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VERBAL INSPIRATION

There is a great deal of misunderstanding as to just what is meant by verbal inspiration. As a matter of fact, the only real inspiration is verbal inspiration. It is the words, certainly, that are inspired. It is not the paper that is inspired. It is not some vague sort of an idea that is inspired. In fact, inspiration does not refer to ideas. Inspiration refers to expression of ideas.

It is important to understand clearly that when we say verbal inspiration, we are using the term, "verbal," not in reference to the process, but in reference to the results. Verbal inspiration does not mean that the inspiration has come about through God's dictating words. Dictation would not be a case of inspiration at all; it would be revelation. There are instances where God has given material to the writer by direct revelation, and this by means of giving particular words. We have many such instances in the Bible. There is nothing unnatural about this. If God is a person, it is just as natural for Him at times to speak words to those who hear Him as it is for any one of us to speak words to another one.

But that is not what we mean by verbal inspiration. Verbal inspiration simply means that the words, all of them, are inspired. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Now it is important here to understand what we mean by inspired. Inspiration in the sense in which it has been held by the Christian Church through the ages and in which it can be reasonably inferred from the statements of the New Testament, is an activity of the Holy Spirit which consists principally of guiding the writers of the Scripture as to the selection of the ideas they are to put in to that which is to be part of the Word of God, and also in keeping them from error in their expression of it. The result of this is that the words give us a ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ correct presentation of those ideas which it is the desire of the Holy Spirit to be included in the Word of God. The words are kept free from error. This does not mean, of course, that these