

## THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES

The word *Scripture* simply means a writing, regardless of the kind or character. *The Nashville Tennessean*, *The Nashville Banner*, and other publications fulfill the demands of that word in its primary sense. That is why the apostle said: "Every scripture **inspired** of God is also profitable" (2 Tim. 3:16). There is not an idle word nor an empty phrase connected with any of the writings inspired of God. [Paul continues by saying]...every Scripture is profitable for four things. Note how comprehensive and inclusive they are: (1) for doctrine or teaching; (2) for reproof; (3) for correction; (4) for instruction in righteousness.

You cannot imagine any condition or need of mankind but one or the other of these statements will adequately apply. Their completeness is in the fact that the man of God may be perfect—not perfect in morals, not perfect in character, but perfect in this respect, namely, that he is thoroughly, completely, furnished unto every good work [v. 17].

I wish that text would register with all who may chance to hear or read what Paul said. The all-sufficiency, the absolute adequacy, and adaptability of the Bible to meet all the demands of the human family are here emphasized. Christians believe that passage.... When I claim, therefore, to believe the Bible, I endorse all the statements as therein found. I mean to subscribe to all of its requirements, and to try to be governed by its teaching.

Now for me to accept any such booklet as a ritual, handbook, manual, catechism, prayer book, confession of faith, discipline, or whatnot, would deny my faith in the Scriptures which I have read. If the Bible thoroughly furnishes a man unto every good work, why have a supplementary book?

When the great infidel, Robert Owen, of New Lanark, Scotland, came to this country and challenged the clergy in our Southern Crescent City of New Orleans, they paid no attention to him. He waxed bolder and extended that challenge throughout America. And then it was that news of such came over the hills and across the vales to a young man teaching school at Bethany, West Virginia. He at once asked, "Who is this uncircumcised infidel that he should challenge the Word of the living God?" I presume that you know the sequel. Alexander Campbell accepted the challenge and a great debate was on. It was held in Cincinnati in April 1829. Since that time infidelity has been on the defense, and it never has been able to uproot and destroy the Word of the Lord.

Let me now ask, Why was it that the clergy, with all of their grand titles and much learning, refused to meet in public discussion the great infidel? The truth is they were conscious of the fact the Mr. Owen would say to them first of all: "You don't accept the Bible yourself, because you have a human creed that evidences your lack of faith in the all-sufficiency of God's Word." Campbell had no creed to defend, and, hence, he was not creed-bound. The whole religious world owes a debt of gratitude to him whom some despise. Small sectarian preachers will try to belittle Alexander Campbell, when the truth is that if the least thought Campbell ever had were to enter the little fellow's head, it would explode like a bomb. We are debtors to such men as...Campbell. No self-respecting man will ever make fun of what he did.

Let us try to impress upon every person the all-sufficiency of God's Word. If we need teaching, the Bible is the source whence it comes. If we go astray, as, doubtless, some of us will, we need reproof. But it is not enough simply to reprove. We still need correction and instruction in righteousness. In all that we need, the Bible is sufficient.

—N.B. Hardeman  
Deceased