

a poor substitute for the claim of the Bible. As a rule it is impossible to get accurate thought from inaccurate words. If one tells another that it is snowing outdoors, the other man will hardly gain the thought that the sun is shining and it is not snowing at all. So in passages of the Scripture: if the words are inaccurate, the thought behind them is hopelessly obscured. "Thought inspirationists" sometimes say that the degree of error in the words is not that great. But if there is error at all in the words, the bounds of the error cannot be determined. Men are the writers of the Bible; and if they wrote erroneously, it can hardly be assumed that through their erroneous expression we will be able to rediscover the truth.

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In this connection the biblical authors occasionally used human or man-made sources available to them, as well as direct revelation from God. Mark was not one of the Lord's disciples but (as many scholars think) likely used Peter as his source of information. Oral and written reports often are the basis of truth in the Old Testament for prophetic messages. Constant appeals in Kings/Chronicles are made to extrabiblical works as source materials. This does not impair the inspired character of those books, for the guidance of the Spirit extends to every sphere of a writer's work.

Were the writers conscious about the full import of their duties? Apparently they were. The powerful injunctions of Moses in Deuteronomy 6 would be valueless if he had no proper concept of what he had written. But the writers' degree of consciousness does not affect us or our understanding. It is *our* consciousness that we have in our hands the Word of God given by Him and written by men under the inspiration of the Spirit.