures, give Him the honour; but if man be the author of any part, give the honour to man. It is a parallel to that presented to Israel by Elijah in the reign of King Ahab:—“If the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him” (1 Kings 18:21.) The worshippers of Baal attributed to their idol the power belonging to the God of Abraham, and they denied that God was the author of the actions which He had performed. Believers in fallible Bible authorship do precisely the same, substituting the work of revelation for works of creation and preservation. It is the same false principle in both cases, but differently applied. If its existence in fleshly Israel needed checking by an inspired “prophet of fire” why

should not its toleration (to use no stronger word) in spiritual Israel be corrected by an uninspired brother of fire?

You (brother Roberts) may, like Elijah, have thought that there were few others who would be valiant for the God of Israel, but I hope you will yet have the satisfaction of knowing that, amid widespread defection, there is a goodly company of brethren who are determined to honour God by contending for the infallibility of His Word. If they fully realise the paramount importance of the conflict, they will endeavour to forget and forgive any incident in the fight for God which they cannot approve.

You have been called “a madman.” The meaning of the charge is dependent on the character of the accuser. From a divine point of view the world is a huge lunatic asylum. Its inhabitants think they see the substance, whereas they see only the shadow. God, who is the substance, is unseen: the material world, which is the shadow, is the only object visible to the natural eye. “Out of God are all things” (1 Cor. 8:6). The Spirit is incorruptible, but that which has been elaborated by the Spirit is corruptible. Of human nature it is said, “The world passeth away and the lust thereof” (1 Jno. 2:17). The natural man does not perceive this. He, therefore, ignores the unseen, and deals only with the seen. He thinks he is a reality following a reality; whereas he is but a shadow pursuing a shadow. In consequence of this delusion, those who give to the substance the energy which he bestows on the shadow are looked upon as mad. But who is the real madman? The man whose pursuits end in death, or he whose labours lead to everlasting life with God? In the present state the latter appears a fool, but when the day of reckoning arrives his madness will be shown to have been the highest wisdom.

The apostle Paul is an illustration. “Thou art beside thyself,” said Festus: “much learning doth make thee mad” (Acts 26:24). And according to modern ideas of propriety, Nehemiah would appear to be insane when he “contended with” the Jews who had married strange wives “and plucked off their hair” (Neh. 13:25).

To the “cold” and “lukewarm” brethren the “hot” ones (Rev. 3:15–16) sometimes appear as mad as do the brethren of Christ in the eyes of unbelievers. The reason is the same in both cases; those who claim to be “wise in Christ” act on principles totally different from those which animate such as are contented to be “fools for Christ’s sake” (1 Cor. 4:10). One class is influenced by human approbation, but the other seeks only the divine. In looking almost exclusively to God, the latter class is at times liable to act in a way that seems very strange. It would be well if both objects could always be harmoniously blended; but, alas the weakness of the flesh precludes it. Even he whose speech and action were perfect was described by the Jews as “mad” (Jno. 10:20); how then can his disciples, especially the “hot” ones escape a similar charge? A quick thinking executive mind is especially liable to do “mad” things; when to this is

added a wholesome godly fear, with a corresponding disregard for man, it is no wonder that your conduct has sometimes presented the appearance of madness. These idiosyncracies have, on some occasions, been of inestimable value in the service of the truth, and I hope you will be spared until the coming of Christ, faithfully and valiantly to defend like “your brother and companion in tribulation,” the Apostle John, “the testimony of Jesus Christ,” and “the word of God” (Rev. 1:9).

Observations of a similar character are applicable to the accusations in which some indulge about “Popery” and “dogmatism,” with this addition, that those whose condemnation is the loudest are, as a rule, addicted to the very things of which they complain. To practice them within the sphere of their own operations is allowable, but for anyone else to appear to do so is a crime.

The charge of claiming infallibility in the defence of an infallible Book is a palpable incongruity. The most flagrant illustration of the assumption of infallibility—that of the Papacy—had a totally different object; it has been claimed for the purpose of setting aside that Book, and it has resulted in the utterance of “great words against the Most High” (Dan. 7:25). But your action has had for its aim the exaltation of the Book of books, and the magnifying of its Immutable and Infallible Author; and it has resulted in much personal loss and suffering. Strange, indeed, it is that such conduct should be described as claiming infallibility for personal ends. If some of those who make this charge understood themselves, they would see that their own attitude approaches very closely to that which they reprobate. The assertion, for instance, that the animal which in our version is called “the coney” (Lev. 11:5), does not chew the cud involves an implied claim to infallibility which is simply appalling; it says, in effect, that Moses, in recording, under Spirit guidance, what “the Lord spake” to himself and Aaron (ver. 1) made an error. No allowance is made for any mistake either in copying, pointing, or translating the Hebrew, or for wrong interpretation through the absence of a comprehensive and accurate knowledge of the animal creation. The quadruped referred to, it is said, can be no other than one which chews not the cud; and yet, says a writer on this subject, “It is on the sole authority of the Rabbinical writers that the Hebrew *shaphan* has been identified with the cony or rabbit. That this conclusion cannot be correct is very evident. The rabbit is not an Asiatic animal, and it is very far from being solicitous of a rocky habitation, which is the distinguishing characteristic by which the *shaphan* is here (Prov. 30:26) mentioned.” Reasons are then given to show that it is most probably an animal which is called by the Syrians *Daman*, by the Arabs *Nabr*, and by the Abyssinians *Ashkoko*. “Under its Abyssinian name of *Ashkoko*, a very full description of the animal has been given by Bruce, and the general accuracy of his account has been attested by more recent observations. He strongly advocates its identity with the *shaphan*, and shows how inapplicable the Scriptural intimations are to the rabbit. . . . Its size corresponds pretty nearly to that of the hare; and its general colour is grey mixed with a reddish brown, but white under the belly, and blackish about the forefeet. It is so much an animal of

the rock, that Bruce says he never saw one upon the ground, or from among the large stones at the mouth of the caves, holes, and clefts of the rock, in which it resides. They are gregarious animals, living in families; they appear to subsist on grain, fruits, and roots; and certainly chew the cud, as the *shaphan* is said to do in Lev. 11:5.”—(*Knight’s Illustrated Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*, Vol. iii. p. 295).

To attribute error to an inspired man, and virtually to demand that one who is uninspired shall make no mistake, is one of those anomalies which can only be explained by the perversity of the human mind. Between inspiration and providence, there is a marked difference. In inspiration God’s action is direct, and, therefore, results in a perfect expression of His mind; but in providence His control is not so complete as to prevent a man manifesting his mental proclivities. On the contrary, God often uses them—even when of an extreme character—for His own purpose. Hence the difficulty which many have in recognising the hand of God in human affairs. They fail to perceive that the action of one is counter-balanced by the action of another, and that the combined results are so carefully adjusted as to fulfil God’s purpose in the exact way and at the precise time which He designed. A narrow view sees only defect, but a comprehensive one—especially when impartial and retrospective—can see that there has been nothing wanting. Thus it is with the operations of the truth; the individual work of each of us is imperfect, but, under the guidance of God, the combined result is without flaw. It is for this reason I have endeavoured to portray all the aspects of the present controversy, and I hope that your readers will bear this in mind in perusing my communication. The survey might have been made more complete had circumstances allowed.

Letter to the Editor 4

BY BRO. J. J. ANDREW, OF LONDON

(Continued from last month.)

Fellowship

The connection between fraternal fellowship and the divine authorship of the Bible cannot be ignored. It is said that our contention on this point is new, and that its introduction is an unwarrantable addition, involving the imposition of a yoke which God does not require. If this be true, it is a serious charge, which convicts us of interposing a barrier to human salvation. Speaking with a full knowledge of the oldest ecclesia in London, I can say that the attitude contended for is not wholly new. It may not have been expressed so explicitly as now formulated, but it has been implied. At the Sunday afternoon discussion class, which permits opponents an equal time with the brethren to adduce evidence and arguments for or against the first principles of the Truth, the speakers have by

announcement on the handbills been expressly confined to “believers in the Divine origin of the Scriptures;” and the same limitation has been imposed upon outside inquirers desirous of asking questions at the week-night meeting of the brethren. Furthermore, a frequent question put to candidates before immersion has been in these or similar words:—“How have the Old and New Testaments been produced?” And the only answer recognised as satisfactory has been that involved in the words “By the Spirit of God.” These facts clearly show that our basis of fellowship has implied a belief in the divine authorship of the Bible. The present contention is, therefore, not quite new; it merely expresses, in a more precise form—rendered necessary by the circumstances of the case—that which we have hitherto believed and tacitly recognised. In reply to this, it will be said that our belief did not specify the Bible to be infallible; and for a good reason; no one questioned it. If the point had been raised, there is little, if any, doubt that infallibility would have been defined to be an essential element of divinely inspired writings. The explicitness with which any part of our belief requires to be set forth depends upon internal or external circumstances. The truth of God is, in its essence, a very simple thing, and in communications between those who are familiar with all its features, it can be expressed in very few words. It is the absence of this comprehensive knowledge which compels us to expound it in elaborate detail. The “many inventions” of the human mind pervert every item. Hence the necessity for a statement in both positive and negative form. Completeness should be its first element, and its second, simplicity. In reference to the subject under discussion, it should not be so lax as to permit of the divine character of the Bible being undermined, nor so stringent as to violate the conscience of any who believe in that divine character, and hold no theory detrimental thereto; and lastly, it should be expressed in such a simple and elementary form that any babe in Christ can endorse it without an exhaustive investigation. The following proposition, which represents the minds of all but four of the brethren who jointly considered the six propositions already presented, is intended to fulfil these requisites. To adapt it for an ecclesial resolution, a few words have been added, and it appears in that form in your intelligence columns for January:—

7. That the fundamental principle involved in the foregoing propositions, viz.—the divine authorship and consequent infallibility of the Bible,—is an essential element in our basis of fellowship, and therefore we decline to fellowship those who attribute to some parts a fallible authorship.

It is not to be expected that this proposition will be received by any who have not endorsed the previous six. A correct belief on the authorship aspect is essential before the mind can rightly consider that of fellowship; without this prerequisite, adverse criticisms will necessarily miss the mark because the importance of the main question does not receive its due weight. The supposition is not entertained that even all who agree with Nos. 1 to 6 can accept No. 7; for there are those who, though of one mind in regard to authorship, diverge on the point of fellowship. The supporters of No. 7 hope, however, that they will before

long be joined by those who accept the previous six, so that if two camps be inevitable, they may be separated by the broad line of belief, and not by the narrower one of fellowship.

The fellowship aspect is summarily rejected by some because they do not find a passage which says in so many words, 'Withdraw from those who disbelieve the inspiration of any part of the Scriptures, or who deny that inspiration involves infallibility.' To commence with any such idea as this is a mistake, and it is in itself sufficient to disqualify the mind for considering the testimony available. If applied to other doctrines, it will be found that very few first principles of the truth can form part of the basis of fellowship. The reason for this is obvious; the apostolic epistles originated in circumstances peculiar to the time in which they were written. For the most part, they treat of erroneous doctrines then propagated; only occasionally, as in 2 Tim. 4:1–3, are undeveloped heresies specified. We are shewn how the first century Christians were admonished to deal with false teachers, and this by implication is a command for us to do likewise. The principles on which they acted can be applied to the innumerable false doctrines which have been advocated during the last eighteen centuries. Any theory or dogma which negatives a vital element of God's revealed Word is a ground for disfellowship. This, it will be said, leaves scope for discussion as to what is included in the word "vital." True; but hitherto it has been possible to arrive at a tolerable amount of unanimity on this point; and there should be no insuperable difficulty in a continuance. Anomalous, indeed, will it be if those who are in harmony on the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the things of Christ's name, cannot agree that the authorship of the book by which they have been enlightened is a vital element of fellowship.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17). Part of the "doctrine" or teaching "learned" by the Roman Christians was the divine authorship of the Old Testament Scriptures. They were taught that "unto the Jews were committed the oracles of God" (chap. 3:1); that to them pertained "the covenants, and the giving of the law . . . and the promises" (chap. 9:4); that "the law" was "holy" (chap. 7:12), that it contained "the form of knowledge and of the truth" (chap. 2:20), and that its "end" for "righteousness" was Christ (chap. 10:4); that the righteousness of God was in apostolic days, "witnessed by the law and the prophets" (chap. 3:21); that the writings of the "prophets" were "holy scriptures" (chap. 1:2); that the record of the faith of Abraham, in Genesis was part of "the Scripture" (chap. 4:3); that the account of Pharaoh's stubbornness in Exodus, was part of "the Scripture" (chap. 9:17); and that the narrative about Elias, in Kings, was also part of "the Scripture" (chapter 11:2); that "faith," by which man can alone "please God" (Hebrew 11:6), cometh "by hearing the Word of God" (ch. 10:17), and that, notwithstanding Israelitish Apostacy, the preaching of "the Word of God" to Abraham's fleshly seed had not been altogether of "none effect" (ch. 9:6); that "the revelation of the mystery" which was "made manifest" in apostolic days, was "made known to all nations for the obedience of faith,"

“according to the commandment of the everlasting God,” “by the scriptures of the prophets” (ch. 16:26); and lastly, that “whatsoever things were written aforetime,” in “the Scriptures,” “were written for” the “learning” of Apostolic believers, that they “might have hope” through the “patience and comfort” derived from those “scriptures” (ch. 15:4).

The advocacy of anything contrary to this teaching would cause a divided state in the Roman ecclesia, which, like other ecclesias, contained those who sowed to the “flesh” and those who sowed “to the spirit” (Gal. 6:8). What, for instance, would be the consequence if any were to teach that the Jews were no more the custodians of the “oracles of God” than any other nation; that the law had no connection with Christ; that though both the law and the Scriptures were called “holy,” the holiness of the Scriptures was much inferior to the holiness of the law; that the narratives of Abraham, Pharaoh, and Elijah were not a part of “the word of God”; that the offer of salvation was not made to Israel under the law; that “the oracles of God” were only the two tables of stone given to Moses; that the “holy Scriptures” were not identical with “the Word of God;” that faith comes by hearing that which is partly God’s word and partly man’s; that some of the things written in “the Scriptures” under Spirit-guidance were erroneous; or that “the word of God” was in some parts written without divine control? That portion of the ecclesia which gave heed to “the Spirit of Truth” in the apostles (1 John 4:6) would oppose these elements of “the spirit of error,” and if unable to change the minds of the advocates thereof, they would find it necessary to withdraw or ask the teachers of the error to do so that they might peaceably pursue the object for which they had been constituted “saints” (ch. 1:7) And in so doing they would but obey the apostolic command to “avoid them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine they had learned.”

The inspired statement in Rom. 15:4, when combined with 2 Tim. 3:15–16, affirms that “Whatsoever things were written aforetime in the Holy Scriptures were written by inspiration of God for our learning, that we might through them be made wise unto salvation, and receive instruction in all things necessary for righteousness.” To teach that some parts of the Old Testament Scriptures were not given by inspiration is subversive of this truth; it is “contrary to the doctrine which” the early Christians “learned” from the apostles; it causes a divided state of mind concerning a matter on which there ought to be unity; and it introduces an “offence” or stumbling-block in a pathway which requires to be made “straight” or “even” (Marg. Heb. 12:13). It, therefore, imposes upon us the obligation to “avoid them” who so teach.

The introduction of a theory about inspired writings which lessens their divine character and authority is likewise opposed to apostolic doctrine; thus, to say that they partake of the deficient knowledge or sinful thoughts inseparable from human penmen, is to affirm that they are defective as a means of “instruction,” and that the “learning” derived from them is, in some things, misleading. A “man of God” cannot be effectively reprov'd if there be any doubt as to the divine

authorship of the admonitions or any question as to the divine guarantee of the Spirit-recorded illustrations; he cannot be correctly instructed if the means of “instruction” be faulty; neither can he be made “perfect” in godliness by writings which do not partake of the perfection of God.

The character of God embraces “love” (1 Jno. 4:8), omnipotence (Gen. 17:1), omniscience (Ps. 139:1–6), wisdom (Rom. 16:27), justice (Isa. 45:21), truthfulness (Tit. 1:2), righteousness (Ps. 145:17), holiness (Ps. 99:9), mercy (Ps. 86:5), immutability (Jas. 1:17), and incorruptibility (Rom 1:23); in all of which He is “perfect” (Matt. 5:48), and, therefore, without error or defect—another mode of saying that He is infallible.

There would be no hesitation in saying that the inspired word is an expression of God’s love, wisdom, and mercy (Ps. 40:10; 1 Cor. 2:7; Ps. 119:58), that it is an embodiment of his holiness, justice and righteousness (2 Pet. 2:21; Lev. 19:36; Ps. 40:9) that it is “incorruptible” (1 Pet. 1:25) “faithful” (Tit. 1:9), and unchangeable (ps. 89:34), that it is endowed with “power” (Rom. 1:16), and that it is “truth” (Jno. 17:17; Ps. 119:160). On what ground can the other features of the divine character be divorced from it? Where is the evidence that the knowledge which omniscience has caused to be written for man’s instruction does not partake of perfect accuracy? And why is infallibility singled out as the only characteristic of God which is absent from, or deficient in His Word? The only answer is, “No proof;” a reply which has been used as an excuse for rejecting everything that God has revealed.

In elaborating proposition 1, I affirmed that everything which comes from God must be infallible. The context shows that this refers to a spoken or written expression of the divine mind. It does not include the works of creation. Between inspiration and creation, there is a clear distinction. In the exercise of creative skill, God imparts to His workmanship those qualities and those only, which His wisdom dictates. Some of His creative works are animate and others inanimate; of the living creatures, one class is endowed only with physical power, another with physical and intellectual power, and a third with physical, intellectual, and moral power. The third class is man, to whom God imparted some only of His own qualities. Man did not come from God in the same sense that spoken or written words come. Speech must necessarily partake of the mental qualities of the speaker. When God speaks, it is the utterance of an infallible mind; to inspire a man to write is but another mode of speaking: the result must, therefore, in either case be an infallible production.

Objection is raised to this conclusion on the ground that some of the Bible statements are not in harmony with scientific facts. The most frequently quoted illustration is that of Joshua and the sun standing still; this, it is said, conveys the idea that the sun goes round the earth instead of, according to astronomical science, the earth going round the sun; and is consequently erroneous. Reasoning such as this ignores the fact that the Bible is adapted for the

understanding of those to whom it was originally given, that it has been written in their own language, and in phraseology suited to their apprehension. To have written it in any other style would have been absurd, and would have defeated its object. If, for instance, the miracle just referred to had been described as the earth standing still, it would have been meaningless to those to whom the record was first given, and, being contrary to their observation, might have interfered with the recognition of its divine origin. In Joshua 10:12, it is Israel's leader who says, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon." It is on the basis of Joshua's words that the inspired record says in the next verse, "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed" (ver. 13). The main point to be narrated was that a miracle took place which had the effect of prolonging the daylight; this was an indisputable fact, and the authorship by which it was recorded was unerring. The mode of expression adopted is quite a different question. The words used were in harmony with the human view of the occurrence, and with the style of language then in vogue—a form of expression which has descended to the present time. It is an everyday event for even scientific people, who know that the earth goes round the sun, to speak of the sun rising and setting, and yet no one thinks of charging them with an erroneous statement. And why? Because the meaning is well understood. Language is reative in its signification. In colloquial speech, a form of expression is adopted different from that used in a scientific treatise. The Bible, although in harmony with science, was not given for the purpose of teaching it, and hence, its references to scientific matters are frequently expressed in words which represent the human aspect of the facts. Neither the infallibility of the authorship, nor the accuracy of the record is thereby vitiated. In considering the character and contents of the inspired writings, there are three features, each distinct from the other, which require remembering, viz.:—First, the authorship; second, the translation; and third, the interpretation. It is under the third feature, not the first, that the references to scientific and other such matters have to be considered; they concern not the authorship, but the mode of expression adopted by the author—two widely different things. If the language used were based upon narrow rules, it would exclude figurative and symbolic words. Christ, for instance, is called a "sun" (Mal. 4:2); literally speaking, he is not a sun; but who would on this ground be so foolish as to say that the statement is untrue or erroneous? The relationship existing between Christ and his followers is the same as that between the luminary of the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth; one gives natural light and the other Spiritual light—a parallel which justifie Christ being called a sun. To say that this, or any other mode of expression, relatively correct, is not infallible, exhibits a misunderstanding of terms. It appears to imply that divine writing cannot be infallible unless expressed in divine language—if such there be; and it overlooks the fact that a divine revelation to man is necessarily limited by the scope of human language. The words chosen are the best to be found; they are "pure," correct, and without error; and consequently, that which they set forth is infallible. To admit inspiration to be infallible, and yet deny that the process of inspiration produces an infallible writing, is one of those incongruities which cannot be reconciled.

The apostolic teaching concerning the character of the Old Testament Scriptures is applicable also to the inspired writings known as the New Testament. The latter are equally with the former, “the oracles of God” (Heb. 5:12). A divine oracle is either a spoken or written utterance of the Deity; hence Peter’s injunction, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11). The apostolic writings are an essential part of the “foundation” on which “the household of God” is “built” (Ephes, 2:20), and they are subject to the same definitions respecting authorship and character as are the writings of the prophets. Paul’s epistles are placed on a par with “the other Scriptures” (2 Pet. 3:16), and are, therefore “holy.” When the apostles addressed unbelievers “they spake the Word of God” (Acts 4:31; 6:2; 13:46; 1 Cor. 14:36). To exclude the suggestion that what they said was in whole or in part their own thoughts and language, Paul says that the Thessalonians “received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God.” (1 Thess. 2:13.) Those who believed and obeyed are described as having been “born again . . . by the word of God” (1 Peter 1:23.) Was that which was written to believers any less the word of God than that which was spoken to unbelievers? The language of the apostle Paul precludes such an idea:—“We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth.” (1 Cor. 2:12–13.) The very fact that an occasional exception is made, as in 1 Cor. 7:12, is evidence that all the rest is from God. By those who recognise this truth, the names of the inspired penmen are simply used to distinguish one portion of the Word of God from another. Only the holders of loose views concerning the divine authorship use the words “Pauhne,” “Petrine,” and “Johannine” to detract from the complete inspiration of the apostolic writings. The familiar character of these writings is no evidence that they were not written throughout (except in the few instances already mentioned) under spirit control. It is presumption to fix on any passage—such as the allusion to Paul’s “cloak” (2 Tim. 4:13) and the “wine” for Timothy (1 Tim. 5:23)—and to say that the Spirit had nothing to do with its being written, and that, therefore, it is not a part of the Word of God. Who can, with authority, affirm that the reference to the “cloak” did not serve some purpose of the Spirit in the first century which does not now exist? No one; then none is justified in affirming that it was not inserted through Spirit guidance. The advice to Timothy about his “infirmities” is an illustration of brotherly solicitude, and thus embodies in a practical form the admonition that the members of the one body “should have the same care one for another” (1 Cor. 12:25). The apostolic epistles were written not merely for the benefit of those to whom they were addressed, but also for subsequent generations. It is true of them, as of the earlier writings, that they “were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope” (Rom. 15:4). The personal matters contained in them are on a par with the biographical incidents of Old Testament history, and, in like manner, illustrate some of the principles of divine commands. They are all “profitable” for the “instruction” of “the man of God.” Even if it could be proved that they were not written under Spirit-guidance, the fact that they formed part of a Spirit-indited

letter would be sufficient evidence of Spirit sanction as to give them, in the absence of a disclaimer, all the force of an inspired record. But such proof is not forthcoming; its place is supplied by audacious assertion.

The apostolic statement that “unto the Jews were committed the oracles of God” (Rom. 3:1) suggests an enquiry; why were they so given? The answer is found in certain words of God, which Moses repeated to Israel:—“If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exod. 19:5–6). This object was not realised; for Israel failed to obey God’s voice and keep His covenant. But though the nation, as a whole, failed in obedience, individual members succeeded in the exercise of faith; there was “a remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom. 11:5), who “obtained a good report” through listening to the voice of God as expressed in His written oracles. When those of them who were living in apostolic days substituted for the abrogated “works of the law” (Gal. 2:16) the “righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 3:22) were they deprived of the custody of God’s “oracles,” or did they cease to be the depository of them? Rather did the national defection throw upon the faithful “remnant” an increased responsibility as “witnesses” (Isa. 43:10) and custodians for God. The apostles and all other Jews of like mind shewed by their zeal for Moses and the prophets (Acts 24:14; 18:24) that they recognised this; they were in “great heaviness” and sorrow of heart for their “kinsmen according to the flesh” (Rom. 9:2–3), earnestly desiring that “they might be saved” (Rom. 10:1); to effect which they “reasoned with them out of the Scriptures” (Acts 17:2), “saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come” (Acts 26:22). They recognised that the voice of God, after the appearing of Christ, was but a continuation of the voice which had spoken for the previous four thousand years, and consequently treasured the written “oracles of God” which succeeded the Pentecostal outpouring as much as those which preceded it.

When the Gentiles received “the word of the Lord” (Acts 13:48), they were placed in relation to “the oracles of God” in precisely the same position in regard to both privileges and responsibilities as were the Jewish followers of Christ. These two classes collectively constituted Spiritual Israel. Some of the “natural branches” of God’s cultivated olive-tree were “broken off”—(Rom. 11:17–21)—that branches from the “wild olive tree” “might be grafted in” (ver. 19). With what object? That they might “partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree” (ver. 17). How were they to do this? By listening to the voice of Him by whom it was planted. That “voice” was uttered to the people of Israel that they might become “a kingdom of priests and an holy nation.” Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ have the prospect of becoming “kings and priests unto God”—(Rev. 5:10)—and they are even now “a royal priesthood, an holy nation” (1 Pet. 2:9). Shall it be said that “the oracles of God” were “committed” to Jews after the flesh, and that they have not likewise, in their more comprehensive form, been committed to Jews after the Spirit? Previous generations have not thought so, or we should not

read of “them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and *for the Word of God*” (Rev. 20:4.) Will the present generation of inward Jews be inferior to those which have preceded it? If so, how can they expect to be among the “called and chosen and faithful” (Rev. 17:14.) whom John in vision saw “living and reigning with Christ a thousand years?” The “Oracles of God” have been handed down to us from apostolic days through two channels, viz., the “little horn” of Daniel’s “fourth beast” dominion, and “the Saints of the most High.” The little horn preserved the manuscripts but destroyed their teaching; whereas, the “Saints” preserved both. Between the two, there was continued strife; which is, in itself, a guarantee as to the genuineness of the Oracles transmitted to us. The printing press has superseded the necessity for preserving them in manuscript form, but it has not diminished the responsibility of defending their divine authorship and the whole of their contents. When there is disagreement among the brethren of Christ as to this duty, who cause the “divisions” which ensue? The uncompromising section are always blamed; they are addressed in language parallel to that which Ahab uttered to Elijah: “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?” (1 Kings 18:17). The reply of Elijah is, in substance, their justification; “I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalam” (ver. 18).

“The household of God” is described by Paul as “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord” (Eph. 2:20, 21). The essential features of this “temple” are defined by the same apostle in chap. 4:4–6: “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Their number is seven, which enables us to identify them with the “seven pillars” “hewn out” by “wisdom” when she “builded her house” (Prov. 9:1); they constitute, therefore, the perfection of revealed wisdom, they are complete and need no addition; neither must anything be taken away from them. The following may be considered to be the order of their importance: One God and Father, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one hope, and one body.

In January and February, 1871, I gave a series of lectures on these seven pillars of the truth, or wisdom’s temple; the full titles of which appear on page 65 of the *Christadelphian* for February, 1871. It is only necessary to quote two for the present purpose, viz.:—

“The one Spirit, or the Spirit of God not a person, but the medium by which the Deity has created all things and revealed His will to Man.” “The one body; a community composed solely of those who reject the traditions of men as embodied in the creeds of Christendom and who understand and believe the unadulterated truth of God, as revealed through the mouths of Moses, the prophets, Jesus and the apostles.

This definition of the “one body” shows that at that time the whole Bible, and not a selection from it, was recognised as the foundation on which the multitudinous body of Christ was based; a definition which is in harmony with the words of Christ concerning the twelve:—“Sanctify them through thy truth: THY WORD IS TRUTH” (Jno. 17:17). The Old and New Testaments are the “Word of God” (Jno. 10:35; 1 Cor. 14:36); therefore they constitute in their collective form the means by which the members of the “one body” are sanctified or made holy.

Psalm 119. is composed of a series of parallelisms, in which by a marvellous but simple variation of language divine revelation is constantly extolled; there are very few verses—perhaps half a dozen—which do not refer to it in some form. The following are a few illustrations:—“Blessed are they that keep *his testimonies*” (ver. 2); “Through *thy precepts* I get understanding” (ver. 4); “Teach me *thy statutes*” (ver. 12); “I will have respect unto *thy ways*” (ver. 15); “I will not forget *thy word*” (ver. 16); the *law* of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver” (ver. 72); “Teach me *thy judgments*” (ver. 108); “Thy law is *the truth*” (ver. 142); “All thy *commandments* are truth” (ver. 151); “All thy commandments are *righteousness*” (ver. 172). The words “testimonies,” “precepts,” “statutes,” “ways,” “word,” “law,” “judgments,” “truth,” “commandments,” and “righteousness,” are used interchangeably. They are sufficiently varied and comprehensive to include every feature of the Holy Scriptures; it is impossible to select any portion which does not come within the meaning of one or more—historical or prophetic, doctrinal or practical. “The truth” is the whole “word of God;” consequently to “believe the truth” (2 Thess. 2:13), and to “obey the truth” (Gal. 3:1) requires the acceptance of that “word” in its entirety. “No lie is of the truth” (1 Jno. 2:21); and therefore no error pertains to its synonym, “the word of God”—another way of describing it as infallible.

“The truth of God” (Rom. 3:7) is identical with “the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 2:7), which is described as “manifold” (Eph. 3:10). Its first utterance was the prediction in Eden that the seed of the woman should bruise the seed of the serpent in the head (Gen. 3:15). At a very early date it was the subject of rejection; the flesh, in the person of Cain “abode not in the truth” (John 8:44), and became “a murderer.” All subsequent revelation is but a “manifold” development of the Edenic announcement; the covenants with Abraham and David enlarge the outline, and the writings of the prophets and apostles fill in the detail. The whole is presented in type by the Mosaic law, the enactments of which are practically illustrated by the historical books of the Old Testament. The believers of “the truth” are not only “Abraham’s seed” (Gal. 3:29), but the multitudinous “seed” of the “woman” (Rev. 12:17); a relationship which imposes upon them the obligation to receive and defend all that God has caused to be written in reference to that “seed” in its varied forms, whether national or individual, fleshly or spiritual, mortal or immortal. Collectively it constitutes a covenant, embracing subordinate covenants, each with its special and distinct clauses. Some of the promises are for national Israel, and some for Israel after the Spirit; the former are a necessary basis for the fulfilment of the latter, and, therefore, the one cannot be divorced

from the other; to take away any part of their “manifold” elaboration is to impair their completeness. The heirs to an earthly estate would be considered foolish and blameworthy to allow the document—whether a deed or a will—by which they were guaranteed possession, to be tampered with in the least, for fear that it might invalidate their claim; witness the care with which all such pieces of parchment are preserved and their words defended. How much more important that the written expression of the divine will, offering an everlasting inheritance, should be perused, understood, believed, obeyed, preserved, and defended, that there may be no risk of the heirs of God losing the proffered privilege.

The seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent represent two opposing elements, which have their ramifications in a variety of directions. They divide the Adamic race into two distinct classes, one of which is on the side of God and the other against Him. From a national point of view, the Jewish race is the seed of the woman, and the Gentiles the seed of the serpent. From an individual standpoint these two seeds find their counterpart in the righteous and unrighteous Jews, and in the faithful and unfaithful brethren of Christ. The principles which they represent are united in each of God’s Sons, one being called “the old man” (Eph. 4:22), and the other “the new man” (ver. 24). The doctrinal and practical portions of the Bible set forth the means by which “the new man” may obtain the victory over “the old man;” the historical parts give illustrations of the way in which the two seeds have each, at various times, both nationally and individually, been in the ascendant; and the prophecies predict conflicts of a similar character. The gospel is glad tidings of the final triumph of the seed of the woman over the seed of the serpent, for which all the previous conflicts are in the aggregate a necessary preparation. The announcement in Eden was the germ of the “gospel preached unto Abraham” (Gal. 3:8), “the gospel preached” to the Israelites (Heb. 4:2), and the gospel preached by the prophets, Christ, and the apostles. To believe that gospel at any stage of its development is to believe that the seed of the woman will completely “bruise” the seed of the serpent. The steps by which the final consummation is reached are not only of interest but of importance to the multitudinous seed of the woman. Where can an authoritative record be found? No-where but in the Holy Scriptures; they extend from the third chapter of Genesis to the end of the Apocalypse. The Bible is, in fact, the book of these two seeds. There has always been some portion of the serpent’s seed which has tried to pervert or destroy the inspired description of its conflicts and final defeat. It has treated the “word of God” in the same way that it dealt with the Son of God, and with a similar result; resurrection has followed crucifixion. The attempt to extinguish it has increased its power. Being “incorruptible” (1 Pet. 1:23), it cannot die, neither can its vitality be weakened, “The word of the Lord endureth for ever. And *this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you*” (ver. 25). The Gospel is thus synonymous with the word of God, and the basis of fellowship for believers of the gospel is the whole of that word, viz., the Bible.

The only occupants of Wisdom's temple are the believers of that which is variously described as "the truth," "the one faith," "the one hope," "the gospel," "the kingdom," "the way of salvation," "the way of the Lord," and "the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ," &c. An essential condition of their entrance is the acceptance of "the wisdom of God" in its elementary form; without which they cannot "grow" (1 Peter 2:2) in that wisdom, as did their Elder Brother (Luke 2:52.) Their growth, or increase, should continue until they "filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. 1:9). If this be neglected, they fail to fulfil the object for which they entered wisdom's temple.

Among the exhortations to wisdom's children are the following:—"Let their heart retain *my words*: keep my commandments and live" (Prov. 4:4); "depart not from the *words of my mouth*" (ch. 5:7), "for *my mouth* shall speak *truth*" (ch. 8:7); "blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord" (ch. 8:34–35). Everything in the Holy Scriptures is the voice of wisdom, uttered "at sundry times and in divers manners" (Heb. 1:1). That voice invites all its children to hear all that it has said, and exhorts them to "depart not from" any of its "words." If dutiful, they comply; if froward, they evade the obligation by perverting the "words" or denying that they have come from the "mouth" of "wisdom." In this way, everything that has been written concerning the "seven pillars" of wisdom's temple has been nullified. The "one God" has been transformed into a co-equal and co-eternal member of a Triune Godhead; the "one Spirit" has been treated as a person distinct from the Father; the "one Lord" has been represented as a being without beginning, and as the possessor, when on earth, of a nature which could neither be tempted nor die; the "one Faith" has been defined as having reference to a land in heaven; the "one Baptism" has been altered from the immersion of adult believers to the sprinkling of infants; the "one Hope" has been interpreted to mean union with Christ at death; and the "one Body" has been identified with a miscellaneous collection of religious communities which believe and practice totally opposite things. The list of perversions might be further increased by the almost endless catalogue of heresies chronicled in ecclesiastical history. Severally, they impair one or more of wisdom's pillars; collectively, they destroy the whole. To protect the "seven pillars" from everything which mars them is an obligation imposed upon all who enter the temple.

The "one Spirit" is necessary to wisdom's temple from two points of view. First, in reference to Creation; and second, to Revelation. Without Adamic Creation there could be no Revelation from God to man, and without such revelation, there could be no salvation. The work of the Spirit in creation is nullified by Paganism and Darwinism; and its operation in the process of revelation and salvation is perverted by the Apostasy. One section says that the "word" given by the Spirit is a dead letter, unless the Spirit operates on the mind of the hearer to produce belief; another teaches that the Spirit did not so completely control the writers under its breathing power, as to prevent them making mistakes. The

former is refuted by the declaration that “faith cometh by hearing . . . the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17), and the latter by the statement that “the Spirit is truth” (1 John 5:6). The “Spirit” in this connection is described as a “witness;” and it is associated with two other witnesses, the “water and blood.” Everyone professing to be a follower of Jesus Christ should be in a position to prove it by these three witnesses; he must shew that he has been baptised in “water,” that he has been cleansed from Adamic sin through the “blood” of Christ, and that he believes the writing of “the Spirit.” “For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one” (ver. 7 and 8 with interpolation omitted). The belief of the Spirit’s teaching requires continuance and growth, and must be accompanied by obedience to its commands; they who comply are said to “walk after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:4), to “mind the things of the Spirit” (ver. 5), to be “led by the Spirit” (ver. 14), to “sow to the Spirit” (Gal. 6:8), and to “live in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25). An ecclesia which fulfils these conditions has the witness or testimony of the Spirit that its members are “doers of the word and not hearers only” (Jas. 1:22); and they may be described as “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). On the other hand if an ecclesia perverts, rejects, or nullifies, any portion of the Spirit’s teaching, it deprives itself to that extent of the witness of the Spirit.

The expression “led by the Spirit” (Rom. 8:14), brings to remembrance the means which God provided for leading the children of Israel through the wilderness, viz., “a pillar of cloud” and “a pillar of fire” (Exod. 13:21–22). “Thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar, and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go.” (Neh. 9:12.) “He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar” (Ps. 99:7.) The pillar was a “light” and a guide, and God spake out of it; in these respects it was a type of the inspired word in relation to our wilderness wanderings. And what is to be said of its origin? It was wholly divine. No human hand had anything to do with providing it; its component element was doubtless spirit. To attribute a human authorship to the antitypical spirit-pillar involves its counterpart in the Israelitish type; an element which can nowhere be found. If not in the type, it cannot be in the antitype. Moses desired the assistance of the flesh, in the person of his father-in-law, as a guide while in the wilderness. “Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how are we to encamp in the wilderness, and *thou* mayest be to us *instead of ey’s*” (Num. 10:31.) But this was not part of the divine arrangement; the guidance must be of God only.

The fact that the “word” is called “the spirit” possesses a significance which cannot be overestimated. It shows that the authorship of the inspired word is wholly spirit, not a mixture of flesh and spirit; and that all the characteristics of the spirit which are capable of being put into words have been embodied in the inspired writings. “The spirit is truth” (1 Jno. 5–6) in all its manifestations, and therefore the “word is truth” (Jno. 17:17); the spirit is Holy, and the “word” is Holy; the spirit is incorruptible, and the “word” is “incorruptible” (1 Pet. 1:23). Every occupant of wisdom’s temple should have no difficulty in perceiving that

incorruptibility and error are “mutually exclusive terms.” If the inspired word contained error, it could neither be called “truth” nor “incorruptible;” and if it were the result of a combined divine and human authorship, it would be not “the sword of the spirit” (Eph. 6:17) but the sword of the spirit and the flesh.

The objection to defining inspired writings as infallible is an illustration of the way in which men often deceive themselves by a mere word. The non-existence of the word *infallible* in the English version (except in Acts 1:3) is no evidence that the idea containing in it is wanting. There is a good reason for the absence of the word; the translators, as is well known, confined themselves as much as possible to pure Saxon; *infallible* is from the French; it fills a useful gap in the English language; without it we should have to say *errorless*, *incapable of error*, *freedom from error*, or *inability to commit error*, &c.

The Scriptures are not silent about error, but to whom do they attribute it? To “false prophets,” &c. (1 Jno. 4:1). The apostle John contrasts “the spirit of truth” with “the spirit of error” (ver. 6). “Error” and “truth” are “mutually exclusive terms.” The “spirit of error” is a fallible spirit, and therefore its antithesis, the “spirit of truth” is an infallible spirit. The fallible spirit is of man, and the infallible spirit is of God. “We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (1 Jno. 4:6). When reasoning on Matt. 25:46, it is rightly contended that “everlasting punishment” cannot comprise the endless existence involved in its antithesis, “life eternal.” The same argument, when applied to this passage, excludes “error” from “the spirit of truth.”

When a statement is made by an apostle concerning divine inspiration, the character of the spirit and its workmanship is necessarily involved in what is said. Bearing in mind, therefore, the testimony already adduced, the familiar declaration of the apostle Paul’s may be amplified as follows:—All Scripture given by inspiration of God is incorruptible, and an embodiment of the Spirit of truth, not of the Spirit of error; and it is profitable for doctrine, reproof, &c. To contend that the word “profitable” is used by the apostle to limit the character of inspired writing is a mistake; it is “profitable” for making men God-like, because the writing itself is God-like; and it would not be so if its authorship embraced a fallible element.

For the benefit of those who persist in objecting to the use of the words *fallible* and *infallible*, because they do not find them in the Bible, the proposition under consideration might be worded somewhat as follows:—

That the Bible is of divine authorship, and consequently, as originally given, free from error, and we decline to fellowship those who attribute to some parts an authorship of error. When men are of one mind, there is no insuperable difficulty in the selection of words by which to express their meaning; but when unable to agree upon *any* form of words, it is evidence that their thoughts are not identical.

In reference to the present controversy, the occupants of wisdom's temple may be divided into three classes. No. 1 attributes imperfection to the spirit-pillar; No. 2 thinks this is harmless; No. 3 objects, and refuses to sanction it. The following colloquy represents the attitude they respectively take:—

No. 1.—This pillar is not all made of Spirit: human hands were employed in its erection, and they have imparted to it some of their own designs.

No. 3.—You are wrong: the men you refer to were under Spirit-control, and everything they did at that time was by direction of the Spirit.

No. 1.—That is an assumption; where is your proof?

No. 3.—We prove it by the name given to the pillar; if any part of it were of human design, it would not be called the "One Spirit."

No. 1.—We see no proof in that; on the contrary, we can perceive evidence of a human workmanship in some parts; look at them.

No. 3.—We find no such evidence, and in face of all the testimony to the contrary, we decline to accept your bare assertion.

No. 1.—Well, as you have not proved your case, we shall proceed to chip off those parts that are not Spirit.

No. 3.—You must not; we strongly object.

No. 2.—Never mind them; what little they can do, won't be any real harm.

No. 3.—Whether it does or not, that is not the right way to look at their proposed action; we object on principle.

No. 2.—Don't be so foolish as to introduce the question of principle into this matter; the Spirit-pillar is of immense size, and what they propose to do cannot materially weaken it.

No. 3.—How do you know? If allowed to begin, there is no saying to what length they will go; moreover, their bad example may be followed by others with tools of a much more destructive character.

No. 2.—You are too imaginative; you theorise too much.

No. 3.—We speak about that of which we have knowledge; we remember some former occupants of the temple similar to No. 1, but not so numerous, who attempted the same thing. And where are they now? Outside; and that is where we shall all be, sooner or later, if we injure any of the pillars.

No. 2.—You are influenced by fear and credulity.

No. 3.—So you think; we certainly fear the Builder of this temple who graciously permitted us to enter it, and we believe that the conditions on which our occupancy is based will be strictly adhered to.

No. 2.—What are they?

No. 3.—That we do nothing to mar the unity which is an essential part of the temple-plan, and that we listen to the sevenfold voice of wisdom, for “whoso hearkeneth unto her shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil” (Prov. 1:33).

No. 2.—We do not see that the action of No. 1 will violate any of the conditions of tenancy.

No. 3.—We do; and so would you if it were directed against such pillars as the “One hope,” the “One faith,” or the “One Baptism.” The “One spirit” is more important than these, because without it, we should have no knowledge of the remaining ones.

No. 2.—Our contention is that no part of the “one spirit” is touched which affects any of the other pillars.

No. 3.—You are mistaken. The action of No. 1 directly affects the “one God” and the “one Lord,” and it prepares the way for undermining all the other pillars.

No. 2.—How does it affect the “one God?”

No. 3.—The “one spirit” is the only means by which the “one God” has communicated to us His wisdom; to affirm that any part of that wisdom comes from man is to deny that God gave it; or to say that the details of that spirit-wisdom are not accurate, is to attribute error to God.

No. 2.—You speak very plainly.

No. 3.—Perhaps so; but not more so than the circumstances require. If any of your brethren were to believe that the “one God” was unholy, unjust, unrighteous, faithless, or cruel; or that His word embodied any of these vices, would you not deem it necessary to make a practical protest?

No. 2.—Certainly we should.

No. 3.—Then why not when error is attributed to His word, that is, to the Spirit-pillar?

No. 2.—Because it is confined to unimportant matters.

No. 3.—We cannot recognise any such limitation; moreover, if it begin with what you call “unimportant matters,” it will, ere long, extend to what you must admit to be important ones.

No. 2.—You exaggerate the danger.

No. 3.—You, on the contrary, underestimate it; there is evidence that some of those who have adopted this false belief concerning the “one Spirit” have gradually cut away every element of Spirit-wisdom.

No. 2.—We will wait to see such a misuse of No. 1’s weapon before we interfere.

No. 3.—Then we must part company that we may not share complicity in the act of sacrilege committed by No. 1, and condoned by you. We hope that you will soon see the necessity for following us, and that No. 1 will shortly discontinue their evil work.

No. 2.—We will think of what you have said.

“Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision” (Phil. 3:2). The apostle who wrote these words would not have said “Beware” in reference to those whose fellowship was to be retained; he must have referred to some who were out of fellowship, or who were deserving of its discontinuance. In either case, it is an injunction which needs to be heeded in circumstances of a similar character. The workmanship of God is good; to mar it is an evil work. The Mosaic “tables were the work of God” (Exod. 32:16); and the inspired word is likewise the work of God. To say that any part of it did not come from Him is clearly an evil work; and hence to withdraw from such is to give practical effect to Paul’s injunction, “Beware of evil workers.”

The evil work in the present controversy consists of a trinity of error, which may thus be briefly described:—

1.—Partial Inspiration.

2.—Fallible Inspiration.

3.—Fallible Incorporation.

One of the objects for which the Mosaic Law was given is expressed in the command to Aaron, to “put difference between holy and *unholy* and between unclean and clean” (Lev. 10:10). Of Aaron and his sons it was said: “They shall therefore keep mine ordinance, lest they bear sin for it, and die therefor, if they

profane it” (Lev. 22:9). To the Levites it was said, “Neither shall ye *pollute* the holy things of the children of Israel, lest ye die” (Num. 18:32). In ordaining an altar of stone God said to Moses, “If thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast *polluted* it” (Exod. 20:25). In prescribing a sacrifice of peace offerings “for the children of Israel,” God instructed Moses that it might be eaten on the first and second day only; of him who ate any on the third day it was said, he “shall bear his iniquity because he hath *profaned* the *hallowed* thing of the Lord” (Lev. 19:8). The whole of the Mosaic law was “holy” (Rom. 7:12), hence to disregard or pervert any of its elements was to profane it. Of this both priests and people were guilty. When charged with having “*polluted* the house of the Lord” they “*despised his words*” (2 Chron. 36:14–16). In Zedekiah’s reign they attended for a time to the command that at the end of every seven years their servants “go free” (Jer. 34:8–15); but subsequently they cancelled this act of liberation, and Jehovah thus addressed them:—“Ye turned and *polluted my name*, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom he had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection” (ver. 16). God’s name was “polluted” by their disregarding his “holy” law. Writing about those whose duty it was specially to instruct the people, Jehovah says, “Her priests have *violated my law*, and have *profaned my holy things*: they have put no difference between the *holy and profane*” (Ezek. 22:26). When some of them offered “*polluted* bread upon” God’s “altar,” they professed inability to see in it anything dishonouring to God; they said, “Wherein have we despised Thy name?” in reply to Jehovah’s inquiry, “If, then, I be a father, where is mine honour? And if I be a Master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts unto you O priests, that *despise my name*” (Mal. 1:6, 7). “Ye have *profaned* it,” saith God, “in that ye say, ‘The table of the Lord is *polluted*’” (ver. 12).

The inspired “Scriptures” are no less holy than the Mosaic law; they were written by “holy men,” under the direction of the “Holy Spirit.” To say that any part is not Spirit-given is to describe as unholy that which is holy; or, in other words, to profane holy writings; and the effect is to violate the word of God, and to pollute the Name of the Lord. The Bible being wholly the product of divine inspiration, those who attribute to some parts a human authorship are guilty of profanity.

Between *profanity* and *blasphemy* the difference, if any, is one of degree; the latter term being somewhat the stronger. Blasphemy does not necessarily involve a wicked motive or an irreligious state of mind; it is, on the contrary, more frequently found in those who are professedly religious. It is the Apostasy, not the heathen, that is charged with being “full of names of blasphemy” (Rev. 17:3). The apostle Paul describes himself, before conversion, as “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious” (1 Tim. 1:13); and yet at that time he was “a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee . . . touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless” (Philip 3:6). Though reverencing the Mosaic law, he declared Jesus Christ to be an imposter; but he “obtained mercy, because,” says he, “I did it ignorantly and in unbelief” (1 Tim. 1:13). As a blasphemer, Saul of Tarsus was sincere and conscientious. To deny that Jesus of Nazareth is the

Messiah is very similar to the denial that the inspired Word involves infallibility; if the former be blasphemy the latter can be no less. Whether or not it trenches upon “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 12:31) is a question deserving of consideration

The Pharisees ascribed the Spirit’s miracles to Beelzebub, and the theory of fallible inspiration attributes error to the Spirit’s writing. In regard to the only manifestation of the Spirit in the present day, there could certainly be nothing more blasphemous than to represent the work of the Spirit in the Holy Scriptures as a combination of truth and error. It is sufficient to justify action similar to that of the Apostle Paul’s towards “Hymenæus and Alexander”—“Whom I have delivered unto Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:20). Discontinuance of fellowship is the only way in which we can follow this precedent.

The incorporation, under inspiration, of documents containing error involves the same principle as fallible inspiration; if the one be possible, the other is also; if there be any difference it is one of degree only, and that of a very slight character. The following remarks of a non-Christadelphian writer are in harmony with this contention:—“Plenary inspiration is in no degree incomparable with the belief, which modern criticism has invested with the highest probability, though it can ever carry the presumption further from the realm of the probable into the realm of the certain, that many ancient and separate documents have been incorporated into the texture of Scripture.... There is no more reason why the Holy Spirit should not have made use of human documents, than there is against the employment of human agency and human faculties at all. Only in such cases, the documents incorporated become invested with a new character from the new relation into which they are placed, and having the seal of the divine authority put upon them, partake of the sanction of inspiration as completely as any other portions of the Word.” That which is here recognised to be unproved is affirmed by some to be an absolute certainty. The lamentation of David over Saul and Jonathan is adduced as a sufficient illustration; and for evidence we are referred to the words: “Behold it is written in the book of Jasher” (2 Samuel 1:18). But who was Jasher? No one knows. It is mere imagination to describe him as “the national poet.” The name means *upright* (see margin). The book in question was thus the book of the upright; it may have been an inspired book; no one can, with authority, say that it was not. But what evidence is there that David’s lamentation was copied from such a book? None. The sentence, “It is written in the book of Jasher,” is quite compatible with a duplicate record by the Spirit similar to some of the incidents recorded in the Kings and Chronicles. Furthermore, is it a justifiable conclusion to say that that which is “written in the book of Jasher” consists of David’s lamentation? We are first told that “David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son” (ver. 17); the next verse is not only enclosed in parentheses, but commences with a word which shows that it is treating of an additional matter:—“Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the song of (R. V.) the bow: behold it is written in the book of Jasher.” What is

written? “The song of the bow.” But is this “song” synonymous with David’s lamentation? This is not clear; but, assuming that it is, what is the character of David’s utterance? It makes specific reference to the death of Saul and Jonathan:—They “were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided” (ver. 23). If already “written in the book of Jasher,” it was a prophecy, and, therefore, a work of inspiration. Thus, from every point of view, the conclusion based on the latter half of verse 18 is unwarrantable.

In dealing with fallible inspiration under Prop. 5, I quoted a note from Bagster’s comprehensive Bible in reference to Num. 25:9 and 1 Cor. 10:8. The only object of this was to disprove the statement that all the MSS. gave 24,000 in Num. 25:9. The fact recorded in the note that some MSS. give 23,000 renders any further explanation unnecessary. On this ground nothing was said about the suggested solution in the latter part of the note, which was given not by way of endorsement, but as forming a part of the quotation. This was so obvious that a remark to that effect appeared superfluous. It is somewhat significant that the manuscript variations in this passage should have reference to the same figures as those concerning Dan. 8:14, viz., 2,300 or 2,400 days.

In the course of the present controversy, the following statements have been made in one quarter or another, either by speech, or pen, or in print:—

1.—That inspiration does not secure infallibility at all times, and for everything that has been written.

2.—That inspiration only secures infallibility where matters of revealed truth are concerned.

3.—That infallible inspiration is a mere theory, for which there is no proof.

4.—That inspiration is confined to matters necessary for salvation.

5.—That an inspired writing is not necessarily free from error in “unimportant details.”

6.—That inspiration was only given where it claims to have been given.

7.—That Christ and the Apostles did not teach the infallibility of the Old Testament Scriptures.

8.—That a writer acting under inspiration might incorporate a document containing minor errors.

9.—That writing is not inspired unless it deals with matters of which the writer previously knew nothing, or which he did not understand.

10.—That there is no need for any of the historical books to have been inspired.

11.—That special inspiration was unnecessary for the writing of the Apostolic epistles.

12.—That those epistles, although not dictated by the Spirit are to be accepted as if commanded by God; thus placing uninspired writing on a level with inspired.

13.—That the Old Testament consists partly of uninspired priestly records.

14.—That the Bible is not wholly the Word of God.

15.—That the quotation by the writers of the New Testament of passages from the Old Testament does not guarantee the inspiration of any words beyond those quoted, and that in some cases the quotations are not made under inspiration.

16.—That the inspiration of Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Philemon, and the Apocalypse, is either doubtful or contrary to fact.

17.—That the writings of Moses are not free from error in regard to natural history.

18.—That it is impossible to decide upon a correct canon of inspired scripture.

19.—That the character of God, and the divine authorship of the Bible, need no defence by man.

20.—That our copies of the Bible are reliable, though the originals may have contained error.

21.—That the truth necessary for salvation is not co-extensive with the whole Bible.

22.—That the upholders of an infallible Bible are the cause of division, and are guilty of placing a stumbling block before the weak.

To these may be added another—though not necessarily a part of the present controversy—viz., a profane comment on Deborah's Song, fit only to appear in an atheistical print.

There can be no doubt that these statements constitute in the aggregate an "evil work" of great magnitude. Nos. 10, 11, and 16, when combined, involve the

rejection of the whole of the New Testament, and the false principles embodied in a number of them, undermine the Divine authority of every part of the Bible, except that which is purely prophetic or doctrinal, and even the doctrinal, by being so closely interwoven with the historical, is placed in jeopardy. As yet, no announcement has been made of the supporters of any one of these statements having discontinued fellowship with the authors of any of the others. Until they do, they are directly, or indirectly, implicated in the whole of this category of false teaching. Those only are free from complicity who have taken a step analagous to that represented by Prop. 7. And this is clearly the simplest method of discharging, in existing circumstances, the duty involved in the Apostolic injunction, "Beware of evil workers." Though this step may, for a time, sever connection with some who have not endorsed any part of the false teaching, or who are in a doubtful state of mind, it is no reason for not taking it. Though grievous now, it may be for their ultimate good; it will at least induce them to give more close attention to a matter which hitherto they may not have sufficiently weighed, and it may result in their thanking some for having taken the lead in the path of safety. In a widespread controversy such as this, there is necessarily a transition period, during which various degrees of belief are mixed together. But, in time, the process of disintegration which inevitably results from the futile attempt to amalgamate truth and error, separates the discordant elements, and allots to each its proper place. To attempt an examination of each individual, as suggested by some, for the purpose of ascertaining how far he does or does not go in the wrong direction, would impose a burden much greater than that which is involved in simple withdrawal; it would, indeed, in existing circumstances, be impracticable. Moreover, it would be unsound in principle. The question is not as to the degree of error which may be embraced while holding on to certain main points; such a proposal leaves it open for each one to decide what may be rejected and what accepted; and, from the great diversity of mental organisation, it is certain that the line of demarcation would be of a most uncertain and irregular character. The question is, as to who will defend the whole of God's "best gift to man." Those who see the necessity of doing this will, sooner or later, flock to the standard of sound teaching and purity of fellowship, wherever it may be raised.

In apostolic days, there existed a widespread element of corruption, under the name of Judaizing teaching. It is condemned in severe language in at least three Epistles, viz., Romans, Galatians, and Philippians. It did not consist of a direct denial of any of the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ, but it inculcated that which nullified some of them; it did not adopt something entirely new, but attempted to re-introduce that which God having once prescribed, had subsequently abrogated. Its leading characteristic was the necessity for brethren of Christ undergoing the rite of circumcision. One object was "to make a fair shew in the flesh . . . lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ" (Gal. 6:12). They did it to meet a difficulty from those who were outside; an object somewhat analogous to that for which some have advocated the doctrine of a fallible Bible authorship, viz., to make the Scriptures more acceptable to such as

are of a sceptical tendency. The apostle Paul describes it as “a little leaven,” but not without adding the words, “leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal. 5:9.) And what did he enjoin in regard to its advocates? The injunction in Phil. 3:2, already dwelt upon, was written with special reference to them. The “evil workers” were identical with “the concision”—a term signifying those who advocated circumcision; this is shown by the words which immediately follow, in the next verse, “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” Though the word rendered “concision” is not the same as that translated “circumcision,” it clearly means the Mosaic ceremony, or rather its advocates. The simple meaning of the word is *cutting* or *excision*, and is probably used by the Apostle to degrade the pretensions of those who were continuing a practice which had been deprived by God of its sacred character. To say, as has been contended, that the Apostle is giving a command to beware of those who cut off from fellowship, is to ignore the context. It also represents Paul as contradicting himself; for, in writing about the same class, to the Galatians, he says, “I would they were *cut off* which trouble you” (Gal. 5:12). This was virtually a command to refuse fellowship to those who had introduced “a little leaven” and it constitutes a sufficient justification for similar action when teaching of a corrupting character, even in an incipient form, is introduced in this age into the “One Body.” There is nothing in this command inconsistent with Paul’s eulogium on “love” (1 Cor. 13 chap.), and John’s exhortation “to love one another” (1 Jno. 4:11). Such passages are based on an unfeigned acceptance of “the wisdom that is from above,” which is “first pure, then peaceable, &c.” (Jas. 3:17). Love “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth” (1 Cor. 13:6); it neither rejoices in, nor countenances, the action of “evil workers,” but marks them, repudiates them, and expostulates with their deluded followers.

“Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed: for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John, ver. 7–11.) Twelve years ago it was necessary to give effect to this injunction, in consequence of some abiding “not in the doctrine of Christ;” they admitted in words that Christ came in the flesh, but practically denied it by affirming that there was a difference between his flesh and that of his mother, Mary. The doctrine concerning Christ’s nature is only one element of the truth, although a vital one. Inspiration is the basis of every item; without it we should have no knowledge of anything divine, not to mention many things human; any doubt as to its infallible character must necessarily weaken its effect on the mind of man, which is already sufficiently predisposed to reject everything from God. The means by which we have received instruction concerning every doctrine is unquestionably of greater importance than any single doctrine. If there be any doubt as to the infallibility of the source of instruction, what guarantee have we that any of its teaching is free from error? That which relates to the Spirit is of

necessity superior to that which concerns the flesh. The “doctrine of Christ” has to do with the flesh; inspiration is solely the work of the Spirit. However important the former may be, the latter is more so; if fellowship be involved in the minor, it cannot be excluded from the major. All who have made false teaching concerning the doctrine of Christ’s nature, a test of fellowship should, to be consistent, do likewise in reference to false teaching on inspiration.

“Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His son Jesus Christ. . . . God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:3–7). The teaching of this important passage is:

1.—That fellowship commences with the Father and the Son;

2.—That on this depends “fellowship one with another.”

3.—That God is light, and that fellowship with Him cannot exist without a continued walking in that light; and

4.—That sin-cleansing through the blood of Christ is dependent on thus walking.

“Light” is a figurative expression for knowledge, truth, wisdom, and righteousness; and “darkness” represents ignorance, error, folly and wickedness; where the one reigns, the other cannot be. The mind of man is by nature “darkened” (Rom. 1:21; Eph. 4:18); only by divine instruction can the darkness be superseded by light: “The entrance of *thy words* giveth light: it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Ps. 119:130). “If they speak not according to *this word* it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20). To “walk in the light” is to act in harmony with the Word of God, and before anyone can do this he must be satisfied as to what constitutes the Word of God.

In the Mosaic “patterns of things in the heavens” (Heb. 9:23) God provided a seven-branch lamp (Exod. 30:7–8) for the purpose of illuminating the holy place of the tabernacle; without such provision darkness would have prevailed, for there was no window or other aperture by which to admit light from outside. The light of the lamp was for the benefit of the officiating priests—the types of saints in their mortal condition, whom Peter denominatel a “holy priesthood” (1 Peter 2:5). Hence the source of their illumination must find a parallel in the provision made for enlightening Christ’s brethren. And how was the light of the seven-branched lamp produced? By means of oil—“Thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee *pure oil olive* beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always” (Exod. 27:20). The oil was not left to the selection of the priests; neither were they allowed to use different kinds; only olive oil, and of pure quality,

was permitted. This oil was a type of the Spirit of God, and the light which it gave typified all that has been revealed by the Spirit: "Thy *word* is a *lamp* unto my feet, and a *light* unto my path" (Ps. 119, 104); "The *commandment* is a *lamp*, and the *law* is *light*" (Prov. 6:23).

In expounding Rev. 1:20, in *Eureka*, Dr. Thomas shows that the Spirit-endowed eldership of the first century was the Light-stand or Lamp of the Ecclesia, and that "when they exercised their functions in the midst of the saints, they were as trimmed lamps with their lights burning" (vol. 1, page 163). Their spirit-gifts were for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12), in other words, for enlightening them in divine wisdom. These spirit-gifts continued until after the completion of the inspired Word in the present dispensation, and then they were withdrawn. Does this show that there has been no spirit-filled lamp to illuminate the saints of subsequent generations? If it did, it would prove that for seventeen or eighteen centuries the antitypical holy place had been enshrouded in darkness; that there had been no "children of light (Eph. 5:8) during this long period; and that a community of enlightened brethren of Christ in the present day was an impossibility. We have to thank God that such has not been the case; the "lamp" of His inspired "Word" (Ps. 119:5) has illuminated the saints during their long down-treading. It is true of that "Word" in its entirety, as also of its prophetic part, that it is "a light that shineth in a dark place" (2 Pet. 1:19). "God who commanded the *light* to *shine* out of *darkness*, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). It was by God's command that the holy place both in type and anti-type, were illuminated. Would he provide a "pure" medium of light for the type and an impure one for the anti-type? Would he enjoin holy priests to adhere strictly to the prescribed method of lighting the inanimate holy place, and permit holy prophets and apostles to act on their own judgment in enlightening the "living" (1 Pet. 2:5, R.V.) holy place? Would God take special care to exclude human design from the means of producing physical light for the Aaronic priesthood, and permit human defects to enter into the elaboration of spiritual light for those who have been constituted "a royal priesthood" to "shew forth the praises of him who hath called" them "out of darkness into His marvellous light?" (1 Pet. 2:9).

The process of illuminating the Mosaic holy place was a mechanical representation of inspiration; human agency was employed, but it had to act in exact accord with the Spirit's dictates. Human handicraft made the seven-branched lamp, but only in conformity with God's design. Human strength gathered the oil, but God decided of what kind. Human hands put the oil into the lamp and caused it to burn, but only at the time and under conditions enjoined by God. It was all of God, without any human ideas whatever; the men employed simply did what God ordained and commanded. Thus is it with those who have been the medium for providing the "lamp" of the inspired Word. And such as give heed to it, in all its parts, "walk in the light as God is in the light," and "have fellowship" first with the Father and His Son and then with one another. When

any of the latter injure God's "lamp," by mixing with it an element of human darkness, their fellowship with Him is impaired, or suspended, according to the nature of the damage done; and then it becomes a duty on the part of those who desire to live in the full light of the Spirit's "lamp" to separate from them that they too may not be in jeopardy of being deprived of fellowship with the Father and the Son. To teach false doctrine or practice is to becloud the "light," but to attribute error to the word of inspiration is to say that the source of the "light" is defective; and this is analagous to an Aaronic priest mixing an impure substance with the pure olive oil prescribed by God. What the effect of such a proceeding would have been, may be gathered from the recorded instances of other infractions of the Mosaic ritual. "Strange incense" was expressly forbidden to be used on the "altar of incense" in the holy place (Exod 30:9). Nadab and Abihu, who "offered strange fire," "died before the Lord" (Lev. 10:1-2). Whether or not there was any explicit command not to use "strange fire" is immaterial; it was sufficient that God had provided sacred fire (Lev. 9:24) on the altar of burnt offering, and that this was the only fire the priests were authorised to place in their censers. The incense and the fire must both be strictly in accordance with the divine enactments; and so also with the oil. Seeing that the use of "strange fire" brought death, there can be no doubt that the use of "strange incense," or strange oil, would have been attended with a like result. The divine judgment on Nadab and Abihu was evidence that their action in doing that "which the Lord commanded them not"—(Lev. 10:1)—had severed their fellowship with Jehovah. It is not difficult to perceive from this incident what is the effect on fellowship in all its aspects of believing that the "lamp" of the "Word" is supplied with impure oil, or in other words, that in the work of Inspiration, the Spirit has been defiled with the flesh.

It has been rightly contended that a revelation from God to man involves miracle; with equal truth it may be added that its preservation among men requires a continuance of divine intervention. History demonstrates the truth of this. The antediluvian world so corrupted the divine revelation given to fallen man (Gen. 6:11-12) that a departure from the ordinary course of nature was deemed necessary to destroy the corruptors of God's way of righteousness, and at the same time save a "few," who, by reason of faith and obedience, "found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (ver. 8.) By means of that "few" God's truth was transmitted to the patriarchal age without, as far as we know, any written record of it. The items of which it was composed were not numerous compared with those we now possess. They were, doubtless, handed down by word of mouth from one generation to another. Those who appreciated them would be careful that there should be no mistake. Feeling a personal interest in the divine communications they would treasure them as of more value than "pearls" or "rubies" (Job 28:18.) The occasional angelic visitations would not lessen but rather increase the responsibility they felt to carefully guard revealed wisdom. They would esteem it as "a precious jewel" (Prov. 20:15), the "fruit" of which was "better than gold, yea, than fine gold," and the "revenue" thereof "than choice silver" (Prov. 8:19). They would do as the mother of Jesus did in reference to the angelic utterances

communicated to her through the shepherds (Luke 2:8–17). Others “wondered” at them, “but Mary kept all these, and pondered them in her heart” (ver. 18–19).

There is no evidence of divine revelation having been reduced to writing until the time of Moses, who may have written the book of Genesis while keeping sheep in the land of Midian. If, as is supposed, he was also the writer of the Book of Job, he may have penned it during the same period. The books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy must of course, have been written during the wilderness journey of the Israelites. The responsibility of carefully guarding the revealed word was not diminished by its reduction to writing.

The children of Israel were taught this lesson in the command to place the “tables of the covenant” inside the ark (Deut. 10:5, Heb. 9:4). And when Moses had written the law a second time, as embodied in the Book of Deuteronomy he said to the Levites which bare the ark of the covenant, “Take this book of the law, and put it by (Rev. ver.) the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee” (Deut. 31:26). Possibly the scroll on which he wrote contained the previous part of the Pentateuch, and this may have been the “book of the law of the Lord given by the hand of (marg.) Moses,” which “Hilkiah, the high priest . . . found . . . in the house of the Lord” in the reign of good King Josiah (2 Kings 22:8; 2 Chron. 34:14).

The tabernacle in which were stored up the “two tables of testimony, tables of stone written with the finger of God” (Exod. 31:18), and the inspired book of the law written by Moses was surrounded on all sides by the children of Israel during their encampment; an illustration of the attitude to be assumed toward the Word of God by spiritual Israel during their wilderness encampment. The two principles which underlie the Mosaic law, including the ten commandments, are defined by Christ to be whole-hearted love for God, and love for neighbour equal to self. “On these two commandments,” says he, “hang all the law and the prophets” (Matt. 22:40). All inspired writing given since Moses is but a development of the principles he was instructed to present to the Israelites. They received in type that which is given to us in antitype; they possessed the shadow, while we are blessed with the substance; they performed literally or physically acts which we have to carry out figuratively or mentally. Thus, *they* came out of the land of Egypt. *We* have come out of “spiritual Egypt” (Rev. 11:8); *they* were “baptised into Moses” (1 Cor. 10:2), *we* are “baptised into Christ” (Gal. 3:27); *they* drank literal water (Exod. 17:6), *we* drink figurative (Jno. 4:14); *they* ate bread which perished (Exod. 16:20), *we* eat “bread” which “endureth unto everlasting life” (Jno. 6:27–35); *they* marched through a “great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions and drought” (Deut 8:15), *we* have to live in an evil and deceptive world (Gal. 1:4; 2 John ver. 7) containing many “snares” (Ps. 141:9); *they* were guided by a visible, cloudy pillar, *we* are guided by the Spirit in the form of the revealed Word and the invisible angelic host (Ps. 34:7). The camp of Israel had in their midst a tabernacle; *we* are the antitypical camp and tabernacle combined. Ours is “the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and

not man" (Heb. 8:2); "we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened" (2 Cor. 5:4)—burdened with sin, and all the responsibilities attaching to the task of working out our "salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). Our relationship to him who is its "high priest" imposes upon us the obligation of guarding this "greater and more perfect tabernacle" (Heb. 9:11) in its present state, by a disinterested watchfulness over its constituent members and its contents. We are required to exercise care that none enter its precincts who have not in the appointed way had their "hearts sprinkled 'from an evil conscience, and their bodies 'washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:22); a condition which necessitates the application of the "blood of sprinkling" (Heb. 12:24) at the Christ "altar" (Heb. 13:10). When within the pale of this "spiritual house" it is our duty to see that its "holy priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:5) performs aright its sacred functions; to "keep," as did the Levitical priesthood "the charge of the tabernacle" and "all the service of the tabernacle," "that there be no wrath upon the children of Israel" (Numb. 18:4, 5).

The details of the priestly "charge" furnish many illustrations of the stringency with which those duties had to be performed. To Aaron and his sons during their consecration it was said. "A bide at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, day and night, seven days, and keep the charge of the Lord, *that ye die not*" (Lev. 8:35). They were commanded upon entering the tabernacle to "wash with water, *that they die not*" (Exod. 30:20). They were to be clothed in the way prescribed when they came "near unto the altar to minister in the holy place, *that they bear not iniquity and die*" (Exod. 28:43). They were told "not to eat of the holy things" if unclean, and the command was accompanied by a penalty:—"They shall therefore keep mine ordinance, *lest they bear sin* for it, and *die*, therefore, *if they profane it*" (Lev. 22:4–9). The descendant of Aaron, who had a blemish, was not permitted to "go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar," and the reason given is, "that he *profane not* my sanctuaries: for I the Lord do sanctify them" (Lev. 21:23). And the "sons of Kohath," whose duty it was, when the camp was on the march, to bear "the vessels of the sanctuary," were forbidden to "touch any holy thing *lest they die*" (Num. 4:15).

These injunctions and the penalties attending their infraction have their counterpart in the "things in the heavens" of which they are "patterns" (Heb. 9:23). Separately and collectively they are designed to inculcate the sanctity of all God's appointments, and to exhibit the danger of profaning that which He has denominated holy. It is a mistake to suppose that the "grace and truth" which "came by Jesus Christ" are less stringent, or can be treated with greater impunity, than the "law given by Moses" (Jno. 1:17). Rather is it the reverse because "grace" is superior to the law of "works" (Rom. 11:6). This is the inspired argument in Heb. 10:28, 29:—"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?" The "blood of the covenant" is a

part of the means by which a believer is “sanctified;” the word of God is another part:—“Sanctify them through Thy truth; *Thy word is truth*” (Jno. 17:17). To count the blood “an unholy thing” is no more sacrilegious than to say that God’s written word, or any part of it, is unholy; and this is done by those who deny the inspiration of some portions. And what can be greater “despite unto the spirit of grace” than to say that its work in the process of inspiration fails to secure infallibility? Though retribution under Christ is not so swift as under Moses, it is equally rigorous. “For we know him that hath said vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (ver. 30, 31). The judicial death which immediately followed profanation under the Mosaic law is, under Christ, merely postponed to the day of Judgment.

The Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites, all sons of Levi, to whom was appointed the duty of carrying the tabernacle and its contents when the camp moved forward (Num. 4.), were types of Christ’s brethren in their present wilderness march; and the holy things which were carried find their counterpart in the Holy Scriptures and all that they teach. It was at the peril of these Levites to evade the “service” and “burden” imposed upon them (ver. 49); no less can be said of the sons of God and their corresponding obligation. It is, doubtless, from this point of view that the apostle describes “the church of the living God” as “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15).

An attempt has been made to depreciate the inspirational character of the “holy Scriptures” with which Timothy was acquainted from a child, by altering that expression into “priestly records” (2 Tim. 3:15). Great stress is laid on the fact that the two Greek words are not the same as those used for “holy Scriptures” in Rom. 1:2, and that the word rendered “Scriptures” in 2 Tim. 3:15 is not the word otherwise used throughout the New Testament, where “Scripture” and “Scriptures” are referred to. On these grounds, it is said that the Old and New Testaments consist of “priestly” or “Sacred Records” (ver. 15), and that they contain “divinely-breathed Scripture” (ver. 16); the “Records” are described as God-given and therefore reliable, but the “Scripture” they contain is defined as God-breathed, and therefore infallible in what it reveals. The “Sacred Records” are thus represented as co-extensive with the Bible, but not so the God-breathed Scripture. This is really another way of putting the old Unitarian formula that the Bible contains the Word of God, but is not wholly the Word of God.

Assuming that the word “priestly” is more correct than “holy” (ver. 15), what is gained by the change? Does it prove that the “records” were not divinely inspired? Or, that if so, their inspiration was of an inferior character? To say so would be a pure assumption. The priests were holy, and their duties were quite compatible with God inspiring them to write Israelitish history. In that case their record of events would be as infallibly true as the predictions of the prophets. God sent unto Israel not only “prophets and wise men,” but also “Scribes” (Matt. 23:34). Among the Old Testament “Scribes” were Seraiah (2 Sam. 8:17), Sheva

(2 Sam. 20:25), Shebna (2 Kings 18:37), Shaphan (2 Kings 22:3), Shemaiah (1 Chron. 24:6), Jonathan (1 Chron. 27:32), Ezra (Neh. 8:4), and Zadok (Neh. 13:13). The functions of a prophet did not necessarily involve writing, though many were commissioned to write; to the office of Scribe, writing was indispensable. The fact that scribes and prophets are associated together as God-sent, indicates that they were equally qualified by God for the work assigned to them, that the writing of the Scribe was as much Godbreathed as the speaking and writing of the prophet.

The substitution of “sacred” as an alternative rendering, indicates that the word “priestly” is not considered to be the exclusive meaning of its Greek counterpart; neither indeed is it. Consequently, without confirmatory evidence, no argument can be based on the word “priestly;” such evidence is wanting. What proof is there that all the books of the Bible have been written by priests? This must be adduced before the substitution of “priestly” for “holy” can be recognised as either prudent or necessary. What, it may be further asked, is the advantage of substituting “sacred” for “holy?” Practically speaking their meaning is identical. The word rendered “holy,” in 2 Tim. 3:15, is defined to be “holy, hallowed, consecrated, sacred, the antithesis to profane,” and the word translated “holy,” in Rom. 1:2, means “sacred, holy, pious, pure, a sanctuary.” It is true that the word rendered “Scriptures” in 2 Tim. 3:15 is not precisely the same as that translated “Scripture” in ver. 16, but they are both from the same root, and there is no radical difference in their respective meanings. The former is defined to be “that which is written, a written character, letter, a drawing, picture, an inscription, writing state papers, accounts, written law, a book treatise;” and the latter means, “drawing, painting, writing, embroidery, a letter.” It will thus be seen that both words are compatible with a record or writing of any kind. A record of events is not the exclusive idea of either word; if ver. 15 mean “record,” ver. 16 does also. The latter is defined to be God-breathed; hence the “Scripture” referred to—whether a record of the past or predictions of the future, or doctrinal or practical teaching—is divinely inspired. The word rendered “Scripture” in ver. 16 is used not only for the Psalms (Matt. 21:42), and for Moses and the prophets (Luke 24:27), but also for the narrative about Elijah in 1 Kings, 19th chapter, from which Paul quotes in Rom. 11:2–4, styling his quotation “the Scripture.” The Psalms, about which no question appears to be raised, are partly historical; Nos. 78., 105. and 106. are notably so.

The “Holy Scriptures” with which Timothy was acquainted from a child, are defined by the apostle Paul as “able to make wise unto salvation,”—an inspired definition which is worth more than many pages of lexicographical hair-splitting. As original documents, only inspired Scriptures can be of value to “make wise unto salvation;” and all that the Bible contains is conducive in some way or other to this end.

Divine history is as important as divine prophecy, because of the intimate relationship existing between the two. The prophecy is based upon the history;

without a record of the past, many predictions of the future would be unintelligible, and would, to some extent, be deprived of their force. God gave a record of what had been, before foretelling what was to come. There is as much necessity for the infallibility of divine history as of divine prophecy and doctrine. Indeed, the doctrine and history, national and personal, are so interwoven that it is impossible to separate them. To describe the record of events as “reliable,” and all the rest as “infallible,” is to introduce a distinction, for which there is no warrant. It is virtually affirming that God-sent records may be of fallible authorship. If so, there is no guarantee that as originally given, they were free from error.

If the so-called “reliable” part be not infallible, it is either uninspired or its inspiration is fallible in its results; in which case the Bible cannot be wholly the infallible Word of God.

The belief in degrees of inspiration does not necessarily enter into the question of fellowship so long as all inspiration be recognised as infallible. Whether such degrees exist is not a matter of revelation. We are told that God has spoken “in divers manners” (Heb. 1:1); a statement quite sufficient to account for the varied forms in which divine inspiration has operated. He who formed the human mind can breathe through any of its faculties—reason, memory, imagination, or feeling—awake or asleep—and yet secure a result free from error. A recognition of this, and nothing less, is essential to the fellowship based “upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets” (Eph. 2:20)

London, Feb. 7, 1886.

Letter to the Editor 5

BY BRO. J. J. ANDREW, OF LONDON

(Concluded from last month)

The book of Deuteronomy—especially the early portion—embraces a record of events; and, as already shewn, “this book of the law” (Deut. 31:26), if not the whole Pentateuch, was put beyond the veil, which represents the flesh, into the most holy place—the dwelling place of Jehovah. This act possesses a significance of no small importance. It is evidence apart from the fact of Moses being the writer, that the book was inspired; for it is quite inconsistent with the holiness of the tabernacle to suppose that a scroll written by a fallible pen would be placed in the most sacred part of a structure wholly designed by God. Its presence there is compatible only with its complete inspiration, and this indicates, that, as regards written matter, it occupied a place next in importance to the tables of stone written by God. All other inspired writing is on a par with that of

Moses, and therefore its relationship to God's handiwork is the same. All are designed for the purpose of developing faith, hope, and love; of which three the greatest is love (1 Cor. 13:13). Indeed, love comprises the other two; without love, neither faith nor hope could attain to perfection. Hence the force of Christ's declaration, that "all the law and the prophets" "hang" upon love (Matt. 22:40); that which is true of the prophets is true also of the apostles. All the "Holy Scriptures" are but an elaboration of the principles of love embodied in the ten commandments; and these were lodged in the Ark in the holy of holies.

When Paul wrote to Timothy about the "Holy Scriptures," he made reference to writings of a specific character, whose holiness was on a par with the holy things in the Mosaic Law. The design of the latter was not only communicated by God to Moses in the Mount (Exod. 24: to 34.) but they were made under the power of inspiration. It is said of Bezaleel that God "filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; and to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work," (Exodu, 35:31–33). Those who have any acquaintance whatever with the Tabernacle and its contents should have no difficulty in recognising the minute detail involved in the inspiration of Bezaleel; and yet his workmanship had to do only with material things to be used as types. Would the Spirit of God be less accurate, detailed, or effective in providing writings intended to "make wise unto salvation?" No one understanding the essential characteristics of inspiration would for a moment entertain such a suggestion. There is no more justification for making one part of the "Holy Scriptures" reliable, and another part infallible than there is for introducing a similar distinction in the inspiration under which the Tabernacle and its furniture were fashioned. And it is equally unwarrantable to make a difference in quality between the "Holy Scriptures" of 2 Tim. 3:15, and the "all Scripture" of ver 15, or to say that the former is greater than the latter. The whole construction of the passage leads to the conclusion that the "Holy Scriptures" and the "all Scripture" are synonymous. To say that this is dependent on the position of word "is"—whether before or after "God-breathed"—or whether it should be there at all—is to take a narrow view, not only of the passage itself, but of the whole subject of inspiration. It is most unlikely that God would allow the authorship and character of the Old Testament to rest entirely upon the precise construction of this one statement; and we have to thank Him that such is not the case. There is, in addition, a variety of testimony, both general and specific, which, in its collective form, leave no doubt as to the divine inspiration and consequent infallibility of the "Holy Scriptures" with which Timothy was acquainted. Those Scriptures have been handed down to us through three independent channels—viz., the Jews, the Papacy, and the Saints. The Jews and the Saints have been at direct variance, in consequence of antagonistic beliefs concerning Jesus of Nazareth, and the Papacy has antagonised them both; collusion between the three, or even any two, has thus been outside the range of possibility. The New Testament "holy scriptures" having come to us through the Papacy and the Saints, there is a similar guarantee as to their

authority. When to these witnesses we add the internal ones—the authoritative and antihuman style throughout, the relationship of one part to another, and the marvellous manner in which the different sections are so interwoven as to form a perfect picture—there is no room for any other conclusion than that God has produced the whole by His spirit. Incredulity may say there is no proof; it always has said so; and will continue to speak thus until the end of its career. It demanded of Christ “a sign from heaven,” but he refused to give it (Matt. 16:1–4); there were already signs in abundance, if it would but recognise them. So likewise is it with the Bible; the book itself is the best witness to its own authorship. If any are looking for a voice from heaven, or for an external piece of inspired writing to say that it has all been God-breathed, they show that the existing evidence is not appreciated by them at its right value. It is not in conformity with God’s operations in this cloudy and dark day to gratify any such expectation. He has given His word as a light, and He requires us to look at it, not with closed, but with open eyes, that we may see the gems with which it abounds on every page, shining like the precious stones in the high-priest’s breast-plate, as he passed the seven-branched lamp on his way to the most holy place. To behold them in their most brilliant hues, as illuminated by the shining forth of the unveiled Spirit from between the cherubim, is impossible in our mortal state; this glorious sight is reserved for incorruptible nature; and it will only be enjoyed by those who rightly use and honour the light with which they are now blessed. To say that that light cannot be identified,—or, in other words, that the correct canon of inspired Scripture cannot be determined—until the High Priest comes forth from the most holy place with the antitypical Urim and Thummin, is, in effect, to affirm that God has shewn less care in providing a complete lamp filled with pure oil for the holy place under Christ than for the holy place under Moses; that the type has been more highly blessed than the antitype. Uncertainty such as this is not conducive to blessing the Lord for His “counsel” (Ps. 16:7), as did Ezra when he opened “the book of the law of Moses” to read it to the people (Neh. 8:5, 6). To heartily “bless the Lord for all his benefits” (Ps. 103:2), we should be able to include in it a perfect, not an imperfect light, an infallible, not a fallible book. To such as are able to do this, God may by His providence, as He is now doing, throw additional light on the sacred page, to comfort, strengthen, and cheer them, in preparation for the day when the divine author will himself “shine forth,” and the “saved” (Ps. 80:1–3) will be presented “before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude, ver. 24).

Some who reject proposition 7 consider the following to be an adequate substitute:—

“That the Bible, as we now have it, is a reliable record of God’s dealings with men in the past, and an infallible revelation of the way of salvation and of His future purpose; a belief of which, in conjunction with obedience to the precepts of Christ and the Apostles, we hold to be necessary to salvation. We shall therefore continue (as heretofore) to fellowship only those who so believe and teach.”

This definition is apparently based upon the exposition of 2 Tim. 3:15–16, already criticised. It contains the same unauthorised distinction between “reliable” and “infallible;” but with this difference, that it deals with our copies of the Bible. If, at the same time, it defined the authorship to be infallible there would be no objection to thus speaking of the copies. But on this point it is silent; there is nothing to show that the Bible is recognised as wholly inspired, or that if inspired, the result is infallible. The significance of these omissions is increased by the fact that it was the means of rejecting propositions affirming

1. That the authorship of the Bible is infallible;
2. That the copies in our possession (subject to errors of transmission) are reliable;
3. That the belief in a fallible authorship of some parts is rejected; and
4. That the fellowship of those who so believe is refused.

It is universally recognised that when an amendment to any motion is put forward, it cannot be construed independently of the circumstances which gave rise to it. If in itself vague or defective, its meaning and object must be gathered from a consideration of the original proposition which it professes to *amend*. On these grounds the amendment in question practically rejects items 1, 3, and 4 in the propositions which it displaced. Thus, by its own omissions, and that which it refused to affirm, it provides an open-door for an indefinite amount of fallible authorship belief; it excludes neither partial inspiration, fallible inspiration, nor fallible incorporation. Under its shadow the inspiration of ten or twelve books in the Old Testament, and four or five in the New Testament might be rejected without affecting the question of fellowship. It is nothing to the purpose to say that it was not so intended; the question is as to its effect. Having displaced a declaration which would have excluded any part of this “evil work” from belief or fellowship, its supporters are inevitably involved in some amount of complicity with it. A definition which might be quite innocuous outside a controversy, assumes a totally different aspect, when put forward in response to a direct issue. This may be illustrated by supposing a discussion to arise in our midst on the nature of man. Those believing the truth of the matter would express it in some such form as the following:—“That man is mortal, and immortality is a gift from God obtainable only through Christ, and we decline to fellowship those who believe otherwise.”

Others not able to endorse this might endeavour to substitute the following as an amendment:—“That man is composed of body, soul and spirit, and that entrance into the kingdom is only obtainable through Christ, and we shall continue (as heretofore) to fellowship only those who so believe and teach.”

An amendment such as this would be rightly regarded as an evasion of a plain issue, designed for the purpose of shielding an erroneous belief, or fellowship therewith. It would in this respect resemble that concerning the Bible already quoted, which could be endorsed by the most latitudinarian sect in Christendom; it is an attempted compromise so loose as to admit of falsehood. There is no little difficulty in understanding how it can be defended by any one heartily believing the divine authorship and consequent infallibility of the Bible. When promoted by earnest, conscientious brethren, it is more dangerous than if advocated by the reverse class; because the unwary are more likely to rely upon the judgment of the former than of the latter. All such should remember that it is but a repetition of that which has often taken place in times past; "One built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar" (Ezek. 13:10). But it will be attended with like result; "Say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall" (ver. 11), and "Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?" (ver. 12).

O Falsehood! O Compromise! O Latitudinarianism! Your votaries have been without number. They have admired you, adored you, and worked for you; they have suffered, fought, and died for you; they have spent their time, strength, and means in your service, and have sacrificed themselves at your attractive shrine. And what will ye give them in return? Will ye mock them? Will ye discover unto them your own impotence? Will ye tell them that ye cannot give what ye have not? Will ye, in the day of reckoning, deride them for having been deceived by a thing of nought? Will ye inform them that ye are but the creation of corruptible flesh? that ye have been formed out of that which is less enduring than a tree? that they have fashioned you after their own device? And will ye tauntingly remind them of the day when they rejoiced and said, Aha! aha! Now we are at ease; our mind is pleased; we have hit the happy mean?

Ye triune deceivers! ye offspring of delusion! an early and endless peace to your ashes. Many of your followers are now reaping your prospective fate. Some there are, still in life, in hopeless ignorance of their coming doom. Are there none beside? None who are the victims of a fleeting fascination? Are there not a few whose immolation at your shrine is still incomplete? to whom the voice of wisdom will not cry in vain? who have already found their mistake? who are not ashamed to own a false step? and who with speedy feet will quit your gates, ere destruction long pronounced against your house cut off retreat? (*14th Feb., 1886*)

London, 21st Feb., 1886.

The Apocalypse is one of the most interesting books of the Bible, and in some respects it is the most remarkable. It is unique among all written productions, in that it comes from one who was for a time in the death-state—"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:18). When Jesus Christ gave it to John he had not only undergone resurrection; he had also

been endowed with Spirit-nature. Of this he gave to the apostles, before ascending to heaven, “many infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3). To those who have since become his disciples, it is impossible to afford the same proofs; they have not, however, been left without evidence. In this, the latest inspired writing, Jesus Christ predicts the disintegration of the Roman Empire, the development of the Papacy, the rise of the Mohammedan power, and the decay of Turkey, &c., &c.; all of which have come to pass. These and other predictions have been to the “servants” of God — (Rev. 1:1)—“infallible proofs” that their High Priest was in heaven. A more convincing mathematical demonstration of his resurrection from the dead could not, in the circumstances, have been provided. Whatever doubts there may be concerning the authorship of other books of the Bible there should be none respecting the Apocalypse; and yet without understanding those that have gone before, it is incomprehensible; they are indispensable to its exposition. It may be described as not only “rooted in the prophets,” but rooted in all the rest of inspired Scripture.

It is presumable that a book of this character would not be devoid of testimony concerning that to which it is so closely related. Among its opening statements we are informed that John “testified the word of the Deity, and the testimony of Jesus Anointed” (ch. 1:2, Eureka translation); and before the close of the first chapter it is said that John was in Patmos “for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (ver. 9). Apart from the symbols requiring prophetic or apostolic words to explain them, there are several references to Old Testament historical matters, viz., “Balaam” (chap. 2:14); “Jezebel” (chap. 2:20); “Sodom” (chap. 11:8); “The Song of Moses” (chap. 15:3); and “David” (chap. 22:16). If it were not for the books of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Kings, and Samuel, we should be without the means of fully understanding these passages. It cannot be supposed that Jesus Christ would send to his brethren a message from Heaven, referring them for details about the past to uninspired writings; it is highly improbable, to say the least. Indeed, the incidental way in which these events are alluded to is in itself evidence that they are all from the same author. Thus, Christ, since his resurrection, puts the seal of his authority to the inspiration of the books just enumerated, which are all more or less historical. If the inspiration of the Pentateuch be admitted, it is difficult to understand on what grounds the books extending from Joshua to Esther can be otherwise described, for they all narrate events in the history of the Jewish race. It would be a most extraordinary anomaly if the journey from Egypt to Canaan had been written by the Spirit of God, and the events after crossing the Jordan had been left to the spirit of man. If the life and covenant with Abraham needed a divine record, surely that with David required the same.

The epistles to the seven churches contain some valuable instruction as to the attitude ecclesias should assume towards false teachers among the brotherhood. The ecclesia at Ephesus was specially commended for its faithfulness in this matter:—“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are

apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars” (ch. 2:2). After what has already been said about “evil workers” (Phil. 3:2) it is not necessary to enlarge on the expression “them which are evil.” The words are sufficiently comprehensive to include wrong practise and false doctrine. “Them which say they are Apostles,” can only refer to members of the one body who for the purpose of teaching something contrary to apostolic doctrine, claimed to be specially sent of God; for none of the faithful brethren would assume a position which was specially restricted to the twelve. Some of these “false Apostles” (1 Cor.2.13) endeavoured to undermine the work of the Apostle Paul, who says of them that “their end shall be according to their works” (ver. 15). Whether or not they denied in words the inspiration of the “holy Apostles” (Eph. 3:5) they did so in effect; they endeavoured to weaken the influence and authority of one at least: and in acting thus they practically aimed a blow at the whole work of Divine inspiration. If Paul were not sent of God, neither were the other Apostles, between all of whom there was perfect harmony; and if the Apostles were not God’s messengers, neither were the prophets, for they all spake the same thing. The Apostle Paul’s vigorous condemnation of these apostolic counterfeits is an illustration of the way in which he would have acted in the present controversy. Although he may not have had to deal with the rejection of inspired writings, he had to meet an attack on inspired speaking; one of the grounds being that “his speech” was “contemptible” (2 Cor. 10:10): between the two there is practically no difference. His opponents appear, also, to have raised the objection that Paul was not one of the original twelve. When there is an inclination to reject any of God’s appointments, it is always easy to find some plausible argument for not accepting it. A fool can devise a reason for contesting anything and everything; a wise man weighs the *pros* and *cons*, and decides in favour of those which preponderate. The “false apostles” and their followers were “fools” (2 Cor. 11:19); they ignored the most important facts of the case; to these facts the apostle appealed to refute them (2 Cor. 11. and 12. chapters). Whatever effect his exposure may have had at Corinth, it evidently produced a good result at Ephesus; the brethren there rejected those who falsely claimed to be apostles; they made the requisite distinction between the holy and the profane, and for this they are commended.

The ecclesia at Pergamos had held fast the “name” of salvation, and had “not denied” the “faith,” even in times of persecution and martyrdom (Rev. 2:13); but this was not sufficient to entitle it to unqualified approval; the Spirit had “a few things against” it; in its midst, and, therefore, in its fellowship, there were “them that held the doctrine of Balaam,” and “also them that held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.” These names, as shown in *Eureka, Vol. I.*, are symbolic; their application, therefore, is not confined to first century teaching; any false doctrine of an analogous character is within the scope of their designation. That which leads spiritual Israel astray from the word of God is a “doctrine of Balaam;” and that which vanquishes the people of God is a Nicolaitane doctrine. Doubts and denials concerning the divine authorship of parts of the Holy Scriptures cannot but have a greater or less effect in both these directions. The fallible authorship belief is a Balaamite and Nicolaitane doctrine in an incipient form; it is saint-

vanquishing, and inspiration-nullifying. It is therefore included in that “thing” which the Spirit says, “I hate,” (ver. 15). That which is hated by the Spirit must be hated also by those who “have been all made to drink into one Spirit,” (1 Cor. 12. 13). The love begotten by the Spirit “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth,” (1 Cor. 13, 6); and like Christ it must be able to show that it has “loved righteousness and hated iniquity,” (Heb. 1, 9); it cannot do this, if through sympathy with fraternal flesh, it has fellowshipped those who detract from the accuracy of the Spirit’s writing. Love is greater than faith and hope, but only when regulated by the precepts of the Spirit; when at variance with these it is the expression of mere natural feeling. The heart as well as the intellect requires to be circumcised (Rom. 2:29). True love for God begets love for that which He loves, and hatred for whatever He hates (1 Jno. 4:6–7). When either characteristic is absent there is a deficiency of the Spirit of Christ,” without which we are “none of His” (Rom. 8:9).

The *teaching* of false doctrine is considered by some to be the only safe ground for withdrawal from fellowship. This is an unsound principle; unity of mind (1 Cor. 1:10) is dependent on belief, not on public teaching. It is not a question as to whether a brother promulgates error, but as to whether he embraces it; if it were not so, those who chose to keep silent, or had not the ability to teach others, would be exempt from disfellowship. The charge against the Pergamos ecclesia, was that some of its members “held” falsehood, and the warning given was that if they did not “repent” the Spirit would come quickly unto the ecclesia, and “fight against” the holders of error “with the sword of” its “mouth” (ver. 16). To escape such a visitation, the ecclesia would be compelled to discontinue fellowship with the holders of the Balaamite and Nicolaitane doctrines, unless they changed their minds.

The toleration of false teaching is specifically condemned in the epistle to the ecclesia in Thyatira:—“Thou *sufferest* that woman Jezebel, which callest herself a prophetess, to *teach* and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols” (Rev. 2:20). This was the chief item of the “few things” with which the Spirit charged the Thyatira ecclesia. The principle on which the accusation was based had been previously enunciated by the apostle John:—“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed: for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil-deeds” (2 John ver. 10–11).

That is to say, however sound a brother’s belief may be, if he knowingly permits or fellowship the believers of false doctrine, he is accounted a partner in their evil work; hence the necessity for withdrawing from such.

The name “Jezebel,” like “Balaam” and “Nicolaitane” is symbolic; it applies to any system, doctrine, or theory which has the effect of leading God’s servants to follow a thing of nought; it is synonymous with “the strange woman” which “flattereth with her words, which for-saketh the guide of her youth, and for-getteth

the covenant of her God,” (Prov. 2:16–17). To accept false teaching is to listen to her voice in preference to the voice of wisdom; and this is one step towards forsaking the written “guide” of divine appointment. On no grounds can we exclude from Jezebel’s flattering words the doctrine that some parts of the “guide” are erroneous; we must not, therefore if we desire divine commendation, suffer her so to teach.

The ecclesia at Thyatira was not an infantile one; its origin is to be traced to Paul’s visit to Macedonia (Acts 16:12–15); when the *Apocalypse* was given, it had been in existence about forty years. Its members had exhibited “works,” “love,” “service,” “faith,” and “patience,” characteristics which give evidence of both intelligence and maturity in the truth. They had, to a considerable extent, “crucified the flesh” (Gal. 5:24), and given heed to “the things of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:5); but they had not done so with that whole-heartedness which the apostolic word had inculcated: they suffered the teaching of “Jezebel,” who falsely called “herself a prophetess;” in other words, they tolerated the corrupting influence of some who falsely claimed to be God’s prophets, and thus countenanced an evil work which nullified the results of inspiration. For this they are reprov’d; a warning to those at the present time, who, however sound their “faith” and however perfect their “works,” “love,” and “patience,” decline to repudiate the fellowship of such as teach that some parts of the Bible are of fallible authorship.

The ecclesia at Philadelphia is the only one of the seven churches of Asia to which no reproof is administered, and the only one which receives the following commendation:—“Thou hast *kept my word* and hast not denied my name thou hast kept *the word of my patience*,” (Rev. 3:8–10). The Spirit being the speaker this is equivalent to saying that the brethren at Philadelphia had kept the complete word of divine inspiration. They had in practice applied the words of the Psalmist:—“I have said that I would *keep thy words*.” “So shall I *keep the testimony of thy mouth*,” (Ps. 109:57, 88). To “*keep the Lord’s testimonies*” (ver. 2), “precepts” (ver. 4), “word” (ver. 17), “law” (ver. 34), and “righteous judgments” (ver. 106), it is first necessary to recognise that they are from God; to attribute to any part of them a fallible authorship is fatal to such keeping. Of this the brethren at Philadelphia were not guilty; “they had learned,” says Dr. Thomas, “the things of the kingdom, or ‘the word,’ and the ‘things of the name.’ That kingdom was the subject matter of ‘the word,’ styled by Isaiah ‘the law and the testimony;’ and which is the rule of speaking for all who walk in the light” (Eureka i. p. 378). The writer of these sentences clearly made no distinction between the inspired “word” and “the things of the kingdom;” with him they were synonymous. The Old Testament Scriptures are almost wholly concerned with matter pertaining to that kingdom either in type or antitype; to deny the divine authorship of any part is to endanger the “word of the kingdom” (Matt. 13). The New Testament treats principally of “the things of the name.” When the *apocalypse* was given, the Gospels and apostolic epistles had not been collected together as had the writings of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. There was thus a good reason for the Spirit speaking not only of “my word,” but also of “my name.”

The Philadelphia ecclesia had not in its midst any who held false doctrine, neither did it suffer such to be taught. Instead of keeping the word of man, it kept the word of God. None of the other six ecclesias were as faithful in this respect; a fact which explains the absence of a similar commendation. Nineteenth century ecclesias must stringently exclude religious falsehood in order to receive the Spirit's verdict of approval, "Thou hast *kept my word*, and hast not denied my name."

The "word of my patience" is a very appropriate designation of the Old Testament books, which "were written for our learning that we, through *patience* and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope" (Rom. 15:4); they are a source of "comfort" in that they record many illustrations of the Spirit's statement through Isaiah: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and *trembleth at my word*" (Isa. 66:2); and they are a source of "reproof" and "correction" in that they exhibit the divine wrath against those who "*despised the word of the Lord*" (Num. 15:31). The Israelites in the wilderness "despised the pleasant land, they *believed not his word*; but murmured in their tents and *hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord*; therefore he lifted his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness" (Ps. 106:24–26). Their "carcasses fell in the wilderness," and "they could not enter" into the land of promise "because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:17–19). On the basis of these facts the in-inspired writer to the epistle to the Hebrews says, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an *evil heart of unbelief*, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). That "unbelief" has relation not only to unfulfilled promises, but to commands, &c., concerning the present. Thus Moses and Aaron were the subjects of divine disapproval, because, when told to "*speak unto the rock*," Moses "*smote the rock twice*," accompanying it by these words, "Must we fetch you water out of the rock?" "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye *believed me not to sanctify me* in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Num. 20:8–12). The action and speech of Moses appear at first sight comparatively insignificant; but a little consideration presents them in a different aspect. To *smite* instead of to *speak* to the rock was to substitute a human method for the divine; to say "must we fetch you water" was to attribute the miracle to the flesh instead of the Spirit. Inspiration and miracle, though different manifestations of the same Spirit, are alike in attesting the power, wisdom, and goodness of God; they are twin witnesses, each confirming the other. It is equally dishonouring to God to pervert either. To ascribe a human authorship to the inspired Word is on a par with attributing the miraculous to the flesh; in either case God is not sanctified.

The "unbelieving" and "all liars" are classed among those who "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8), "and there shall in no wise enter into it [*i.e.*, the holy city] any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (ver. 27); those without the city include "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (ch. 22:15). The "unbelievers," whose doom is here portrayed, are such as are amenable to judgment; otherwise they would not be sentenced to "the second death;" they are

not those who are ignorant of the revealed Word, but such as have known it and then rejected it; they are of that class who “did not profit” by “the word preached” because it was “not mixed with faith” (Heb. 4:2). They believe the Word of God for a time, but fail to continue; the retrograde path on which they enter is paved with doubts and questionings concerning things not previously disputed by them; the first few steps give rise to a demand for proof, accompanied frequently by the statement that none can be given; which is sufficient to indicate a condition of mind unfitted for the reception of whatever evidence there may be; hence, when the evidence is presented, it is instantly condemned as of no weight. The heart which begins thus to be “hardened” is often transformed, though gradually and imperceptibly, into “an evil heart of unbelief” (Heb. 3:12, 13). “The deceitfulness of sin,” in some form or other, is the cause; and so complete is the deception that the victim can, with difficulty, realise his condition; hence the loud protestations on his part of sincerity, conscientiousness, and good intentions; all of which may be conceded, with this reminder, that good intentions often pave the way to the second death. To ask for evidence is a duty; to reject it, when adduced, is a sin. *Proof* is a relative term; it has no fixed standard among men; that which one mind describes as unimpeachable another rejects as worthless. The responsibility of deciding what constitutes satisfactory proof rests with each one; but it must not be exercised lightly. When the verdict is given against the side for which there is evidence, and in favour of that for which there is none, the cause is not lack of proof, but lack of faith. This is the unfortunate condition of some who refuse to believe in the infallible authorship of the whole of the Scriptures.

To ascribe error to the product of inspiration is beyond mere unbelief; it is a palpable “lie” of no small magnitude. Hence the prospect for those who love and make it is exclusion from “the holy city.” That city is of Spirit constitution, and its inhabitants will consist only of those who have sown to the Spirit (Gal. 6:8). If the inspired word be partly fallible, those who work by it must necessarily sow to both flesh and Spirit; in which case it would be exceedingly difficult for any to “reap of the Spirit, life everlasting.” The flesh is, in itself a sufficient impediment to an upright walk, without any particle of its corrupt element being combined with the Spirit. We may be certain that He who said, “The thinking of the flesh is death, but the thinking of the Spirit is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6), permitted no amalgamation of such antagonistic elements.

The declaration of unabated confidence in the divine authorship, and consequent infallibility of the Bible, accompanied by the refusal to fellowship those who believe in the fallible authorship of some parts, has been compared to the act of Uzza, in putting forth his hand to save the ark. If the analogy be correct, the doom awaiting those of us who have taken this step is judicial death. But before such a conclusion can be accepted, the circumstances of the incident must be examined. The charge implies that between the ark and the Bible there is a perfect parallel. This is a useful and important admission; if adhered to it will simplify the task of replying.

It is recorded that “David gathered all Israel together . . . to bring the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim” (1 Chron. 13:5); “they carried the ark of God in a new cart,” Uzza being one of the drivers (ver. 7); “when they came unto the threshing-floor of Chidon . . . the oxen stumbled,” and “Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark” (ver. 9); for this the Lord “smote him,” and “he died before God” (verse 10). David not understanding the meaning of this “breach,” “was displeased”; and, being afraid of God, he “brought not the ark home to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite” (ver. 13). Within “three months” David had ascertained the cause of Uzza’s death; he had learned that “none ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites” (ch. 15:2). He therefore assembled “the fathers of the Levites” and said to them, “sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For *because ye did it not at the first*, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that *we sought him not after the due order*” (ch. 15:12–13). The “due order” prescribed by the law of Moses was that the Kohathites, “sons of Levi,” should, when the ark required removing, carry it by means of “staves” passed through the “rings” of its “four corners” (Num. 4:2–6); Exod. 25:12–15). To carry it in a “cart,” although “new,” was a violation of this “order,” and hence the divine wrath was caused by disregard of God’s command. It was a right thing to carry the Ark; about this there can be no question. But it was wrong for it to be carried by beasts of burden; human beings, and those only who were sanctified were to perform the task. Even they were not to “touch” it “lest they die” (Num. 4:15). Uzza violated this prohibition, and, although his intentions were good, he suffered the threatened penalty. He profaned the Ark by bringing into contact with it an unholy, erring, human element, contrary to divine appointment. The counterpart to this in relation to the Bible, is the attempt to uphold the inspired word by attributing to some parts a human authorship; and the defence of its complete divine authorship is paralleled by the sanctified Levites carrying the Ark according to God’s command.

The Ark, like everything else connected with the Tabernacle, was designed by God; no part of it—either shape, size, or material—was left to human selection (Exod. 25:10–16). And the mechanical act of constructing it was effected under the direct influence of inspiration; Bezaleel was “filled with the Spirit of God” (Exod. 31:3) for this very purpose. The Ark was a material embodiment of divine ideas, and the Bible is an expression of the Deity’s mind in a written form; the sacred character of the Ark is an indication of the sanctity of the inspired Scriptures. The places unto which the Ark came were made “holy” (2 Chron. 8:11); and the human minds in which the inspired word finds a lodgment are sanctified by it (Jno. 17:7). It is as profano to attribute a partial human design to the latter as it would be to the former. It was the loss of the Ark of God that caused the death of Eli (1 Sam. 4:18); and its profanation by the Philistines brought upon them “a very great destruction” and “a great slaughter” (1 Sam. 5. 9:6–19); incidents which are full of admonition in regard to the treatment of the inspired word.

The Ark contained “the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant” (Hebrew 9:4). The manna typifies eternal life, the budded rod prefigures Christ after resurrection, and the tables of stone represent the commands to be obeyed to fulfil the will of God; these tables were engraved with the two aspects of love—love to God and love to man—on which “hang all the law and the prophets” (Matt. 22:37–40), and likewise it may be added the apostles. Collectively the contents of the Ark symbolise “the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ;” the almond rod, apart from the bud, typifies all that is predicted and recorded concerning Christ in his humiliation, and the rod with the bud, all that is written respecting him since resurrection. And what about the Ark itself? It finds its parallel in the historical, genealogical, and chronological parts of holy writ, which uphold and contain the doctrinal and practical teaching. To separate the one from the other is analogous to making a distinction between the ark and its contents; the structure of shittim wood covered with gold, was no less of divine conception and providing than were the manna, the budded rod, and the tables of stone. All were equally holy, and the Levites were under the obligation to protect and carry the whole. The faithful performance of this duty was one of the items essential to their fellowship with the God of Israel; their neglect in the reign of David produced the “breach” of which Uzza’s death was a sign (1 Chron. 15:13). So far, therefore, from this incident being a warning to the upholders of a wholly-inspired and infallible Bible, it is full of encouragement to them to continue; and on the other hand, it is a lesson of reproof to those who say that the Bible is partly inspired, that its inspiration has not always secured infallibility, or that fellowship is based only on such portions as may be described to “revelation.”

In reply to the foregoing argument, it will be said that the Ark typifies Christ, not the word of inspiration. But, inasmuch as some of the Mosaic “patterns” typify more than one of the “things in the heavens” (Heb. 9:23), this answer cannot, in itself, be considered satisfactory. Is it not possible that the Ark is a type of both Christ and the inspired Word? It is more than possible, or even probable, it is a certainty; and the proof is to be found in the *Apocalyptic* statement, “His name is called THE WORD OF GOD” (Rev. 1:9–13). There is a written Word of God, and a personal Word of God, and the identity between the two is as close as their respective characteristics permit. Christ was once “the Word made flesh” (John 1:14); he is now the Word made Spirit. The Son of Mary was an embodiment of the divine mind, and the Holy Scriptures are an expression of the same. The mental and moral principles of the Written Word were transferred to the mind of Jesus Christ:—“I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, *thy law is within my heart*” (Ps. 40:8); “*thy Word have I hid in my heart*” (Ps. 109:11). As the tables of stone and the Manna were “hidden” (Rev. 2:17) in the ark, so love to God and man, and the Spirit’s food were within the heart of Christ—with this result, that he “preached righteousness in the great congregation” (Ps. 40:9). The principles of the written Word comprise love, mercy, faith, patience, justice and righteousness; all of which were exemplified in the life of Christ. He has since become an

embodiment of them in a higher sense, inasmuch as Spirit is superior to flesh; and to these must be added two others, viz., incorruptibility and infallibility.

In the Mosaic pattern God spake “from above the mercy seat,” which was “upon the ark of the testimony,” through the high priest “unto the children of Israel” (Exod. 25:22). In like manner the personal Word of God now speaks to his brethren from the anti-typical mercy-seat and ark through the written Word. The Word of God is thus in one form “within the veil” (Heb. 6:19), and in another form without the veil. To this there is a counterpart in the Mosaic shadow. When Israel encamped, the ark was in the most holy place; when on the march, it was carried by the Levites. When, in the reign of David, it was borne “upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the Lord” (1 Chron. 15:15) “God helped” them (ver. 26), and the result was a great manifestation of joy on the part of “all Israel.” So great was the exuberance of David, that “Michal the daughter of Saul . . . despised him in her heart” (ver. 28–29); an exhibition of contempt for divine things for which she suffered “unto the day of her death” (2 Sam. 6:23). The present controversy has seen its followers of Uzza; it is to hoped that it may not yet witness any imitators of Michal

It is worthy of note that while the “ark of God remained with the family of Obededom . . . the Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that he had” (1 Chron. 13:14). Obed-edom was a Levite, and he was subsequently appointed to be one of the “porters” of the tabernacle (1 Chron. 16:38). *Obea* means a servant, and *Edom* is the name of the nation which sprang from Esau, a name used in prophecy to represent the Gentiles (Obad. ver. 18, 21; Eureka iii. 413, 416). Obed-edom is, therefore, a very fitting representative of Gentiles who become servants of God, members of the anti-typical order of Levites, porters of the anti-typical tabernacle, and “citizens” of the “commonwealth of Israel” (Eph. 2:12–19). To receive a blessing similar to his, they must treat the ark of God, or the Written Word with the same reverence. It is not too much to say that any community associated with the truth, which subjects it to sacrilegious treatment, will not be divinely blessed.

When the “Ark of God” was in the possession of the Philistines “they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.” In the morning they found that “Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the Ark of the Lord.” They “set him in his place again,” but the next day he had again “fallen,” and, in addition, his “head” and “the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him” (1 Sam. 5:24). Even to the idol-worshipping Philistines this result was not wholly inexplicable; they recognised that the “hand” of the “God of Israel” was “sore” upon them and upon Dagon (ver. 7); hence, at the end of “seven months” they sent it away, accompanied by presents, in “a new cart” (chap. 6.) They had been guilty of placing the Ark of God in an idolatrous temple, and of giving to it a place second to the idol; and for this God showed his displeasure in an unmistakable way.

The Gentile Apostasy has committed an analogous offence. It has invented an idol, styled by the Spirit “a strange God” (Dan. 11:39), the “Man of sin” and “the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called a god, or an object of reverence; so that he as a god sitteth in the temple of the god, showing himself that he is a god” (2 Thess. 3–4, Dr. Thomas’s translation in *Eureka* iii. p. 74). In other words, it has invented a so-called infallible church, and given it a higher place than the Word of God. For this it will be consumed with the spirit of the Lord’s mouth.

It has been argued by Protestants that those nations which have severed their connection with the Romish Church have had greater prosperity than those which retain their alliance. The facts adduced present at least a probable basis for the contention. Our own kingdom supplies an illustration; Ireland suffers more troubles than does Great Britain; and there can be no doubt that her allegiance to the “Infallible Pope” is one of the causes. Even antitypical Philistines who treat the Word of God with sacrilege suffer the judgments of God; how then can antitypical Israelites escape when they do likewise, though to a less extent?

When Jesus Christ was in the flesh, he was the antitype of the Mosaic tabernacle. “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up” (Jno. 2:19). He is no less so now that he has passed “through the veil” (Heb. 10:20) from the holy to the most holy place; and as he is “The Word of God” (Rev. 19:13) the tabernacle, as well as the Ark, was a type of the personal Word, and of the written Word. What has been already pointed out in reference to the Spirit-designed and Spirit-produced Ark equally applies to the tabernacle; with this difference, that the tabernacle exhibits greater complication and detail. Nothing was left to man; all was of the Spirit, including the number of “loops” and “taches” for the “curtains” and the number of the “sockets” and “tenons” for the “boards” (Exod. 26:5, 6, 19). The sides and the covering were no less holy than the lamp, the altar of incense, and the table of shew-bread, which they protected; they were essential as a depository for “the vessels of the Sanctuary.” The historical parts of the written word of God are no less so in relation to the doctrinal and practical teaching which they enclose.

The Tabernacle and “all the vessels thereof” were anointed with “oil of holy ointment” (Exod. 40:9), the composition of which was wholly of divine prescription (Exodus 30:23–33). It was to be confined solely to the purposes enumerated; “whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger shall even be cut off from his people.” Like the pure olive oil for the lamp, “the holy anointing oil” typified the Spirit; thus the ceremony for which it was designed shewed that the Tabernacle and its contents, were Spirit consecrated, as well as Spirit designed and produced.

As the antitype of the tabernacle, Jesus was anointed with the Spirit at his baptism and again at his resurrection (Heb. 1:9). His brethren are part of the same antitype: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God” (1 Cor. 3:16). When

“baptised unto Christ” they “put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27), and are thus christed or anointed. It is to this the Apostle John refers when he says, “Ye have an unction [or anointing] from the Holy One and know all things” (1 Jno. 2:20); “the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (ver. 27). In what way does the anointing of believers by Christ “teach” them so that they “know all things?” By the inspired word. “Holy one” and “anointing” are used by John interchangeably, each being described as the source of knowledge; one is the personal word of God and the other the written word of God. Hence believers of the first principles of the truth in being anointed by Christ are thereby anointed by the inspired word of God; and consequently their permanent consecration is dependent on a continued subjection to its influence. To attribute to some parts a fallible authorship is to defile “the holy anointing oil” which testifies to their having been constituted the antitypical tabernacle in its present stage of development. John says that their “anointing . . . is truth, and is no lie,” which is equivalent to affirming that the inspired Word contains no error, or in other words is infallible.

“Thou hast magnified thy word above all they name” (Ps. 138:2). Objection has been raised to the application of this passage to the whole Bible on the ground that “the term” rendered “word” means neither *writing, book, record, nor Bible*, but “*utterance, saying, speech, or promise.*” The objection is based on a misconception: an utterance, speech, or promise, does not lose any of its characteristics when reduced to writing, or recorded in a book; it possesses the same importance in a written as in a spoken form. The Psalmist is referring to the “word” revealed by God to man; which has sometimes been communicated by an audible voice, and at other times by the pen. He is giving expression to a principle applicable to all divine utterances irrespective of the time or mode of their delivery. Any that were spoken or written after the nation of Israel and Jesus Christ came into existence, were but a development of those which preceded them; each class is necessarily on a par with the other. As already shown, the whole Bible is an elaboration of the divine utterance in Eden concerning the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Jehovah’s word preceded all that God has since brought into existence for the redemption of man; it is the cause or origin of the name of salvation; hence the reason for Jehovah having magnified it above his name. His words since given are no less the subject of the same exaltation.

The recording of human utterances, &c., in conjunction with the divine is presented as an insuperable difficulty to the application of the Psalmist’s statement to the whole of the Holy Scriptures; and to illustrate it reference is made to the serpent’s lie and the speeches of Job’s three friends. If it had been contended that inspiration did more than guarantee an accurate record of uninspired utterances, the difficulty raised might have some force; but this has been specially guarded against by the terms of Prop. 2. Our contention is that the record of them is infallible; to describe it as simply reliable is insufficient; a

document may be on the whole reliable and yet contain a few errors. Gibbon's History is a reliable account of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire; but who would presume to say that it was wholly free from error? In a writing professedly divine, we need something more than reliability; nothing less than infallibility.

Salvation being based upon sin, God's utterances are necessarily connected with that which is wrong; hence the record of the human is indispensable to the understanding of the divine. How, for instance, could we know the meaning of the prediction about the seed of the serpent (Gen. 3:15) if the words of the serpent had not been previously recorded? and how should we know for what Job's friends were condemned if we had no account of what they said? These and similar wicked deliverances are absolutely necessary for the purpose of exhibiting the expressed wisdom, love, mercy, wrath, forbearance and justice of God. If the record of them be not free from error, it is impossible for us rightly to understand God's words and actions in relation to them. Would it not have been an inexplicable anomaly if God had permitted His infallible utterances to be interwoven with a fallible record of the words and actions which gave rise to them? It was not for these divine utterances disconnected from their context that the Fifth Seal brethren were "slain"; it was for the Holy Scriptures in their possession; and these the Spirit calls "the Word of God" (Rev. 6:9)—the complete development of the "word" which the Psalmist says has been "magnified" above God's name.

To take exception to Judges, Ruth, or Samuel being part of that which has been thus "magnified" is to introduce an unauthorised distinction; these books form an integral part of the whole, and they cannot be omitted without detracting from the completeness of God's "perfect gift." In Judges we have illustrations of God's promise to protect and rule the nation of Israel, accompanied by exhibitions of faith on the part of those whom he raised up for the nation's deliverance. The book of Ruth, apart from its connection with the genealogy of Christ, furnishes a practical illustration of obedience to one of the Mosaic enactments (Deut. 25:5–6). The books of Samuel, among other things, give the life of him whose throne is to be occupied by Christ; the discipline to which David was subjected in the reign of Saul, being an example of the way in which God prepares His sons for reigning in His kingdom.

One historical incident in Samuel is very pertinent to the present subject. In a conflict between Israel and the Philistines, Saul "adjured the people saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted any food" (1 Sam. 14:24). This was an unwise command; for when the people had smitten the Philistines they were "very faint," and they "flew upon the spoil," and "did eat" the sheep, oxen, and calves "with the blood." In this they committed "sin against the Lord" (ver. 31, 32, and 33). They were forbidden to eat lawful food, and their hunger led to the partaking of unlawful. In like manner, they who are engaged in fighting "the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12) are in need of the appointed food to give them

strength; if they neglect to partake of it they will hunger for that which is prohibited; and, thus they may not only become faint, but be led into sin.

Jonathan not having heard his father charge the people was ignorant of the interdict, and accordingly, when passing a wood where honey was abundant, “he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened” (ver. 27); in other words, he was refreshed and strengthened. The rest of the people abstained from food, and to this Jonathan attributed the incompleteness of the victory.

The food of which Jonathan partook is a type of that provided for “the man of God:”—“How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than *honey* to my mouth!” (Ps. 119:103). Of the “law,” “testimony,” “statutes,” “commandment,” and “judgments,” it is written, “More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than *honey* and the honeycomb” (or the *dropping of honeycombs*, Marg. Ps. 19:10). Can there be any doubt, in view of these comparisons, as to what is meant by the glorified bridegroom, when he says, “I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk” (Cant. 5:1). “Wine and milk” (Isa. 55:1) are both used to represent the “good things” with which God supplieth “the hungry” (Luke 1:53); “the honeycomb with honey,” is but a parallel to the same. What a beautiful figure by which to describe the inspired word! The honey is the doctrinal part, and the honeycomb, the historical, genealogical, and chronological; the latter is necessary in order to hold the former; we might as well say that the instinct of the bee produces the honey and not the comb, as that the Spirit has caused to be written the doctrinal but not the historical portions of the Bible. The statement of the Bridegroom that both have been “eaten” by him is sufficiently significant to need no explanation; that which he has done the members of his Bride are called upon to imitate.

In writing about the apostolic epistles, in connection with Rom. 16. 17., I used the expression “an occasional exception” in reference to 1 Cor. 7:12 This was not intended to mean that the apostolic words were the mere thinking of the flesh, or that they were written without Spirit guidance. The “exception” had reference to direct Spirit-dictation, as described in the verses (1 Cor. 2:12–13) previously quoted. To say the least, such passages—some three or four—must be viewed as having received the Spirit’s sanction, seeing that they form part of an epistle in which the mind of the Spirit is so fully and explicitly set forth. It is an illustration, not of the absence of the Spirit, but of the different modes of the Spirit’s operations. To speak thus gives no licence for saying that the Spirit had nothing to do with certain parts simply because its operation is not seen. In the last verse of 1 Cor. 7., Paul’s “judgment” is represented as equivalent to “the Spirit of God.”

Attention has been called to the fact that inspired men have made mistake; as, for instance, Peter (Gal. 2:11). The only object for which this matter can have been introduced into the present controversy is to teach by implication that they may also have made mistakes in their inspired writings. It has even been

contended that if not infallible in all the affairs of life, there is no guarantee of infallibility when speaking or writing under the Spirit. Such a conclusion arises from confounding things which differ. Inspiration was not intended to deprive the recipients of their individual responsibility to God. If it did, they would have no probation; and in that case their salvation would be attributable to direct action on the mind, not to faith and obedience. This would be subversive of the principle on which eternal life is obtainable. Inspiration has been confined to giving expression to God's mind. When not so engaged, inspired men have been left to "work out" their "own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12); a process which compelled them to "keep under" the "body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means," after preaching "to others," any of them "should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:27).

The statement that the infallibility of the written Word of God has been embodied in the personal Word will not be accepted by those who attribute fallibility to the inspired Word. To meet the position of such the argument must be reversed. There can be no question about the infallibility of the personal Word of God, seeing that he has attained to the "divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4). That infallibility assumes a very tangible form in His capacity as "Judge of quick and dead" (Acts 10:42). To that tribunal all his brethren must submit. On what basis will they be judged? On that of the inspired Word. The principle, embodied in Christ's statement is applicable to all the other words of the Spirit:—"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath *one* that judgeth him. The *Word* that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (Jno. 12:48). The spoken and the personal Word are both comprised in this passage. The "Word made flesh" repudiated the office of Judge: "If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (ver. 47). At that time he was not invested, in nature, with the qualities of incorruptibility; these attributes were added when he became the Word made Spirit; and having fulfilled his allotted task "to save the world," he has become the "One that judgeth him" who rejected his spoken words. In the exercise of that infallible judgment he quotes the words of the unrighteous:—"Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow; wherefore thou gavest not thou my money into the Bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?" (Luke 19:23). Thus the personal word of God formulates a description of the evil actions of men as the foundations for his decree. Is the former invested with any less infallibility than the latter? Or is it deprived of any of the characteristics pertaining to the utterances of the personal Word? Let him who dares, say Yea. The same principles exactly are applicable to the record of man's doings and sayings in the written Word. An infallible judge requires an infallible Word on which to exercise judgment; the one involves the other, and God has provided both. This is infinitely superior to the preservation of the autograph manuscripts of the inspired Word. The demand which has been made for their production before deciding upon their infallibility borders somewhat on presumption. No one man could so test them as to be able to declare them completely free from error; and it is

questionable whether any number of men at this stage of the world's history could do so by personal inspection. It would require the aggregation of all the knowledge embodied in Bible facts to perform such a task. Knowing this, God has not left His Word to any such uncertain and fallible test; He has, in subsequent communications, confirmed the Divine Authorship of those which have gone before; and this testimony is crowned by the last book of the Bible. It defines the Holy Scriptures to be the "Word of God" (Rev. 6:9); and it declares that Word to be infallible (Rev. 19:13). The personal "Word of God" is infallible; therefore, the Written Word is infallible. The Written Word has been given only by inspiration; therefore, the product of inspiration is without error. Its Alpha is God, and its Omega, His Son; both Author and Counterpart testify to its infallibility. *Quod erat demons randum*, which was to be demonstrated.

Behold ye despisers of infallible inspiration, ye who attribute error to the Word of God, ye traducers of the Most High! Behold, the proof which ye have demanded. Ged hath heard your unsanctified reasonings; yea, He hath foreseen and provided for them. The absolute proof which ye have incredulously called for is very nigh you; it is in your own hands; it was in existence before ye were; it is in the Book whose complete infallibility ye have dared to question; it is embodied in Him who is your appointed judge. Ye have presumptuously denied the infallibility of the written Word of God; will ye dare to question the infallibility of the personal Word of God? The day is fast approaching when ye will have to appear in his presence. Will ye continue to hold your blasphemous belief until summoned before him? Think you that his infallible and penetrating scrutiny will overlook a doctrine which logically attributes to himself an erring element? If so, ye will continue your self-destroying career; but in that case your blood will be upon your own heads, not upon those who have repudiated your false teaching. If you think otherwise, and change your minds, your only course is to throw yourselves on the mercy of Him whom ye have unwittingly libelled. Ye will do well to lose no time; for no one knows when the door of mercy will be closed. Wait not till the Word of God appears in person, for then will the decree go forth, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still" (Rev. 22:11): he that believes a lie, let him continue so to believe (ver. 15).

Behold, ye conscientious doubters, ye who, like Thomas, decline to believe unless ye can see with your eyes! Behold the infallible proof which ye have desired. Your father in heaven hath provided it to satisfy such doubts as yours, and enable you, without hesitation, to separate from cavillers and blasphemers. Will ye not accept it? Will ye any longer be faithless? Will ye not, like Thomas, praise your Lord and your God for granting your desire? Will ye continue to countenance a doctrine which dishonours your heavenly Father and your Elder Brother? How can ye longer partake of the emblems of Christ with any whose belief involves, in effect, the infallibility of Him whom those emblems smybolise? Think ye that ye will not be accountable for complicity with them? that ye will not be condemned for suffering them so to teach. Ye hope to be raised to equality with Him whose name ye bear; in other words to form part of the multitudinous

Word of God. Ye believe that ye will then be infallible. The infallibility of the multitudinous Word of God rests upon the infallibility of the written word. Will ye allow anyone to impugn either the one or the other? Will ye remain in fellowship with those who thus tamper with your birthright? Will ye not without delay, discard their word nullifying and saint-vanquishing doctrine and join those who have already taken this righteous step?

Behold, ye who have already believed! Behold the top stone to the mountain of evidence on which your conviction is based! Behold the weapon which your loving Father hath devised to strengthen your hands in the arduous conflict. It has been stored up in His inexhaustible armoury to be brought forth in time of need.

Others may believe now that irrefutable proof is produced; but ye are among those of whom it is said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (Jno. 20:29). Ye have been fighting for the "Word of God," and its author hath sharpened for you "the sword of the Spirit" that ye may henceforth defend with even greater vigour the precious gift committed to your trust. Will ye not "magnify the Lord" and "exalt his name?" (Ps. 34:3). Will ye not like David, when the ark was brought safely into its resting-place, "give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name," and "make known his deeds among the people?" (1 Chron. 16:8). "Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name. Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually. Remember his marvellous work that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth. O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones. He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth. Be ye mindful always of his covenant; *the word* which he commanded to a thousand generations" (ver. 9–15).

"The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:12, 13). The written and the personal Word of God are combined in this passage. The written Word is a "mirror" (Jas. 1:23, Rev. Ver.) It enables man to see himself as he really is; its words are "piercing," and he who fulfils them finds that they "divide asunder soul and spirit"—that they unerringly distinguish between the Old Man and the New Man. Both righteous and unrighteous are accurately reflected in its pages. As the inspired "Scripture" is said to "foresee" and "preach" (Gal. 3:8) so does it "discern the thoughts of the heart." Its character is too penetrating for the stony ground and thorny place hearers (Matt. 13:20–22). They are not able to bear "tribulation" for the Word's sake, or they allow the things of the flesh to "choke" the things of the Spirit. The same is true of the personal Word of God. To depart from the written Word is to depart from Christ, and to "keep" that Word is to "abide in him" (1 Jno. 2:27).

It is written of Israel in the wilderness, "The Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee" (Deut. 23:14). In like manner the personal Word of God "walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks," or ecclesias (Rev. 2:1) to "search the reins and hearts." His "eyes" are "like unto a flame of fire" (Rev. 2:18); and "all things are naked and opened" before him. At irregular intervals he applies his "two-edged sword" to the whole of the One Body to "divide asunder" its "joints and marrow." His object is two-fold, viz., to bring into greater prominence some item of the truth, and "that they which are approved may be made manifest" (1 Cor. 11:19); the sifting process likewise makes manifest the disapproved.

When apostolic truth was revived about forty years ago, its political aspects were the chief source of attraction. But when the signs of the times became less prominent many of the early adherents fell away; they were not prepared for the tedious waiting in association with those in a lowly position. Upwards of twenty years ago the judgment question became the subject of discussion, the point being, Do the resurrected righteous appear before the judgment seat mortal or immortal? To answer, "immortal" nullifies the judgment, and hence those who favoured this view were cut off from fellowship. Above twelve years ago a controversy arose concerning Christ's nature, the contention being as to whether his nature was sinful like that of the rest of the race. As this involved Scriptural teaching concerning sacrifice for sin it did not admit of compromise. Those who believed that Christ inherited the nature of his mother, were compelled to sever themselves from such as held that he was free from Adamic condemnation.

The present conflict has arisen in the same way as the previous ones, by the teaching of that which is contrary to revealed truth. It is a sequel to those which have gone before. The judgment question brought before us our personal responsibility to Christ, and our individual account-giving at his appearing. That relating to his nature increased our knowledge of the "man of sorrows" and enabled us to realise more fully his sufferings. The inspiration question deals with the whole of the written Word, and brings vividly before us the infallibility of him whom we have shortly to meet. It is more important than any which have preceded it, and hence the length and intensity of the crisis. The doctrines of the judgment and of Christ's nature relate to the flesh, but inspiration has to do with the spirit. It is connected with the judgment seat, in that it affects the infallibility of its occupant, the personal Word of God; and this explains why resurrection and judgment have been introduced in the midst of the present controversy.

These three items of the truth constitute a graduated series of things divine, each one bring the present generation of believers into closer relationship with their Father and Elder Brother. It is written, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). The only source of this knowledge is the inspired Word; what, then, can be more essential to its attainment than a strong conviction as to the complete Divine Authorship of that Word? Doubts upon this point sooner or later prove fatal to any

growth therein, and in some cases lead to the entire loss of that which was once learned. To be well versed in all the doctrinal elements of the truth is useless without an intimate acquaintance with the Father and the Son. "Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord" (Jer. 9:24). Jehovah's loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness are exhibited in his dealings with nations and individuals; and it is only an inspired pen that could correctly portray them. In the providential workings, the Divine action is not perceptible to the natural eye; only minds which have been exercised in spiritual things can perceive it; and even they cannot accurately determine where the divine ends and the human begins. God alone knows this; and inspiration is the means for communicating it to man.

The ark is not only the type of the individual Christ, but also of the multitudinous Christ: so also is the most holy place of the tabernacle (Eureka ii. pp, 360, 536, and 733). They are, therefore, closely related to the saints. Christ being the individual Word of God, he and his brethren in their glorified condition constitute the multitudinous Word. The basis on which the members of the one body attain to this exaltation is that on which their head has already been raised to it. The inspired "word" must be "hid" in their "heart" (Ps. 119:11), and they must "receive with meekness the engrafted word" (Jas. 1:21). The principles of that word must be so imbibed as to form part of themselves, and become the source of their thoughts and actions. In other words they must honour and defend the written antitype of the ark and most holy place, that in the age to come they may form part of the personal and multitudinous antitypes thereof, and realise what it is to be "the tabernacle of God with men" (Rev. 21:3).

Conflicts like the present constitute "a refiner's fire." The personal Word of God is sitting as "a refiner and purifier of silver, to purify the antitypical "Sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Mat. 3:2, 3). In the natural process here referred to, it is said that the refiner looks into the molten metal to see his own countenance, and that when this is clearly reflected he knows that the refining process is complete. So likewise does Christ look into "the thoughts and intents of the heart" of his brethren to see his own likeness; if not distinct, the refining process continues until the "dross" is purged away (Isa. 1:25). It is not a pleasant experience; indeed it is extremely disagreeable; but it is indispensable. "The trial of" their "faith is much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire" (1 Pet. 1:7). Hence they are exhorted to "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try" them "as though some strange thing" had "happened unto" them. On the contrary they are to "rejoice, inasmuch as" they are thereby made "partakers of Christ's sufferings"—an indispensable requisite to sharing in the "glory" to be "revealed" (1 Pet. 4:12, 13). His life was one of conflict; so also must theirs be.

The question which is now being put to each of us is, Shall we adhere to the flesh or the Spirit? It assumes two aspects, one relating to belief and the other to fellowship. To attribute a human authorship to any part of the inspired Word, or to fellowship those who so believe, is to cling to the flesh. The first consideration should be God. Human associations are of no value unless in harmony with Him. His truth is a continual divider between the flesh and the Spirit, from the time it is first embraced to the end of probation. Christ "came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34); and that sword, the Word of God, has not yet ceased its functions. The present controversy is an illustration, and blessed will those be who discern its line of demarcation.

It is thought by some that disfellowship is only applicable when that which was expressed at baptism is abjured. This is a defective way of representing the matter. There are some things which, though not actually formulated at baptism, are involved in that which is believed. The infallibility of the Judge of quick and dead is an illustration; if a brother, after baptism, were to question or deny this there would be no hesitation in withdrawing from him. The infallibility of the inspired word is a similar position; it is implied in the belief and obedience of the truth, hence when disputed, there is a clear case for separation.

Reference has been made to the fact that the leading men of the religious world have discussed the inspiration question without arriving at a settlement. This is true, but it is no reason for the brethren of Christ treating it as an insoluble enigma. The teaching of the apostasy tends to becloud this, like every other element of the one "foundation." In affirming that the possession of the Holy Spirit is necessary for every believer it depreciates the value of the word of the Spirit, which it denominates "a dead letter;" and thus interferes with the perception of an important truth, that the Spirit and the Word are used interchangeably. In neglecting the divine instruction embodied in the Mosaic types, it is prevented from learning the lessons which they teach. Having perverted the doctrine concerning "the word made flesh," it is no wonder if the "learned" are at sea respecting the Word. And inasmuch as they have practically set aside Christ's office as Judge, their minds are not prepared for the evidence embodied in the infallibility of the personal Word of God. With the "children of light," these obstacles do not exist. Consequently they are able to thank "the Father of Lights" that that which he has "hid from the wise and prudent" has been "revealed unto babes," (Luke, 10:21).

The circumstances which originated the present controversy have admittedly aggravated its severity. Respecting one element of them, you (Bro. Roberts) have published some remarks of mine of an adverse character. You did so, I apprehend, because they were accompanied by a defence of the Scriptures; though you were then ignorant of anything which was to follow the exposition of the first six propositions. In so doing, you subordinated self for the sake of the Word of God. The apostle Paul, by the direction of the Spirit, recorded some of his natural infirmities (2 Cor. 10:10; 11:6); and you, in furtherance of the Spirit's

teaching, have printed a criticism on your own judgment. You have, in this, given another illustration of your self-abnegating character, and have thereby afforded evidence that you acted on this principle from the beginning. The appreciation of those who already esteem your self-denying labours will be increased, and I trust that those who have taken an opposite view will be led to see that, with whatever else you may be accused, you have not been using the inspiration question as a lever to further personal ends, and that you have not been seeking to maintain “the headship of an organisation,” or “fighting for the shepherd’s crook,” but that your aim has been to fulfil your duty to God, in defending His Holy Word.

You have, my dear brother, been contending that our wilderness spirit-pillar is wholly of divine origin, and that it should be our sole guide. You have been insisting on the purity of the oil which has been provided for the lamp of our holy place. You have been protesting against the introduction of any strange element into the holy ointment oil by which our tabernacle is anointed. You have been showing that the camp of Israel should, by God’s appointment, surround the tabernacle, and that its sacred contents should be borne only by holy Levites. And you have been fighting for the Ark of Israel to keep it out of the hands of the Philistines. With such a record you may well rely, with confidence, on divine judgment. ‘He who is on the side of God has God on his side.’”

Making myself the mouthpiece of all who are like-minded on this vital question, I will, in conclusion, address a few words to those who have not yet taken the same uncompromising stand:—It is with regret that we have deemed it necessary to sever our fraternal fellowship; we hope, however, that it is only for a time. We have acted on principle without regard to human judgment. If you think we are influenced by personal animus, we trust that, ere long, the impression will be removed. Our “heart’s desire and prayer” (Rom. 10:1) is that your eyes may be opened to see that in which we rejoice. If we have spoken plainly, it is because of the momentous character of the question at issue. If our words and actions have caused pain, they have not been intended to inflict it; they are the result of pain which we have suffered in consequence of the attempt to injure that which we highly prize. Your pain may be speedily removed if ye will but act on the principle for which we contend—a principle which we decline to surrender, even if it involve the loss of the right hand. The way we have acted, we will not, if ye join our Levitical band of ark-bearers, make a subject of dispute; rather than enter into controversy on this aspect, we will let human judgment go by default, and allow you to think that in what we have done, everything has been wrong, and nothing right; relying in confidence on the judgment of a higher tribunal. Your attitude, though evil in itself, has not been without some good results; it has stimulated us to make a more exhaustive search for evidence than we should have done. But we do not wish to confine the benefit thereof to ourselves; we desire you to share it, and, therefore we urge you to join us. If you persist in refusal, we fear it may prove the greatest mistake in your life.

At the risk of being considered “conceited,” “credulous,” or “superstitious,” and of “claiming superior spiritual discernment,” I must, before concluding, acknowledge the Providential guidance which has supplied *some of the evidence* I have been able to adduce. In the formulation of one part—that which connects the ark with the personal “Word of God,” as Judge of quick and dead—I was under “the hand of God” in a very marked manner; the experience was that of the brain being forced to think in a certain direction. This irrefutable proof was not necessary for my own satisfaction; other evidence being quite sufficient. Its unveiling is therefore intended for others. Will all who are directed to it recognise its force? I pray that they may. When “the good hand of my God” was upon Nehemiah (Ch. 2:8) it directed his mind toward that with which he was already acquainted, viz., the desolate city of Jerusalem, and his thoughts produced that sadness of countenance which led to King Artaxerxes granting his desire. In my case the mind was caused to dwell on familiar items of the truth as to portray their relationship to each other. I can but regard it as an answer to a prayer often presented in the words of the Psalmist, “Let me behold wondrous things out of thy law” (Ps. 119:18), and given at this time for the purpose of leaving me most in credulous “without excuse” (Rom. 1:20) in regard to the infallible character of the inspired Word.

I pray that, as one one occasion “in Judah,” the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes by the Word of the Lord” (2 Chron. 30:12), so all who are hesitating may be led to take an uncompromising position in defence of the divine authorship of the Bible.

Longing for the day when the sons of God will be permitted to pass from the holy to the most holy place,

I am,
Your brother in defence
of the Word which
God hath magnified
above His name,
J. J. ANDREW.
March 14th, 1886.

Rejoinder to brother Andrew's Letter

BY ROBERT ROBERTS

DEAR BROTHER ANDREW,—*I greet you in the Lord, as becomes those who seek to conform to His ways, however variant from modern custom, or repugnant to natural taste. His favour only can bless and prosper. Therefore I pray it may be multiplied to you exceedingly.*

Your long letter has been welcomed by many. It occurs to me to respond to it in the pages of the *Christadelphian*—not that it calls for any answer. It is all that I could have wished and more than I expected, as a vindication of the Holy Oracles and our duty toward them in the unhappy circumstances that have arisen amongst us. But there are some things on which a word or two, by way of rejoinder, might be fitting.

I know you object to anything in the way of praise. But you must allow me to say how thankful I am to God you were moved to break silence on the subject. Your silence was not misunderstood by me; but the cause of it was not known to others, and was misconstrued by many who imagined you sympathised with views of the authorship of the Bible which interfere with its completeness and authority as the Word of God.

Readers of the *Christadelphian* were not aware, and I was not at liberty to tell them, that you wrote me at the very beginning of the controversy, intimating your concurrence in the argument I had advanced, though dissenting from the mode in which I had introduced the subject. They naturally, therefore, came to wrong conclusions regarding your silence. You have now thoroughly undeceived them. In this, you must permit me to rejoice. Your exhaustive argument, if it has not yet had much weight with those who took the wrong attitude in the first instance, a calculated to powerfully influence earnest minds, and has certainly tended greatly to strengthen and encourage those who have ranged themselves in defence of the absolute divinity of the Scriptures. If some say they wish you had spoken sooner, all must feel that your argument, coming at the time it has done, on the back of so many other efforts and arguments, will act as the final surge of the tide that floats the stranded bark.

A great many who have shared my satisfaction at your thorough-going defence of the Scriptures, have dissented (and that strongly) from the strictures you felt called upon to make in the first part of your letter. My answer to these writers has been that I could endure any amount of personal reproof at the hands of those who stand up in defence of the Bible against the unbelief of our age, of which the plausible theory of partial inspiration is the advanced guard.

I have the answer of a good conscience as regards the objects at which I aim, and the principles by which I am actuated in their accomplishment, but I know the infirmity of the flesh enough to acknowledge that there is always more room for

criticism than commendation in the ways of man. If I have a better opinion of my performances in the particular matter concerned than your remarks appeared to indicate, it may be part of my infirmity. Who can tell? God will judge rightly. Our divergence of view is probably due to dissimilarity of natural constitution rather than to differing conceptions of truth and duty. Your natural man differs entirely from mine—in some respects favourably so. You are slower to be moved, but more deliberate and thorough in the measures to which you are finally impelled. You are not so ardent in your impulses, but for this reason, you are more evenly balanced in your mental operations, and less liable to extreme forms of dissent. In all the circumstances, I find it easy to submit to the implied censure of your remarks as to the mode of my warfare in this matter at the start. It represents the candid judgment of an impartial mind, differing as to the expediences of the case, while animated by the same solitudes for the integrity of the word of God in this day of unbelief. This is a very different thing from the malevolence which tries to injure by a false colouring, or that unintentionally injures by its moral incompetence to discern righteous action.

The explanation of my course is involved in one matter you refer to in the opening part of your letter. You remark upon my conflict with scepticism, which until recently you thought a mistake, and to the prominence I have constantly given to the evidence of the Bible's divinity. The origin of this policy, on my part, goes a long way back. A few years after I became acquainted with the truth (now 34 years ago), those *Essays and Reviews* came out to which you refer as a wave of scepticism that has nearly washed away the foundations of religious faith from the country. About the same time, Colenso's attack on Moses caused a sensation everywhere, and some time after, M. Renan's fascinating, but most fallacious *Life of Christ*, followed, I think, by Darwin's "Development of Species." Up to that time, I had accepted the Bible as a family tradition, without knowing the reasons that existed for the confidence reposed in it. Consequently, when the Essay and Reviewists, backed by Bishop Colenso and the others, came forth in their glittering armour against the ark of God, amid the universal plaudits of the learned—I trembled. This effect was greatly aggravated by my transfer from believing Scotland (alas! it has greatly lost its character since then), into the very hot bed of Atheism in Yorkshire. I was brought into daily personal contact with unbelief in its most pronounced and determined form. This contact made me very uncomfortable, and at last downright unhappy. Many a solitary stroll I had on the country roads in the dark in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield, soliloquising and apostrophising on the mighty subject. One night, I remember, three miles out, under the stars, I was enabled to feel the strength of David's argument: "He that hath formed the eye shall he not see?" But it was a considerable time before I felt my feet on solid ground. I was getting Dr. Thomas's *Herald of the Kingdom* month by month at that time. I wished with all my heart he would say something in defence of the Bible. His scriptural demonstrations were superb, but he had little to say as to the divinity of the Scriptures themselves. He would occasionally refer to the subject in a spirit of sublime confidence, but in my state of mind, I wanted argument. The Doctor evidently felt the Bible to be its own evidence,

which it undoubtedly is, as I now see. But I was not sufficiently risen above the morass of native ignorance to see that. I wanted evidence that I could see and handle. I did the best I could for myself, in my collisions with others, but I wanted more than my occupation would allow me time to learn. I think I wrote the Doctor on the subject (but at this distance of time, I could not be sure). At all events, there at last appeared a series of articles in the *Herald* on the authenticity of the New Testament. For these, I felt more thankful than words could express. It was like the genial summer sun breaking out on the freezing winter. I had never surrendered my faith. With tears, I resisted. I had been a daily reader of the Bible for some years, and I felt it was morally impossible it could be an invention, however unable I was to answer cavils with which the air was full. Still I was unhappy, and the reading of the articles in question ended my unhappiness. They lifted a great cloud from my path. They put me upon a track of thought that, widening and broadening, led me at last into the land of serene confidence in which I had enviously seen the Doctor from afar. From that time, I felt a comfort of faith that nothing has since been able to disturb.

And I have naturally felt that the same cause would produce the same effect in others; that is, that cogent argument on the truth of the Bible would produce cordial and confident faith in believers, and therefore, all the results that come from faith, in consecration and fruitfulness as the servants of the Lord Jesus. This view has led me into the line of things where you thought effort was thrown away.

I was kept in this line in various ways; I came in contact with various kinds of people, who said, with regard to the truth, that it was a beautiful system, but had no other foundation than the Bible, about the truthfulness of which they had more than doubts. It was a frequent query with this class, "Why don't you meet Bradlaugh?" If I said Bradlaugh's arguments could be answered, the remark was incredulously received, with the rejoinder that nobody had answered him yet. I knew that the clergy, in their ignorance of the Bible, were unable to answer him. Therefore I was bound to admit the force of the remark. This gradually led to a willingness to meet him for the sake of the moral effect (which I have since realised) of being able to say I had met him. I may say that one of the first results of my debate with Bradlaugh was the reclamation of a near relation from the chilling realms of unbelief into which for years he had been drifting.

But it was not the extreme type of unbelief represented by Bradlaugh that I found the most obstructive to the progress of the truth. From blank atheism, most people instinctively revolt. But from another form of unbelief, there is no such revolt, but the reverse—that, namely, popularised by the "higher criticism" of the German metaphysicians and theologians. This praised the Bible as the finest form of religious "genius," but at the same time, brought it to a level with the human mind, in teaching that the human mind is the source and arbiter of religious truth, and that the Bible is only to be received in so far as it conforms with the constantly advancing culture of human judgment and conscience. In this view, the Bible is an affair of high and venerable authorship, yet human, inspired

of God, as other high forms of human literature are supposed to be inspired, and as all men are supposed to be inspired. Modern Unitarianism is the practical sectarian result of this view of things—a view that allows a man to praise the Bible and even to profess to be a believer of it, and at the same time to discard its most vital teaching and set aside its most imperative commandments. I do not require to tell you that nothing is more destructive of the Bible's teaching than this view,—placing man practically above it, and leaving him at liberty to submit to it or otherwise, as seems good and meet to him.

I was, in the course of conflict with various kinds of opposition, made very thoroughly acquainted with the various forms assumed by the anti-Bible theorisings of the age; and with their bearings on the wisdom of God. A sensitiveness of touch, perhaps abnormal, was the result, but it was a sensitiveness developed by reason. I will not allow that imagination had anything to do with it. Between imagination and discernment there is a palpable and demonstrable difference. Discernment may always appear imagination to those who are deficiently endowed with the former. Discernment can logically formulate itself which imagination cannot do. When, therefore, the doctrine was enunciated that there were “limits within which it is prudent to confine our theory of inspiration;” that “historical infallibility” was not essential to the inspiration of the Scriptures; that Christ and the apostles could not mean to guarantee “every point and portion of the Jewish history;” that the apostles could not have believed the very words of the Hebrew Scriptures to “have all been the products of inspiration;” that in point of fact, inspiration applies only to “things beyond the power of man to discover for himself;” and that it was a comparatively unreasonable view that “the Scriptures contained no error;”—I say, when such a view was propounded in our midst under circumstances, and by a pen apparently affording the highest guarantees of confidence, it is more easy for me to ask you to imagine than to describe the embarrassment in which I felt myself placed. Had the view been ventilated privately, I should have felt the matter open to private rectification, or at all events capable of simple and harmless treatment as regards effects on others; or had it, though publicly inculcated, been generally scouted, I should have felt the matter one calling for no great concern. Instead of this, it was published to the four winds and by my own innocent act in supplying every address I had for the circulation of specimen numbers of the publication in which it appeared—an act I performed in the confidence and expectation that the new publication was to be devoted to the defence of the Scriptures. And the doctrine, instead of being reprobated, seemed to be received with universal favour and even exultation. The way in which my private demurs were received by one and another, made me feel I was practically alone. The feeling was greatly aggravated by circumstances going before on which I had striven to place the best construction, but which I now felt were demonstrative of a deliberate plan, of the existence of which I was assured six months previously, to break away from the narrow ways of the truth in doctrine and practice, and to widen out into a broader path of “liberty,” than the truth faithfully followed allows.

What was I to do? What I did is my answer. I might have done differently; but I saw no other way at the time. In other respects (I mean apart from the inspiration article) the *Exegetist* was of a character to excite the gravest reprobation in minds thoroughly imbued with a knowledge and love of the Scriptures. It re-introduced to our esteem and confidence men and theories and systems from which we had been gladly emancipated. It seemed as if the whole world of Bible-nullifying "learning," against which we had been fighting for years, was to receive a friendly re-admittance in our midst—as if Satan, in his brightest and most attractive angelic garb, had suddenly appeared in the midst of the house of God. My brief epistolary expression of sorrow at the character of the publication elicited a rejoinder that made me feel there was no alternative but war, at the hazard of all consequences. The war came, and on its probable meaning, from a divine point of view, you have expatiated in a manner, which if it has elicited the scorn of the scorner, has comforted and strengthened and reconciled to its rigours, the larger class of those to whom God is a reality and the Bible the most precious possession of their lives.

The part I have performed in it you have not been able to thoroughly approve. It would have been much more gratifying to me had this been otherwise, but I submit with a certain satisfaction. I take it as a divine discipline to have to endure disapprobation for a course of action to which I was helplessly driven by the circumstances of the case, and in which, so far as I can judge myself, I was actuated by a simple and single regard to what was my duty in relation to the divine interests committed to the hands of every faithful son of God in this evil day. I prefer to submit to the censure of good men who love God and maintain His honour, than to weaken the battle on behalf of His word by merely personal vindication. For personal vindication I would rather wait to that most interesting moment when the issues of life will be infallibly exhibited in the presence of men and angels at the tribunal of the Word of God, before which God has appointed we must all appear. I do not mean that nothing but vindication awaits me then: because I am conscious of shortcoming enough to make me continually sensible of the need for the Lord's forbearance even now. But I do mean to say that so far as this inspiration controversy is concerned, I have no misgivings as to how the Lord regards the matter.

It has been a grievous trial that so many have been unable to see where the new doctrine leads. It has been still more grievous to find the issue confused by the use of words in different senses. If there has been anything more trying than these, it has been the persistent denial of the existence of such a doctrine as partial inspiration by those who all the time have been using arguments and asking questions that have no other meaning than the proving of it.

There have been those who have thought they were taking safe and satisfactory ground in admitting inspiration in matters having to do with salvation, but leaving the question open as regards other matters which they variously speak of as "unimportant details," "immaterial particulars," &c., and as to which

the editor of the *Æon*'s contention is that the Spirit of God thought it "superfluous" to keep the writers from error; and that as a matter of fact, "no more perilous and egregious mistake could be made than in thinking that inspiration has secured infallibility at all times and for everything that has been written."—(*Æon*, November 14th, 1884, p. 57.)

The gravity of such a view becomes apparent when its bearings are fully seen. Its principal vice lies here: it leaves every one to decide for himself what is important and what is not so: what bears on salvation and what does not: and when he has decided this, he is at liberty, as regards everything he may consider unimportant or unconnected with salvation, to believe this about it that it is possibly and probably marred by error: for this is the essence of the theory,—that Bible errors (as they are assumed to be) are to be accounted for on the principle that there are departments in the Bible in which inspiration was not at work or in which it considered it "superfluous" to exclude error.

For the fully manifested and practical evil of this principle, we have only to glance at communities that make no profession of the truth as we recognise it; all of whom would exceedingly differ from us as to what had to do with faith and salvation. The Unitarians and large classes of the Independents and myriads in the "church" would deny that history has anything to do with faith or salvation, even such a piece of history as the resurrection of Christ. They deny that prophecy or "doctrine" have to do with them. In their view, the only thing having to do with salvation is what they call the "ethical" element of religion: that is, matters of character, and sentiment, and behaviour. The precepts of Christ they would admit have to do with salvation, but as for history, prophecy, and doctrine, they would contend that except in so far as they may casually involve the illustration of the ethical element, they are outside a subject which is exclusively an affair of character and moral condition. Now, let us suppose Unitarians, Independents, and Episcopalians of this class were to come among us, and were to find it as a principle recognised among us, that we could not be sure of the inspiration and infallibility of those parts of the Bible that had nothing to do with salvation, how much of the Bible would they leave us in the category of a fully inspired and reliable word? They would be justified in their application of the principle in striking through the whole of Moses, with its history of Abraham, and its history of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. They would object to the writings of the prophets, with their political and bewildering vaticinations (as they regard them); and they would object to a large part of the New Testament, with its "dogmas and its miraculous histories." They would say to us: "By your own principle, these cannot be retained as the unerring word of inspiration, seeing they have nothing to do with salvation?" Of what avail would it be for us to say, "they *have* to do with salvation"? Would they not say, "How do you know?" We might quote statements in various parts: would they not say, "These statements have to do with a theory of the matter—a doctrine; and we are not to be cumbered by the antiquated notions of men respectable enough in their time, as

good moral writers, but whose theoretical conceptions are not to be placed on a level with the words of unerring inspiration?"

This is no imaginary case: for it is the very position of large classes in professing Christian communions in both England and America, by whom Moses and the historical writings in the Bible generally are rejected as legendary, and the prophets as something worse; and the apostles as the teachers of effete dogma, with which what they consider their otherwise enlightened "ethics," were choked and marred. By this class, the system of divine wisdom embodied in the Scriptures is reduced to an affair of "morality." Those who plead for the toleration of partial inspiration among us, would not carry the principle so far just now—and perhaps never, but this is the outcome of the principle: and it is the outcome of a principle we have to look at. It is not possible to discriminate between those who logically carry a bad principle out and those who fail to do so from either the checking power of association, or the lack of capacity to discern its bearings. Sooner or later, an evil principle will work itself out, whether those who advocate its introduction see its tendencies or not. It "eats as doth a canker." Therefore, the only way for enlightened men to act is to put it away absolutely and have nothing to do with it. This is what we are doing, and obliged to do, with many painful results as regards the alienation of friends, but with very wholesome results as regards the preservation of the Scriptures in their true position in our midst.

It seems very harmless to say that the Bible is "an infallible revelation of the way of salvation," but not in other matters. Many have been suared by this plausible proposition. But many others see it in its true character as a doctrine ultimately involving the subversion of the whole position of faith and hope which is founded on the Bible as the Word of God.

Many, now away from us, say, and said while they were with us, that they believe in the complete inspiration of the Bible; and yet all that they say is directed against the doctrine that they say they believe; which they call "a theory," and all that they do tends to the support of that which they profess to reject. How is such a situation to be understood? There are various ways of regarding it, none of them yielding a basis of co-operation. Admitting their honesty (which it is well not to call in question) their ambiguous tactics must result from a difference in the understanding of terms employed. We, who contend for the divine authorship of the Bible, understand by complete inspiration the controlling operation of the Spirit of God in the writers of the Bible, so that they wrote only what God willed to be written, and not what their merely human impulse might dictate. But if some men understand that all men are more or less inspired who know divine ideas; or (as some have said), that men are inspired in the proportion that they possess common wisdom and intelligence, then it is easy to understand how such men may honestly say they believe in a wholly inspired Bible who do not, in the proper sense, do so. It is a case of words wrongly used. And therefore, as it is sense and not sound—ideas and not words—that govern

our relations in the matter, other definitions have to be employed in testing the matter. The real test is found in the question of whether inspiration admits of error or not. An inspiration that admits of error ceases to be the thing represented to true Bible believers by the word inspiration. And it matters not whether this error comes in by the direct action of inspiration, or by the so-called "intermission" of inspiration; it matters not whether the error is the direct perpetration of the Spirit of God, or is allowed to come in because the Spirit of God thinks it "superfluous" to prevent it, the practical result is the same. Such a view gives us a Bible on which we cannot rely: a Bible in which there is a human element liable to err—a Bible much less trustworthy than is intended by those who advocate this view. For this supposed human element is present in a form that cannot be detected. No man can put his finger upon it and say, "This is the human element, where there is possibly error." Even those who say everything pertaining to salvation is infallibly inspired, have no certainty here: for such have first to decide, as already pointed out, what pertains to salvation—in reference to which, men's opinions would differ with their natural bias. When the word "inspiration" is used with loose ideas, precise terms become necessary in defining the subject. When men say "We believe the Bible is wholly inspired," and then add, "but not every jot and tittle," there arises a necessity for finding out what they mean. This is the explanation of the varying and apparently superfluous steps that have had to be taken in vindication of the truth.

As for those who deny that there is such a thing as partial inspiration, I can only understand their contention on the principle suggested in the last paragraph—namely, that they have a different conception of the idea represented by the word inspiration from what they had at the beginning of the controversy. The controversy originated in these propositions: There are "*limits within which* it is prudent to confine our theory of inspiration." Inspirational power "would only apply to the original documents and, in our view, to *only such parts* OF THEM AS could not otherwise be produced." The "reasonable and defensible view of the question is that which makes inspiration cover all that may be said to cover divine revelation proper, by which we mean everything in the Scriptures that may have been beyond the power of man to discover for himself." "Historical infallibility is not essential to inspiration:" "that Christ and the apostles could not mean to guarantee every point and portion of Jewish history;" that "the apostles could not have believed the very words of the Hebrew scriptures, to have all been the products of inspiration."

These propositions were endorsed in this frank and unmistakeable manner by the editor of the *Æon*:—"Has inspiration only secured infallibility where revealed truth has been given, leaving all truth below this to *the ordinary vicissitudes of literature*? The *Exegetist* has adopted this last conclusion. . . . We have long had a settled conviction that this last position is the one that the Scriptures themselves assume, and that it is the only tenable one," &c. "This doctrine is precisely our own. Inspiration has been given only where it claims to have been given, and where it was needful for it to have been given, and that is, in all

matters of revelation" (*The Æon*, Oct. 31st, Nov. 7th and 21st, 1884). "You say inspiration carried infallibility with it, through every jot and tittle: *we say it does not*" (*Æon* March 21st).

Those who, in view of these things, maintain that the doctrine of partial inspiration has not been advocated, compel us to seek some occult explanation of their tactics. On the face of it, it seems as if they must be blind or perverse. I can understand those who say, "We believed the doctrine of partial inspiration when it was first advanced, but we have since become convinced that it is a dangerous error." But I cannot understand the other class, except on the supposition that they speak with casuistic reservation, or have come to attach a different meaning to the words from what they represented in the beginning.

These considerations may help you to understand the action at Birmingham. While there was a verbal recognition of the true doctrine on the part of those now separated from us, there was a secret nursing and encouragement of the false. "Not every jot and tittle" was a phrase used hundreds of times. "Was inspiration necessary for this? Was inspiration necessary for that?" were questions asked in regular conversation. The introducer of the doctrine was constantly defended, and his paper sedulously circulated. The *Æon* was also week by week sowing tares, and increasing the bitterness and the opposition manifested on the part of those who sympathised with partial inspiration. I recognised that if things were left as they were, the work of the truth would become hopelessly responsible for this Bible-destroying doctrine. It would become established as a tolerated tradition among us; and would work its leavening and destructive work with the process of time. How to extricate the situation was the difficulty. There was apparently a majority on the wrong side; and there was no hope of the resolution that had been adopted some months previously, being applicable, because while its terms were assented to, its meaning was construed in a sense to admit of partial inspiration. The only plan was to ask consent to a form of words that could not so be treated. I resolved upon this. Before doing so, however, I tried the experiment of coming to an understanding with the leading brethren. I invited them to talk the matter over a friendly cup of tea. This experiment was a failure. It became evident that we could not come to agreement. I asked them, in view of our hopeless difference, to retire peaceably from the meeting. They strenuously objected to this. I said, unless they did so, they would compel the adoption of measures to effect a separation. They threw the responsibility of this upon me, and I had no alternative but to accept it. I issued the circular published at the time in the pages of the *Christadelphian*. The form of words to which I asked assent was that they recognised the necessity of stepping aside from all who refused to repudiate the doctrine which had been publicly promulgated and publicly endorsed, and defended in our midst—mentioning the names of the two brethren who had taken the leading part in doing so. The mention of the names was a necessity for the specific identification of the doctrine to be repudiated. The introduction of partial inspiration was a matter of history which there was a persistent endeavour to ignore, along with which there was an equally persistent

opposition to the complete inspiration of the Bible, the truth of which was constantly disparaged as a “theory.” There was the certain prospect that without some process of thorough eradication, the false doctrine would remain in our midst, and the true be choked by a hollow form of words that seemed to concede it, while used practically to exclude it. In such an ambiguous situation action was a necessity, if the truth was not to be exposed to corruption from the elements that had been set loose.

I might have waited longer. It might have been wiser to do so. But we had had seven months of it, and that seemed long enough with an increasing tendency to get worse through the circulation of tainted literature. Everybody had had time to make up their minds, and their minds were setting more and more distinctly in the shape first imparted. The aspect in which the situation appeared to me was that the Word of God was being sacrificed to personal preferences; and that a solemn trust was being trifled with. Either through incompetence to discern the danger or through the power of bias in reference to men, error of the most dangerous character was being tolerated and fostered in the name of the truth. It was as if a serpent had been brought into the house and an asylum sought for it under the sofa or on the hearth rug, under the protestation that it was a harmless toy; or as if in a law case, the witnesses had begun to privately impart information and concede vital points to wolfish counsel on the other side, and insisting in their simplicity, that it made no difference; or as if the garrison of a besieged fortress had begun to admit visitors by a back door, from the ranks of the enemy, on the plea that they were friendly people from whom no harm was to be apprehended. This, at least, was how the thing appeared to me. The certainty lay before us that if something were not done to clear us of the treachery, it would become an established doctrine among us that the Bible was not in all things to be trusted; that it was human and possibly erring in all matters that man could discover for himself; or that if in a sense inspiration in its entirety was to be conceded, yet to inspiration it had seemed “superfluous” to withhold the writers from error in some things (in how many, no one could tell or pretended to tell). The practical issue of such a doctrine could not stop short of the spiritual ditch in which it has plunged the Unitarians and Congregationalists of the present day. I felt it was not a matter to be compromised at all. Therefore, I made up my mind to leave the assembly with all who were prepared to take unmistakable ground on the question. To ascertain who these were, I submitted a printed statement for their adoption—with what results you know.

That I should be accused of evil motives—that it should be said to me, “It is not a question of inspiration and you know it,” was specially hard to bear, after all the evidence I had given of my willingness to give the highest place (if there is a high place) to men supposed to be faithful servants of the truth. The suggestion to which you refer that I was fighting “for the headship of an organization,” is specially galling in the state of facts which can only be fully known to God and myself. The judgment seat will disclose, if there is need, that the so-called “headship of an organisation” is a continual mortification to me, and has been so

from the commencement. It is a position forced upon me by the effort to do my duty both in publishing the truth and protecting it from corruption. It is not a thing I enjoy in the least. Nothing would be more congenial to me than to retire before men capable of discerning and enforcing the righteous ways of the Spirit of God, and animated by a manifest desire to glorify the Word of God and benefit men. On the other hand, I acknowledge that nothing is more impossible than to give way to men who fail to appreciate the privilege the truth has brought them, or to discern the evil connected with the endless human plausibilities that fill the world in Church and State. Men of a capable, zealous, and benevolent mind would soon have the field gladly to themselves, so far as I am concerned, for the work is to me a continual eating of bitter herbs. But they judge me by themselves. They cannot do otherwise. I pray they may be forgiven all their evil speeches. The kind of opposition they have offered is only what happens in every controversy that takes place. The President of the Local Government Board is accused of jealous feelings towards Mr. Gladstone, because he resigns his place in the Government from inability to reconcile himself to Mr. Gladstone's sweeping Irish measures. It is the invariable course of men whose case is weak on the merits, to impugn the motives of their opponents and deny their ostensible aims. I am neither surprised nor disconcerted at tactics which are as old as the world. I am willing to believe that some of those who employ them in this case, do so with some honesty of conviction. But they none the less commit a grievous wrong against me and sin a sin, which they may be called upon to answer to their shame.

A more consistent class of antagonists are those with whom you have had to deal in London—those who say that while they recognise the inspired character of the Bible, they are not prepared to refuse association to those who may be unable to hold the same decided views as themselves. Though more consistent, however, and therefore excitative of more agreeable sentiments than those caused by the ambiguities of their *confreres* elsewhere, the attitude which they would invite us to occupy with them is not a degree less objectionable. It is rather more, than less, objectionable, spiritually considered. It amounts to an open plea for liberty to regard the Bible as a partly-inspired, and possibly erring, book, which our Birmingham friends do not consent to in words. The plea would not be put forward in this form, but it is the plea that lurks in the heart of their contention. Their contention is that a belief in the fully inspired and infallible character of the Bible autographs ought not to be made a test of fellowship. This of course means, that a man having doubts as to this belief, should not be rejected from fellowship because of his doubts. If this would be right in the case of one person, it would be right in the case of two or any number. It would therefore be right in the case of the whole meeting. It therefore comes to this that we are invited to take a position which involves the possibility of our community becoming at last a community of believers in the partly inspired and unreliable character of the Bible. To such a proposal it is impossible for men with their eyes open to do less than offer the most strenuous uncompromising refusal.

You have referred to the Providential character of the present upheaval. I have no doubts on this aspect of the case. We may of course misread, or have a difficulty in correctly reading the purposes of God in providence in the absence of a divine interpretation; but we cannot err in including in them the facts of actual experience. Among such facts in this case, is the test brought to bear upon every one as to the nature of their foundations. At such a time as this, every earnest mind is made to ask itself—"Why am I where I am? Is it for man's sake or God's sake? For my own sake or the truth's sake? Because of friendly influence or because of my independent submission to the claims of the Spirit of God?" I recollect once being very powerfully exercised in this way during the life of Dr. Thomas when envious friends had temporarily poisoned his mind against me. If I had been rooted in Dr. Thomas, I must have slipped away from the truth. The rough experience of the current situation must act in this way upon many; and this is doubtless in the scope of the divine intention. Harmful results are certain; but this is not inconsistent with divine objects. On the contrary, they may be, and doubtless are, comprised in those objects in addition to the other. The reading of the prophets shows us that though God bears long with inattention and insubjection on the part of His people, there come times when events are permitted that distress and destroy those who do not honour Him with a full subjection to the privileges He has given them. There may be some such object in the present turmoil. But I believe more good than evil will be the result. In one way, I already see it. For years, the truth has been getting encumbered like a ship with bottom fouled from long-sailing. Adherents have been multiplied denominationally, as we might say without, in many cases becoming assimilated to the spirit of the system to which they have attached themselves. Many have accepted the doctrines of the truth in a theoretical form, without that thorough acquaintance with the scriptures which results in submission to their sentiments and practical requirements. They have, in many cases, merely changed their "creed" and their denominational profession without coming into sympathy with the Spirit of God as brought to bear on us in the writings of Moses, the prophets, and the apostles. They have become nominal Christadelphians without receiving the Spirit of the Bible. This storm on the subject of inspiration, while breaking withered branches from the tree, is going to stir the sap and increase the life vigour in its remaining parts; and lead to more life and fruitfulness in all senses. Many are they who already say they thank God for the inspiration controversy. They feel a confidence in the Bible beyond anything they ever felt before, and experience a determination of greatly increased force, to do as Paul told Timothy to do,—to give themselves "wholly" to the things to which the Bible gives them relation.

But whatever be, or be not, the purpose of God in allowing us to come into this affliction, there was but one course for those who have made the Word of God their portion in life, and who aim to know no man after the flesh—prepared, if necessary, to sacrifice father and mother, husband and wife, houses and land. That course has been taken by many. It has been taken by you. That it has been taken by me in a way that does not meet the full approval of all I love is a sorrow,

to which I reconcile myself in the inability to see that any other course was open to me in the circumstances. Presently, God will show us His mind on the subject by the mouth of Christ: to which, if I know myself, I yearn to submit to the uttermost depths of humiliation, whatever it may be. Meanwhile, set with you for the defence of the Gospel, of which, in our age, we should have no pledge or guarantee without a wholly-inspired and infallible Bible,

I remain, indomitably,
Your fellow-soldier at all hazards and risks in the field of battle,
ROBERT ROBERTS.
Birmingham, 29th March, 1886.