On Method

~Other Speakers G-L: Charles Hodge:

§ 1. Theology a Science.

IN every science there are two factors: facts and ideas; or, facts and the mind. Science is more than knowledge. Knowledge is the persuasion of what is true on adequate evidence. But the facts of astronomy, chemistry, or history do not constitute the science of those departments of knowledge. Nor does the mere orderly arrangement of facts amount to science. Historical facts arranged in chronological order, are mere annals. The philosophy of history supposes those facts to be understood in their causal relations. In every department the man of science is assumed to understand the laws by which the facts of experience are determined; so that he not only knows the past, but can predict the future. The astronomer can foretell the relative position of the heavenly bodies for centuries to come. The chemist can tell with certainty what will be the effect of certain chemical combinations. If, therefore, theology be a science, it must include something more than a mere knowledge of facts. It must embrace an exhibition of the internal relation of those facts, one to another, and each to all. It must be able to show that if one be admitted, others cannot be denied.

The Bible is no more a system of theology, than nature is a system of chemistry or of mechanics. We find in nature the facts which the chemist or the mechanical philosopher has to examine, and from them to ascertain the laws by which they are determined. So the Bible contains the truths which the theologian has to collect, authenticate, arrange, and exhibit in their internal relation to each other. This constitutes the difference between biblical and systematic theology. The office of the former is to ascertain and state the facts of Scripture. The office of the latter is to take those facts, determine their relation to each other and to other cognate truths, as well as to vindicate them and show their harmony and consistency. This is not an easy task, or one of slight importance.

Necessity for System in Theology

It may naturally be asked, why not take the truths as God has seen fit to reveal them, and thus save ourselves the trouble of showing their relation and harmony?

The answer to this question is, in the first place, that it cannot be done. Such is the constitution of the human mind that it cannot help endeavoring to systematize and reconcile the facts which it admits to be true. In no department of knowledge have men been satisfied with the possession of a mass of undigested facts. And the students of the Bible can as little be expected to be thus satisfied. There is a necessity, therefore, for the construction of systems of theology. Of this the history of the Church affords abundant proof. In all ages and among all denominations, such systems have been produced.

Second, A much higher kind of knowledge is thus obtained, than by the mere accumulation of isolated facts. It is one thing, for example, to know that oceans, continents, islands, mountains, and rivers exist on the face of the earth; and a much higher thing to know the causes which have determined the distribution of land and water on the surface of our globe; the configuration of the earth; the effects of that configuration on climate, on the races of plants and animals, on commerce, civilization, and the destiny of nations. It is by determining these causes that geography has been raised from a collection of facts to a highly important and elevated science. In like manner, without the knowledge of the laws of attraction and motion, astronomy would be a confused and unintelligible collection of facts. What is true of other sciences is true of theology. We cannot know what God has revealed in his Word unless we understand, at least in some good measure, the relation in which the separate truths therein contained stand to each other. It cost the Church centuries of study and controversy to solve the problem concerning the person of Christ; that is, to adjust and bring into harmonious arrangement all the facts which the Bible teaches on that subject.

Third, We have no choice in this matter. If we would discharge our duty as teachers and defenders of the truth, we must endeavor to bring all the facts of revelation into systematic order and mutual relation. It is only thus that we can satisfactorily exhibit their truth, vindicate them from objections, or bring them to bear in their full force on the minds of men.

Fourth, Such is evidently the will of God. He does not teach men astronomy or chemistry, but He gives them the facts out of which those sciences are constructed. Neither does He teach us systematic theology, but He gives us in the Bible the truths which, properly understood and arranged, constitute the science of theology As the facts of nature are all related and determined by physical laws, so the facts of the Bible are all related and determined by the nature of God and of his creatures. And as He wills that men should study his works and discover their wonderful organic relation and harmonious combination, so it is his will that we should study his

Word, and learn that, like the stars, its truths are not isolated points, but systems, cycles, and epicycles, in unending harmony and grandeur. Besides all this, although the Scriptures do not contain a system of theology as a whole, we have in the Epistles of the New Testament, portions of that system wrought out to our hands. These are our authority and guide.

§ 2. Theological Method.

Every science has its own method, determined by its peculiar nature. This is a matter of so much importance that it has been erected into a distinct department. Modern literature abounds in works on Methodology, i. e., on the science of method. They are designed to determine the principles which should control scientific investigations. If a man adopts a false method, he is like one who takes a wrong road which will never lead him to his destination. The two great comprehensive methods are the a priori and the a posteriori. The one argues from cause to effect, the other from effect to cause. The former was for ages applied even to the investigation of nature. Men sought to determine what the facts of nature must be from the laws of mind or assumed necessary laws. Even in our own day we have had Rational Cosmogonies, which undertake to construct a theory of the universe from the nature of absolute being and its necessary modes of development. Every one knows how much it cost to establish the method of induction on a firm basis, and to secure a general recognition of its authority. According to this method, we begin with collecting well-established facts, and from them infer the general laws which determine their occurrence. From the fact that bodies fall toward the centre of the earth, has been inferred the general law of gravitation, which we are authorized to apply far beyond the limits of actual experience. This inductive method is founded upon two principles: First, That there are laws of nature (forces) which are the proximate causes of natural phenomena. Secondly, That those laws are uniform; so that we are certain that the same causes, under the same circumstances, will produce the same effects. There may be diversity of opinion as to the nature of these laws. They may be assumed to be forces inherent in matter; or, they may be regarded as uniform modes of divine operation; but in any event there must be some cause for the phenomena which we pereeive around us, and that cause must be uniform and permanent. On these principles all the inductive sciences are founded; and by them the investigations of natural philosophers are guided.

The same principle applies to metaphysics as to physics; to psychology as well as to natural science. Mind has its laws as well as matter, and those laws, although of a different kind, are as permanent as those of the external world.

The methods which have been applied to the study of theology are too numerous to be separately considered. They may, perhaps, be reduced to three general classes: First, The Speculative; Second, The Mystical; Third, The Inductive. These terms are, indeed, far from being precise. They are used for the want of better to designate the three general methods of theological investigation which have prevailed in the Church.

§ 3. The Speculative Method.

Speculation assumes, in an a priori manner, certain principles, and from them undertakes to determine what is and what must be. It decides on all truth, or determines on what is true from the laws of the mind, or from axioms involved in the constitution of the thinking principle within us. To this head must be referred all those systems which are founded on any a priori philosophical assumptions. There are three general forms in which this speculative method has been applied to theology.

Deistic and Rationalistic Form.

1. The first is that which rejects any other source of knowledge of divine things than what is found in nature and the constitution of the human mind. It assumes certain metaphysical and moral axioms, and from them evolves all the truths which it is willing to admit. To this class belong the Deistical and strictly Rationalistical writers of the past and present generations.

Dogmatic Form.

2 The second is the method adopted by those who admit a a supernatural divine revelation, and concede that such a revelation is contained in the Christian Scriptures, but who reduce all the doctrines thus revealed to the forms of some philosophical system. This was done by many of the fathers who endeavored to exalt pi,stij into gnw/sij i. e., the faith of the common people into philosophy for the learned. This was also to a greater or less degree the method of the schoolmen, and finds an illustration even in the "Cur Deus Homo" of Anselm, the father of scholastic theology. In later times Wolf applied the philosophy of Leibnitz to the explanation and demonstration of the doctrines of revelation. He says, "Scripture serves as an aid to natural theology. It furnishes natural theology with propositions which ought to be demonstrated; consequently the philosopher is bound not to invent but to demonstrate."1 This method is still in vogue. Men lay down certain principles, called axioms, or first truths of reason, and from them deduce the doctrines of religion by a course of argument as rigid and remorseless as that of Euclid. This is sometimes done to the entire overthrow of the doctrines of the Bible, and of the most intimate moral convictions not only of Christians but of the mass of mankind. Conscience is not allowed to mutter in the presence of the lordly understanding. It is in the spirit of the same method that the old scholastic doctrine of realism is made the basis of the Scriptural doctrines of original sin and redemption. To this method the somewhat ambiguous term Dogmatism has been applied, because it attempts to reconcile the doctrines of Scripture with reason, and to rest their authority on rational evidence. The result of this method has always been to transmute, as far as it succeeded, faith into knowledge, and to attain this end the teachings of the Bible have been indefinitely modifed. Men are expected to believe, not on the authority of God, but on that of reason.

Transcendentalists.

3. Thirdly, and preeminently, the modern Transcendentalists are addicted to the speculative method. In the wide sense of the word they are Rationalists, as they admit of no higher source of truth other Reason. But as they make reason to be something very different from what it is regarded as being by ordinary Rationalists, the two classes are practically very far apart. The Transcendentalists also differ essentially from the Dogmatists. The latter admit an external, supernatural, and authoritative revelation. They acknowledge that truths not discoverable by human reason are thereby made known. But they maintain that those doctrines when known may be shown to be true on the principles of reason. They undertake to give a demonstration independent of Scripture of the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, Redemption, as well as of the immortality of the soul and a future state of retribution. Transcendentalists admit of no authoritative revelation other than that which is found in man and in the historical development of the race. All truth is to be discovered and established by a process of thought. If it be conceded that the Bible contains truth, it is only so far as it coincides with the teachings of philosophy. The same concession is freely made concerning the writings of the heathen sages. The theology of Daub, for example, is nothing more than the philosophy of Scheiling. That is, it teaches just what that philosophy teaches concerning God, man, sin, redemption, and the future state. Marheinecke and Strauss find Hegelianism in the Bible, and they therefore admit that so far the Bible teaches truth. Rosenkranz, a philosopher of the same school, says Christianity is the absolute religion, because its fundamental principle, namely, the oneness of God and man, is the fundamental principle of his philosophy. In his "Encyklopadie" (p. 3) he says: "The only religion which conforms to reason is Christianity, because it regards man as the form in which God has revealed himself. Its theology is therefore anthropology, and its anthropology is theology. The idea of (Gottmenschheit) the godhead of man, is the key of Christianity, in which as Lessing says, lies its rationality."

These are the principal forms of the speculative method in its application to theology. These topics will present themselves for fuller consideration in a subsequent chapter.

§ 4. The Mystical Method.

Few words have been used with greater latitude of meaning than mysticism. It is here to be taken in a sense antithetical to speculation. Speculation is a process of thought; mysticism is matter of feeling. The one assumes that the thinking faculty is that by which we attain the knowledge of truth. The other, distrusting reason, teaches that the feelings alone are to be relied upon, at least in the sphere of religion. Although this method has been unduly pressed, and systems of theology have been constructed under its guidance, which are either entirely independent of the Seriptures, or in which the doctrines of the Bible have been modified and perverted, it is not to be denied that great authority is due to our moral nature in matters of religion. It has ever

been a great evil in the Church that men have allowed the logical understanding, or what they call their reason, to lead them to conclusions which are not only contrary to Scripture, but which do violence to our moral nature. It is conceded that nothing contrary to reason can be true. But it is no less important to remember that nothing contrary to our moral nature can be true. It is also to be admitted that conscience is much less liable to err than reason; and when they come into conflict, real or apparent, our moral nature is the stronger, and will assert its authority in spite of all we can do. It is rightfully supreme in the soul, although, with the reason and the will, it is in absolute subjection to God, who is infinite reason and infinite moral excellence.

Mysticism as applied to Theology.

Mysticism, in its application to theology, has assumed two principal forms, the supernatural and the natural. According to the former, God, or the Spirit of God, holds direct communion with the soul; and by the excitement of its religious feelings gives it intuitions of truth, and enables it to attain a kind, a degree, and an extent of knowledge, unattainable in any other way. This has been the common theory of Christian mystics in ancient and modern times. If by this were meant merely that the Spirit of God, by his illuminating influence, gives believers a knowledge of the truths objectively revealed in the Scriptures, which is peculiar, certain, and saving, it would be admitted by all evangelical Christians. And it is because such Christians do hold to this inward teaching of the Spirit, that they are often called Mystics by their opponents. This, however, is not what is here meant. The mystical method, in its supernatural form, assumes that God by his immediate intercourse with the soul, reveals through the Feelings and by means, or in the way of intuitions, divine truth independently of the outward teaching of his Word; and that it is this inward light, and not the Scriptures, which we are to follow.

According to the other, or natural form of the mystical method, it is not God, but the natural religious consciousness of men, as excited and influenced by the circumstances of the individual, which becomes the source of religious knowledge. The deeper and purer the religious feelings, the clearer the insight into truth. This illumination or spiritual intuition is a matter of degree. But as all men have a religious nature, they all have more or less clearly the apprehension of religious truth. The religious consciousness of men in different ages and nations, has been historically developed under diverse influences, and hence we have diverse forms of religion, -- the Pagan, the Mohammedan, and the Christian. These do not stand related as true and false, but as more or less pure. The appearance of Christ, his life, his work, his words, his death, had a wonderful effect on the minds of men. Their religious feelings were more deeply stirred, were more purified and elevated than ever before. Hence the men of his generation, who gave themselves up to his influence, had intuitions of religious truth of a far higher order than mankind had before attained. This influence continues to the present time. All Christians are its subjects. All, therefore, in proportion to the purity and elevation of their religious feelings, have intuitions of divine things, such as the Apostles and other Christians enjoyed. Perfect holiness would secure perfect knowledge.

Consequences of the Mystical Method.

It follows from this theory, -- (1.) That there are no such things as revelation and inspiration, in the established theological meaning of those terms. Revelation is the supernatural objective presentation or communication of truth to the mind, by the Spirit of God. But according to this theory there is, and can be, no such communication of truth. The religious feelings are providentially excited, and by reason of that excitement the mind perceives truth more or less clearly, or more or less imperfectly. Inspiration, in the Scriptural sense, is the supernatural guidance of the Spirit, which renders its subjects infallible in the communicating truth to others. But according to this theory, no man is infallible as a teacher. Revelation and inspiration are in different degrees common to all men. And there is no reason why they should not be as perfect in some believers now as in the days of the Apostles. (2.) The Bible has no infallible authority in matters of doctrine. The doctrinal propositions therein contained are not revelations by the Spirit. They are only the forms under which men of Jewish culture gave expression to their feelings and intuitions. Men of different culture, and under other circumstances, would have used other forms or adopted other doctrinal statements. (3.) Christianity therefore, neither consists in a system of doctrines, nor does it contain any such system. It is a life, an influence, a subjective state; or by whatever term it may be expressed or explained, it is a power within each individual Christian determining his feelings and his views of divine things. (4.) Consequently the duty of a theologian is not to interpret Scripture, but to interpret his own Christian consciousness; to ascertain and exhibit what truths concerning God are implied in his feelings toward God; what truths concerning Christ are involved in his feelings toward Christ; what the feelings teach concerning sin, redemption, eternal life, etc., etc.

This method found its most distinguished and influential advocate in Schleiermacher, whose "Glaubenslehre" is constructed on this principle. By Twesten -- his successor in the chair of Theology in the University of Berlin -- it is held in greater subjection to the normal authority of Scripture. By others, again, of the

same school, it has been carried out to its utmost extreme. We are at present, however, concerned only with its principle, and neither with the details of its application, nor with its refutation.

§ 5. The Inductive Method.

It is so called because it agrees in everything essential with the inductive method as applied to the natural sciences.

First, The man of science comes to the study of nature with certain assumptions. (1.) He assumes the trustworthiness of his sense perceptions. Unless he can rely upon the well-authenticated tesimony of his senses, he is deprived of all means of prosecuting his investigations. The facts of nature reveal themselves to our faculties of sense, and can be known in no other way. (2.) He must also assume the trustworthiness of his mental operations. He must take for granted that he can perceive, compare, combine, remember, an infer; and that he can safely rely upon these mental faculties in their legitimate exercise. (3.) He must also rely on the certainty of those truths which are not learned from experience, but which are given in the constitution of our nature. That every effect must have a cause; that the same cause under like circumstances, will produce like effects; that a cause is not a mere uniform antecedent, but that which contains within itself the reason why the effect occurs.

Second, The student of nature having this ground on which to stand, and these tools wherewith to work, proceeds to perceive, gather, and combine his facts. These he does not pretend to manufacture, nor presume to modify. He must take them as they are. He is only careful to be sure that they are real, and that he has them all, or, at least all that are necessary to justify any inference which he may draw from them, or any theory which he may build upon them.

Third, From facts thus ascertained and classified, he deduces the laws by which they are determined. That a heavy body falls to the ground is a familiar fact. Observation shows that it is not an isolated fact; but that all matter tends toward all other matter, that this tendency or attraction is in proportion to the quantity of matter; and its intensity decreases in proportion to the square of the distance of the attracting bodies. As all this is found to be universally and constantly the case within the field of observation, he mind is forced to conclude that there is some reason for it; in other words, that it is a law of nature which may be relied upon beyond the limits of actual observation. As this law has always operated in the past, the man of science is sure that it will operate in the future. It is in this way the vast body of modern science has been built up, and the laws which determine the motions of the heavenly bodies; the chemical changes constantly going on around us; the structure, growth, and propagation of plants and animals, have, to a greater or less extent, been ascertained and established. It is to be observed that these laws or general principles are not derived from the mind, and attributed to external objects, but derived or deduced from the objects and impressed upon the mind.

A. The Inductive Method as applied tc Theology.

The Bible is to the theologian what nature is to the man of science. It is his store-house of facts; and his method of ascertaining what the Bible teaches, is the same as that which the natinral philosopher adopts to ascertain what nature teaches. In the first place, he comes to his task with all the assumptions above mentioned. He must assume the validity of those laws of belief which God has impressed upon our nature. In these laws are included some which have no direct application to the natural sciences. Such, for example, as the essential distinction between right and wrong; that nothing contrary to virtue can be enjoined by God; that it cannot be right to do evil that good may come; that sin deserves punishment, and other similar first truths, which God has implanted in the constitution of all moral beings, and which no objective revelation can possibly contradict. These first principles, however, are not to be arbitrarily assumed. No man has a right to lay down his own opinions, however firmly held, and call them "first truths of reason," and make them the source or test of Christian doctrines. Nothing can rightfully be included under the category of first truths, or laws of belief, which cannot stand the tests of universality and necessity, to which many add selg-evidence. But self-evidence is included in universality and necessity, in so far, that nothing which is not self-evident can be universally believed, and what is self-evident forces itself on the mind of every intelligent creature.

Facts to be collected.

In the second place, the duty of the Christian theologian is to ascertain, collect, and combine all the facts which God has revealed concerning himself and our relation to Him. These facts are all in the Bible. This is true, because everything revealed in nature, and in the constitution of man concerning God and our relation to Him, is contained and authenticated in Scripture. It is in this sense that "the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants." It may be admitted that the truths which the theologian has to reduce to a science, or, to speak more humbly, which he has to arrange and harmonize, are revealed partly in the external works of God, partly in the constitution of our nature, and partly in the religious experience of believers; yet lest we should err in our inferences from the works of God, we have a clearer revelation of all that nature reveals, in his word; and lest we should misinterpret our own consciousness and the laws of our nature, everything that can be legitimately learned from that source will be found recognized and authenticated in the Scriptures; and lest we should attribute to the teaching of the Spirit the operations of our own natural affections, we find in the Bible the norm and standard of all genuine religious experience. The Scriptures teach not only the truth, but what are the effects of the truth on the heart and conscience, when applied with saving power by the Holy Ghost.

The Theologian to be guided by the same rules as the Man of Science.

In the third place, the theologian must be guided by the same rules in the collection of facts, as govern the man of science.

1. This collection must be made with diligence and care. It is not an easy work. There is in every department of investigation great liability to error. Almost all false theories in science and false doctrines in theology are due in a great degree to mistakes as to matters of fact. A distinguished naturalist said he repeated an experiment a thousand times before he felt authorized to announce the result to the scientific world as an established fact.

2. This collection of facts must not only be carefully conducted, but aiso comprehensive, and if possible, exhaustive. An imperfect induction of facts led men for ages to believe that the sun moved round the earth, and that the earth was an extended plain. In theology a partial induction of particulars has led to like serious errors. It is a fact that the Scriptures attribute omniscience to Christ. From this it was inferred that He could not have had a finite intelligence, but that the Logos was clothed in Him with a human body with its animal life. But it is also a Scriptural fact that ignorance and intellectual progress, as well as omniscience, are ascribed to our Lord. Both facts, therefore, must be included in our doctrine of his person. We must admit that He had a human, as well as a divine intelligence. It is a fact that everything that can be predicated of a sinless man, is in the Bible, predicated of Christ; and it is also a fact that everything that is predicated of God is predicated of our Lord; hence it has been inferred that there were two Christs, --two persons, -- the one human, the other divine, and that they dwelt together very much as the Spirit dwells in the believer; or, as evil spirits dwelt in demoniacs. But this theory overlooked the numerous facts which prove the individual personality of Christ. It was the same person who said, "I thirst;" who said, "Before Abraham was I am." The Scriptures teach that Christ's death was designed to reveal the love of God, and to secure the reformation of men. Hence Socinus denied that his death was an expiation for sin, or satisfaction of justice. The latter fact, however, is as clearly revealed as the former; and therefore both must be taken into account in our statement of the doctrine concerning the design of Christ's death.

Necessity of a complete Induction.

Illustrations without end might be given of the necessity of a comprehensive induction of facts to justify our doctrinal conclusions. These facts must not be willfully denied or carelessly overlooked, or unfairly appreciated. We must be honest here, as the true student of nature is honest in his induction. Even scientific men are sometimes led to suppress or to pervert facts which militate against their favorite theories; but the temptation to this form of dishonesty is far less in their case, than in that of the theologian. The truths of religion are far more important than those of natural science. They come home to the heart and conscience. They may alarm the fears or threaten the hopes of men, so that they are under strong temptation to overlook or pervert them. If, however, we really desire to know what God has revealed we must be conscientiously diligent and faithful in collecting the facts which He has made known, and in giving them their due weight. If a geologist should find in a deposit of early date implements of human workmanship, he is not allowed to say they are natural productions. He must either revise his conclusion as to the age of the deposit, or carry back to an earlier period the existence of man. There is no help for it. Science cannot make facts; it must take them as they are. In like manner, if the Bible asserts that Christ's death was a satisfaction to justice, the theologian is not allowed to merge justice into benevolence in order to suit his theory of the atonement. If the Scriptures teach that men are born in sin, we cannot change the nature of sin, and make it a tendency to evil and not really sin, in order to get rid of difficulty. If it be a Scriptural fact that the soul exists in a state of conscious activity

between death and the resurrection, we must not deny this fact or reduce this conscious activity to zero, because our anthropology teaches that the soul has no individuality and no activity without a body. We must take the facts of the Bible as they are, and construct our system so as to embrace them all in their integrity.

Principles to be deduced from facts.

In the fourth place, in theology as in natural science, principles are derived from facts, and not impressed upon them. The properties of matter, the laws of motion, of magnetism, of light. etc., are not framed by the mind. They are not laws of thought. They are deductions from facts. The investigator sees, or ascertains by observation, what are the laws which determine material phenomena; he does not invent those laws. His speculations on matters of science unless sustained by facts, are worthless. It is no less unscientific for the theologian to assume a theory as to the nature of virtue, of sin, of liberty, of moral obligation, and then explain the facts of Scripture in accordance with his theories. His only proper course is to derive his theory of virtue, of sin, of liberty, of obligation, from the facts of the Bible. He should remember that his business is not to set forth his system of truth (that is of no account), but to ascertain and exhibit what is God's system, which is a matter of the greatest moment. If he cannot believe what the facts of the Bible assume to be true, let him say so. Let the sacred writers have their doctrine, while he has his own. To this ground a large class of modern exegetes and theologians, after a long struggle, have actually come. They give what they regard as the doctrines of the Old Testament; then those of the Evangelists: then those of the Apostles; and then their own. This is fair. So long, however, as the binding authority of Scripture is acknowledged, the temptation is very strong to press the facts of the Bible into accordance with our preconceived theories. If a man be persuaded that certainty in acting is inconsistent with liberty of action; that a free agent can always act contrary to any amount of influence (not destructive of his liberty) brought to bear upon him, he will inevitably deny that the Scriptures teach the contrary, and thus be forced to explain away all facts which prove the absolute control of God over the will and volitions of men. If he hold that sinfulness can be predicated only of intelligent, voluntary action in contravention of law, he must deny that men are born in sin, let the Bible teach what it may. If he believes that ability limits obligation, he must believe independently of the Scriptures, or in opposition to them, it matters not which, that men are able to repent, believe, love God perfectly, to live without sin, at any, and all times, without the least assistance fromn the Spirit of God. If he deny that the innocent may justly suffer penal evil for the guilty, he must deny that Christ bore our sins. If he deny that the merit of one man can be the judicial ground of the pardon and salvation of other men, he must reject the Scriptural doctrine of justification. It is plain that complete havoc must be made of the whole system of revealed truth, unless we consent to derive our philosophy from the Bible, instead of explaining the Bible by our philosophy. If the Scriptures teach that sin is hereditary, we must adopt a theory of sin suited to that fact. If they teach that men cannot repent, believe, or do anything spiritually good, without the supernatural aid of the Holy Spirit, we must make our theory of moral obligation accord with that fact. If the Bible teaches that we bear the guilt of Adam's first sin, that Christ bore our guilt, and endured the penalty of the law in our stead, these are facts with which we must make our principles agree. It would be easy to show that in every department of theology, -- in regard to the nature of God, his relation to the world, the plan of salvation, the person and work of Christ, the nature of sin, the operations of divine grace, men, instead of taking the facts of the Bible, and seeing what principles they imply, what philosophy underlies them, have adopted their philosophy independently of the Bible, to which the facts of the Bible are made to bend. This is utterly unphilosophical. It is the fundamental principle of all sciences, and of theology among the rest, that theory is to he determined by facts, and not facts by theory. As natural science was a chaos until the principle of induction was admitted and faithfully carried out, so theology is a jumble of human speculations, not worth a straw, when men refuse to apply the same principle to the study of the Word of God.

§ 6. The Scriptures contain all the Facts of Theology.

This is perfectly consistent, on the one hand, with the admission of intuitive truths, both intellectual and moral, due to our constitution as rational and moral beings; and, on the other hand, with the controlling power over our beliefs exercised by the inward teachings of the Spirit, or, in other words, by our religious experience. And that for two reasons: First, All truth must be consistent. God cannot contradict himself. He cannot force us by the constitution of the nature which He has given us to believe one thing, and in his Word command us to believe the opposite. And second, All the truths taught by the constitution of our nature or by religious experience, are recognized and authenticated in the Scriptures. This is a safeguard and a limit. We cannot assume this or that principle to be intmuitively true, or this or that conclusion to be demonstrably certain, and

make them a standard to which the Bible must conform. What is self-evidently true, must be proved to be so, and is always recognized in the Bible as true. Whole systems of theologies are founded upon intuitions, so called, and if every man is at liberty to exalt his own intuitions, as men are accustomed to call their strong convictions, we should have as many theologies in the world as there are thinkers. The same remark is applicable to religious experience. There is no form of conviction more intimate and irresistible than that which arises from the inward teaching of the Spirit. All saving faith rests on his testimony or demonstrations (1 Cor. ii. 4). Believers have an unction from the Holy One, and they know the truth, and that no lie (or false doctrine) is of the truth. This inward teaching produces a conviction which no sophistries can obscure, and no arguments can shake. It is founded on consciousness, and you might as well argue a man out of a belief of his existence, as out of confidence that what he is thus taught of God is true. Two things, however, are to be borne in mind. First, That this inward teaching or demonstration of the Spirit is confined to truths objectively revealed in the Scriptures. It is given, says the Apostle, in order that we may know things gratuitously given, i. e., revealed to us by God in His Word (I Cor. ii. 10-16). It is not, therefore, a revelation of new truths, but an illumination of the mind, so that it apprehends the truth, excellence, and glory of things already revealed. And second, This experience is depicted in the Word of God. The Bible gives us not only the facts concerning God, and Christ, ourselves, and our relations to our Maker and Redeemer, but also records the legitimate effects of those truths on the minds of believers. So that we cannot appeal to our own feelings or inward experience, as a ground or guide, unless we can show that it agrees with the experience of holy men as recorded in the Scriptures.

The Teaching of the Spirit.

Although the inward teaching of the Spirit, or religious experience, is no substitute for an external revelation, and is no part of the rule of faith, it is, nevertheless, an invaluable guide in determining what the rule of faith teaches. The distinguishing feature of Augustinianism as taught by Augustin himself, and by the purer theologians of the Latin Church throughout the Middle Ages, which was set forth by the Reformers, and especially by Calvin and the Geneva divines, is that the inward teaching of the Spirit is allowed its proper place in determining our theology. The question is not first and mainly, What is true to the understanding, but what is true to the renewed heart? The effort is not to make the assertions of the Bible harmonize with the speculative reason, but to subject our feeble reason to the mind of God as revealed in his Word, and by his Spirit in our inner life. It might be easy to lead men to the conclusion that they are responsible only for their voluntary acts, if the appeal is made solely to the understanding. But if the appeal be made to every man's, and especially to every Christian's inward experience, the opposite conclusion is reached. We are convinced of the sinfulness of states of mind as well as of voluntary acts, even when those states are not the effect of our own agency, and are not subject to the power of the will. We are conscious of being sold under sin; of being its slaves; of being possessed by it as a power or law, immanent, innate, and beyond our control. Such is the doctrine of the Bible, and such is the teaching of our religious consciousness when under the influence of the Spirit of God. The true method in theology requires that the facts of religious experience should be accepted as facts, and when duly authenticated by Scripture, be allowed to interpret the doctrinal statements of the Word of God. So legitimate and powerful is this inward teaching of the Spirit, that it is no uncommnon thing to find men having two theologies, -- one of the intellect, and another of the heart. The one may find expression in creeds and systems of divinity, the other in their prayers and hymns. It would be safe for a man to resolve to admit into his theology nothing which is not sustained by the devotional writings of true Christians of every denomination. It would be easy to construct from such writings, received and sanctioned by Romanists, Lutherans, Reformed, and Remonstrants, a system of Pauline or Augustinian theology, such as would satisfy any intelligent and devout Calvinist in the world.

The true method of theology is, therefore, the inductive, which assumes that the Bible contains all the facts or truths which form the contents of theology, just as the facts of nature are the contents of the natural sciences. It is also assumed that the relation of these Biblical facts to each other, the principles involved in them, the laws which determine them, are in the facts themselves, and are to be deduced from them, just as the laws of nature are deduced from the facts of nature. In neither case are the principles derived from the mind and imposed upon the facts, but equally in both departments, the principles or laws are deduced from the facts and recognized by the mind.