

EXEGETICAL

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"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."—2 Timothy iii., 16-17.

There are three general thoughts which appear prominently on the surface of this passage, viz.: the *inspiration*, the *use*, and the *end* or *design* of Scripture. The inspiration of Scripture, in one form or another, has been held by the Church in all ages; various theories, however, have been propounded in regard to this doctrine. For example, there is the *partial* theory, according to which only certain parts of Scripture are inspired. Then there is the *imperfect* theory, which holds to an inspiration consistent with error. To this belongs the opinion held by many, that the thoughts only, and not the words, are inspired. Others take inspiration to be merely *suggestion*, or *superintendence* on the part of God; others, that it is only the elevation of man's so-called higher reason to such a degree of intensity that he discerns spiritual truth not otherwise attainable.

Now, in opposition to, and in confutation of all such speculative theorizing, the Apostle says: "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.*" The word *all* is comprehensive. We cannot confine it to one part of Scripture to the exclusion of another; nor to the thoughts, to the exclusion of the words, for in many cases the word and thought must stand or fall together. Hence we have the evangelical doctrine of *plenary*, that is a full and complete inspiration which extends to the writers, as also to the thoughts and words contained in the writings. Such a complete Divine influence is necessary, for it is evident that a fallible man cannot deliver an infallible message, unless he himself is rendered infallible, at least for the time and occasion. So we find the Apostle Peter declaring that "prophecy came not in old times by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Moreover the writers were not mere machines—not the pens, but the penmen of Scripture—the mouthpieces, as it were of God, as Peter declared, just before the day of Pentecost, that "the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of his servant David." This view is supported by the language of the writers themselves. The common introduction to prophetic address is, "thus saith the Lord," and it was at men's peril if they refused to accept the prophet's words as the very words of God himself. "All Scripture," in the text refers mainly to the Old Testament, but the old and the new stand or fall together. They evidence themselves to be parts of one complete whole, and like the two sides of an arch, what supports one, supports both. The word "*inspiration*," is a very proper rendering of the original. The Greek word is *Theopneustos*, and means, simply, God inbreathed, and so may be applied with equal propriety to the writers, as well as to the thoughts and words written.

Inspiration proper, must be distinguished from *revelation*. All Scripture is inspired, but all is not revealed. For example, a large proportion of Scripture is a simple narration of historical events, most of which may