

INSPIRATION, "INSPIREDNESS," AND THE PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD TODAY

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All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16-17.

It seems eminently fitting that the Apostle Paul, having written these words concerning the inspiration and profitableness of Scripture, should go right on to write:

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires: and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths. 2 Tim 4:1-4.

Here Paul charges Timothy to preach the word, to preach sound doctrine, and to preach the truth. The connection between the last two verses of chap. 3, and the first four verses of chap. 4, seems unavoidable: because all Scripture is inspired and profitable, therefore preach the word!

Of course it should be recognized that the Scripture which Timothy had in A.D. 63 (at the time of the writing of 2 Timothy) included copies of the Old Testament books, copies of those New Testament books which had thus far been written, put into circulation, and made available to Timothy, and perhaps the original of Paul's first epistle to Timothy, together with the original of this second epistle. It should also be recognized that the claim of inerrancy is made, not for copies of Scripture, but for the originals.

This distinction between inerrant originals and errant copies has occasioned considerable discussion, both concerning the value of the doctrine of inerrancy (since we do not possess the originals), and concerning our ability to say that we are proclaiming the word, sound doctrine, and truth today (since we possess only errant copies). This discussion, which has been going on for some time, has acquired a new impetus and urgency in recent years, in part because of the cleavage which has surfaced between "inerrantists" and "errantists" in the evangelical camp.

An illustration of this discussion appears in the exchange, in editorials and letters, between Dr Lester DeKoster, editor of *The Banner*, and Dr Edwin H. Palmer, Executive Secretary of the New International Version Translation Committee. The exchange was occasioned by Dr Palmer's statement in the January, 1977, issue of *The Outlook*, as follow: "To be very clear, let me assert with all the force that is in me that the King James