

Scripture truth, therefore, traced to its source terminates in God; traced to its influence upon the heart and life it terminates in righteousness. And, here, reverting for a moment to the thought first presented, viz., inspiration, we have the Bible containing sixty-six books, by some forty writers of various attainments, in various countries, extending over a period of 1700 years, the writers unknown to one another, without common plan or purpose, and yet the influence exerted by all and every part of this book is to make men holy and God-like in character. Is it inspired of God, or not? Surely the answer, even by the honest sceptic must be—*truly this is the book of God*. This thought will appear more fully developed in the next verse, which presents the end or design of Scripture; viz.: "*that the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works*."

The term "man of God," is an unusual form of expression in the New Testament: it occurs frequently in the Old, and there it is applied to a prophet or teacher, as in the case of Elijah. In this passage, it no doubt primarily refers to the New Testament teacher, but we think it is to be taken in a generic sense, and as such it embraces all Christians. We are all in a sense men of God, if we have become united to Christ by faith: more than this, we are said to be sons and daughters of God Almighty, and it is God's desire that we should be perfect; as our Saviour said, "be ye perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This, however, is not absolute perfection, as that cannot be attained by the creature; neither is it a perfectly sinless state, for "there is no man that liveth and sinneth not;" but there is a relative perfection or completeness of character, at which we should aim, and which by God's grace results from a proper use of Scripture. This state is perhaps best expressed by the last clause of the verse, viz.: "thoroughly furnished unto all good works;" and a man "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" is perfect. Perfection was a characteristic of humanity at its inception—now it is imperfection. Coming from the hand of his Creator there was no duty to which man was inadequate—now imperfection and inadequacy are written on every thought, word and action. Man sinned against his Maker, and as sin is a demoralizing and enfeebling principle, it has crushed and paralyzed every faculty of the human soul, nay, man died morally and spiritually by sin. This, however, is so far negative, but sin is also positive in its effects; it has not only incapacitated man for the perception of the true and the good; but it has set him at war with God and everything God-like. Now as perfection consists in harmony with the divine will, sin and its effects upon the human soul must be removed before perfection is possible; and just here the end or design of Scripture is manifest. Scripture was but the preparation for, and is but the exhibition of Christ and his redemptive work. In him we have not only the model, but through him perfection is made possible to the most sinful. By Christ life comes to the dead soul, demoralization is replaced by order, feebleness by strength; enmity, barrenness and stagnation in the human soul are replaced by all the graces of the Spirit. Moreover as internal perfection implies external effectiveness, the man becomes thoroughly furnished unto all good works. He is renewed, re-clothed, rehabilitated in relation to God and all the surroundings. This