

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

Scripture teaches that the words of Scripture are inspired by God, and thus the entirety of the canonical Scriptures are inspired, 2 Timothy 3:16. God did not inspire people like Moses, Jeremiah, or Matthew; rather, the words that He gave to mankind through them are inspired. Since “inspired” means “God breathed,” and Matthew 4:4 states, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,” believers are to live by inspired words. Since the present tense verb “proceedeth” in Matthew 4:4 represents continuing action, as is also found in other very closely related uses of the verb,ⁱ the breath of God, that is, inspiration, remains in the words of the copies of the autographs, and men are to live by every word of those inspired copies. The fact is that neither 2 Timothy 3:16 nor Matthew 4:4 actually refer to *inspiration* as a process, rather than a product.ⁱⁱ Standard Greek lexica provide ample evidence for the use of *Theopneustos*, God-breathed, as a quality of actual written copies of the Scriptures.ⁱⁱⁱ 2 Peter 1:16-21 does not employ the word “God-breathed” nor any phraseology like “proceedeth out of the mouth of God” like Matthew 4:4 does. 2 Timothy 3:16 teaches that a quality or attribute of Scripture, whether of autographs or apographs, is that it has the breath of God in it.^{iv}

One can use the word *inspiration* to refer to the process whereby God dictated His Words to the prophets as described in 2 Peter 1:16-21. However, the meaning of 2 Timothy 3:16 is that the breath of God/inspiration remains in every Word perfectly preserved in Hebrew and Greek, just as it does in the original manuscripts. Thus, the perfectly preserved words in the Greek and Hebrew Received Texts underneath the Authorized Version represent a text just as inspired as the original copies dictated to Moses, Paul, or Luke, as the words in the Received Text are identical to those in the autographs.

Recognizing inspiration as equal to the continuing action of “proceeding out of the mouth of God” that pertains to the *product* of what was originally dictated by the Holy Ghost to men moved by Him (2 Peter 1:16-21) helps to solve of the debate over the propriety of the use of the word *inspired* for accurate translations such as the King James Version.

1.) Accurate copies of the Greek and Hebrew words are inspired, since inspiration, in 2 Timothy 3:16, refers to a product. Paul instructs Timothy that the product of the written Scripture itself is both “inspired/God-breathed” and “profitable.” Neither “God-breathed” nor “profitable,” in 2 Timothy 3:16, refer to the process of the giving of the autographs. Both adjectives describe the noun “Scripture” and attribute a quality to it.^v

2.) Anything that we can properly call “God’s Word” is inspired, because, by definition, if God breathes out some words, He has inspired those words. “All Scripture is inspired,” 2 Timothy 3:16. The verse equates what is “Scripture” with what is “inspired.” The two categories are identical—if something is “Scripture,” then it is “inspired.”^{vi} Had the verse referred to the process of revealing Scripture it would have stated, “All Scripture

was given by inspiration of God.” Since 2 Timothy 3:16 refers to the product of that process, inspired words, it states, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” The breath of God is an inherent quality of all that is Scripture, all that is the Word of God.

3.) Scripture shows us that accurately translated words are still Scripture. 1 Timothy 5:18, for example, refers to both the untranslated gospel of Luke (10:7) and the translated book of Deuteronomy (25:4) as “Scripture.” Indeed, 1 Timothy 5:18 is the only other reference to *Scripture* (*graphe*) in Paul’s epistles to Timothy, so it is natural for one to consider 2 Timothy 3:16 in light of this previous reference. The same Paul who tells Timothy that everything that is *Scripture* is *inspired* calls both the untranslated and accurately translated Word of God *Scripture*.

4.) Therefore, accurate translations are Scripture.

5.) Since accurate translations are Scripture, they are inspired, since all Scripture is inspired. All Scripture has the breath of God upon it.

Therefore, since the Authorized Version is an accurate translation of the perfectly preserved Hebrew and Greek Words dictated by the Holy Ghost, it is Scripture, and it is inspired.

To avoid this conclusion one would need to say that the King James Bible is the uninspired Word of God, and it cannot produce faith (Romans 10:17), it is not quick, powerful, sharp, and so on, and believers are not to live by it (Matthew 4:4).^{vii}

Furthermore, Timothy was commanded in 2 Timothy 4:2 to preach the inspired Scripture of 2 Timothy 3:16.^{viii} Since the originals were not available to him, but the copies or translations he was to preach—and certainly he would have preached the Old Testament in Greek translation to the church at Ephesus—were still God-breathed, inspiration must refer to the product revealed by God, the canonical words of Scripture, and thus accurate copies and translations of the autographs are inspired.

Two qualifications to the above must be made, however.

1.) Only Greek and Hebrew words are *directly* inspired. Translated words are *derivatively* inspired.^{ix} The directly inspired Greek and Hebrew cannot be changed, jot or tittle. Translated words can be changed and still have the breath of God. Dropping the “eth” from KJV verbs would not make the translation lose the breath of God. One could, in like manner, say that the KJV is derivatively preserved, sharp, quick, powerful, faith-producing, and so on. This fact does not by any means make English, rather than the directly, verbally, plenary inspired and perfectly preserved Greek and Hebrew (and Aramaic) words the Christian’s authority. The original language text is verbally, plenary inspired, while a translation that is entirely accurate has plenary inspiration, but not the verbal inspiration of the original language,^x and is entirely dependent for its authority upon the original language text. The substance of the meaning conveyed by God in Greek and Hebrew words is transferred into the language of a translation, but God

did not dictate English, French, Spanish, or Latin words to the penmen of the Bible; He revealed Himself in Scripture in Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic words.^{xi}

2.) When translations other than the KJV are accurate, in those parts they are also (derivatively) inspired. The NASV, for example, possesses the breath of God in the parts where it is not mistranslated nor is translated from a corrupt Greek or Hebrew text. This fact explains why believers who use English translations other than the KJV can be built up spiritually, and why unbelievers can be converted through the instrumentality of modern Bible versions.

This use of *Theopneustos* for product, rather than process, is the clear use of the Greek word in related Christian/Koiné Greek texts. For instance:^{xii}

Papias 10:1 Regarding, however, the divine inspiration [*Theopneustos*] of the book [i.e., the Revelation of John] we think it superfluous to speak at length, since the blessed Gregory (I mean the Theologian) and Cyril, and men of an older generation as well, namely Papias, Irenaeus, Methodius, and Hippolytus, bear witness to its genuineness.^{xiii} [Papias, who lived around the turn of the first century, reproduced by Andrew of Caesarea (563-637), Preface to the Apocalypse]

Here the book itself, the Greek words, the product, is referred to as inspired. Process is not in view, but product.

Sibylline Oracles 5:406-407 But God, the great Father of all within whom is the breath of God [*Theopneustos*], they were accustomed to reverence with holy sacrifices and hecatombs.^{xiv}

Here the unknown writer of the Sibylline Oracles refers to the breath God puts within people as *Theopneustos*. It is simply “breath from God.”

Consistency thus requires that believers either refrain from calling translated Scripture “the Word of God” or allow the use of the word *Theopneustos* for anything that has the breath of God in it, including translated Scripture. An examination of the use of *Theopneustos* in its Koiné background leads to this conclusion.

The affirmation that translations possess the breath of God in a derived sense is by no means an affirmation of Ruckmanism. Peter Ruckman’s doctrine is that the English of the King James Version is superior to the Greek and Hebrew words God promised to preserve (Matthew 5:18), and thus involves a denial of the perfect preservation of the words God gave in the once-and-for-all completed process of giving the Scripture (Psalm 12:6-7). Ruckman affirms that a move of God like that mentioned in 2 Peter 1:16-21 took place in 1611, a repudiation of the completion of the canon and a rejection of the warning of Revelation 22:18-19. Scripture, on the other hand, denies that 2 Peter 1:16-21 pertains to any other than the original writers of the Scripture when they penned the autographs, but maintains that the original copies do not lose the breath of God when they are copied or (in a derived sense) when they are accurately translated. Indeed,

recognizing the Scriptural fact that the breath of God remains upon copies and (in a derived sense) accurate translations destroys the foundational appeal of the Ruckmanite error. Ruckmanism claims that only if one affirms that another supernatural act of giving the Scripture such as is described in 2 Peter 1:16-21 took place in 1611 with the Authorized Version can one have a Bible in his hands today that is living, powerful, sharper than any two edged sword, and truly the Word of God. The fact that the breath of God remains in accurate copies and accurate translations allows the believer to affirm that he does indeed have the very Word of God in his hand when he holds a King James Bible, without adopting the heresy of a re-opening of the canon in 1611 or denying the promises of Scripture that every Hebrew and Greek word God gave in the autographs is still available and is still the ultimate authority for the Christian (Matthew 4:4; 5:18; Isaiah 59:21).

Some have alleged that the grammar of 2 Timothy 3:16 requires a restriction of the *Theopneustos* of 2 Timothy 3:16 to the original manuscripts because of an alleged distinction in 2 Timothy 3:15-16 between the words *grammata* and *graphe*. One word supposedly speaks of the autographs, and the other word of copies. It is difficult to determine how exactly this argument is supposed to work, but, in any case, it is invalid, since both words are used for copies.

For example, *grammata* is used of copies:

John 5:47 But if ye believe not his writings [*grammata*], how shall ye believe my words?

They Jews of the first century only had copies of Moses' writings, obviously.

The word is also used of copies, and with semantic overlap with *graphe*, in early extra-Biblical patristic works:

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I:20:1 Besides the above [misrepresentations], they adduce an unspeakable number of apocryphal and spurious writings, which they themselves have forged, to bewilder the minds of foolish men, and of such as are ignorant of the Scriptures [*grammata*] of truth.

Justin, *Dialog with Trypho* 29: For these words have neither been prepared by me, nor embellished by the are of man; but David sung them, Isaiah preached them, Zechariah proclaimed them, and Moses wrote them Are you acquainted with them, Trypho? They are contained in your Scriptures [*grammata*], or rather not yours, but ours. For we believe them; but you, though you read them, do not catch the spirit that is in them.

Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 70: Moreover, these Scriptures are equally explicit in saying, that those who are reputed to know the writings of the Scriptures [here both words together, *ta grammata tw'n graphon*], and who hear the prophecies, have no understanding.

Theophilus of Antioch, to Autolycus 3:29 These periods, then, and all the above-mentioned facts, being viewed collectively, one can see the antiquity of the prophetic writings [*grammata*] and the divinity of our doctrine, that the doctrine is not recent, nor our tenets mythical and false, as some think; but very ancient and true.

Graphe is also used of copies of Scripture:

Matthew 21:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures [*graphe*], The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

The book that the Lord Jesus' audience would hold in its hands and read was a *graphe*.

John 5:39 Search the scriptures [*graphe*]; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Early patristic writings also use *graphe* for copies. One easy example is:

1 Clement 53:1 For you know, and know well, the sacred scriptures [*graphe*], dear friends, and you have searched into the oracles of God. We write these things, therefore, merely as a reminder.

Here the copies that Clement's audience, the Church at Corinth, was examining were the sacred/holy scriptures. The Greek of 1 Clement 53:1 is *tas hieras graphas*, almost identical to 2 Tim 3:15's *ta hiera grammata*. If there is some sort of technical distinction between the words so that only either *graphe* or *grammata* refers only to the autographs, the distinction was lost already in what is likely the earliest extant Christian document after the composition of the New Testament, 1 Clement, which was written by the man who appears to have been the Baptist pastor of the church at Rome around the turn of the 1st century.^{xv} As noted above, *grammata/graphe* are also found together as early as Justin Martyr's *Dialog with Trypho* 70, c. A. D. 120 or before. Moreover, these early texts use both *grammata* and *graphe* for copies of the Scriptures, rather than restricting the words to the autographs.

Thus, it is difficult to know which word, *gramma* or *graphe*, is the one that is supposedly the technical word for the autographs, and why one must believe the one or the other word constitutes such a technical reference in 2 Timothy 3:15-16. The plain teaching of 2 Timothy 3:16 is that accurate copies of the Bible have the breath of God upon them in the same way that the original manuscripts did.

On a concluding note, when this author made a cursory examination of Baptist confessions and similar material, there appeared to be no hesitation in employing the word *inspiration* for copies or for accurate translations. For example:

“And no decrees of popes or councils, or writings of any person whatsoever, are of equal authority with the sacred scriptures. And by the holy scriptures we understand, the

canonical books of the Old and New Testament, as they are now translated into our English mother tongue [the KJV, as is evident from both the time of the confession and the references and allusions to verses in the document], of which there hath never been any doubt of their verity and authority in the protestant churches of Christ to this day. . . . all which are given by the inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life. (Article 37, *An Orthodox Creed*, 1678, quoted in Underhill, *Confessions of Faith and Other Public Documents*).

The Charleston Association of Baptist Churches in their 1802 circular #9, “On the Duty of Churches to their Ministers” (cited in Furman, *A History of the Charleston Association of Baptist Churches*) wrote, “We conclude in the language of inspiration—“Live in love and peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.” Note that the “language of inspiration” is the KJV.

There did not appear to be any confession that either denied that the breath of God was in copies or accurate translations, or that made some sort of distinction between *gramma* and *graphe* in 2 Timothy 3:15-16.

Scripture teaches that *inspiration* is a quality that pertains to all that is appropriately called *Scripture*. Since original language copies are properly considered *Scripture*, they are properly termed *inspired*. Since, in a derived sense, the Bible, when accurately translated, is still properly termed *Scripture*, the Word accurately translated is, in a derived sense, properly termed *inspired*. Therefore, it is proper to call the King James Version *inspired*, because it is an accurate translation of the Greek and Hebrew autographs dictated once and for all by the Holy Ghost.

This author^{xvi} welcomes any comments or questions about this analysis. He can be contacted via his website, <http://faithsaves.net>.

ⁱ See Matthew 15:11, 18; cf. Luke 4:22; Revelation 1:16; 19:15. Note the unquestionable continuing action in Revelation 22:1. A denial of continuing action in John 15:26 would overthrow the classical doctrine of the interpersonal relations in the Trinity by denying the Spirit’s eternal procession from the Father (and the Son). Note that while *ekporeuomai* is not very common in the aorist or perfect tenses, it is found in these forms outside the NT (2 Samuel 19:8 (LXX), aorist, clearly a one time action; Numbers 31:28, 36; Deuteronomy 11:10 (LXX), perfect tense, retaining the fundamental idea of the Greek perfect), although not within the NT itself.

ⁱⁱ “The Greek word of this passage—*Theopneustos* . . . says of Scripture . . . that it is breathed out by God, ‘God-breathed,’ the product of the creative breath of God. In a word, what is declared by this fundamental passage is simply that the Scriptures are a Divine product, without any indication of how God has operated in producing them. . . . Paul declares, then, that ‘every scripture,’ or ‘all scripture’ is the product of the Divine breath, ‘is God-breathed,’ [and so] he asserts with as much energy as he could employ that Scripture is the product of a specifically Divine operation” (pg. 60, *Revelation and Inspiration*, Benjamin B. Warfield. Elec. acc. Rio, WI: AGES Digital Software, 2006; orig. pub. New York: Oxford University, 1927).

Nevertheless, the *Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament*, J. Parkhurst (2nd ed. 1794; elec. acc. <http://books.google.com>) defines θεόπνευστος as: “from θεός, *God*, and πνευσσαί, 3rd pers. sing. perf. pass. of πνεω, fut. πνευσω, *to breathe*. *Breathed or inspired by God, divinely inspired, given by divine inspiration* . . . 2 Tim 3:16.” The perfect tense root underlying θεόπνευστος would make the idea of a completed action in which the Scriptures were dictated, with the result that the breath of God remains upon the words, possible, and thus gives some justification for employing the word *inspired* for the process

of giving the Biblical autographs. However, the actual use of *Theopneustos* in 2 Timothy 3:16, and frequently in *Koiné* Greek, for a product, indicates that considering actual original language copies of Scripture as both *inspired* and *profitable* is the correct exegesis of the verse. The predicate adjective ὠφέλιμος, *profitable*, in 2 Timothy 3:16, does not specify a process, but a product—so does the predicate adjective θεόπνευστος. Of course, if Scripture has the quality of being θεόπνευστος, when it came into being, it must have been supernaturally spoken by God, so there is nothing wrong with speaking of inspiration as the process of the giving of the autographs. To deny, however, the fact that 2 Timothy 3:16 ascribes the breath of God as a quality to apographs of Scripture and shut up *Theopneustos* to only the giving of the autographs is to neglect the exegesis of 2 Timothy 3:16, and the idea expressed in that text by the Holy Ghost through the apostle Paul, because of a secondary, although certainly legitimate, sense of the word.

ⁱⁱⁱ G. W. Lampe's *Patristic Greek Lexicon* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007, 20th ed.) reads: "θεόπνευστος . . . *divinely inspired* . . . of Scripture (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16) . . . θεόπνευστος . . . as a frequent epithet of γραφαί or of γραφή or applied either to contents of scriptures or to the actual volumes." Lampe provides vast amounts of evidence for the use of θεόπνευστος as a quality of copies of Scripture in patristic literature, including passages where the actual copies in hand that were being read among the Christians are called inspired (θεόπνευστων ἀναγνισμάτων) and it is obvious that no reference to the one-time process of giving the autographs is in view. When the classical *Greek-English Lexicon* of H. G. Liddell & R. Scott (9th ed., New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996) provides examples of the adjective θεόπνευστος used for dreams (ὄνειροι) and artwork or craftsmanship (δημιουργημα), clearly employing θεόπνευστος as a quality of the substantive modified, not making reference to God breathing out a piece of artwork in a one-time process. The *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), mentions, among many other examples, the "God-breathed ointments" (μυρίσμασι θεοπνεύστοις) of the *Testament of Abraham* 20:11. Similarly, Warfield documents the very common use of θεόπνευστος as a quality of apographs through patristic quotations such as: "truly holy are those letters . . . and the writings or volumes that consist of these holy letters or syllables, the same apostle consequently calls 'inspired by God, seeing that they are profitable for doctrine,'" "sing . . . the inspired Scriptures"; "All bread is nutritious[.] . . . All Scripture is God-inspired (πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος) and profitable"; (*Revelation and Inspiration*, chapter 7, "God-inspired Scripture").

^{iv} Note that the -τος ending on θεόπνευστος supports the view that the sense is passive ("Scripture is God-breathed") rather than active. A. T. Robertson wrote: "The verbal in -τος goes back to the original Indo-Germanic time and had a sort of perfect passive idea," while cautioning that "we must not overdo this point. . . . Strictly this pro-ethnic -tos has no voice or tense and it never came to have intimate verbal connections in the Greek as it did in Latin and English" (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 4th ed. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1934, pg. 1095, cf. 157–58). Warfield discusses the question in *Revelation and Inspiration* chapter 7, "God-breathed Scripture."

^v Compare the connection between the adjectives θεόπνευστος and ὠφέλιμος made by Clement of Alexandria, τὰς γραφὰς ὁ Ἀπόστολος θεοπνεύστους καλεῖ, ὠφελίμους οὖσας. Similarly, Origen, πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος οὖσα ὠφελιμός ἐστι. (citations from pg. 208, *The Revision Revised*, John Burgon. Elec. acc. *Fundamental Baptist CD-ROM Library*. London, Ontario: Bethel Baptist Church, 2009.). Many other patristic texts evidence the use of θεόπνευστος as a quality of Scripture. For example, Eusebius refers to the Hebrew copies employed by the LXX translators as "inspired (θεόπνευστος) Scriptures" (*Church History* V:8:10), employing *Theopneustos* as a quality of the written Word that remained upon apographs, rather than making a reference to the one-time process of the giving of the autographs—the copies actually in the hands of the translators, Eusebius affirmed, were θεόπνευστος.

^{vi} Thus, the equative relation *pasa graphe Theopneustos* establishes that all that is *graphe* is also *Theopneustos*. The reader who does not know Greek should note that the KJV *is*, although italicized, is clearly the correct verbal form in the Greek equative clause. The word *was* simply cannot be properly supplied. The related adjective-noun-adjective equative verb constructions in the pastoral epistles support this affirmation. Note that a present tense form of *to be* must in each case be supplied: 1 Timothy 1:15, This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, πιστός ὁ λόγος καὶ πάσης ἀποδοχῆς ἄξιος; 1

Timothy 2:5 For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, εἷς γὰρ Θεός, εἷς καὶ μεσίτης Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων; 1Timothy 4:4 For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, ὅτι πᾶν κτίσμα Θεοῦ καλόν, καὶ οὐδὲν ἀπόβλητον; 1 Timothy 4:9 This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, πιστὸς ὁ λόγος καὶ πάσης ἀποδοχῆς ἄξιος; Titus 1:12 The Cretians *are* always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies, Κρήτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται, κακὰ θηρία, γαστέρες ἀργαί.

vii

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

Romans 1:2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,;) (ὁ προεπηγγελῆσθετο διὰ τῶν προφητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν γραφαῖς ἁγίαις);

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: (φανερῶθέντος δὲ νῦν, διὰ τε γραφῶν προφητικῶν, κατ’ ἐπιταγὴν τοῦ αἰωνίου Θεοῦ, εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη γνωρισθέντος)

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. (ὡς καὶ ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς, λαλῶν ἐν αὐταῖς περὶ τούτων ἐν οἷς ἔστι δυσνόητά τινα, ἃ οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι στρεβλοῦσιν, ὡς καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς γραφάς, πρὸς τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτῶν ἀπώλειαν.)

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. (ζῶν γὰρ ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ἐνεργῆς, καὶ τομώτερος ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν μάχαιραν δίστομον, καὶ δίκνούμενος ἄχρι μερισμοῦ ψυχῆς τε καὶ πνεύματος, ἀρμῶν τε καὶ μυελῶν, καὶ κριτικὸς ἐνθυμήσεων καὶ ἐννοιῶν καρδιάς.)

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” (τὸν ἔμφυτον λόγον, τὸν δυνάμενον σῶσαι τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν), 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: (πᾶσα γραφή . . . ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἔλεγχον, πρὸς ἐπανάρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ)

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 (πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος)

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.

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Note the anaphoric article in *ton logon* in 4:2, referring back to the *graphe* of 3:16.

ix

While it is true that the specific phrase *derivatively inspired* is not found anywhere in the Bible, it is equally true that the word *translation* is absent. The implications of this paragraph, and the doctrine of derivative inspiration, are simply the good and necessary consequences of the fact that accurately translated Scripture is still Scripture, and one can accurately translate Scripture in more than one way. Inspiration is *derived* in translated Scripture because the words in the receptor language derive all their authority from the original language texts that are correctly translated. The fact that translated words can be modified and still have the breath of God is the necessary consequence of the fact that “he doeth” and “he does” are both correct translations of the appropriate Greek or Hebrew phrases. Thus, one has no right to object to the use of the word *derivative* in connection with *inspiration*, based on the absence of the word in the Bible, in connection with translations, unless he likewise objects to and abstains from the use of the word *translation* itself, never refers to Scripture as *verbally* or *plenarily* inspired, abstains from speaking of *monotheism*, or the *Trinity*, and so on. The use of the term *derivative inspiration* is simply a way of expressing the necessary distinction between the perfect and absolutely unchangeable original language texts given by God once for all in the autographs (2 Peter 1:16-21; Jude 3) and accurately translated copies. Not the word *Theopneustos* alone, but all the terms that pertain to the original language texts of the Bible only pertain in a derived way to copies. Since translated Scripture is only in a derived sense *Scripture, the Word of God, quick/living, powerful, profitable*, and so on, it is, in like manner, *inspired* in a derived sense.

x

Nonetheless, in a derivative way, texts like “the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life” (John 6:63) are applicable to the words of accurate translations, although translated words are unlike the unchangeable, ultimately authoritative Greek words Christ originally spoke which were recorded by the Apostle John through the dictation of the Holy Spirit.

xi

The affirmation of absolute verbal and plenary inspiration for the original language text, but of a secondary derivative inspiration for accurate translations, is the classic position assumed by Baptists and Protestants in the Reformation and post-Reformation era. Richard Muller explains the historic Protestant position:

[Alongside] the insistence of the Reformed that the very words of the original are inspired, the theological force of their argument falls in the substance or *res* rather than on the individual words: translations can be authoritative *quoad res* because the authority is not so much in the words as in the entirety of the teaching as distributed throughout the canon. . . . [T]he issue of “things” (*res*) and “words” (*verba*) . . . is crucial to the Protestant doctrine of Scripture and is, as many of the other elements of the Protestant doctrine, an element taken over from the medieval tradition and rooted in Augustine’s hermeneutics. . . . [T]he words of the text are signs pointing to the doctrinal “things.” This distinction between *signa* and *res significata*, the sign and the thing signified, carries over into the language typical of scholastic Protestantism, of the words of the text and the substance of the text, of the authority of translations not strictly *quoad verba* but *quoad res*, according to the substance or meaning indicated by the original. . . . [O]nly the [original language] sources are inspired (*theopneustoi*) both according to their substance (*quoad res*) and according to their words (*quoad verba*)[.] This must be the case, since holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, 2 Pet. 1:21, who dictated to them not only the substance (*res*) but also the very words (*verba*). For the same reason, the Hebrew and the Greek are the norms and rules by which the various versions are examined and evaluated. . . . [There is] a distinction between authenticity and authorship *quoad verba*, which belongs only to the Hebrew and Greek originals, and authenticity and authority *quoad res*, which inheres in valid translations. . . . Thus translations can be used, but with the reservation that only the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament are the authentic norms of doctrine and the rule by which doctrinal controversy is to be decided[.] Versions that are congruent with the sources are indeed authentic according to substance (*quoad res*); for the Word of God [may be] translated into other languages: the Word of God is not to be limited, since whether it is thought or spoken or written, it remains the Word of God. Nonetheless they are not authentic according to the idiom or word, inasmuch as the words have been explained in French or Dutch. In relation to all translations, therefore, the Hebrew and

Greek texts stand as *antiquissimus*, *originalis*, and *archetypus*. Thus, translations are the Word of God insofar as they permit the Word of God to address the reader or hearer: for Scripture is most certainly the Word of God in the things it teaches and to the extent that in and by means of its power of God touches the conscience. Even so, in translations as well as in the original the testimony of the Holy Spirit demonstrates the graciousness of God toward us. All translations have divine authority insofar as they correctly render the original: the tongue and dialect is but an accident, and as it were an argument of divine truth, which remains one and the same in all idioms. (pgs. 269, 326-327, 403, 416, 427-428, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy; volume 2, Holy Scripture: The cognitive foundation of theology* (2nd ed.), Richard Muller. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003; quotations and original sources not reproduced)

^{xii} Compare also the uses (which are loose but relevant for comparison) of *Theopneustos* as product in the Sibylline Oracles 5:308, “God-breathed streams” (νάμασιν τοῖς θεοπνεύστοις) *Pseudo-Phocylides* 129, “God-breathed wisdom” (θεοπνεύστου σοφίης) and *Testament of Abraham* (Recension A) 20:11, “God-breathed ointments and perfumes” (μυρίσμασι θεοπνεύστοις καὶ ἀρώμασιν). In each of these instances a divine quality is ascribed to the noun modified by *Theopneustos*. The “God-breathed ointments and perfumes” of the *Testament of Abraham* is parallel to the “God-woven linen cloth” (σινδόνι θεοῦφαντῶ) mentioned immediately previously. (Of course, a simply linguistic point is being made here, namely, that *Theopneustos* is a designation for a product—by no means must the verbal, plenary giving of each word of the Scriptures by God be reduced to the level of allegedly divine quality unknown Koiné writers ascribe to perfume or ointment.) Note the detailed and careful discussion of these texts (and others, such as Nonnus’ “theopneustic sandal,” a Bostran inscription speaking of an ἀρχιερεὺς θεοπνεύστος, etc.) by Warfield in *Revelation and Inspiration* chapter 7.

^{xiii} Περὶ μέντοι τοῦ θεοπνεύστου τῆς βίβλου [τῆς Ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰωάννου] περιττὸν μηκύνειν τὸν λόγον ἡγούμεθα, τῶν μακαρίων Γρηγορίου φημι τοῦ θεολόγου καὶ Κυρίλλου, προσέτι δὲ καὶ τῶν ἀρχαιοτέρων Παπίου, Εἰρηναίου, Μεθοδίου καὶ Ἰππολύτου ταύτην προσημαρτυρούντων τὸ ἀξιόπιστον.

^{xiv} ἀλλὰ μέγαν γενετήρα θεὸν πάντων θεοπνεύστων ἐν θυσίαις ἀγίαις ἐγέραιρον καὶ ἐκατόμβαις.

^{xv} See the article “Images of the Church in 1 Clement” at <http://faithsaves.net>; Clement teaches justification by faith alone, church independence and autonomy, and in every way looks like a good Baptist.

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