

Comments on Dr. H. D. Williams' Book, *The Miracle of Inspiration*,

By Thomas D. Ross¹

I. Introduction

The comments below are my own notes from reading Dr. Williams' book, *The Miracle of Inspiration*, which is printed and recommended by the Dean Burgon Society. The book sets forth the Society position that the word *Theopneustos* refers to the process through which God produced the autographs of the Bible, and is not properly used for translated Scripture.

Before studying my comments on Dr. Williams' book, the reader is urged to read my essay, "Thoughts On the Word *Theopneustos*, 'given by inspiration of God' in 2 Timothy 3:16, and the Question of the Inspiration of the Authorized Version," which is available on my website, <http://faithsaves.net/bibliology/>, in the link "Are Accurate Copies and Translations of Scripture Inspired?" The arguments advanced in that short essay are essential background to the comments below. One who does not read the essay will miss a very large portion of the point of my responses to Dr. Williams.

My comments do not have page numbers on them, since they are taken from a version of Dr. Williams' book that is posted on the Internet (<http://www.biblefortoday.org/Articles/miracle.htm>) and that does not contain page numbers. However, the comments are listed in the order that they are found in his book, and one who has difficulty finding them should simply do a search for the relevant text on the copy of Dr. Williams' book on the Internet.

Finally, as I repeat in my conclusion, it is important to state that I am a friend of those who stand for the preserved Words of God, dictated only one time, in a miraculous process that will never be repeated, in the autographs, and perfectly preserved in the Hebrew and Greek words that underlie the Authorized Version. I am an opponent of Ruckmanism. I am thankful for Dr. Williams' stands for Biblical Baptist doctrine and Biblical, militant fundamentalism in many areas. I appreciate his sincerity and his desire to oppose the strange, the weird, and the heretical notions perpetuated by Peter Ruckman and his supporters, including his totally false notion that the KJV corrects the Greek and Hebrew and is advanced revelation. I have great sympathy with Dr. Williams' desire to avoid the extremes of Ruckmanism, and write the comments below as a friend of the pro-preservation, pro-TR/KJV, anti-Ruckmanite position of the Dean Burgon Society and Dr.

¹ Thomas Ross is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley (B. A.), Fairhaven Baptist College (M. A.), Great Plains Baptist Divinity School (M. Div.), and Anchor Baptist Theological Seminary (Th. M.) He is currently working on a Doctor of Philosophy degree. In conjunction with his church-run schools for his degree programs, he has pursued studies in Biblical languages and theology at Baptist Bible Seminary in Clarks Summit, PA, Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary in Lansdale, PA, Emmanuel Baptist Theological Seminary in Newington, CT, Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, PA, and other institutions. He has read through the *Torah* in Hebrew, and has read the New Testament through in Greek a number of times. While serving the Lord with his wife Heather at Mukwonago Baptist Church in Mukwonago, Wisconsin, he teaches college and seminary language courses at a local fundamental Baptist Bible college. He contributed to the editing of the book *Thou Shalt Keep Them: A Biblical Theology of the Perfect Preservation of Scripture*, gen. ed. Kent Brandenburg. The views expressed in this book review are his own.

Williams himself. I write the comments below as a friend, trusting that the words of Solomon in Proverbs (27:17) are applicable: “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.” I share Dr. Williams’ desire to advance and defend the truth about the doctrine of inspiration for the glory of the God who once and for all gave the Word. May my essay on 2 Timothy 3:16, and the comments below that are based upon its conclusions, advance the cause of His glory and His kingdom on earth, as His people possess a correct view of the nature of the inspiration of the Scriptures.

II. Comments on Dr. Williams’ Book

Dr. Williams wrote:

Inspiration = means “**God-breathed**” from the Greek word *theopneustos* (2 Tim. 3:16). It is a very technical Biblical term indicating a miraculous process and product. The Words of God originally given in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek to special men selected by God to record were “God-breathed.” In this work, this is the **process** of inspiration. The **product** of inspiration in this work is the recorded inspired Words in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek in the sixty-six books of the canon of Scripture for man that are infallible and inerrant. “Inspiration” is a miracle. This means that God is the author of the original Words in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, which is the Bible. The men who recorded them are not coauthors, although God used their vocabulary. This author believes that the Words that underlie the King James Bible English translation are the original perfect Words “*given by inspiration of God*” to “*holy men of God*” to record. God has providentially superintended the accurate, faithful, verbal, plenary, formal, equivalent translation of the Preserved original-languages into the receptor-languages of the world so that some translations can be said to be without **translational** errors. In summary, “**Inspiration is** (1) **the miracle** whereby **the Words** of Scripture in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek were (2) **God-breathed** and “*once delivered*” using “*holy men of God*” and their vocabulary, (3) who **recorded** them “**once**” perfectly as they were “*moved along*” by the Holy Spirit (4) in such a way that “**all**” the Words written are **infallible and inerrant** in the sixty-six books of the canon of Scripture.” A succinct way of stating the same thing is: “**The perfect author of the perfect Bible is God.**”

My comment: One hopes, at the beginning of this book, that Dr. Williams will prove his definition of inspiration somewhere later. Unfortunately, after reading the book through, this reader was disappointed.

Dr. Williams wrote:

An accurate and faithful translation that is without **translational** errors may be called the Word of God in English, Spanish, French, Latin, etc., but it is not the inspired Word of God, which was “*once delivered*” perfectly by the miraculous process of “inspiration.” A translation should not be referred to as inspired or given by inspiration because of the confusion it generates.

My comment: Dr. Williams will need to prove his definitions. Assertions are not proof.

Dr. Williams wrote:

(1) Ryrie's definition:

"[B]iblical inspiration is that it is God's superintendence of the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs. Several features of the definition are worth emphasizing: (1) God superintended but did not dictate the material. (2) He used human authors and their own individual styles. (3) Nevertheless, the product was, in its original manuscripts, without error.

...

(4) Dictation view:

"...verbal inspiration is that it means dictation; that is, the writers were completely passive and God simply dictated to them what was to be recorded. Of course it is true that some parts of the Bible were dictated (like the Ten commandments and the rest of the law), but [his] definition proposed above incorporates the idea that God allowed the writers varying degrees of self-expression as they wrote."

My response: Ryrie did not deal with the true view, which is dictation, but not passive. The inspiration description of #4 is a straw man. Dr. Williams' own conclusion was:

This author submits that every one of these views places a limit upon an Almighty Eternal God who exists as three persons, who is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, and who operates inside or outside the laws of nature and physics as we know them. Once again, "*inspiration*" is a miraculous process that is unexplainable in human terms. Any definition must yield to God's way of presenting it. It is a miracle. We should recognize and accept it by faith no less than we recognize the virgin birth, the resurrection, the ascension and many other Biblical miracles.

My comment: Dr. Williams needs to prove, not merely assert, that inspiration is process, not a product.

Dr. Williams wrote:

"Inspiration is (1) ***the miracle*** whereby ***the Words*** of Scripture in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek were (2) ***God-breathed*** and ***"once delivered"*** using *"holy men of God"* and their vocabulary, (3) who perfectly ***recorded*** them ***"once"*** as they were *"moved"* along by the Holy Spirit (4) in such a way that ***"all"*** the Words written are ***infallible and ierrant*** [*sic*]² in the sixty-six books of the canon of Scripture."

My comment:

² Please note footnote #3 in relation to the *sic* notations.

Again, assertion is not proof. Dr. Williams asserts, over and over again, that *Theopneustos* refers to a process, when the word is a predicate adjective commenting on the nature of Scripture, and is thus a product, as I proved in my essay. He needs to prove that inspiration is a process, but he never does so.

Dr. Williams wrote:

This work is presented as a polemic for our brothers and sisters to turn to Scripture for understanding “*inspiration*,” and not rely on what other men say[.]

My response:

Amen!

Dr. Williams wrote, on Job 32:8, the only OT verse with the English word “*inspiration*” in it:

The passage in Job in the Hebrew language indicates that man should be able to “*know*” and “*teach*” “*wisdom*,”^[viii] but only the Spirit can teach God's “*wisdom*” or “*revelation*” so that it may be understood spiritually. The receiptin [*sic*] and understanding of “*revelation*” can only be achieved [*sic*] through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

My response:

The Hebrew word in Job 32:8 is נְשָׁמָה, meaning “*breath*.” In fact, the Hebrew phrase found in Job 32: 8, נְשָׁמַת שְׁרָי, is also found in 33:4, where it is translated “*the breath of the Almighty*.” The word is regularly used for breath in other contexts (the complete list of texts with the Hebrew word is: Gen 2:7; 7:22; Deut 20:16; Josh 10:40; 11:11, 14; 2Sam 22:16; 1Kings 15:29; 17:17; Is 2:22; 30:33; 42:5; 57:16; Psa 18:16; 150:6; Job 4:9; 26:4; 27:3; 32:8; 33:4; 34:14; 37:10; Prov 20:27; Dan 10:17). There is nothing at all in this text in Job to undermine the view presented in my work, “*Thoughts On the Word Theopneustos*,” “*given by inspiration of God*” in 2 Timothy 3:16, and the *Question of the Inspiration of the Authorized Version*,” which presents the perspective from which I am coming to Dr. Williams’ work.

Dr. Williams wrote a section entitled:

“*Theopneustos*” and the Greek onstruction [*sic*] in Context

My response:

In this section, Dr. Williams gives an explanation of the verse that is supposed to prove that translations cannot be called *inspired*. He does not give such an explanation, however; he simply asserts it. He does not deal with the Koiné parallels with the word

Theopneustos. He does not deal with the necessity of supplying the equative verb *is* because of the Greek syntax. He concludes: “the proper understanding [is] that: all the Scripture (all the **God-breathed Words**) of the Bible in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words in the sixty-six books of the canon of Scripture “*is given by [sic] inspiration*” and “*once delivered*”([sic] Jude 1:3) as the prophets and by extension, the Apostles, were “*moved by the Holy Spirit*” (2 Pe. 1:21).” However, he does not deal with the arguments in favor of the view in my paper on 2 Timothy 3:16 at all. For that matter, Dr. Williams never deals with any of the references to *Theopneustos* as product in standard Greek lexica such as *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd. ed. (BDAG), William F. Danker (ed.), Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000; or the *Greek-English Lexicon*, H. G. Liddell & R. Scott, 9th ed., New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996; or the *Patristic Greek Lexicon* ed. G. W. Lampe (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007, 20th ed). The fact that Dr. Williams never cites or deals with the overwhelming evidence that *Theopneustos* is a product that one can obtain by simply looking in these standard lexica is inexplicable for a work that claims to be scholarly. One wonders if he even looked at these three volumes at any point in writing his book.

I have no problem with the doctrine of the section on 2 Peter 1:21, but Dr. Williams never proves that 2 Peter 1:21 deals with the predicate adjective *Theopneustos*.

Dr. Williams wrote:

“In 2 Timothy 3:15, Paul is referring to copies of the canon of the Old Testament in Hebrew and Aramaic that were Preserved to the “jot and tittle” (apographs) and were available to Timothy for salvation.

My comment:

Dr. Williams never proves that original language words are in view in 2 Timothy 3:15. He does demonstrate that it is possible that Timothy knew Hebrew and Aramaic from his infancy and youngest years, and certainly it is not impossible that Timothy learned these languages in addition to Greek, which was almost surely his native tongue, but Dr. Williams has advanced no proof whatsoever in favor of his position. A demonstration that a different position is not certain (that Timothy first knew Greek and later learned the other languages, probably) does not prove that his own position is correct. It is mere assertion. A mere assertion is not evidence for his conclusion from 2 Timothy 3:15: “The reason is because “all” the Words of Scripture in the original languages [sic] are God-Breathed (autographs) by a [sic] iraculous [sic] process. The Words were not God-breathed in English, Spanish, French, Italian, German, etc., but were God-breathed in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.” However, Dr. Williams is correct in this section when he asserts that the LXX is not a very accurate translation.

Dr. Williams continues:

In **2 Timothy 3:15**, the Holy Spirit, speaking through Paul, uses the Greek word, grammata (grammata) in a phrase: “*he [sic] hagia grammata*,” which is translated “*the*

holy scriptures.” Grammata refers to the [sic] temple's **copies** or **apographs** of the Old Testament Scriptures to the “*jot and tittle.*” The Greek word, *graphe*, in 2 Tim. **3:16** refers to the **autographs** or the **original Words in Hebrew and Aramaic.**

My response:

Dr. Williams has given no evidence whatsoever for this distinction between *grammata* and *graphe*, nor has he dealt with the argument against the distinction advanced in my paper, mentioned earlier.

I am in entire agreement with Dr. William’s polemic against those who deny that the Bible is truth, perfect in every jot and tittle in the autographs.

Dr. Williams wrote:

We do not claim that every word written in this document will be understood the same by the author and by those reading it. Anyone who has written anything for public review will attest to the difficulty of covering “all the bases.” But, the author would very much appreciate feedback and comments.

My response:

This response is exactly what Dr. Williams requests—feedback and comments.

Dr. Williams wrote:

A Few Definitions

(1) In this work, “**inspiration**” means “**God-breathed**” from the Greek word *theopneustos* (2 Tim. 3:16). It was a miraculous process that resulted in a miraculous product that has not been duplicated since the Scriptures were completed with the recording of the Words of the book of Revelation. The Words originally given in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek to selected, special “*holy men of God*” to record were “God-breathed.” They are perfect as defined in this work (q.v.).

My response:

Dr. Williams needs to prove, not assert, again and again, his definition. He has not proven it in his book to this point. Note that Dr. Williams says, “were God-breathed,” a process idea, while 2 Timothy 3:16 reads, “are God-breathed,” a product.

Dr. Williams wrote:

An accurate and faithful translation that is without translational errors may be called the Word of God in English, Spanish, French, Latin, etc., but it is not the inspired Word of God, which was given “*once*” and should not be referred to as inspired or given by inspiration because of the confusion it generates.

My response:

I suppose, then, that somehow an accurate translation is God's Word, but not a Word that is God-breathed, so that it is the uninspired Word of God that somehow is God's Word although He did not say it. The KJV is the uninspired Word of God, then. Also, one should only refrain from referring to a translation as inspired if to do so is contrary to Scripture. If calling a translation inspired has Scriptural warrant, then those who refuse to do so are the ones who are causing confusion.

Dr. Williams wrote:

Please refer back to these definitions as this sinner saved by grace tries to offer a clear explanation of a topic that is separating many good and godly men, which should not be the case. Brothers and sisters in Christ should be unified (Eph. 4:11-16).

My response:

I appreciate the recognition that we are sinners saved by grace, and believe that all believers have a spiritual unity (John 17). However, Ephesians 4:11-16 is talking about unity in Christ's church, His *ekklesia*, the body of Christ, the local, visible, assembly of immersed believers. The body of Christ metaphor is defined in 1 Corinthians as the local assembly at Corinth (1 Corinthians 12:27; 1:2).

Dr. Williams wrote:

Thus, the King James Bible is complete, accurate and faithful to the Words of God and can be said to be the Words of God in English without error.

My response:

I am not aware of any translational errors in the KJV, and I have a very strong tendency to defend its translational renderings. However, I have no specific verses that say that God would give an English Bible without any errors, since the specific verses relate to the preservation of original language words (Matthew 5:18). Thus, I will not make the affirmation that there are absolutely no errors of translation in the KJV a test of fellowship or separation, since I have no verses that prove it, although I personally think that it is indeed the case and am not aware of any such errors. (I do not know if Dr. Williams would agree or disagree with my conclusion here; I am simply stating my own position.)

Dr. Williams wrote:

The Words of God given by "*inspiration*" as the "*foundation*" of our faith were given "*once*" without error or capable of error.

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for **the faith** which was **once delivered** unto the saints.” Jude 1:3 (HDW, my emphasis)

My response:

Without question, the faith was once delivered as Jude 3 affirms. Dr. Williams employs Jude 3 over and over again, but he never demonstrates or indicates in any way why the verse is a definition of the Greek word *Theopneustos*.

Dr. Williams wrote:

we do know that the Words of God **accurately** copied **without error** do carry the original “*inspiration*” as it is defined in this work. **If the Words are copied exactly, they are the same Words that were God-breathed.** It would be ridiculous to claim the same Words when copied exactly, are not inspired. “*Inspiration*” is not dependent upon the material upon which [*sic*] the Words in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek are written, nor is “*inspiration*” dependent upon the recorders or the scribes who copied them [*sic*].

My response:

It appears here that Dr. Williams employs the term *inspiration* for the product, rather than the process, of God giving the Words of the Bible. I agree with this section exactly, except for the grammatical errors. It appears to contradict, however, his earlier, frequently repeated affirmations that inspiration was a one-time process.

Dr. Williams wrote:

(4) “**Translational Idealism**” is related to the belief that certain translations of the Bible have reached or are [*sic*] equivalent to the **perfection** of the 'received' original Words of God and can be called “inspired.” This is “idealism” that stems all the way back to Plato et al. The conclusion that a perfect translation as defined in this work or even a perfect 'original' text can be achieved by **reasoning** is the result of the “*logic*” or the “*critical analysis*” of men. This is the **reasoning of men** that was first heralded by Platonism, but it is inappropriate.[lviii] It is a result of “idealism” [*sic*] or “idealistic” goals. Many individuals [*sic*] may not realize that their claims of a “perfect” or “inspired” ideal translation(s) stem from Greek philosophy. According to Scripture, this cannot be. (4) “**Translational Idealism**” is related to the belief that certain translations of the Bible have reached or are equivalent to the **perfection** of the 'received' original Words of God and can be called “inspired.” This is “idealism” that stems all the way back to Plato et al. The conclusion that a perfect translation as defined in this work or even a perfect 'original' text can be achieved by **reasoning** is the result of the “*logic*” or the “*critical analysis*” of men. This is the **reasoning of men** that was first heralded by Platonism, but it is inappropriate. It is a result of “idealism” or “idealistic” goals. Many individuals [*sic*] may not realize that their claims of a “perfect” or “inspired” ideal translation(s) stem from Greek philosophy. According to Scripture, this cannot be. First, man is depraved; he is a

sinner. Secondly, in a “born-again” man, the old man is still present (Eph. 4:22, Rom. 7:13-25). Words chosen by man to translate the 'received' Words of God may **reflect** the original perfect “ideal” Words that are God-breathed, but they are **not** the God-breathed Words. This concept is similar to the doctrine that a born-again man may be complete, but certainly not equivalent to the “perfect” indwelling Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus Christ, or the Father. A man is never perfect or equal to any one of the three persons of the Trinity, just as a translated word is never perfect or equal to the “once delivered” inspired Words.

My response:

Certainly the original words of the autographs in the original languages are the ultimate authority for faith and practice, and stand above all translated words. However, before asserting that those who claim the word “inspired” can be used in connection with translations are getting their ideas from Greek philosophy, it would be a good idea to actually look at the Koiné use of *Theopneustos* and deal with the arguments advanced in works such as my composition on the subject. To ignore such Scripture-based arguments, or to be ignorant of them, and then assert that those who take the position that *Theopneustos* can be applied in a derived sense to translations are getting their ideas from Plato is incredibly unconvincing and an exceedingly poor argument. Furthermore, while Dr. Williams repeatedly asserts that “individuals [sic] may not realize that their claims of a “perfect” or “inspired” ideal translation(s) stem from Greek philosophy,” he never quotes Plato or any other Greek philosopher to prove his point. Just as he never deals with any of the relevant uses of *Theopneustos* in the Koiné, but states, over and over again, that 2 Timothy 3:16 refers to the one-time process of giving the autographs, so he does not quote Plato or any other Greek philosophers, but states that those who believe a translation can be called inspired are deriving their ideas from Greek philosophy.

Dr. Williams wrote:

Which text is “perfect”? Irenaeus (c. 115-202 A.D.) knew. He was a student of Polycarp, who in turn was a student of the Apostle John. It is the Words “uttered by” the Holy Spirit. He said:

“...The Scriptures are perfect, inasmuch as they were uttered by the Word of God and His Spirit.”[lxiii] [Endnote lxiii reads: Hills, op. cit., p. 2. Hills quoting Irenaeus from Migne’s *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*, vol. 7, col. 805, col. 844.]

My response:

Obviously the original copies of Scripture actually are perfect, as is evidenced by the quotation from 2 Irenaeus 28:2. The quotation neither affirms nor denies that copies or accurate translations can be called *Theopneustos*, a word not found anywhere in the quotation or its context. To conclude anything from this quotation about what can *not* be called “inspired” from a quotation about what *is* perfect is a logical converse fallacy, even apart from the fact that Irenaeus uses the word “perfect” in a far looser sense than

Dr. Williams does in his writings and the quotation does not even have the word *Theopneustos* in it. One wonders if Dr. Williams actually looked at what Irenaus wrote in its context, or simply replicated a quote from Edward F. Hills without actually examining Irenaus' writings at all.

Dr. Williams wrote:

“Every good gift and every [sic] perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is **no** variableness, neither shadow of turning.” James 1:17, cf. 3:15, 17 (HDW, my emphasis)

There is “*no variableness, neither shadow of turning*” in the Trinity or the Words of the Trinity. The Words are perfect as defined by this work and have no spelling errors, no “printing” errors, and no interpretations. They were recorded as “*holy men of God...were moved along by the Holy Ghost*” (2 Pe. 1:20-21). A translation is **variable** and shows a “*shadow of turning*” through editions and revisions.

My response:

James 1:17 has absolutely nothing to do with translations set in contrast with original language Biblical texts. The point is that all good things come from God. Furthermore, the verse does not say that the gifts do not change, but that God, who is immutable, does not change. The exegesis here is remarkably poor.

Dr. Williams wrote:

“But now is made manifest, and by **the scriptures** of the prophets, according to the **commandment** of the everlasting God, **made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.**” Romans 16:26 (HDW, my emphasis).

In other words, “*the scriptures*” were translated. The Lord said:

“In the law it is written, With men of **other tongues and other lips** (languages) will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 14:21 (HDW, my addition).

He speaks to men through accurate and faithful translations of Scripture. The method of translating is also clearly given in Scripture, which is word-fr [*sic*]-word (e.g. Mat. 1:23, Mr. 5:41, 15:34, Jn. 1:38, 41, etc. interpreted = translated).

My response:

I agree with Dr. Williams that God speaks through accurate and faithful translations. How can God speak, how can translations be His Word, unless His breath is upon those words?

Dr. Williams wrote:

The Word “*Inspiration*” is a Highly Technical Term

The original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words of God from heaven were supernaturally given to man by *inspiration*, a **highly technical Biblical term** (Psa. 119:89, Dan. 10:21, 2 Tim. 3:16). No translation produced by logic, critical analysis, textual criticism or equivalence, whether formal, verbal, plenary or dynamic equivalency, could equal the matchless words [*sic*] of God received “**once**” for “*obedience to the faith.*” The perfect Words must be 'received' (Jn. 17:8). This is similar to receiving the Lord Jesus Christ unto salvation. Both are related to faith—“*So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing [*sic*] by the word of God*” (Rom. 10:17) You cannot receive salvation [*sic*] without 'receiving' the Words of God as Truth through faith. The Preserved Words of God received by the **process** of “*inspiration*” and verbally, plenary, accurately, and faithfully translated into a receptor-language without translational error can be called the preserved Words of God in English, Spanish, French, Africanis, [*sic*] etc. However, a translation can never be called inspired, a technical term, because the words are **chosen** by man to accurately and faithfully **represent** the Words given by “*inspiration.*”

Dr. Phil Stringer makes this sagacious point:

“If a translation were inspired, it could be done within a few days because God would be breathing-out the words. Every accurate and faithful translation takes from a few to many years.”[lxiv]

The words chosen by the translator will not be “inspired,” but if they are accurate and faithful, they will be inerrant and carry **the full authority** (q.v. see the discussion about authority below) of the perfect, pure, inspired, inerrant, infallible, Preserved Words of God. God's reputation (character) will stand behind them.

My response:

Psalm 119:89 and Daniel 10:21 have nothing to do with the word *Theopneustos*. The rest of the quotation simply assumes the conclusion that requires proof, namely, that *Theopneustos* refers to the process of giving the autographs rather than being a quality of whatever is properly designated as *Scripture*. Assuming one's conclusion in one's premises, and presenting no evidence whatsoever that *Theopneustos* is a “highly technical” term, while ignoring how the word is actually used in Koiné Greek is not a little unconvincing. In his book, Dr. Williams repeats, over and over again, his affirmation that *Theopneustos* is a “highly technical” term in his book—but he never, ever presents evidence for his affirmation, nor ever looks carefully at the syntax of 2 Timothy 3:16, nor at the Koiné uses of *Theopneustos*.

Dr. Williams wrote:

Properly Translated Preserved Words Possess the Properties of the Words of God

Without a doubt, the preserved Words of God though proper translating of the Preserved Words of God in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek possess the properties of **authority** outlined so clearly in Hebrews 4:12, which says:

“For the word of God is **quck**, [*sic*] and **powerful**, and sharper than any twoedged sword, **piercing** even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is **a discerner** of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12

Properly translated Bibles are:

(1) quick (alive),

(2) powerful (2 Tim. 3:16-17),

(3) piercing [*sic*] (providing signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts, Heb. 2:4), and

(4) a discerner Ecc. 8:5, Eze. 44:23, Mal. 3:18, 1 Co. 12:10).

Therefore, the Preserved Words of God in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek accurately and faithfully translated will carry **the authority** of the original perfect Words. But, the translated [*sic*] words are not derivatively inspired or doubly inspired (q.v.) because the Word “inspiration” is a biblically technical term meaning **God-breathed**. It is used only ONCE in the New Testament. In other words, translated Words are not God-breathed, but they may be the [*sic*] preserved Words of God in a receptor-language (such as Spanish, English, German, French, etc.) if they are accurately and faithfully translated by plenary, verbal, formal equivalent translating using the method of “word-for-word” translating so far as the syntax of a receptor-language will allow.

My response:

Theopneustos is an adjective that describes the nature of Scripture. It is just like the adjectives *quick*, *powerful*, etc. Since Dr. Williams admits that translated Scripture, as it is Scripture, is *quick*, *powerful*, etc., he should admit that translated Scripture is also *Theopneustos*. Note the following quotation from my article on this subject:

Compare the following instances of *graphe* [Scripture] + modifying adjective in the NT:

Rom. 1:2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,); (ho proepēgeilato dia tōn prophētōn autou en graphais hagiāis,);

Both accurate copies and accurate translations can be called “holy scriptures,” or else believers had better scratch out “holy” from the phrase “Holy Bible” in the copies they carry with them.

Rom. 16:26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: (phanerōthentos de nyn, dia te graphōn prophētikōn, kat’ epitagēn tou aiōniou Theou, eis hypakoēn pisteōs eis panta ta ethnē gnōristhentos.)

Notice that the “Scriptures of the prophets/prophetic Scriptures” are used to give the gospel to all nations—so, since all nations certainly do not have the original copies, nor do they know Hebrew and Greek, accurately translated Scripture is still “prophetic Scripture.”

2 Peter 3:16 As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. (hōs kai en pasais tais epistolais, lalōn en autais peri toutōn; en hois estī dysnoēta tina, ha hoi amatheis kai astēriktoi streblousin, hōs kai tas loipas graphas, pros tēn idian autōn apōleian.)

False teachers do not have the original manuscripts, but they twist both copies and the translated Word to their own destruction.

Consider the related language in Hebrews 4:12:
For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (zōn gar ho logos tou Theou, kai energēs, kai tomōteros hyper pasan machairan distomon, kai diiknoumenos achri merismou psychēs te kai pneumatōs, harmōn te kai myelōn, kai kritikos enthymēseōn kai ennoioōn kardias.)

Both accurate copies and accurately translated Bible is “the Word of God.” Here, then, accurate copies and translations of Scripture have the adjectives “living,” “powerful,” “sharper,” “piercing” (adjectival participle), and “discerner” applied to them.

In another related text, James 1:21 speaks of the “engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (emphyton logon, ton dynamenon sōsai tas psychas hymōn), where “engrafted” is an adjective and “which is able to save” is an adjectival participle. Certainly people can be saved from hearing accurate copies and accurate translations of the original manuscripts, or nobody who is alive today would be truly regenerate—nor would Timothy himself have been saved (2 Timothy 3:15). (While it is cannot be proven without any doubt, it is very likely that Timothy’s mother and grandmother taught him the Scriptures in what was almost surely his first language, Greek, so the “scriptures” he knew from his infancy were not even original language copies, but the Word translated; cf. 2 Timothy 1:5; Acts 16:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:15.)

Consider, then, 2 Timothy 3:16:

All scripture *is* . . . profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (pasa graphē . . . ōphelimos pros didaskalian, pros elegchon, pros epanorthōsin, pros paideian tēn en dikaiosynē:)

Certainly the description here pertains to accurate copies and translations of the Word. Both are unquestionably profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction? If copied and translated Scripture are not “profitable,” believers today are in real trouble!

So, copied and translated Scripture has the adjectives “holy,” “prophetic,” “able to save,” “living,” “powerful,” “profitable,” etc. properly applied to it.

Consider then 2 Timothy 3:16a:

All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God (pasa graphē theopneustos)

Accurate copies and translations properly have the adjective *Theopneustos*, “God-breathed,” applied to them as well as all the other adjectives listed—including the adjective “profitable” later on in 2 Timothy 3:16.

It will not do for Dr. Williams simply to assert that *Theopneustos* is different from all other adjectives that are properties of Scripture. He needs to prove it, and he has not given any proof whatsoever, only mere assertion, copiously repeated. Translated Scripture is “inspired” in 2 Timothy 3:16 in the same sense that it is “profitable” in the very same verse. Translated Scripture is not living, powerful, prophetic, or inspired in the same sense that the original language texts are. God’s Words translated are, in a derived sense, profitable, living, powerful, prophetic, and inspired. It is not consistent to say that the translated Words of God are powerful, living, prophetic, and so on, but deny that they are inspired.

Dr. Williams wrote:

Possibly, men who claim “inspiration” for the preserved (small “p”) Words of God in a translation by accurate and faithful translating are confusing terms.

My response:

Would it not be better to prove the meaning of the word *Theopneustos* first, and then accuse others of confusing terms? What if Dr. Williams has ignored the evidence, and so he is the one confusing terms?

Dr. Williams wrote:

(B) Derivative inspiration, which states that a translated Bible receives inspiration from the underlying original Words. It ignores the biblical definition of inspiration, *theopneustos* (theos = God; pneustos = breathed). This position also ignores the Bible's declaration that the Words of God were “*once delivered*” by “*inspiration.*” (*Jude 1: 3*) The word order in the Greek text, as in the KJB, is for emphasis on “ONCE. . . (D) Translations from the TR/TT into the languages of the world are inspired [*sic*].”

My response:

It is not enough for Dr. Williams to assert that a derivative inspiration view “ignores the [B]iblical definition of inspiration.” He has not dealt with a single instance of the word *Theopneustos* in the Koiné. Furthermore, he has no right to juxtapose Jude with 2 Timothy 3:16. The Bible does not say that “the Words of God were ‘once delivered’ by ‘inspiration.’” It states that the faith was once delivered, Jude 3, and that Scripture has the quality of being inspired, 2 Timothy 3:16. This is an entirely insufficient statement that does not deal with any of the evidence or the arguments for a derivative inspiration view. Obviously the original manuscripts were produced in a unique process, never to be repeated again. The advocate of derivative inspiration does not deny this. He simply affirms that the breath of God remains upon the Words of God when they are correctly translated.

Dr. Williams wrote:

Which Version of the King James Bible Is Inspired? . . . [T]he question, “Which King James Bible edition or revision is inspired?” cannot be answered. No pounding of the pulpit, threats, proclamations, emotional declarations, or similar can make the legitimate questions go away.

My response:

This question could be a serious problem for a Ruckmanite. On the other hand, for one who affirms that accurately translated Scripture retains the breath of God, and that this fact explains the significance of *Theopneustos*, the question is easy. Any verse, paragraph, chapter, book, etc. of the directly inspired Greek and Hebrew text that is correctly translated still possesses the breath of God. It is living, powerful, and sharp in a derived way, and it is inspired in a derived way, for *Theopneustos* is not a process in 2 Timothy 3:16 but an adjective describing what “Scripture” is. Translated Scripture is Scripture in a derived way, and translated Scripture is inspired in a derived way.

Dr. Williams wrote:

Belief in a perfect translation “*given by inspiration of God*” is the result of a tendency towards “mysticism.”

My response:

Would it not be good to exegete 2 Timothy 3:16, to look at the other similar constructions in the NT, and to study what *Theopneustos* meant to Paul and Timothy, before making such assertions?

Dr. Williams wrote, in his section against derivative inspiration:

[God's] innate or inherent ability, authority, and power to speak Words given by "*inspiration*" is not transferable to man, just as His ability to create or cause a miracle is not transferable to man. Man must operate within the laws of nature. . . . God can and does grant "*acquired authority or power*" to certain men such as the Apostles and prophets to perform miracles, but the inherent ability is not transferrable [*sic*]. The inherent ability remains with God who alone has none of the restraints of man's dimensions. The Holy Spirit, who indwelt the Apostles, actually performed the miracles based on the *acquired authority (power)* granted to those 'certain' men (Acts 3:12). In like fashion, God grants man the authority to translate His Words into the languages of the world. However, the innate power of "*inspiration*" inherent in God is not transferrable to man. Men simply recorded the original inspired Words breathed-out by the innate power of God. The men who recorded the Words were not inspired and did not possess the inherent power of God to inspire Words.

My response:

The fact is that one needs to look at what *Theopneustos* actually means instead of spending a lot of time on ideas of what seems reasonable to one about what God might or might not do. Dr. Williams appears to affirm here that God did not have the ability to reduplicate the process of 2 Peter 1:15-21 with a translation. While God did not reduplicate the process of 2 Peter 1 with any translation, to say that He could not have done so is an invalid argument. He could have done what He did with the translators of the KJV (or the NIV, for that matter), although He did not do so. Furthermore, to argue that "the men who recorded the Words were not inspired" has zero to do with derivative inspiration. Why is an argument that God did not breathe out men in a section that is supposedly dealing with the position that the breath of God remains on translated Scripture?

Dr. Williams wrote:

The inspired Words given by an omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent God and translated into words chosen by man have "*acquired authority*" or "*acquired power.*" The Words do not have the *innate or inherent power or authority* of the original inspired Words given by God.

My response:

This statement is exactly right. It explains why accurately translated Scripture does not possess the breath of God directly, but only in a derived way.

Dr. Williams wrote:

Translations are not Derivatively Inspired . . . Some people are attributing derivative inspiration to translations. Many people teach that the King James Bible is derivatively inspired. A derivative implies **change**. Synonyms of “derivative” are unoriginal, imitative, plagiaristic, copied, derived, lacking in originality, offshoot, by-product, spin-off, and end-product of something that is changing. The *antonym* of derivative is original. A derivative word in linguistics is a word formed from another word. The word is similar but can and usually does have a significantly different meaning. It is very likely not to be synonymous (e.g. adding a suffix or prefix to a word may change the meaning significantly). In calculus, a derivative is a measurement of how a value [*sic*] **changes** as its inputs **change**. Since the Words [*sic*] of God are unchanging in their original pure, perfect, inspired “*jots and tittles*,” **no** derivative can be formed. . . . A derivative translation would be akin to a dynamic equivalent translation(s), which changes over time to suit evolving cultures and words. It would be more appropriate to call translations such as the NIV, NLT, and others based upon dynamic equivalent translating, derivative translating. This is suggestive of a changing foundation. . . . If we claim any translation has derivative inspiration and purity, we are essentially giving those who produce translations every six months in English and frequently in other languages the tacit approval to continue to produce changing 'derivatives' every six months.

My response:

If “derivative inspiration” means that one is in favor of new corrupt modern versions in English every six months and dynamic equivalence, then few to none of those who say the KJV is derivatively inspired believe in derivative inspiration, and Dr. Williams should coin a new term that represents their actual position. Sound advocates of the derived inspiration of the KJV affirm that the adjective *Theopneustos* means “breath from God,” and that accurate translations retain that breath in the same way that they retain the qualities of being life-giving, powerful, profitable, etc. They are *inspired* in the same derived sense that they are *Scripture*. Dr. Williams needs to explain why other adjectives that relate to Scripture are retained by the translated Word, but the adjective *Theopneustos* is not so retained. He spends a lot of time giving all sorts of ideas of his, but he never does the exegesis. This makes his work very unconvincing.

Dr. Williams wrote:

Furthermore, this author cannot find any proof that derivative inspiration has been an **orthodox** position for several centuries or is from ancient times. Another website maintained by “Baptistpillars” has another article by the same author, which discusses derivative inspiration. Again, no documentation of “historical” orthodox support for a “derived” text could be found.

My response:

He will find evidence for it if he reads my paper on 2 Timothy 3:16. He has produced no proof in his book from even one Baptist confession, or any Protestant historical confession whatsoever, that true churches and saints repudiated the idea that the breath of God was upon translations, or that the word *Theopneustos* cannot be applied to accurate translations. I am not saying that a view that equates *inspiration* with the process of giving the autographs cannot be found, especially among works that postdate the fundamentalist-modernist controversy, but Dr. Williams, while critiquing a man who wrote on the Internet for not citing any historical documentation, does not cite any historical documentation himself—and he is writing a book that is supposed to prove his point, not making some points in an article on a website.

Dr. Williams wrote:

Calling a Translation Inspired Causes Confusion . . . A person calling any translation “inspired” is simply adding to the widespread and growing confusion facing churches in these last days. Certainly, many people have been seeking new ideas or other ways to exalt the glory of the Words of God and the **conferred** authority of accurate and faithful translations, but there has been a “muddying of the water.” It is hoped that men would drop their use of the word inspired to refer to any translation because of the tremendous confusion that is generated by these claims. The claims cannot be supported by a careful examination of the Biblical meaning of the word “*inspiration*” in the Bible, which should be our final authority, not some 'scholar,' pastor, missionary, or teacher.

My response:

It is most unfortunate that Dr. Williams book did not do a careful examination of the meaning of the word *inspiration* in the Bible. Such a careful study proves that the word *Theopneustos* is properly applied to translations, just like other adjectives that pertain to Scripture. Sadly, in my little essay of nine pages, I provided far more exegetical material related to 2 Timothy 3:16 than Dr. Williams provides in his entire book.

III. Conclusion

As indicated in the introduction, I am a friend of those who stand for the preserved Words of God, dictated only one time, in a miraculous process that will never be repeated, in the autographs, and perfectly preserved in the Hebrew and Greek words that underlie the Authorized Version. I am an opponent of Ruckmanism. I am thankful for Dr. Williams’ stands for Biblical Baptist doctrine and Biblical, militant fundamentalism in many areas. I appreciate his sincerity and his desire to oppose the strange, the weird, and the heretical notions perpetuated by Peter Ruckman and his supporters, including his totally false notion that the KJV corrects the Greek and Hebrew texts and is advanced revelation. However, his book is not going to be successful as a refutation of Ruckmanism, nor will it successfully advance the cause of a correct understanding of the nature of inspiration, for the following two main reasons:

1.) Dr. Williams never, ever deals with the essential arguments for a derivative inspiration position. He never even looks at the Koiné usage of *Theopneustos*. He does not even deal with the texts cited in standard lexica such as BDAG, Liddell-Scott, or Lampe. From all that appears in the book, the thought does not even appear to have occurred to him to do so. He never looks at the syntax of 2 Timothy 3:16 and related texts in the New Testament. He never explains why he is willing, as he professes himself in the book, to apply the adjectives of Hebrews 4:12 to translated Scripture, but is unwilling to apply the adjective *Theopneustos* to translated Scripture. He never explains why the adjective “profitable,” within 2 Timothy 3:16 itself, can be applied to translated Scripture, but the adjective *Theopneustos* cannot. Instead, he sets up a straw man that compares a derivative inspiration position to dynamic equivalence in modern Bible versions. It is unfortunate that Dr. Williams wrote an entire book that is supposed to be a refutation of derivative inspiration (and other views that he believes are false), but he ignored the Scriptural basis for the derivative inspiration position. The reader who hopes for an honest, careful, exegetical evaluation of 2 Timothy 3:16 will have his hopes dashed and feel like he has wasted his time reading Dr. Williams book.

2.) Dr. Williams’ book is poorly written and is filled with typographical, grammatical, and syntactical errors. These errors make Dr. Williams, or whoever typed his book out for him, look like an ignoramus. They are extremely irritating to anyone, such as this writer, who values good English. Dr. Williams’ book reflects badly upon the Dean Burgon Society and even upon his book’s thesis. Many readers will reject what Dr. Williams says out of hand because they will assume that if he cannot be careful enough to spell his words correctly, he cannot be trusted with his facts.³

Dr. Williams is, I believe, a godly and sincere brother in Christ who has a desire to stand for righteousness and oppose the Ruckmanite heresy from the commendable stand for preservation taken by the Dean Burgon Society. Both he, and the Society, would do well to stop recommending or promoting the book *The Miracle of Biblical Inspiration* and evaluate the actual evidence for a derivative inspiration position as set forth in works such as my (much shorter!) essay, “Thoughts On the Word *Theopneustos*, ‘given by inspiration of God’ in 2 Timothy 3:16, and the Question of the Inspiration of the Authorized Version” or similar compositions. At the very least, if they wish to continue to affirm that the adjective *Theopneustos* is different from all the other adjectives that are employed in the Bible for Scripture, and that it alone, unlike all the rest, does not pass over to translations, they ought to actually fairly present the position that they are opposing and deal with it.

³ When I sent this review to Dr. Williams, I was glad to hear him indicate that the many grammatical, syntactical, and typographical errors in the version of his work I read were introduced in the process of his book’s preparation for posting on the Internet, and that he was not responsible for them. He also stated that these errors have, after I wrote this review, been corrected. While I have not gone back and reread his entire book after he contacted me and told me that the grammatical and typographical errors have been corrected, I am glad to add this footnote and publish Dr. Williams’ affirmation that he was not responsible for these mistakes.