

unfortunate that our common word "inspiration" suggests a whole series of ideas which are very different from the Biblical idea of inspiration.

When people say they do not believe in inspiration of words but in inspiration of ideas, they are confusing inspiration with revelation. God revealed ideas to men. He inspired men to write down these ideas in words which present them accurately. Inspiration is actually a matter of words.

This should not lead us to think that verbal inspiration means that these are the only words in which God's ideas could be expressed. It means nothing of the sort. Positively, it means that these words do express the desired ideas. Negatively, it means that they do not include or properly imply other ideas which are false.

Many people have a real problem when they find in the Bible parallel passages expressing the same idea in different ways. They should remember that verbal inspiration does not mean that only one particular phrase could express the divine idea. Verbal inspiration means that the words are suitable for the purpose, and that they are free from error.

God did not create a set of mathematical symbols for the giving of His Word. He used human language, with all its weakness and changeableness, but He used it in such a way as to accomplish His purpose.

Human words vary in their meaning from time to time. One sentence may be interpreted in various ways. Verbal inspiration never justifies taking a few words out of context and building a doctrine upon them. It means that the words, as used in the time and place of writing, studied in their context, present the very idea God desires presented, and do not include false ideas.