

correct views of inspiration. For example, God actually spake to the patriarchs, as one man speaks to another, and the Pentateuch is an inspired record of what God really did say to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and the rest. Thus the first idea is revelation—God actually and literally communicating His mind to the fathers. The inspiration, by which the records of these revelations were composed, is a distinct and subsequent idea. This is true with reference to the whole Bible. God has spoken at sundry times and in divers manners, and the Bible contains the inspired record of these successive revelations—and forms, viewed as a whole, one complete and harmonious revelation of God's will to man—inspired and, therefore, infallible accounts of what God has on various occasions communicated until the whole revelation was complete.

This brings us to another important point, which must not be omitted in a Scriptural answer to the question, *In what light are we to regard this book?* It is not only true that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; but the Spirit has been given to abide with that truth for ever. The Bible is the Word of God, not merely in the same sense in which any other work that remains to us from past ages is the work of its author. These human authors, when once they have uttered their word, have no further control over it—the record remains; but the writer is dead, and done with it. But God abides: His Spirit abides with his truth—it is still invested with divine power and in distinction from every thing else, it is a living word quick and powerful. The word “He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved,” is as much God's living word as was the command, “Let there be light,” at the instant it was uttered over the darkness of primeval night. It is as much God's living word this day and to us, as it was to the men of a former day, when it came first and freshly from the inspired lips, or the inspired pen. God speaks to us, though it comes in the unobtrusive silence of the sacred page, without external splendor to dazzle, or awful herald to arrest attention, it is the word of Jehovah still—quick and powerful—piercing to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, the joint and marrow, proving a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. We come to this word as though we were actually admitted to an audience with the eternal! Our spirits being aroused from their listlessness, their levity quelled, and their proud questionings hushed, and bending in solemn expectation, childlike docility and loving submission, we say “Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.”

Accepting the Scriptures as the very Word of God, upon evidence so strong that to believe that it is the word of men, would indicate the most irrational credulity, the shifting conjectures and discoveries of the day cannot unsettle our belief. The Bible has ever and again been cast into the crucible of critical analysis and scientific research, and the result has been the solution of old difficulties, and the raising of some new ones. The advocates of plenary inspiration have no objection whatever to fair scholar-like examination of the Bible, they place no barrier in the way of enquiry and thought, assured that the Word of God liveth and abideth for ever, and that it comes to us with an authority exclusively its own, the authentic record of the revelation which God has given to tell us what His mind and will are. The Scriptures have a power too, exclusively their own—the Spirit who inspired them being with them to