

In this there was an eminent disparity between the prophets of God, and those among the Pagans said to be possessed of the spirit of *Python*, or spirit of divination. These are reported to have uttered their predictions in what is called ecstasy or trance, that is, whilst they underwent a temporary suspension both of their reason and of their senses. Accordingly, they are represented as mere machines, not acting, but acted upon and passive, like the flute into which the musician blows.

This is what has been called organic inspiration. In imitation of one remarkable class of these, the sorcerers and soothsayers among the Jews (who, like those of the same craft among Pagans, reaped considerable profit from abusing the credulity of the rabble) had acquired a wonderful mode of speaking, in which they did not appear to employ the common organs of speech, and were thence termed... *ventriloqui*, belly-speakers.

It is in allusion to this practice that Isaiah (viii. 19. xxix. 4.) denominates them *the wizzards*, that peep and that mutter, whose speech seemed to rise out of the ground, and to whisper out of the dust. Totally different was the method of the prophets of the true God. The matter, or all that concerned the thoughts, was given them; what concerned the manner, or enunciation, was left to themselves. The only exception the rabbis mention is Balaam, whose prophecy appeared to them to have been emitted in spite of himself. But this case, if it was as they imagine, which may be justly doubted, was extraordinary.

In all other cases, the prophets had, when prophesying, the same command over their own actions, over their members and organs, as at other times. They might speak, or forbear; they might begin, and desist, when they pleased; they might decline the task as signed them, and disobey the divine command. No doubt, when they acted thus, they sinned very heinously, and were exposed to the wrath of Heaven. Of the danger of such disobedience we have two signal examples, in the prophet who was sent to prophecy against the altar erected by Jeroboam at Bethel, and in the prophet Jonah.

But that men continued still free agents, and had it in their power to make a very injudicious use of the spiritual gifts and illuminations which they had received from above, is manifest from the regulations, on this subject, established by the apostle Paul in the church of Corinth... "The spirits of the prophets," says he, "are subject unto the prophets," 1 Cor. xiv. 32. Such is the difference between those who are guided by the Spirit of truth, and those who are under the influence of the spirit of error.

(The Works of George Campbell... Vol. 3, Dissertation on the Gospels... London: Printed for Thomas Tegg... MDCCCXI, ebook, 51-52, Text and Paragraph Structure Modified)