

speak?" In later times He moved men specially appointed to be the exponents of His thought to speak or write in His name by way of warning or entreaty or judgment or encouragement. But how the Divine intelligence acted upon the mind of the sacred writers and teachers we cannot tell. It is a profound mystery. Can we be certain that it is a fact though it is inexplicable? Most assuredly we can. The mode in which one human intelligence acts upon another is incomprehensible, yet we do not doubt that one inspires and moves another to high thinking and noble living, so that he becomes a teacher to his own and all future generations. We are as convinced of it as we are of our own existence. So the writers of the Old and New Testaments were conscious that they were uttering the thoughts of another by whom they were prompted and moved. The phrases, "Thus saith the Lord," "The word of the Lord that came to Isaiah," Jeremiah, Hosea, and others, are a proof that such was their conviction. "This we say by the word of the Lord," exclaims St. Paul. "I speak not this by commandment," he declares to the Corinthians when he is giving expression merely to his own opinion, not to words divinely suggested. But might they not have been deceived, imagining when they were in a frenzy, or transport of feeling, or exalted state of thought, that they were directed by heavenly inspiration, just as the priests of the Grecian oracles supposed themselves to be influenced by a divinity when they gave forth their dark and ambiguous sayings? But the fact that their utterances were sometimes at complete variance with their national prejudices and their expectations is indisputable proof that their thought was not spontaneous, but was suggested to them. The Messianic promise was the central idea of Old Testament prophecy, but the writers represented the future deliverer in terms diametrically opposed to the popular conception of Him. Speaking as Jews, in days of national prosperity, they could not have described the calamities, the political extinction, the oppression, the degradation, the hatred which Israel and Judah were to suffer, and which have received literal fulfilment, had these things not been revealed to them by the infinite Intelligence who sees the end from the beginning. Their forecasts of the complete annihilation of the mighty monarchies that then flourished in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, so that even the sites of their proud and splendid cities should be forgotten; their predictions of the humiliation of haughty and powerful Egypt which should become the basest of kingdoms; their prophecies of the rise of the powerful empires of Greece and Rome