

# The Verbal Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures

The apostle Paul expressed this truth in 2 Timothy 3:16: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." God used human writers to pen His words. These men were specially chosen by God, and perfectly guided by the Holy Spirit to put the very words of God on paper so that the Holy Scripture would be completely free from any error (2 Peter 1:21).

Since the Holy Scripture is inspired by God it must be infallible, inerrant and authoritative. **Infallibility** means that the Scriptures, as given by Him in the original autographs are perfect and incapable of error in its entirety. We know from the very nature of God that He is infallible (Psalm 18:30). If this infallible, unchanging God has revealed Himself to man in the Scriptures, then the Scriptures must also be infallible. **Inerrancy** means that there are absolutely no mistakes in the Scriptures. Even though the men of God who wrote the words were imperfect men, their imperfection did not enter into the Scriptures because their writing was not on their own will, but they were moved by God (2 Peter 1:21).

The Holy Scripture is **authoritative**. This means that it demands our absolute trust and obedience to all its contents. "The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or Church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God." (Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter I, Section IV)

For 18 centuries there was no deviation in the Church from this position of biblical inspiration and inerrancy, with the exception of a few small cultic groups. In the 18th and 19th centuries however, theologians in Europe began to apply the ideas of unbelieving philosophies to the Scriptures. This eventually led to modernist attacks on the doctrine of inspiration that continue to plague the church to this day.

In our present time the attack on Scripture has become more subtle. Many now claim to believe that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, but deny that it is inerrant. Out of the discussions and debates, two views have emerged: Limited inerrancy teaches that the Scriptures merely contain the Word of God, and neo-orthodoxy teaches that the Scriptures become the Word of God only when it convicts or inspires us. Both views are heretical. The Holy Scripture is the Word of God.

Their refusal to accept a full inerrancy is based on the false assumption that there are apparent errors in the Scriptures, at least in areas of science and history. But if the Scriptures cannot be trusted to be accurate and inerrant on matters of science and history, then it cannot be accurate and inerrant on matters of doctrine, since doctrine is intricately interwoven together with portions containing history and science. The doctrine of inspiration must be defended by specifying that the Holy Scripture is without error not only in matters of faith, and not only in what it affirms, but in every area in which it speaks, when properly interpreted and understood in its context.

Alleged discrepancies and errors that have been adduced as proof of limited inerrancy can be explained in several ways: Changes in spelling, changes in units of weight and measurement, different calendar systems, or variant readings unintentionally made by scribes during the copying of manuscripts. For those discrepancies that evade explanation at present, we believe that explanations do exist for them, although we do not know them yet, with our limited understanding. It can also be demonstrated that these actually affect a very small percentage of the Scriptures and that the text has been very well preserved by divine providence throughout centuries of transcription. Edward F. Hills wrote:

"God's preservation of the New Testament text was not miraculous but providential. The scribes and printers who produced the copies of the New Testament Scriptures and the true believers who read and cherished them were not inspired but God-guided. Hence there are some New Testament passages in which the true

reading cannot be determined with absolute certainty. There are some readings, for example, on which the manuscripts are almost equally divided, making it difficult to determine which reading belongs to the Traditional Text. Also in some of the cases in which the Textus Receptus disagrees with the Traditional Text it is hard to decide which text to follow. Also, as we have seen, sometimes the several editions of the Textus Receptus differ from each other and from the King James Version. And, as we have just observed, the case is the same with the Old Testament text. Here it is hard at times to decide between the kethibh and the keri and between the Hebrew text and the Septuagint and Latin Vulgate versions. Also there has been a controversy concerning the headings of the Psalms.

In other words, God does not reveal every truth with equal clarity. In biblical criticism, as in every other department of knowledge there are still some details in regard to which we must be content to remain uncertain. But the special providence of God has kept these uncertainties down to a minimum.” (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p.224)