Inspiration

Introduction

The term "inspiration" like "Trinity" is not a biblical word but does summarize some important facets of biblical truth which we will delve into with this article. The theological idea of inspiration presupposes a personal God with a mind and a sovereign will. The Christian's conviction regarding the inspiration of the Bible is based upon the Bible's own testimony or in other words, it is based upon on explicit assertions.

J. Hampton Keathley III writes "As special revelation is God's communication to man of the truth he must know in order to be properly related to God, so inspiration deals with the preservation of that revelation so that what was received from God was accurately transmitted to others beyond the original recipient. In revelation we have the vertical reception of God's truth while in inspiration we have the horizontal communication of that revelation accurately to others. The question is how can we be sure the Bible is God's revelation to man and not merely the product of human ingenuity or merely human opinion? If what God revealed has not been accurately recorded, then that record is subject to question. The doctrine of inspiration answers that question and guarantees the accuracy of the Bible as God's special revelation."[1]

J. I. Packer writes "The idea of canonical Scripture, *i.e.* of a document or corpus of documents containing a permanent authoritative record of divine revelation, goes back to Moses' writing of God's law in the wilderness (Ex. 34:27f.; Dt. 31:9ff., 24ff.). The truth of all statements, historical or theological, which Scripture makes, and their authority as words of God, are assumed without question or discussion in both Testaments. The Canon grew, but the concept of inspiration, which the idea of canonicity presupposes, was fully developed from the first, and is unchanged throughout the Bible. As there presented, it comprises two convictions. 1. *The words of Scripture are God's own words*. OT passages identify the Mosaic law and the words of the prophets, both spoken and written, with God's own speech (*cf.* 1 Ki. 22:8–16; Ne. 8; Ps. 119; Je. 25:1–13; 36, *etc.*). NT writers view the OT as a whole as 'the oracles of God' (Rom. 3:2), prophetic in character (Rom. 16:26; *cf.* 1:2; 3:21), written by men who were moved and taught by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20f.; *cf.* 1 Pet. 1:10–12). Christ and his apostles quote OT texts, not merely as what, *e.g.*, Moses, David or Isaiah said (see Mk. 7:10; 12:36; 7:6; Rom. 10:5; 11:9; 10:20, *etc.*), but also as what God said through these men (see Acts 4:25; 28:25, *etc.*), or sometimes simply as what 'he' (God) says (*e.g.* 1 Cor. 6:16;

[1] Bibliology: The Doctrine of the Written Word, page 14; Biblical Studies Press 1997.

Heb. 8:5, 8), or what the Holy Spirit says (Heb. 3:7; 10:15). Furthermore, OT statements, not made by God in their contexts, are quoted as utterances of God (Mt. 19:4f.; Heb. 3:7; Acts 13:34f., citing Gn. 2:24; Ps. 95:7; Is. 55:2 respectively). Also, Paul refers to God's promise to Abraham and his threat to Pharaoh, both spoken long before the biblical record of them was written, as words which *Scripture* spoke to these two men (Gal. 3:8; Rom. 9:17); which shows how completely he equated the statements of Scripture with the utterance of God. 2. *Man's part in the producing of Scripture was merely to transmit what he had received*. Psychologically, from the standpoint of form, it is clear that the human writers contributed much to the making of Scripture—historical research, theological meditation, linguistic style, *etc.* Each biblical book is in one sense the literary creation of its author. But theologically, from the standpoint of content, the Bible regards the human writers as having contributed nothing, and Scripture as being entirely the creation of God. This conviction is rooted in the self-consciousness of the founders of biblical religion, all of whom claimed to utter—and, in the case of the prophets and apostles, to write—what were, in the most literal sense, the words of another: God himself. The prophets (among whom Moses must be numbered: Dt. 18:15; 34:10) professed that they spoke the words of Yahweh, setting before Israel what Yahweh had shown them (Je. 1:7; Ezk. 2:7; Am. 3:7f.; *cf.* 1 Ki. 22). Jesus of Nazareth professed that he spoke words given him by his Father (Jn. 7:16; 12:49f.). The apostles taught and issued commands in Christ's name (2 Thes. 3:6), so claiming his authority and sanction (1 Cor. 14:37), and they maintained that both their matter and their words had been taught them by God's Spirit (1 Cor. 2:9–13; *cf.* Christ's promises, Jn. 14:26; 15:26f.; 16:13ff.). These are claims to inspiration. In the light of these claims, the evaluation of prophetic and apostolic writings as wholly God's word, in just the same way in which the two tables of the law, 'written with the finger of God' (Ex. 24:12; 31:18; 32:16), were wholly God's word, naturally became part of the biblical faith. Christ and the apostles bore striking witness to the fact of inspiration by their appeal to the authority of the OT. In effect, they claimed the Jewish Scriptures as the Christian Bible: a body of literature bearing prophetic witness to Christ (Jn. 5:39f.; Lk. 24:25ff., 44f.; 2 Cor. 3:14ff.) and designed by God specially for the instruction of Christian believers (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Tim. 3:14ff.; *cf.* the exposition of Ps. 95:7–11 in Heb. 3–4, and indeed the whole of Hebrews, in which every major point is made by appeal to OT texts). Christ insisted that what was written in the OT 'cannot be broken' (Jn. 10:35). He had not come, he told the Jews, to annul the law or the prophets (Mt. 5:17); if they thought he was doing that, they were mistaken; he had come to do the opposite—to bear witness to the divine authority of both by fulfilling them. The law stands for ever, because it is God's word (Mt. 5:18; Lk. 16:17); the prophecies, particularly those concerning himself, must be

fulfilled, for the same reason (Mt. 26:54; Lk. 22:37; *cf.* Mk. 8:31; Lk. 18:31). To Christ and his apostles, the appeal to Scripture was always decisive (*cf.* Mt. 4:4, 7, 10; Rom. 12:19; 1 Pet. 1:16, *etc.*). The freedom with which NT writers quote the OT (following LXX, Targums, or an *ad hoc* rendering of the Hebrew, as best suits them) has been held to show that they did not believe in the inspiredness of the original words. But their interest was not in the words, as such, but in their meaning; and recent study has made it appear that these quotations are interpretative and expository—a mode of quotation well known among the Jews. The writers seek to indicate the true (*i.e.* Christian) meaning and application of their text by the form in which they cite it. In most cases this meaning has evidently been reached by a strict application of clear-cut theological principles about the relation of Christ and the church to the OT. (See C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 1952; K. Stendahl, *The School of St Matthew*, 1954; R. V. G. Tasker, *The Old Testament in the New Testament*[2], 1954; E. E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, 1957.)[2]

Definition

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines the word "inspiration" as "a divine influence or action on a person believed to qualify him to receive and communicate sacred revelation, the action or power of moving the intellect or emotions." They state that the word "inspire" means "to influence, move, or guide by divine or supernatural inspiration."

Therefore, the doctrine of inspiration contends that, God the Holy Spirit so supernaturally directed the human authors of Scripture that without destroying their individuality, their literary style, their personal interests, and their vocabulary, God's complete and connected thought towards man was recorded with perfect accuracy in the original languages of Scripture. The original languages of Scripture contain the very words of God, and therefore, bear the authority of divine authorship.

H. Lindsell writes "Inspiration carries with it the divine authority of God so that Scripture is binding upon the mind, heart and conscience as the only rule of faith and practice for the believer. In its authority, Scripture stands above men, creeds and the Church itself. All of them are subject to Scripture and any authority that any one of them many exert is valid insofar as it can be supported from Scripture."[3]

LXX Septuagint (Gk. version of OT)

[2] Packer, J. I. (1996). Inspiration. In (D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, & D. J. Wiseman, Eds.)*New Bible dictionary*. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

[3] Tenney, Merrill C. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible in Five Volumes*. page 288; Regency Reference Library, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1975.

Consequently, there are three reasonable suppositions: (1) Since God is a Person, perfect, eternal, infinite and just, He will always have a message to give and He will always reveal it so it could be understood by any believer. (2) The divine record and revelation will be given in accurate terms: accuracy and inerrancy (3) the text of this record will be preserved in its purity by God Himself and will therefore be indestructible. God sees to that. Thus, one can say that the Bible in its original languages is the exact record, the mind and will of God.

Inspiration guarantees: (1) the accuracy of Satan's lies and the way that they were phrased. (2) The way people committed their sins. (3) Anything that is not related to the plan of God and outside the plan of God is recorded for a purpose and for a reason.

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy with Exposition states "1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself. 2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms: obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises. 3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning. 4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives. 5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church."

Ryrie defines inspiration as "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]

W. H. Griffith Thomas writes "The word *inspiration* comes from *inspiratio* meaning 'to breathe in,' and is applied in Scripture as follows: (1) to God as the Author of man's intelligence (Job 12:8), and (2) to Scripture itself as inspired by God (2 Tim 3:16). In the latter passage it clearly denotes some action of God in the

[4] Ryrie, C. C. (1972). *A survey of Bible doctrine*. Chicago: Moody Press.

provision and conveyance of His revelation to man. While primarily spoken of the Old Testament, the term may rightly be extended to the New Testament also as part of the literature which is regarded as Scripture. The word means 'God-breathed' and indicates that primary and fundamental quality which gives Scripture its character of authoritativeness over spiritual life, and makes it profitable for the various aspects of human need. What inspiration is can best be gathered from the claim of Scripture itself. Old Testament prophets claimed to speak as God gave them their messages. The New Testament claims this quality of divine authority for the Old Testament. In harmony with this, Scripture is everywhere spoken of as 'the word of God.' Such titles as 'the scriptures' and 'the oracles of God' (Rom 3:2), with such phrases as 'it is written,' clearly involve this. Then again the words of Scripture are attributed to God as their Author (Matt 1:22; Acts 13:34) or to the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:16; Heb 3:7), and the writers are said to have spoken in or through the Holy Spirit (Matt 2:15), and so the very words of Scripture are regarded as divinely authoritative (John 10:34–35; Gal 3:16) and its contents designed for the spiritual use and guidance of mankind in all ages (Rom 15:4; 2 Tim 3:16). The Apostle Paul claims for his words an authority equal to that of the Old Testament and as given from God, while the author of the Apocalypse quite evidently places his message on a level with the older Scriptures.[5] The warrant for this doctrine of a divine authority enshrined in the Scripture lies in the teaching about the Holy Spirit who is promised as Teacher and Guide of the disciples of Christ (John 14:26; 16:13). It is best to use the term revelation of the subject matter of the message, and the word inspiration of the method by which the message was conveyed. By the inspiration of Scripture we understand the communication of divine truth in some way unique in degree and kind. As the apostles were inspired to teach orally, we cannot think their inspiration left them when they had to write. Of the eight writers of the New Testament five were apostles and the other three were their close companions, men in a special relation to them. We can therefore regard inspiration as a special gift of the Holy Spirit by which the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles and their companions in the New Testament transmitted the revelation of God as they received it. All the available facts go to show that there was a quite unique manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the Apostolic Age. A comparison of the works of the second century with the books of the New Testament reveals the difference between the work of the Spirit of God in each age, between the Spirit of inspiration and the Spirit of illumination."[6]

Edward J. Young: "Inspiration is a superintendence of God the Holy Spirit over the writers of the Scriptures, as a result of which these Scriptures possess Divine

[5] William Sanday, *Inspiration*, pp. 332, 375.
[6] (1961). *Bibliotheca Sacra*, *118*(469), 40–42.

authority and trustworthiness and, possessing such Divine authority and trustworthiness, are free from error."[7]

Millard J. Erickson: "By inspiration of the Scripture we mean that supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit upon the Scripture writers which rendered their writings an accurate record of the revelation or which resulted in what they wrote actually being the Word of God."[8]

The definitions of inspiration presented above speak both of God's action, by His Spirit, in the human author and of the nature of the resulting text. Therefore, the Scripture states that "no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation; indeed, prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20–21). Furthermore the Scriptures teach that not only are the human authors of Scripture "carried along by the Holy Spirit," but the resulting Scripture is "God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16).

Notice that these passages teach that it is Scripture that is so described, not the human author. If we choose to use the word "inspired" instead of "God-breathed," then we can say that it is the text that is inspired, not the human authors. Now, if we use the term "inspire" to the fact that the human authors were "carried along by the Holy Spirit," then the authors of Scripture were in fact inspired. Therefore, our definition of inspiration is designed to capture both the work of the Holy Spirit through the human author and the resulting status of the text of Scripture.

It is important to understand that there is nothing in this definition that requires a particular mode of inspiration. The Scriptures reveal that inspiration may operate through a vision, a trance-like dream, and hearing voices. However we must also keep in mind that there is nothing in the definition that requires such phenomena. In fact, the Scriptures also reveal that it is not clear that all of the biblical writers were always self-consciously aware that what they were writing was canonical Scripture.

So the term "inspiration" is really not much more than a convenient label to attach to the process whereby God has brought about the existence of the Scriptures: verbal revelation and historical witness, words of human beings and words of God, the truth that God chose to communicate and the particular forms of individual human authors.

J. Hampton Keathley III writes "Inspiration must be carefully defined because of the varied uses of this term and the wrong ideas about inspiration being promoted today, ideas that are inconsistent with what the Bible itself teaches regarding inspiration. Inspiration may be defined as 'God's superintendence of the human authors of Scripture so that using their own individual personalities, they

[7] Edward J. Young, *Thy Word Is Truth*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1957, p. 27.
[8] Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1983, p. 199.

composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs.' If we break this definition down into its various parts, we note several elements, each of which is vital to understanding what the Bible teaches about inspiration. (1) The word 'superintendence' refers to the guiding relationships God had with the human authors of Scripture in the various material of the Bible. His superintendence varied in degree, but it was always included so that the Spirit of God guaranteed the accuracy of what was written. (2) The word 'composed' shows that the writers were not simply stenographers who wrote what God dictated to them. They were actively involved using their own personalities, backgrounds, and God's working in their lives, but again, what was composed had the superintendence of God over the material written. (3) 'Without error' expresses what the Bible itself claims to be true regarding its record; it is God's word and that word is truth (John 17:17; Ps. 119:160). (4) Though our translations of the Bible are tremendously accurate, being based on thousands of manuscript witnesses, inspiration can only be ascribed to the original autographs, not to manuscript copies or the translations based on those copies."[9]

Enns writes "There are several important elements that belong in a proper definition of inspiration: (1) the divine element—God the Holy Spirit superintended the writers, ensuring the accuracy of the writing; (2) the human element—human authors wrote according to their individual styles and personalities; (3) the result of the divine-human authorship is the recording of God's truth without error; (4) inspiration extends to the selection of words by the writers; (5) inspiration relates to the original manuscripts."[10]

New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition states "It is important to distinguish this use of 'inspiration' from two other uses. The first springs from the contemporary world of art. We speak of composers, writers, painters, sculptors, musicians and others being 'inspired'. If we stop to think about this usage at all, we might suppose that these people have been 'inspired' by the Muse; the more theologically inclined might assign the 'inspiration' to God's 'common grace'. Apart from such reflection, we do not mean very much more than that their work is excellent, the elite from the first class. In consequence we might conclude that their work is 'inspiring', *i.e.* it makes those who gaze at it lift their horizons a little, or attempt something new, or otherwise find themselves ennobled. Such use is not normally taken to mean that the Sovereign God has thereby communicated his truth in permanent form to his covenant people. The second use of 'inspiration' with which our definition must not be confused is that found in the usage of the church Fathers. It has often been noticed that 'inspiration' never functions among the Fathers as a criterion for canonicity. This is not because the Fathers do not

[9] Bibliology: The Doctrine of the Written Word; pages 15-16; Biblical Studies Press 1997
[10] Enns, p. 160.

think the Scriptures are inspired, for in fact they do; rather, it is because in their usage inspiration is not something that attaches exclusively to Scripture. Thus in a sermon Eusebius attributes to Emperor Constantine (whether or not this attribution is correct), the preacher begins, 'May the mighty inspiration of the Father and of his Son … be with me in speaking these things'. In one of his letters to Jerome, Augustine goes so far as to say that Jerome writes under the dictation of the Holy Spirit. Gregory of Nyssa can use the same word translated 'God-breathed' ('inspired') in 2 Timothy to refer to his brother Basil's commentary on the six days of creation. In short, a number of Fathers use a variety of expressions, including 'inspiration', to lump together what many theologians today would separate into the two categories 'inspiration' and 'illumination'. The latter acknowledges the work of the Holy Spirit in the mind of countless believers, not least preachers, Christian writers and teachers, but denies to their thoughts and words and writings the kind of universal authority that is binding on all Christians everywhere and that is today connected with the word 'inspiration'. Implicitly, of course, the Fathers make the same sort of distinction (even if their categories are different) insofar as they recognize only certain documents as canonical, *i.e.* a closed list of Scriptures with binding authority on the entire church."[11]

J. Ireland writes "The doctrine that God has 'inspired' a particular set of texts. The term usually refers to the Christian doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible, but it is problematic: Various Christian groups differently understand the process of God's inspiring of the sacred text. However, the differing views fall on a spectrum that is roughly described with the overly simple terms 'conservative' and 'liberal.' On one end of this spectrum, the 'conservative' view of inspiration is that God spoke through prophetic individuals (albeit in a manner that fully incorporated their unique personalities and cultural settings) to produce a text that is fully God's word. To say the Scriptures are inspired is to say they have their origin in God and are in every part God's word (compare 2 Tim. 3:16 wherein "inspired" is literally "God-breathed"; 2 Peter 1:21). On the other end of the spectrum, 'liberal' scholars hold that the text was less directly inspired, and cite examples of apparent internal inconsistency within the biblical text—such as the reports of the building of the Ark (Deut 10:1–5; Exod 37:1–9), Paul's encounter with Christ (Acts 9:7; Acts 22:9), and the manner of Judas' death (Acts 1:16–19; Matt. 27:3–10—as well as contradictions with what is known of history (P. Achtemeier, 42). Inspiration is one form of revelation. Generally speaking, revelation pertains to the unveiling of something (i.e. of God and His purposes) while inspiration pertains to the way in which that revelation is conveyed (i.e. God speaking through human agents). Theories of inspiration differ greatly and include: 1. The *dictation theory of*

[11] Carson, D. A., France, R. T., Motyer, J. A., & Wenham, G. J. (Eds.). (1994). *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 8). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

inspiration: The sacred authors became lost in an ecstatic state and wrote while fully under God's control, as though in a trance. 2. A *limited view of inspiration*, seeing some aspects of Scripture as "more inspired" than others. 3. A *natural view of inspiration* understands the inspiration of Scripture in terms of the inherent religious genius of the human authors. 4. An *illumination theory of inspiration* holds that the Holy Spirit illumined for the writers of Scripture divine truths."[12]

J. I. Packer writes "In formulating the biblical idea of inspiration, it is desirable that four negative points be made. 1. The idea is not of mechanical dictation, or automatic writing, or any process which involved the suspending of the action of the human writer's mind. Such concepts of inspiration are found in the Talmud, Philo and the Fathers, but not in the Bible. The divine direction and control under which the biblical authors wrote was not a physical or psychological force, and it did not detract from, but rather heightened, the freedom, spontaneity and creativeness of their writing. 2. The fact that in inspiration God did not obliterate the personality, style, outlook and cultural conditioning of his penmen does not mean that his control of them was imperfect, or that they inevitably distorted the truth they had been given to convey in the process of writing it down. B. B. Warfield gently mocks the notion that when God wanted Paul's letters written 'He was reduced to the necessity of going down to earth and painfully scrutinizing the men He found there, seeking anxiously for the one who, on the whole, promised best for His purpose; and then violently forcing the material He wished expressed through him, against his natural bent, and with as little loss from his recalcitrant characteristics as possible. Of course, nothing of the sort took place. If God wished to give His people a series of letters like Paul's, He prepared a Paul to write them, and the Paul He brought to the task was a Paul who spontaneously would write just such letters' (The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, 1951, p. 155). 3. Inspiredness is not a quality attaching to corruptions which intrude in the course of the transmission of the text, but only to the text as originally produced by the inspired writers. The acknowledgment of biblical inspiration thus makes more urgent the task of meticulous textual criticism, in order to eliminate such corruptions and ascertain what that original text was. 4. The inspiredness of biblical writing is not to be equated with the inspiredness of great literature, not even when (as often) the biblical writing is in fact great literature. The biblical idea of inspiration relates, not to the literary quality of what is written, but to its character as divine revelation in writing."[13]

Geisler writes "From the biblical description of the process of inspiration, the necessary constituents of a theological definition of inspiration may be derived.

[12] Ireland, J. (2012). Inspiration, Doctrine of the, History of. In (J. D. Barry & L. Wentz, Eds.)*The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
[13] Packer, J. I. (1996). Inspiration. In (D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, & D. J. Wiseman, Eds.)*New Bible dictionary*. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

There are three: 1. Divine causality. The prime mover in inspiration is God: 'No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God' (2 Peter 1:21). In other words, God moved, and the prophet mouthed the truths; God revealed, and man recorded His word. The Bible is God's word in the sense that it originates with Him and is authorized by Him, even though it is articulated by men. God speaks in their written records. 2. Prophetic agency. The prophets played an important role in the overall process of inspiration; they were the means by which God spoke. The word of God was written by men of God. God used persons to convey His propositions. In other words, as J.I. Packer perceptively observes, there God exercised 'concursive operation in, with and through the free working of man's own mind.'[14] He amplifies the concept further saying, We are to think of the Spirit's inspiring activity, and, for that matter, of all His regular operations in and upon human personality, as (to use an old but valuable technical term) concursive; that is, as exercised in, through and by means of the writers' own activity, in such a way that their thinking and writing was both free and spontaneous on their part and divinely elicited and controlled, and what they wrote was not only their own work but also God's work.[15] God prepared the prophets by training, experience, gifts of grace, and, if need be, by direct revelation to utter His word. 'By it [inspiration], the Spirit of God, flowing confluently with the providentially and graciously determined work of men, spontaneously producing under the Divine directions the writings appointed them, gives the product a Divine quality unattainable by human powers alone.'[16] In inspiration, then, God is the primary cause, and the prophets are the secondary causes. Thus the divine influence did not restrict human activity but rather enabled the human authors to communicate the divine message accurately. 3.Scriptural authority is the final product of God's causality and the prophetic agency. Hence, the Bible is a divinely authoritative book. God moved the prophets in such a way as to breathe out (literally, "spirate") their writings. In other words, God spoke to the prophets and is speaking in their writings. Although some might argue that the prophetic model of inspiration is inadequate,[17] in order to shift the basis of the believer's authority from Scripture to some other locus, Carl F. H. Henry rightly observes that 'the church is neither the locus of divine revelation, nor the source of divine inspiration, nor the seat of infallibility. Rather, the church has the task of

[14] James I. Packer, *"Fundamentalism" and the Word of God*, p. 82; J.I. Packer, *God Has Spoken*, esp. pp. 45–124. Also see I. Howard Marshall, *Biblical Inspiration*, pp. 40–43.
[15] Packer, *"Fundamentalism"*, p. 80.
[16] Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, pp. 154–60.
[17] Paul J. Achtemeier, *The Inspiration of Scripture: Problems and Proposals*, pp. 29–3, 74–75, 99–100, 122–23, and elsewhere. Clark Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle*, uncritically accepts this notion, stating, "The Bible is more than prophecy, and although direct divine speech is part of the record, there are many other kinds of communication as well, some of them more indirect and ambiguous" (p. 63), and indicating that "Paul J. Achtemeier has called attention to the inadequacy of the prophetic model for representing the biblical category of inspiration in its fulness" (p. 234 n. 8).

transmitting, translating, and expounding the prophetic-apostolic Scriptures.'[18] The cause of inspiration is God, the means is the men of God, and the end result is the word of God in the language of men. Therefore, this definition of inspiration is suggested: *Inspiration is that mysterious process by which the divine causality worked through the human prophets without destroying their individual personalities and styles to produce divinely authoritative and inerrant writings*."[19]

B.B. Warfield writes "THE word "inspire" and its derivatives seem to have come into Middle English from the French, and have been employed from the first (early in the fourteenth century) in a considerable number of significations, physical and metaphorical, secular and religious. The derivatives have been multiplied and their applications extended during the procession of the years, until they have acquired a very wide and varied use. Underlying all their use, however, is the constant implication of an influence from without, producing in its object movements and effects beyond its native, or at least its ordinary powers. The noun "inspiration," although already in use in the fourteenth century, seems not to occur in any but a theological sense until late in the sixteenth century. The specifically theological sense of all these terms is governed, of course, by their usage in Latin theology; and this rests ultimately on their employment in the Latin Bible. In the Vulgate Latin Bible the verb *inspiro* (Gen. 2:7; Wisd. 15:11; Ecclus. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21) and the noun *inspiratio* (2 Sam. 22:16; Job 32:8; Ps. 17:16; Acts 17:25) both occur four or five times in somewhat diverse applications. In the development of a theological nomenclature, however, they have acquired (along with other less frequent applications) a technical sense with reference to the Biblical writers or the Biblical books. The Biblical books are called inspired as the divinely determined products of inspired men; the Biblical writers are called inspired as breathed into by the Holy Spirit, so that the product of their activities transcends human powers and becomes Divinely authoritative. Inspiration is, therefore, usually defined as a supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given Divine trustworthiness."[20]

Inspiration vs. Revelation

Inspiration is God revealing Himself through the Word of God which is His mind whereas revelation is God using a vehicle. Inspiration is the means God used to reveal Himself through the Bible whereas revelation is concerned with the divine origin of Scripture and the giving of truth to men.

[18] Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, vol. 2: *God Who Speaks and Shows: Fifteen Theses, Part One*, pp. 13–15.
[19] Geisler, N. L., & Nix, W. E. (1986). *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Rev. and expanded., pp. 38–39). Chicago: Moody Press.
[20] Warfield, B. B. (2008). *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Revelation and Inspiration* (Vol. 1, pp. 77–78). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Interpretation emphasizes the understanding of God's revelation to man. Through revelation, God reveals truth and by interpretation man understands this truth. Interpretation deals with understanding the revelation provided in Scripture whereas illumination refers to the ministry of the Holy Spirit helping the believer to understand this revelation from God in the Scriptures.

In revelation we have the vertical reception of God's truth while in inspiration we have the horizontal communication of that revelation accurately to others. The word of God in its original languages is the vehicle by which God reveals Himself to mankind. In other words, inspiration is the process by which God worked through the human authors without destroying their individual personalities, vocabularies and writing styles to produce divine authoritative and inerrant writings.

God reveals Himself to man in four ways: (1) by nature or creation (Psalm 19:1-6; Rom. 1:19-20). (2) Human conscience (Romans 2:14-15). (3) The Living Word, i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:18; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Cor. 1:24; Heb. 1:1-3). (4) The Written Word, the Bible in its original languages.

God's will, purpose and plan for your life can only be found in the written Word, not in nature since nature cannot: (1) Give information about God's purpose for your life. (2) Give information about God's will for your life. (3) Give information about God's plan for your life. (4) Give the way of salvation.

God's will, purpose, plan and way of salvation are revealed to us: (1) in the written Word of God, i.e., the Bible. (2) By the Living Word of God, i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the process goes like this: (1) revelation is the objective fact of God communicating to mankind (2) inspiration is the means by which God communicated to mankind (3) interpretation is the process of understanding what God has communicated.

The Holy Spirit is involved in every step. He is the member of the Trinity responsible for this revelation since He guided and directed the human authors of Scripture to put down in the original autographs God's complete and connected thought to mankind. So the Spirit was the means by which God communicated His will to men. He is responsible for the inspiration of Scripture. He is also the one who guides the believer in the interpretation of this revelation and helps them to understand it so as to make application.

H. Lindsell writes "So technically, revelation preceded inspiration which has to do with the divine method of inscripturating the revelation whether what was written came to the writer by direct communication from God, from his own research, from his own experience or from extant records. Inspiration includes the superintending work of the Holy Spirit, but the human writers of Scripture were not automatons. Each writer had his own style. Each one used the Hebrew or the

Greek language according to his own unique gifts and educational background. At the same time that God used human authors in harmony with their gifts He also indited holy Scripture."[21]

The Extent of Inspiration

Verbal inspiration is a view of inspiration that holds that the words themselves in the original languages of Scripture are truly God's words, inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is sometimes caricatured as a "dictation theory." But most conservatives today do not believe that God simply dictated His Word to scribes working like a modern secretary or a robot. God used the prophets and controlled them, but He did not violate their styles or personalities. The nearest thing to a theory of dictation is the teaching of the Roman Catholic Council of Trent in 1545, which said in Latin that the Scriptures were "*Spiritu Sancto dictante*." But the Latin *dictante* does not mean "dictate" in the modern sense. It simply means "spoken" or "said."[22]

The expression "plenary" inspiration expresses the view of biblical inspiration that contends that God is the ultimate author of the Bible in its entirety. This means that God's superintending work in inspiration extends to the whole Bible and to each part of the Bible. Plenary inspiration guarantees that all that the church has come to affirm as Scripture is both authoritative and helpful for Christian belief and practice.[23]

The Bible portrays historical statements and details unknown to man and unconfirmed by human records (Gen. 1:11). Inspiration guarantees the accuracy of these events (Isa. 14; Ezek. 28). In Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, there are two accounts of Satan's fall. Satan existed long before man, yet we have in writing, with perfect accuracy, all that God wants us to know about Satan's fall. There are several accounts of the creation of the universe and these are found in the Scriptures from Genesis to Isaiah, and Colossians 1. We would have no way of knowing these events were it not for the fact that God Himself provided the information through inspiration so that we might know about eternity past.

The Bible is not a history book but it does contain many historical accounts. All of these are necessary and are accurate. They form the basis and background for the communication of doctrine. There have been many archeological discoveries which demonstrate the perfect accuracy of the Scriptures.

[21] Tenney, Merrill C. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible in Five Volumes*. page 288; Regency Reference Library, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1975.
[22] Harris, R. L. (2002). *Exploring the basics of the Bible* (p. 9). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.
[23] Grenz, S., Guretzki, D., & Nordling, C. F. (1999). In *Pocket dictionary of theological terms*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Some places in the Bible have direct quotations from God. Sometimes, God would make known future events which man had no way of foreseeing or understanding at the time of their revelation.

Examples of prophecy: (1) Destruction of the powerful Edomites (Ezek. 25:12-14). (2) Fall of Tyre (3) Person and Work of Christ (Psa. 22; Isa. 53).

These prophecies were fulfilled perfectly. Future prophecies for the Tribulation, Second Advent of Christ and the Millennium will be perfectly fulfilled also.

The record of human or Satanic lies in the Bible does mean that falsehood is truth. Inspiration guarantees the accuracy of these lies such as the devil's lies in Genesis 3:1-5. The book of Ecclesiastes reveals human viewpoint. God did not approve of Solomon's human viewpoint but it was recorded to reveal the thinking of one who is out of fellowship with God.

So "verbal" signifies the words of the original languages of Scripture whereas "plenary" means "full" or "complete" as opposed to partial. Thus verbal plenary inspiration expresses the idea that each and every word in the original languages of Scripture are inspired by God who gave full expression to His thoughts in the original languages of Scripture. He influenced the very choice of the words used within the personality and vocabulary of the writers so that the Bible is not only the Word of God but also the words of men.

Charles Hodge has expressed the meaning of verbal inspiration well: It is meant that the Divine influence, of whatever kind it may have been, which accompanied the sacred writers in what they wrote, extends to the expression of their thoughts in language, as well as the thoughts themselves,—the effect being, that in the original autograph copies, the language expresses the thought God intended to convey with infallible accuracy, so that the words, as well as the thoughts, are God's revelation to us.[24][25]

Geisler writes "The Bible claims to be the verbal, infallible, and inerrant Word of God. Because divine authority extends to every part of Scripture, this is verbal plenary inspiration. Although the general claims of the New Testament explicitly refer to only the Old Testament, they may be applied to the New Testament as well, because it too is 'Scripture' and 'prophetic.' The divine nature of Scripture does not rule out the fact that it is also a human book, manifesting the variety of literary styles, figures of speech, and individual personalities of its authors. However, like Christ, the Bible is theanthropic, having both the divine and human elements united in one expression. As a result, God adapted His truth to finite understanding, but He did not accommodate it to human misunderstanding. Therefore, on the authority of Christ, the Scriptures are completely inerrant."[26]

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[24] Charles Hodge, source unknown.
[25] Duffield, G. P., & Van Cleave, N. M. (1983). *Foundations of Pentecostal theology* (p. 24). Los Angeles, CA: L.I.F.E. Bible College.
[26] Geisler, N. L., & Nix, W. E. (1986). *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Rev. and expanded., p. 64). Chicago: Moody Press.

Documentation

The Scriptures claim that they are inspired by God the Holy Spirit. Thus, when approaching the subject of inspiration, one should let the Scriptures speak for itself.

2 Samuel 23:2 "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His Word was on my tongue." (NASB95)

Isaiah 59:21 "And as for Me, this is My covenant with them, says the Lord: "My Spirit which is upon you (Isaiah), and My Words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring," says the Lord, "from now and forever." (NASB95)

Mark 12:36 "David himself said in the Holy Spirit, "the Lord said to My Lord, sit at My right hand, until I put Your enemies beneath My feet." (NASB95)

Acts 28:25 "And when they (the unbelieving Jews in Rome) did not agree with one another, they began leaving after Paul had spoken one parting word, "The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers." (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world (cosmic system), but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. (NASB95)

Ephesians 3:4 As a result of the public reading of this epistle you ought to be able to understand my technical knowledge about the mystery of the Christ, 5 which (mystery) in other generations was not made known to mankind as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by means of the Spirit. (Author's translation)

Hebrews 3:7 Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "today if you hear His voice." (NASB95)

1 Peter 1:12, "It was to them (Old Testament prophets) that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by means of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-things into which angels long to look."

Revelation 2:7 "He, who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Revelation 2:11 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (NASB95)

Revelation 2:17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (NASB95)

Revelation 3:6 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (NASB95)

Revelation 3:13, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (NASB95)

Revelation 3:22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (NASB95)

2 Timothy 3:16

Second Timothy 3:16 is considered by many as an internal argument for the inspiration of the Bible. If this verse is internal proof for the inspiration of the Bible, then we must have an accurate translation of what this text actually does say. However, there are differences of opinion regarding the translation of this verse.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness. (NASB95)

This verse contains the figure of asyndeton meaning that Paul is not using a connective word between his last statement in verse 15 and his statement here in verse 16. This figure emphasizes the solemn nature of Paul's statement with regards to the Old Testament Scriptures which suggests that he is making an assertion about the Scriptures.

"**All Scripture is inspired by God**" is composed of the following: (1) nominative feminine singular form of the adjective *pas* (πᾶς), "**all**" (2) nominative feminine singular form of the noun *graphē* (γραφή), "**Scripture**" (3) nominative feminine singular form of the adjective *theopneustos* (θεόπνευστος), "**inspired by God**."

There are lot of difficult exegetical decisions that need to made with regards this verse. For instance, does *graphē* refers to various passages of Scripture or is it used in a collective sense. If the latter is the case, then what collection does it refer to? There is the question as to whether or not the adjective *pas* means "all" or "every?"

Does *theopneustos* function as a predicate adjective or an attributive adjective? The latter would mean "God-breathed Scripture" whereas the former would mean "Scripture is God-breathed."

Consequently should the verb *eimi*, "**is**" which is omitted due to the figure of ellipsis, be placed after *graphē* or after *theopneustos*? The former would mean "Scripture is God-breathed" whereas the latter would mean "God-breathed Scripture is..." This results in a decision as to whether or not *kai* is between

theopneustos and *ōphelimos* which would give us the translation "God-breathed and profitable" or is it functioning as an adjunctive adverb "also" resulting in the translation "God-breathed Scripture is also profitable."

In 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2, Paul is exhorting Timothy to continue to persevere and remain faithful in carrying out his duties as his delegate. Timothy is to persevere and remain faithful to the gospel which he has learned and become convinced of (2 Timothy 3:14). Paul reminds him that he was raised in the Old Testament Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:15).

In 2 Timothy 4:2, the apostle exhorts him to preach the gospel. His young delegate can be totally and completely assured that he is able to do this because the gospel message he proclaims originates from God Himself (2 Timothy 3:16) and not from human beings.

Therefore, the Scriptures are profitable for Timothy and his ministry because it is God's Word. The teaching of the Judaizers which certain apostate pastors in Ephesus and Crete were listening to originates with Satan and the kingdom of darkness (1 Timothy 4:1; cf. Titus 1:14). In direct contrast to this, Timothy's message originates from God.

Graphē

The noun *graphē* means "Scripture" and is used in a collective sense referring specifically to the Old Testament canon of Scripture since the New Testament was in the process of being written during the first century and was not completed until the end of the first century. This is indicated by the fact that the word is used in this way often in the New Testament. Also, Paul's statements in 2 Timothy 3:14-15 indicates this as well as since they refer to Timothy being raised in the Old Testament Scriptures.

2 Timothy 3:14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (NASB95)

The word *graphē* functions as a nominative subject meaning it is performing the action of the verb *eimi* which is deliberately omitted because is employing the figure of ellipsis for emphasis. The apostle Paul uses this figure here to emphasize the divine authorship of the Scriptures.

The entire statement πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος constitutes an equative clause for the simple reason that it requires an implied verb. Consequently this makes the assertion that all scripture is profitable.

Pas

The noun *graphē* is modified by the attributive adjective *pas* which means "each and every" since it pertains to totality with emphasis upon a thing's individual components. When the adjective *pas* is used with a noun in the singular and without the definite article, it emphasizes the individual members of a class that is denoted by the noun. *Pasa* is used here without a definite article and with the singular noun *graphe*. Therefore, the adjective *pasa* is modifying the noun *graphe* and is used in a distributive sense referring to "each and every" portion of the Old Testament Scripture.

H. Wayne House writes "The first point that needs to be examined is whether πᾶσα should be translated 'all' or 'every.' The New American Standard Bible, The New Testament: A Translation in the Language of the People (Williams), The New Testament in Modern English (Phillips), The New Testament in the Language of Today (Beck), and the Revised Standard Version follow the Authorized Version in its translation of the word as 'all.' The American Revised Version as well as The New English Bible translate it 'every.' Bernard is quite persuaded that this word should be rendered 'every.' 'The absence of the article assures us that we must render "every Scripture" and not (with the Authorized Version) "all Scripture"; the thought is not of the Old Testament regarded as an organic whole, but of every individual "Scripture" therein.'[27] Referring to Bernard's statement, Guthrie, who leaves room for question, states the following: Bernard decides emphatically for 'every' on the basis of the absence of the article, but Simpson points out analogous cases where *pas* is used in a semi-technical phrase and where the meaning 'every' is ruled out, e.g. Acts 2:36 where 'all the house of Israel' is clearly demanded (see also Eph 2:21; 3:15; Col 4:12). Yet it may well be in all these exceptions the *pas* draws attention to the partitive aspect of the expression, and, if that is so, the present phrase may mean Scripture as viewed in each separate part of it.[28] In concurrence with the observation of Guthrie, πᾶς when used with an anarthrous noun is translated 'every' in order to call attention to the individual members of the class denoted by the noun.[29] However, when the noun accompanying πᾶς is a proper noun or collective term,[30] the adjective may be translated 'the whole' or

[27] J. H. Bernard, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899), pp. 136-37.
[28] Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Tyndale Bible Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), pp. 163-64.
[29] William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 636. There are twenty-one examples of πᾶς in the construction found in 2 Timothy 3:16, i.e., πᾶς + the noun + the adjective. Examples include Matthew 7:17 ("every good tree"); Matthew 12:36 ("every idle word"); and Ephesians 1:3 ("every spiritual blessing"). The other examples are Acts 23:1; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 1:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:17; 2 Timothy 2:21; 4:18; Titus 1:16; 2:10; 3:1; Hebrews 4:12; James 1:17; 3:16; and Revelation 8:7; 18:2, 12; 21:19 (J. W. Roberts, "Note on the Adjective after πᾶς in 2 Timothy 3:16, " *Expository Times* 76 [August 1965]: 359). While all these examples translate πᾶς by "every," none has a noun with the technical meaning as seen in γραφή as mentioned in the main discussion above.
[30] Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), p. 491.

'all.'[31] In agreement with the foregoing, Moule says that the translation 'every inspired Scripture' is most unlikely, and he suggests that the proper meaning is that 'the whole of Scripture is inspired.'[32] Although the American Revised Version and The New English Bible translated πᾶσα 'every' in 2 Timothy 3:16, they did not always translate it that way. In Matthew 3:15; Acts 2:36; 7:22 they translate it 'all.' An examination of γραφή in its more than fifty occurrences in the Greek New Testament reveals that it was considered a technical term or proper noun.[33] Thus when it occurred with πᾶς it did not need the article and therefore was translated 'all' or 'the whole.'[34] Hendriksen summarizes this point well. It is not true that the absence of the article compels us to adopt the translation of the A.R.V, 'every scripture.' The word Scripture can be definite even without the article (I Peter 2:6; II Peter 1:20). Similarly πᾶς =Λσραήλ means "all Israel" (Rom 11:26)…. But even if the rendering 'every scripture' be accepted, the resultant meaning would not differ greatly, for if 'every scripture' is inspired, 'all scripture' must be inspired also.[35] Thus it is concluded that when πᾶς is used with a technical noun it is better to render it 'all' rather than 'every.'"[36]

The NET Bible has the following note, "There is very little difference in sense between *every scripture* (emphasizing the individual portions) and 'all scripture' (emphasizing the composite whole). The former option is preferred, because it fits the normal use of the word 'all/every' in Greek (πᾶς, *pas*) as well as Paul's normal sense for the word 'scripture' in the singular without the article, as here. So *every scripture* means 'every individual portion of scripture.'"[37]

Mounce writes "The question is whether Paul is thinking of Scripture as a cohesive whole ('all') or as the sum total of its parts ('every'). Some argue that 'every' Scripture suggests that only some portions of Scripture are God-breathed ('every Scripture that is inspired'), but this seems foreign to the text. Paul is encouraging Timothy to center his ministry on Scripture because it comes from God and will fully equip him for service. It is out of place within this context to introduce the note of the supposed unreliability of some of Scripture. Rather translating πᾶς as 'every' emphasizes that the origin of every single element of the OT comes from God."[38]

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[31] Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 637.
[32] C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 95.
[33] John Peter Lange, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, vol. 23: *Thessalonians-Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.), p. 109. Referring to 2 Timothy 3:16 Lange writes, "Although the article is wanting here, nevertheless, by virtue of the connection, it is not to be doubted a moment that the Apostle is speaking decidedly and exclusively of the γραφή of the Old Covenant, as of a well-completed whole…. In no case can the absence of the article in a word so frequently used as γραφή surprise us, since it is employed, in fact, almost as a proper name" (ibid.).
[34] Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920), p. 296. The usual construction would be ὁ πᾶς but "the article is not used with πᾶς if the noun, standing alone, would have no article."
[35] William Hendriksen, *I -II Timothy , Titus*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957), p. 301.
[36] (1980). *Bibliotheca Sacra*, *137*(545), 50–56.
[37] Biblical Studies Press. (2006). *The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible*. Biblical Studies Press.
[38] Mounce, William D., The Word Biblical Commentary, volume 46, Pastoral Epistles, page 566; Thomas Nelson, 2000.

Theopneustos

The adjective *theopneustos* appears only once in the Greek New Testament, here in 2 Timothy 3:16. It is a compound word composed of the noun *theos*, "God," and the verb *pneo*, "breathe, breathe into." Thus, its etymology suggests the word means "breathed by a god" or "divinely inspired." This word can be viewed in a passive sense emphasizing that Scripture's source is the breath of God meaning that it originates in and comes from God Himself. It can be viewed in an active sense emphasizing that the Scripture is filled with the breath of God meaning it is inspiring. This author chooses to render the word "God-breathed" rather than "inspired by God" since the word's original sense is passive and more importantly the context indicates a passive sense for the word.

B.B. Warfield demonstrates that in classical, Hellenistic Greek and patristic literature, the word is used in a passive sense, he writes "THE phrase, 'Given by inspiration of God,' or 'Inspired of God,' occurs, as is well-known, but once in the New Testament—in the classical passage, to wit, 2 Tim. 3:16, which is rendered in the Authorized Version, 'All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God,' and by the Revised Version, 'Every Scripture inspired of God *is*, etc.' The Greek word represented by it, and standing in this passage as an epithet or predicate of 'Scripture'—θεόπνευστος—though occurring here only in the New Testament and found nowhere earlier in all Greek literature, has nevertheless not hitherto seemed of doubtful interpretation. Its form, its subsequent usage, the implications of parallel terms and of the analogy of faith, have combined with the suggestions of the context to assign to it a meaning which has been constantly attributed to it from the first records of Christian interpretation until yesterday...We cannot think it speaking too strongly, therefore, to say that there is discoverable in none of these passages the slightest trace of an active sense of θεόπνευστος, by which it should express the idea, for example, of 'breathing the divine spirit,' or even such a quasi-active idea as that of 'redolent of God.' Everywhere the word appears as purely passive and expresses production by God. And if we proceed from these passages to those much more numerous ones, in which it is, as in 2 Tim. 3:16, an epithet or predicate of Scripture, and where therefore its signification may have been affected by the way in which Christian antiquity understood that passage, the impression of the passive sense of the word grows, of course, ever stronger. Though these passages may not be placed in the first rank of material for the determination of the meaning of 2 Tim. 3:16, by which they may have themselves been affected; it is manifestly improper to exclude them from consideration altogether. Even as part bearers of the exegetical tradition they are worthy of adduction: and it is scarcely conceivable that the term should have been entirely voided of its current sense, had

it a different current sense, by the influence of a single employment of it by Paul—especially if we are to believe that its natural meaning as used by him differed from that assigned it by subsequent writers. The patristic use of the term in connection with Scripture has therefore its own weight, as evidence to the natural employment of the term by Greek-speaking Christian writers. This use of it does not seem to occur in the very earliest patristic literature: but from the time of Clement of Alexandria the term θεόπνευστος appears as one of the most common technical designations of Scripture...If, then, we are to make an induction from the use of the word, we shall find it bearing a uniformly passive significance, rooted in the idea of the creative breath of God...Thus it appears that such a conception as 'God-breathed' lies well within the general circle of ideas of the Hellenistic writers, who certainly most prevailingly use the word. An application of this conception to Scripture, such as is made in 2 Tim. 3:16, was no less consonant with the ideas concerning the origin and nature of Scripture which prevailed in the circles out of which that epistle proceeded. This may indeed be fairly held to be generally conceded...And one is very likely to insist that, whatever may be its origin, this conception of the divine origination of Scripture was certainly shared by the New Testament writers themselves, and may very well therefore have found expression in 2 Tim. 3:16—which would therefore need no adjustment to current ideas to make it teach it. At all events, it is admitted that this view of the teaching of 2 Tim. 3:16 is supported by the unbroken exegetical tradition; and this fact certainly requires to be taken into consideration in determining the meaning of the word...That the words of Scripture are conceived, not only in Hebrews but throughout the New Testament, as the utterances of the Holy Ghost is obvious enough and not to be denied. But it is equally obvious that the ground of this conception is everywhere the ascription of these words to the Holy Ghost as their responsible author: *littera scripta manet* and remains what it was when written, viz., the words of the writer. The fact that all Scripture is conceived as a body of Oracles and approached with awe as the utterances of God certainly does not in the least suggest that these utterances may not be described as God-given words or throw a preference for an interpretation of θεόπνευστος which would transmute it into an assertion that they are rather God-giving words...The result of our investigation would seem thus, certainly, to discredit the new interpretation of θεόπνευστος offered by Ewald and Cremer (the active sense). From all points of approach alike we appear to be conducted to the conclusion that it is primarily expressive of the origination of Scripture, not of its nature and much less of its effects. What is θεόπνευστος is 'God-breathed,' produced by the creative breath of the Almighty. And Scripture is called θεόπνευστος in order to designate it as 'God-breathed,' the product of Divine spiration, the creation of that Spirit who is in all spheres of the Divine activity the executive of the Godhead. The traditional

translation of the word by the Latin *inspiratus a Deo* is no doubt also discredited, if we are to take it at the foot of the letter. It does not express a breathing *into* the Scriptures by God. But the ordinary conception attached to it, whether among the Fathers or the Dogmaticians, is in general vindicated. What it affirms is that the Scriptures owe their origin to an activity of God the Holy Ghost and are in the highest and truest sense His creation. It is on this foundation of Divine origin that all the high attributes of Scripture are built."[39]

House writes "The problem posed in the translation of this word is whether it is a passive verbal form or an active verbal form. If it is a passive form, the word is emphasizing that Scripture's source is the breath of God, that is, it originates in and comes from God. If the word has an active meaning, the emphasis is that the Scripture is filled with the breath of God, that is, it is inspiring. Cremer at one time believed that θεόπνευστος is a passive form, but in later editions of his lexicon he argued that it is active. A transference of meaning to inspired by God, given by God, can hardly be explained or vindicated; this meaning might, without straining the context, suit Ps.-Phocyl. 121, but certainly is inadmissible as an epithet of γραφή…. The signification, spirit-filled, breathing the Spirit of God, is in keeping with [the context]…."[40] Cremer recognizes that θεόπνευστος was originally passive in meaning. He simply says that the sense is 'God-filled' rather than 'God-breathed' which, he argues, readily passed into the active sense of 'God-breathing' after the analogy of such words as ἄπνευστος or εὔπνευστος, which from 'ill-or well-breathed' came to mean 'breathing forth good or ill.'[41] Barth allows this Greek word to have a passive meaning but believes that it also has an active meaning: 'Scripture is given and filled and ruled by the Spirit of God and it is actively outbreathing and spreading abroad and making known the Spirit of God.'[42] However, one must realize that all words having a -πνευστος ending in compound form originally had the passive sense and that the active sense always is a derived one.[43] Such a compound may have both an original passive sense and a derived active sense, but not at the same time in a particular context as Barth is suggesting. Some evangelicals have either not understood the meaning of this compound word or they have been careless in their definitions. For example, Moore states that inspiration 'in the sense of Scripture literally means "God-breathed." The writers of the Holy Writ were thus "breathed upon and in" by the Spirit of God.'[44] What Moore has missed is that 2 Timothy 3:16 does not say the writers were inspired but

[39] Warfield, B. B. (2008). *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield: Revelation and Inspiration* (Vol. 1, pp. 229–280). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.
[40] Hermann Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, 4th ed., trans. William Urwick (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), p. 731. See Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, pp. 245-348, for a fuller discussion of γραφή and related material.
[41] Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon*, p. 731.
[42] Cited from Klaas Runia, *Karl Barth's Doctrine of Holy Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pubishing Co., 1962), p. 131.
[43] Warfield, The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, p. 280.
[44] H. L. Moore, *Eternal Questions* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 1968), p. 12.

that Scripture is inspired ("Godbreathed" or "spirated"). This word is defined by the lexicon as 'inspired by God.'[45] The word is a compound of θεός and πνέω. Cremer states that the word cannot be traced to πνέω but only to ἐμπνέω since, as he says, the simple verb is never used of divine activity.[46] However, this is disproved in the Septuagint where examples contrary to his view may be found (see, e.g., Ps 147:18 and Isa 4:24).[47] Words that are compounded with -πνευστος are called verbal adjectives and are formed from verb stems. In the broadest sense, they are participles, since they partake of both verbal and adjectival qualities and their basic idea is passive.[48] To understand how θεόπνευστος was formed, one must observe that verbal adjectives have the ending -τος added to the verb stem of the first or second aorist passive.[49] Then -τος is joined to πνευ-, which is the first aorist stem of πνέω.[50] Since πνέω has an epsilon as a short final vowel, a sigma is united to the aorist passive stem, forming πνευσ.[51] Then -τος is added to the first aorist passive stem and compounded with θεός. Very definitely this word is passive in its original sense. Other words with the same ending are primarily passive in meaning (though a few nonpassive meanings may be found in lexicons). Liddell and Scott give several examples of verbal adjectives with the passive sense.[52] There is then no morphological or lexicographical reason why the Greek word in 2 Timothy 3:16 should not be translated with the passive 'God-breathed,' especially in view of the context."[53]

In 2 Timothy 3:16, the adjective *theopneustos* is functioning as a predicate nominative meaning it is making an assertion about each and every portion of Scripture, namely that it is God-breathed. The context indicates that the adjective *theopneustos* is functioning in a predicate relation to the noun *graphē*. The adjective *theopneustos* is in the second anarthrous predicate position to the noun *graphē*. This all indicates that Paul is making a solemn assertion regarding the divine origin of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Some argue that the word is used in an attributive sense which means "All God-breathed Scripture is also profitable." However, the apostle Paul's intent in the passage is to reaffirm the Old Testament Scriptures originated with God. He is making an assertion about the divine origin of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Furthermore, we know the copula is omitted due to the figure of ellipsis. The most natural place for the copula to go would be between the subject and the first

[45] Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 357.
[46] Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon, p. 731.
[47] Cf. Warfield, The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, pp. 281-87.
[48] Robertson, *A Grammar*, pp. 157, 1095.
[49] William Watson Goodwin and Charles Burton Gulick, *Greek Grammar* (Waltham, MA: Blaisdell Publishing Co., 1958), p. 147.
[50] Ibid., p. 153.
[51] Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, p. 160.
[52] Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, comps., *A Greek-Engish Lexicon*, rev. Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 790-92. Also see Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, pp. 281-82.
[53] (1980). *Bibliotheca Sacra*, *137*(545), 57–58.

word that follows it. We need to remember when a writer uses this figure he assumes his readers understand where the copula should go. This would suggest that *theopneustos* has a predicate function.

Wallace writes "In the NT, LXX, in classical and Koine Greek, the overwhelming semantic force of an adj.-noun-adj. construction in an equative clause is that the first adj. will be attributive and the second will be predicate.[54]There are almost 50 instances in the NT and LXX in which the second adj. in such a construction is predicate and the first is attributive (39 of which involve πᾶς before the noun; most in the LXX) and none on the other side. The evidence is so overwhelming that we may suggest a 'rule': *In πᾶς + noun + adjective constructions in equative clauses the πᾶς, being by nature as definite as the article, implies the article, thus making the adjective(s) following the noun outside the implied article-noun group and, therefore, predicate.*[55] In the least, the evidence renders translations of this verse such as the NEB's ("every inspired scripture has its use") highly suspect."[56]

House writes "The most difficult problem in 2 Timothy 3:16 is whether this word is in the attributive position or the predicate position. Either one is grammatically permissible, so the decision ultimately must be made by determining how this word relates to its context. In the Greek construction πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ωηφέλιμος, the word 'is' may be understood immediately before θεόπνευστος thus making it a predicate adjective (with the clause translated "All Scripture is God-breathed and also profitable"), or immediately after θεόπνευστος thus making it an attributive adjective (with the clause translated, "All God-breathed Scripture is also profitable"). However, a copula or verb is not necessary for an adjective to be classified as a predicate adjective.[57] Cook says, 'If the translation were to be 'all God-breathed Scripture is also profitable,' the word order would normally be *pasa theopneustos graphe*.'[58] In other words Cook is saying that θεόπνευστος normally would be identified as an attributive adjective if it precedes its noun. However, anarthrous adjectives are not so easy to distinguish as to whether they are predicate or attributive adjectives; they may be either. An articular attributive adjective occurs before the noun and directly after the article, but this is not always true concerning the anarthrous adjective. Although an articular attributive normally precedes the noun, the "rule is that an anarthrous

[54] There is possibly one exception to this in the NT and none in the LXX. I have found perhaps one or two exceptions in Hellenistic Greek (one in Josephus, one in the Didache), though none so far in Attic Greek. The research has not been exhaustive, but the odds are against taking θεόπνευστος as attributive

[55] For a lengthier discussion of this text, cf. D. B. Wallace, "The Relation of Adjective to Noun in Anarthrous Constructions in the New Testament" (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979) 51-61. The article in *NovT* with the same title is virtually identical with the thesis except that it lacks two parts: (a) an appendix listing all definite and questionable predicate adjectives in anarthrous constructions (73–102), and (b) a detailed discussion of some of the exegetically significant texts (46–61).

[56] Wallace, D. B. (1999). *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (p. 314). Zondervan Publishing House and Galaxie Software.

[57] Robertson, *A Grammar*, p. 656.

[58] Cook, *Systematic Theology*, p. 36.

adjectival attributive usually follows its substantive."[59] Robertson gives several examples of constructions in which the anarthrous adjectives follow the nouns they modify.[60] In a study of the construction, πας + noun + adjective, Roberts has convincingly demonstrated that usually in this exact sequence the adjective has the attributive sense. In all twenty-one exact parallels to 2 Timothy 3:16 the adjective is attributive, except 1 Timothy 4:4 in which there are intervening words between the adjectives and the noun. [61]Roberts also lists several examples from the Septuagint translation of the Pentateuch (Gen 1:21, 30; Exod 12:6; 18:26; Deut 1:39; 17:1) which have the same order and in which the adjectives are predominantly attributive. In view of Roberts's study one might assume that the question of whether the Greek word under discussion is a predicate adjective or an attributive adjective is a closed case. This is not true, however, for in 2 Timothy the noun has a technical meaning, which puts it in a classification different from those examples given above. The previous discussion on γραφή showed that it has the same force as a noun with an article, allowing the predicate adjective to follow. Thus although a predicate adjective would normally precede the noun, this is not a necessary requirement. Winer wisely states that one should not insist on any invariable rule in the Greek sentence except that of spontaneity.[62] Many have condemned the American Revised Version and The New English Bible for translating θεοπνευστος as an attributive adjective. Several verses that have the same construction and yet are still translated predicatively (e.g., Rom 7:12; 1 Cor 11:30; 2 Cor 10:10) are sometimes cited in order to default the two above translations. An examination of these passages, though, reveals that they would be awkward in their contexts as attributives. In addition they do not have the same construction as that found in 2 Timothy 3:16. Thus defaulting the American Revised Version and The New English Bible by comparing them with texts having a similar construction must at least not be pressed. One of the main objections to the word being translated as a qualifying adjective is that the καὶ which follows it in the sentence would not be needed. Some have tried to solve this difficulty by not translating καὶ. This is done by The New English Bible: 'All God-breathed Scripture is profitable.' But it 'is just as arbitrary to leave out καὶ as it is to translate it here by also…. That an inspired composition was also useful, was intelligible of itself indeed.'[63] Alford, however, believes the adjunctive or ascensive use of this conjunction is perfectly permissible. Yet he does admit that the construction, as in 2 Timothy 3:16, is an awkward one. He cites Luke 1:36; Acts

[59] F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and ed. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 251.
[60] Robertson, *A Grammar*, p. 418.
[61] Matthew 7:17; 12:36; Acts 23:1; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Ephesians 1:3; 4:29; Colossians 1:10; 2
[62] Cited from Robertson, *A Grammar*, p. 417.
[63] Lange, Thessalonians-Hebrews, p. 109.

26:26; Romans 8:29; and Galatians 4:7 as New Testament examples of the ascensive use of the word.[64] These examples are acceptable evidence that καὶ might be used as an ascensive in 2 Timothy 3:16 without doing injustice to the construction. Alford believes that to accept it as a connecting word deprives the sentence of symmetry. In addition, he says that if it is a connective, the following words must be understood as the purposed result of the God-breathing as well as the ὠφέλεια of the Scriptures, which is hardly natural.[65] However, both views under discussion are acceptable. The main flaw among the two is not the ἵνα clause with καὶ as a connective of θεόπνευστος and ὠφέλιμος, but καὶ as an ascensive. The ἵνα is probably in this context introducing a result clause,[66] which can go smoothly with a phrase such as θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος; thus the sense is 'All Scripture is God-breathed and all Scripture is profitable.' From this discussion one may see that from a grammatical standpoint 'God-breathed' may be considered as either an attributive adjective or a predicate adjective. Both views have their weak and strong points and neither one is conclusive grammatically. How then is one to know which to choose? Robertson clarifies the difference between these two kinds of adjectives: 'The distinction between the attributive adjective and the predicate adjective lies in just this, that the predicate presents an additional statement, is indeed the main point, while the attributive is an incidental description of the substantive about which the statement is made.'[67] Is 'God-breathed' in 2 Timothy 3:16 to be considered as incidental and thus attributive? This writer thinks not! Θεόπνευστος is as much a main point as ὠφέλιμος. Paul had used πᾶσα γραφὴ in verse 16 in contrast to ἵερα γράμματα in verse 15 to show the additional value of apostolic Scripture. A 'reminder of its divine origin is perfectly appropriate in a passage intended to impress on his disciple its value both as authenticating the Christian message and as a pastoral instrumental.'[68] The term θεόπνευστος is not just an incidental description of γραφή; it is also a focal point of the passage. Paul first shows Scripture's origin and then he shows its practicality. Scripture's main attestation is that it is God-breathed, that is, it originates in God. So 'the emphasis is that Scripture partakes of the quality of the creative breath of God,'[69] and Scripture is profitable. This results in the (Christian) man being 'perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' If Scripture is not God-breathed, the believer has no equipment for the spiritual battles of life; and if all Scripture is not God-breathed, the Christian cannot be sure as to which portion of Scripture he may hold as infallible truth. The Authorized Version declares inspiration in 2 Timothy

[64] Lange, Thessalonians-Hebrews, p. 109.
[65] Ibid., p. 396.
[66] Robertson, *A Grammar*, pp. 991-94.
[67] Ibid., p. 656.
[68] J. N. D. Kelley, *Pastoral Epistles*, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 203.
[69] Cook, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 36-37.

3:16, whereas the American Revised Version implies it. One cannot be dogmatic in deciding the correct translation of πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος, but with all things taken into consideration (syntax, word formation, and context) the balance of the argument is that 2 Timothy 3:16 should be translated, 'All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable….'"[70]

Dan Wallace makes a significant contribution to understanding this passage, he writes "We need to ask whether the adjective in a πᾶς-noun-adjective construction in an equative clause is normally predicate or attributive. However, since πᾶς is used in such constructions in the NT only a few times, it is necessary to expand our approach in two directions, though still concentrating on equative clauses: (1) We will touch on the slightly broader phenomenon of adjective-noun-adjective to see if this will help to inform the more specific πᾶς -noun-adjective construction. But since there are only six such constructions in the NT, we also should get a representative sampling of usage in extra-NT Greek. (2) We will examine the πᾶς-noun-adjective constructions in equative clauses in the LXX. The LXX is targeted for its special contribution because (a) the LXX is both Koine Greek and biblical Greek,[71] and (b) the LXX can be examined exhaustively with reference to the πᾶς-noun-adjective constructions via Hatch and Redpath's Concordance.[72] The contribution of extra-NT literature: Besides an exhaustive study of the general phenomenon of anarthrous noun-adjective constructions in the NT, I have looked at representative portions from Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Demosthenes, Polybius, Josephus, select papyri, as well as the LXX. In the 5,290 lines of text I perused, only three yielded instances of the adjective-noun-adjective construction in equative clauses.[73] Two of these, coincidentally, were in Herodotus. In Book 1.8 we see τίνα... λόγον οὐκ ὑγιέα. This, however, is not an ideal parallel for there is an intervening word between the first (pronominal and attributive) adjective and the noun and a negative particle separating the second (predicate) adjective from the noun. In 1.6, however, we see a clearer example: πάντες Ἕλληνες ἦσαν ἐλεύθεροι. Here the pronominal adjective is attributive while the second adjective is predicate. This affords an excellent parallel with 2 Tim 3:16, for those who

[70] (1980). *Bibliotheca Sacra*, *137*(545), 58–61.

[71] By 'biblical Greek' I do not intend to convey agreement with Turner's conclusion "that Bibl. Greek is a unique language with a unity and character of its own" (J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 4 vols, vol 3: *Syntax*, by N. Turner, 4).

[72] For purposes of this study, and the one on which it is based (Wallace, "The Relation of Adjective to Noun," 132), the standard manual editions of Nestle-Aland[25] and Rahlfs (for LXX) were used, though the results were checked against more critical works. It should be noted that the database was compiled before Nestle-Aland[26-27], *Gramcord*/*Accordance*, or the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* were available. Thus, all the work had to be done manually.

[73] The portions examined were: Homer *Odyssey* 1.1-62, *Iliad* 18.1-165; Herodotus Book 1.1-22, Book 2.1-6 (Stein's edition); Thucydides Book 1.1-14.3, Book 2.1.1-2.5 (Hude's edition); Demosthenes Book 1.1-28 (First Olynthiac), Book 9.1-46 (Third Philippic); Polybius *The Histories* 1.1.1-11.8; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 15.1-99; *Elephantine Papyrus* 1,11.1-18; *Elephantine Papyrus* 2,11.1-18; *Cairo Zenon Papyrus* 59426.1-8; *Cairo Zenon Papyrus* 59251.2-22; *Elephantine Papyrus* 13.1-15; *Urkunde der Ptolemäerzeit* 59.1-33; *Urkunde der Ptolemäerzeit* 62.1-36; *Tebtunis Papyrus* 110.1-15; *Berlin Griechische Urkunde* 1103.2-30; and *Berlin Griechische Urkunde* 1121.1-46. In the LXX, I examined (apart from the specialized study on πᾶς-noun-adjectives which was culled, initially at least, from Hatch-Redpath) Gen 1:1-4:26; Exod 20:1-26; Lev 19:1-37; Deut 6:1-8:15; Psalms 1, 2, 17 (18), 21 (22), 31 (32), 38 (39), 50 (51), 70 (71) 118 (199), 149, 150; Isa 40:1-44:28; 49:1-53:12; Jonah 1:1-4:11; Zech 12:11-14:21.

affirm that θεόπνευστος is a predicate adjective are also convinced that the location of the implied equative verb or copula (at least, as far as the translation is concerned) is between γραφή and θεόπνευστος. Herodotus' example offers proof that such an understanding can be legitimate in Greek.[74] The other reference is Zech 14:21 in which πᾶς is attributive and ἅγιον (ἅγιος in some witnesses) is predicate (ἔσται πᾶς λέβης...ἅγιον). Although no other examples were found in equative clauses, I did find two more precise parallels to the total construction in 2 Tim 3:16 in the LXX. By 'precise' I mean adjective-noun-adjective-καί-adjective (which, in 2 Tim 3:16, is πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος). In Deut 7:1 the construction is ἑπτὰ ἔθνη πολλὰ καὶ ἰσχυρότερα with ἑπτά functioning as an attributive and πολλὰ καὶ ἰσχυρότερα functioning as predicates. In Gen 2:9 the adjective preceding the noun is πᾶς (πᾶν ξύλον ὡραῖον εἰς ὅρασιν καὶ καλὸν εἰς βρῶσιν)—again, the adjectives following are predicate.[75] Therefore, in the only three parallels to 2 Tim 3:16 in equative clauses I discovered in extra-NT literature, the second adjective was always predicate and the first adjective was attributive. And in the only two constructions in extra-NT literature which paralleled the complete construction of adjective-noun-adjective-καί-adjective in 2 Tim 3:16, even though both parallels were in non-equative clauses, the adjectives following the noun were predicate while the adjective preceding the noun was attributive. Although the examples are not numerous, it might be significant that they all point in one direction. The phenomenon in the New Testament: Adjective-noun-adjective constructions in equative clauses. I discovered only six instances in the NT, apart from those involving πᾶς, in which the construction in equative clauses was adjective-noun-adjective. In Matt 22:36 and Mark 12:28 (parallel passages) there may be ambiguity as to which adjective is predicate and which is attributive. However, in neither instance can both adjectives be construed as attributive. Various strands of grammatical, lexical, and historical evidence, in fact, suggest that in each case the preceding adjective is attributive and the following adjective is predicate.[76] In Jas 3:8 κακόν is a substantival adjective with ἀκατάστατον preceding it and serving in an attributive role. However, these two words form the main body of the clause, with μεστή serving in an appositional capacity (in a sense) to κακόν. Technically, κακόν is in the predicate with an implied subject, ἀκατάστατον is an attributive adjective modifying this substantival adjective, and μεστή, though functioning as a predicate adjective, is functioning thus in its own appositional phrase, not in the main clause. Rev 16:18 affords a similar example

[74] The placement of the verb and the sense of the construction, however, do not necessarily have a one-to-one correspondence. Note the example in Zech 14:21 as well as those listed in n. 34.

[75] These two texts are listed here for the sake of completeness, though their relevance to our target passage, because they involve non-equative clauses, may be minimal.

[76] For a discussion, see my thesis, "The Relation of Adjective to Noun in Anarthrous Constructions in the New Testament" (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979) 49-51.

(τηλικοῦτος σεισμὸς οὕτω μέγας). The gospel of Luke furnishes better examples. In 19:17 we see ἀγαθὲ δοῦλε... πιστός. The first adjective is attributive and the second adjective is predicate. However, the second adjective is in the following clause (though the noun is only implied in the verb). But in 4:24 we have οὐδεὶς προφήτης δεκτός ἐστιν. Here the first (pronominal) adjective is attributive and the second adjective is predicate. Thus in constructions not involving πᾶς no example had both adjectives functioning as attributives. However, there was ambiguity in two texts as to which adjective was attributive and which was predicate; two others had the second adjective outside of the main clause; and only one was a clear instance of attributive-noun-predicate. The πᾶς constructions hopefully will give us a clearer picture. Πᾶς-noun-adjective constructions in equative clauses. Besides 2 Tim 3:16, there are at least four more similar constructions in the NT. In Luke 2:23 the construction is πᾶν ἄρσεν...ἅγιον...κληθήσεται. Here the pronominal adjective is attributive and the following adjective is predicate. In Jas 1:19 the construction is ἔστω δὲ πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ταχύς... βραδύς...βραδύς. Here the pronominal adjective is attributive and all three adjectives following the noun are predicates. This, then, is a step closer to the 2 Tim 3:16 construction, for it too involves more than one adjective following the noun. In Jas 4:16 we see πᾶσα καύχησις τοιαύτη πονηρά ἐστιν. This is the first clear instance in either the NT or extra-NT literature which we have examined in which both the preceding and trailing adjectives are attributive. Yet in this isolated example, the linguistic situation veers off from what we see in 2 Tim 3:16 in one very important point, viz., the presence of τοιαύτη as the trailing adjective. τοιούτος, as other pronominal adjectives, may stand outside of the article-noun group but still have an attributive relation to the noun (cf. αἱ δυνάμεις τοιαῦται in Mark 6:2). In fact, with this in mind, we could well argue that Jas 4:16 fits neatly with the 'predicate θεόπνευστος' view, for the following adjective, πονηρά, is predicate. In 1 Tim 4:4 the structure is even closer to that of 2 Tim 3:16: πᾶν κτίσμα θεοῦ καλόν, καὶ οὐδέν... Here it is obvious that the first adjective is attributive and the second is predicate. There is the further parallel in that the second adjective is joined by καί to the word in the predicate, οὐδέν. It might be objected that οὐδέν here is used substantivally and therefore does not afford an exact parallel with 2 Tim 3:16. However, the parallel is not at all diminished for ὠφέλιμος in 2 Tim 3:16, as οὐδέν here, could grammatically stand in the predicate alone. This text, then, is the closest parallel to 2 Tim 3:16 in the NT. The fact that it, too, is in a pastoral epistle adds weight to the view that θεόπνευστος in 2 Tim 3:16 is a predicate adjective. As with the extra-NT evidence, and the adjective-noun-adjective constructions within the NT, the πᾶς-noun-adjective construction suggests the same semantics: the first adjective is attributive

and the second is predicate. We have found no clear exceptions to this principle.[77] But admittedly, the examples are few: altogether only fourteen adjective-noun-adjective constructions were found in the extra-NT and NT literature. Nevertheless, this monolithic trend can hardly be used in support of an attributive θεόπνευστος in 2 Tim 3:16. Πᾶς-noun-adjective constructions in equative clauses in the LXX: The singular semantic path down which our construction has gone has led me to propose, as a working hypothesis, the following 'rule': In πᾶς-noun-adjective constructions in equative clauses the πᾶς, being by nature as definite as the article, implies the article, thus making the adjective(s) following the noun outside the implied article-noun group and, therefore, predicate.[78] This hypothesis can be put through a rigorous test which is inductively complete and self-contained.[79] In perusing the more than 6,000 entries on πᾶς in Hatch-Redpath, I culled from them (what I believe to be) all the πᾶς-noun-adjective constructions in equative clauses. Altogether, I discovered thirty-six such constructions. Remarkably, in thirty-five instances the πᾶς was definitely attributive and the adjective(s) following the noun was/were definitely predicate. For example, πᾶσαι ψυχαὶ ἑπτά in Gen 46:25; πᾶσα θυσία ἱερέως ὁλόκραυτος ἔσται in Lev 6:23(16); πᾶς ἀνήρ ...δίκαιος in Prov 21:2; πᾶσα κεφαλὴ φαλακρά in Ezek 29:18.[80] On only one occasion was there ambiguity. In 2 Kings (4 Kingdoms) 19:35 (πᾶντες σώματα νεκρά) it was questionable as to which adjective was attributive and which was predicate.[81] But even here it was not possible to construe both adjectives as attributive. Thus this one possible exception to the 'rule' in no way supports an attributive θεόπνευστος in 2 Tim 3:16. On six occasions I discovered the construction πᾶς-noun-adjective-καί-adjective, which is an even stronger parallel to the construction in our target passage: ἦσαν δὲ πᾶσαι ψυχαί... πέντε καὶ ἑβδομήκοντα in Exod 1:5; πᾶν ἀρσενικόν...ὀκτακισχίλιοι καὶ ἑξακόσιοι in Num 3:28; πᾶν ἀρσενικόν... ἑξακισχίλιοι καὶ πεντήκοντα in Num 3:34; πᾶν ἀρσενικόν

[77] There is one twofold example which seems, *prima facie*, to violate this principle. In Jas 1:17 πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθὴ καὶ πᾶν δώρημα τέλειον are clearly fully attributive constructions. However, what is not so clear is whether the clause is equative or non-equative. In the words following (ἄνωθέν ἐστιν καταβαῖνον) it is possible to treat the verb and the participle in separate clauses *or* as a periphrastic construction. If they are periphrastic (in which case ἄνωθεν would qualify πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθὴ καὶ πᾶν δώρημα τέλειον rather than function predicatively to ἐστιν) then the whole clause would belong to the non-equative category. In light of the evidence amassed thus far, and in light of this distinct grammatical possibility, we cannot cite Jas 1:17 as a *clear* exception to the principle we have suggested.

[78] One objection to this principle at the outset might be concerned with its confinement to constructions involving πᾶς. Πᾶς, unlike most adjectives, does not need the article to make the noun any more definite. Thus it might also be added here that other pronominal adjectives which are equally definite would, in all probability, fit the 'rule' as well. We see this with the numeral εἷς in Eph 4:6, for example, in which the wording approximates a "Granville Sharp construction" (for which see my essay, "The Semantic Range of the Article-Noun-Καί-Noun Plural Construction in the New Testament," *GTJ* [1983] 61-63): εἷς θεὸς καὶ πατήρ. Here it is obvious that πατήρ refers to the same person as θεός (note also τοῦτο in Acts 5:31). But are there examples of pronominal adjectives in adjective-noun-adjective constructions? Significantly, of the six instances of adjective-noun-adjective constructions in equative clauses we examined, the clearest parallel to the *structural* phenomenon in 2 Tim 3:16 was in Luke 4:24 (οὐδεὶς προφήτης δεκτός ἐστιν). Here the pronominal adjective does indeed function attributively while the second adjective is predicate.

[79] By this I mean only that an entire body of literature (the LXX) can be examined exhaustively, rather than selectively, through the use of a concordance (Hatch-Redpath).

[80] Cf. also Gen 46:22, 26, 27; Exod 1:5; Lev 11:32, 34 (*bis*); 13:58; 15:4 (*bis*), 9, 17, 24, 26; 17:15; 27:11, 28; Num 3:28, 34, 39; Josh 21:26; Judg 20:17; 1 Sam 11:8; 1 Chron 2:4; 21:5; Prov 3:15; 8:1; Jer 9:26; Zech 14:21; Sirach 23:17; 3 Macc 3:29.

[81] Of course, if πάντες is not modifying the noun (which is quote probable, due to the lack of gender concord) then we would most naturally treat it substantivally as a pronoun.

δύο καὶ εἴκοσι χιλιάδες in Num 3:39; ἦν πᾶς Ισραηλ χίλιαι καὶ ἑκατὸν χιλιάδες in 1 Chron 21:5; πᾶς δὲ τόπος... ἄβατος καὶ πυριφλεγὴς γινέσθω in 3 Macc 3:29. On each of these occasions both adjectives following the noun were predicate. Hence, these verses add substantial weight as fairly precise parallels,[82] along with 1 Tim 4:4, to 2 Tim 3:16. The totality of this septuagintal evidence was so overwhelmingly in support of the 'rule' suggested in this paper that I felt compelled to pursue one more validation process. If it is true that the article is implied in the πᾶς in πᾶς-noun constructions in equative clauses, and that any adjective following the πᾶς-noun construction would be considered in the predicate, then it ought also be true that any adjective preceding the πᾶς-noun construction would be in the predicate. After all, if the πᾶς in such constructions implies the article, then it should not matter, ex hypothesi, which side of the article-noun group the adjective falls: either way, it should still be predicate. I tested this hypothesis by again examining the entries on πᾶς in Hatch-Redpath. I discovered ten adjective-πᾶς-noun constructions in equative clauses. In each instance the adjective preceding the πᾶς-noun group was clearly predicate.[83] To summarize the septuagintal evidence: thirty-five of thirty-six πᾶς-noun-adjective constructions in equative clauses definitely supported the 'rule.' One was questionable, though it in no way viewed both adjectives as attributive. All ten adjective-πᾶς-noun constructions supported the 'rule.' Altogether, in forty-six syntactical parallels to our passage, at least forty-five support a predicate

[82] It might be objected that these examples do not provide precise parallels because (1) in the first five instances, the καί joined two numerals in such a way that it would be impossible to treat these adjectives as bearing a different relation to the noun (e.g., if we were to consider πέντε in Exod 1:5 as attributive and ἑβδομήκοντα as predicate, we would get the nonsense reading of "all five people were also seventy"!); (2) in the last text cited (3 Macc 3:29), even though this passage does not involve the "numbers idiom," the verb is expressed (γινέσθω), rendering it more explicit than the construction in 2 Tim 3:16.

In response, one should note that: (1) The very fact that the trailing adjectives in five of the examples can only be taken as predicates is hardly an argument *against* a predicate θεόπνευστος in 2 Tim 3:16. These instances may, in fact, be merely an extension—to the point of a set idiom—of the semantics of the πᾶς-noun-adjective construction we have already seen in the LXX. Further, all grammatical study must proceed on the basis of an indisputable semantic nuance for the particular construction under consideration. That all of the indisputable examples of the construction which is the concern of this paper affirm *only* that the adjective(s) following πᾶς-noun in an equative clause is/are predicate just might indicate that such was part of the warp and woof of hellenistic Greek. (2) Although the verb is expressed in 3 Macc 3:29, its location gives no hint as to whether the trailing adjectives should be treated as attributives or predicates. Hence, it affords a decent parallel to our target passage, for if the author of 2 Timothy had added a verb *after* ὠφέλιμος in 3:16 (paralleling exactly the construction in 3 Macc 3:29), the debate over the relation of θεόπνευστος to γραφή would hardly thereby have been settled. Further even when the verb does stand between noun and adjective, this is not a sure indicator that the adjective belongs in the predicate (cf., e.g., φῶς εἶδεν μέγα in Matt 4:16; τυφλοί εἰσιν ὁδηγοί in Matt 15:14; μικρὰν ἔχεις δύναμιν in Rev 3:8). Again, we submit that neither the presence (or absence) of the verb, nor its location in the clause, is the primary factor which determines the relation of adjective to noun in any given instance. (3) Admittedly, most of our parallels from the LXX employ the copula while it is absent from 2 Tim 3:16. But to demand that the parallels be more precise than πᾶς-noun-adjective in an equative clause (especially since the presence and location of the verb are not decisive matters) just might define *any* parallels out of existence. I am reminded here of W. Grudem's recent insight in connection with the syntax of 1 Pet 3:19 ("Christ Preaching through Noah: 1 Peter 3:19-20 in the Light of Dominant Themes in Jewish Literature," *TrinJ* [1986] 22):

> ... it is exegetically illegitimate to demand parallel examples which are so narrowly specified that one would not expect to find many, if any, examples. (It would be similar to saying that ὧν, "of whom," in [1 Peter] 3:3 cannot refer to "wives" because there is no other example of a relative pronoun taking as its antecedent an articular feminine plural vocative...!)

Consequently, though the parallels we have uncovered do not qualify for the accolade "exact parallels," they are as precise as the extant literature we have examined has turned up. In the least, it would appear that the burden of proof rests on the shoulders of the one who wishes to see *attributive* adjectives in such constructions.

[83] Deut 27:26; Prov 3:32; 11:20; 16:5; 22:11; Judith 16:16 (*bis*); Wisdom of Solomon 13:1; Sirach 25:19; 4 Macc 9:29.

θεόπνευστος and the one possible exception does not support an attributive θεόπνευστος."[84]

Thoughts on Second Timothy 3:16

So we can see here in 2 Timothy 3:16 that Paul is emphasizing with Timothy and the church which would read this epistle that the Old Testament Scriptures were God-breathed and thus are useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness. In other words, though God used men to communicate with the human race through the Bible, the Bible itself originates with God and is not merely human book but also a divine book. Therefore, it is a unique book because it is both human and divine just like Jesus Christ who is both God and man.

J. I. Packer writes "According to 2 Tim. 3:16, what is inspired is precisely the biblical writings. Inspiration is a work of God terminating, not in the men who were to write Scripture (as if, having given them an idea of what to say, God left them to themselves to find a way of saying it), but in the actual written product. It is Scripture—*graphē*, the written text—that is God-breathed. The essential idea here is that all Scripture has the same character as the prophets' sermons had, both when preached and when written (cf. 2 Pet. 1:19–21, on the divine origin of every 'prophecy of the scripture'; see also Je. 36; Is. 8:16–20). That is to say, Scripture is not only man's word, the fruit of human thought, premeditation and art, but also, and equally, God's word, spoken through man's lips or written with man's pen. In other words, Scripture has a double authorship, and man is only the secondary author; the primary author, through whose initiative, prompting and enlightenment, and under whose superintendence, each human writer did his work, is God the Holy Spirit. Revelation to the prophets was essentially verbal; often it had a visionary aspect, but even 'revelation in visions is also verbal revelation' L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology, E.T. 1957, p. 103). Brunner has observed that in 'the words of God which the Prophets proclaim as those which they have received directly from God, and have been commissioned to repeat, as they have received them … perhaps we may find the closest analogy to the meaning of the theory of verbal inspiration' (Revelation and Reason, 1946, p. 122, n. 9). Indeed we do; we find not merely an analogy to it, but the paradigm of it; and 'theory' is the wrong word to use, for this is just the biblical doctrine itself. Biblical inspiration should be defined in the same theological terms as prophetic inspiration: namely, as the whole process (manifold, no doubt, in its psychological forms, as prophetic inspiration was) whereby God moved those men whom he had

[84] Daniel B. Wallace, The Relation of θεόπνευστος to γραφή in 2 Timothy 3:16; pages 4-9.

chosen and prepared (cf. Je. 1:5; Gal. 1:15) to write exactly what he wanted written for the communication of saving knowledge to his people, and through them to the world. Biblical inspiration is thus verbal by its very nature; for it is of God-given words that the God-breathed Scriptures consist. Thus, inspired Scripture is written revelation, just as the prophets' sermons were spoken revelation. The biblical record of God's self-disclosure in redemptive history is not merely human testimony to revelation, but is itself revelation. The inspiring of Scripture was an integral part in the revelatory process, for in Scripture God gave the church his saving work in history, and his own authoritative interpretation of its place in his eternal plan. 'Thus saith the Lord' could be prefixed to each book of Scripture with no less propriety than it is (359 times, according to Koehler, op.cit., p. 245) to individual prophetic utterances which Scripture contains. Inspiration, therefore, guarantees the truth of all that the Bible asserts, just as the inspiration of the prophets guaranteed the truth of their representation of the mind of God. ('Truth' here denotes correspondence between the words of man and the thoughts of God, whether in the realm of fact or of meaning.) As truth from God, man's Creator and rightful King, biblical instruction, like prophetic oracles, carries divine authority."[85]

Wiersbe writes "The doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture is vitally important, and a doctrine that Satan has attacked from the beginning ("Yea, hath God said?" [Gen. 3:1]). It is inconceivable that God would give His people a book they could not trust. He is the God of truth (Deut. 32:4); Jesus is 'the truth' (John 14:6); and the 'Spirit is truth' (1 John 5:6). Jesus said of the Scriptures, 'Thy Word is truth' (John 17:17). The Holy Spirit of God used men of God to write the Word of God (2 Peter 1:20–21). The Spirit did not erase the natural characteristics of the writers. In fact, God in His providence prepared the writers for the task of writing the Scriptures. Each writer has his own distinctive style and vocabulary. Each book of the Bible grew out of a special set of circumstances. In His preparation of men, in His guiding of history, and in His working through the Spirit, God brought about the miracle of the Scriptures. We must not think of 'inspiration' the way the world thinks when it says, 'Shakespeare was certainly an inspired writer.' What we mean by biblical *inspiration* is the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on the Bible's writers, which guaranteed that what they wrote was accurate and trustworthy. *Revelation* means the communicating of truth to man by God; *inspiration* has to do with the *recording* of this communication in a way that is dependable. Whatever the Bible says about itself, man, God, life, death, history, science, and every other subject is true. This does not mean that every statement in

op.cit. opere citato (Lat.), in the work cited above

[85] Packer, J. I. (1996). Inspiration. In (D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, & D. J. Wiseman, Eds.)*New Bible dictionary*. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

the Bible is true, because the Bible records the lies of men and of Satan. *But the record is true*."[86]

Peter Williams has the following comment, he writes "'All Scripture is God-breathed.' That means the Bible owes its origin and its contents to the guidance and leading of the Holy Spirit. Peter puts it like this: 'No prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit' (2 Peter 1:20). Nobody but the most prejudiced person would deny that the Bible is a unique book if only because, after existing for centuries, it continues to be taught, bought, distributed and loved more than any other book that has ever been written. But its true uniqueness lies in its unity, which is the hallmark of its divine inspiration. For the Bible is not just one book but a whole library of thirty-nine books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament. These were written over a period of some fifteen centuries by more than forty authors all of whom were different, including kings (David, Solomon), philosophers (Ecclesiastes), poets (Psalms), farmers (Amos), statesmen (Daniel), priests (Ezekiel, Ezra), prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah), fishermen (Peter, John) and scholars like Paul. With such a variety of authorship over such a long period, one might expect the result to be a book that was no more than a mixed bag of ideas and inconsistencies. Instead, the Bible has a wonderful unity from Genesis to Revelation as it unfolds the single theme of God's plan of redemption. Human inspiration, on the other hand, is something quite different. If we were to take some of the great writings of the world such as Plato, Aristotle, Josephus, Dante, Shakespeare etc., and join them in a single volume, all we would have would be a series of disconnected ideas and contradictions. There would be no unity or theme to hold the different books together as a single whole. The inspiration of the Bible is also seen in its unique survival. All through history it has been a hated book for certain people because of its claim to be the word of the living God. But in spite of all attempts at times by emperors, dictators and totalitarian governments to destroy it by burning, confiscation and the imprisonment and persecution of those who read it and preach it, all such attempts have miserably failed—this remarkable book is still with us and is as widely dispersed as ever. During the Stalin era in Russia, the Marxist government derided the Bible as a book full of legends, myths, and old wives' tales. It even established an anti-Bible museum in Moscow to try and convince the people. Yet for all their derision, the authorities were so desperately afraid that people would read it and believe it, that they put them in prison and in labour camps for doing so. Why? Because they knew that this unique book had the power to change people's lives."[87]

[86] Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, pp. 252–253). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
[87] Williams, P. (2007). *Opening up 2 Timothy* (pp. 82–84). Leominster: Day One Publications.

Duane Litfin writes "Paul had just noted that the Scriptures are able to make one wise with regard to salvation, a lesson Timothy had learned long before. But now Paul wanted to reemphasize to Timothy the crucial role of God's inscripturated revelation in his present ministry. Thus Paul reminded Timothy that **all Scripture is God-breathed** (*theopneustos*, "inspired"), that is, God's words were given through men superintended by the Holy Spirit so that their writings are without error. This fact was virtually taken for granted by the Jews."[88]

Through the superintending influence of God's Spirit upon the writers of Holy Scripture, the account and interpretation of God's revelation has been recorded as God intended so that the Bible is actually the Word of God. In writing, these men of God used their own ordinary languages and literary forms that were typical of their day. Yet within this very human activity God was at work. God chose to convey His Word through their words. This divine-human activity is truly the concursive inspiration of Holy Scripture. When God's Word came to us through human authors, the humanity of the instrument God chose to use can be seen in the product. It is possible to actually see different personalities as we look at various books of the Bible. The style, vocabulary, and particular purposes of the apostle John are distinct from those of Luke. Yet both final products of their writings are equally the inspired Word of God. In the history of the church, the divine character of Scripture has been the great presupposition for the whole of Christian preaching and theology. This is readily apparent in the way the New Testament speaks about the Old Testament. That which appears in the Old Testament is cited in the New Testament with formulas like "God says" and "the Holy Spirit says" (Acts 4:24–25; 13:47; 2 Cor 6:16). Scripture and God are so closely joined together in the minds of the New Testament authors that they naturally could spoke of Scripture doing what it records God as doing (Gal 3:8; Rom 9:17). The introductory phrase "It is [stands] written" is also used of the New Testament writings. Because of the apostolic word's divine origin and content, Scripture can be described as "certain" (2 Pet 1:19), "trustworthy" (1 Tim 1:15; Titus 3:8), "confirmed" (Heb 2:3), and eternal (1 Pet 1:24–25). As a result those who build their lives on Scripture "will never be put to shame" (1 Pet 2:6). The Word was written for instruction and encouragement (Rom 15:4), to lead to saving faith (2 Tim 3:15), to guide people toward godliness (2 Tim 3:16b), and to equip believers for good works (2 Tim 3:17). The Bible affirms its own inspiration in 2 Timothy 3:16–17: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." Second Timothy 3:16–17 focuses primarily on the *product* of inspiration, the final writing of Scripture, though it also includes the secondary aspects of

[88] Litfin, A. D. (1985). 2 Timothy. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 757). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

purpose and process. What is being asserted is the activity of God throughout the entire process, so that the completed, final product ultimately comes from Him. It is a mistake to think of inspiration only in terms of the time when the Spirit moves the human author to write. The biblical concept of inspiration allows for the activity of the Spirit in special ways within the process without requiring that we understand all of the Spirit's working in one and the same way. In the processes of creation and preservation of the universe, God providentially intervened in special ways for special purposes. Alongside and within this superintending action of the Spirit to inspire human writings in the biblical books, we can affirm a special work of the Spirit in bringing God's revelation to the apostles and prophets. God's Spirit is involved both in revealing specific messages to the prophets (Jer 1:1–9) and in guiding the authors of the historical section in their research (Luke 1:1–4). We can assert that inspiration extends to the choice of words, even though Scripture's meaning is located at the sentence level and beyond. Thus our understanding of inspiration affirms the dual nature of Holy Scripture—it is a divine-human book. This recognition enables us to have a healthy understanding of the diverse literary genres represented in Scripture. The Holy Spirit is the one who, in a mystery for which the incarnation provides the only analogy, causes the verbal human witness to coincide with God's witness to Himself. It is necessary to view inspiration as extending to all portions of Holy Scripture, even beyond the direction of thoughts to the selection of words. We must recognize the element of mystery involved in the process, which does not fully explain the how of inspiration. This understanding of inspiration seeks to do justice to the human factors in the Bible's composition and avoids any attempt to suggest that the Bible was mechanically dictated. We affirm both the divine character of Scripture and the human circumstances of the Bible's composition.[89]

2 Peter 1:20-21

2 Peter 1:20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (NASB95)

"**Interpretation**" is the genitive feminine singular noun *epilysis* (ἐπίλυσις), which is a hapax legomenon. The basic idea behind the word is that of an "unfolding" which can indicate either an "explanation" or a "creation." It is sometimes used in extra-biblical Greek for an "interpretation." Other times it has the idea of "solution" or even "spell."

[89] Dockery, D. S., Butler, T. C., Church, C. L., Scott, L. L., Ellis Smith, M. A., White, J. E., & Holman Bible Publishers (Nashville, T. . (1992). *Holman Bible Handbook* (p. 816). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

Here the context would indicate the word means "imagination" referring to an Old Testament prophet communicating a prophecy which is found in the Old Testament that is the product of his own imagination. Peter's statement in verse 21 would indicate this since in this verse he is emphasizing the divine origin of Old Testament prophecy.

Verse 20 is variously interpreted. There are three key terms here that help decide both the interpretation and the translation. As well, the relation to v. 21 informs the meaning of this verse. (1) The term "comes about" (γίνεται [*ginetai*]) is often translated "is a matter" as in "is a matter of one's own interpretation." But the progressive force for this verb is far more common. (2) The adjective ἰδίας (*idias*) has been understood to mean (a) one's own (i.e., the reader's own), (b) its own (i.e., the particular prophecy's own), or (c) the prophet's own. Catholic scholarship has tended to see the reference to the reader (in the sense that no individual reader can understand scripture, but needs the interpretations handed down by the Church), while older Protestant scholarship has tended to see the reference to the individual passage being prophesied (and hence the Reformation doctrine of *analogia fidei* [analogy of faith], or scripture interpreting scripture). But neither of these views satisfactorily addresses the relationship of v. 20 to v. 21, nor do they do full justice to the meaning of γίνεται. (3) The meaning of ἐπίλυσις (*epilusis*) is difficult to determine, since it is a biblical *hapax legomenon*. Though it is sometimes used in the sense of interpretation in extra-biblical Greek, this is by no means a necessary sense. The basic idea of the word is *unfolding*, which can either indicate an explanation or a creation. It sometimes has the force of *solution* or even *spell*, both of which meanings could easily accommodate a prophetic utterance of some sort. Further, even the meaning *explanation* or *interpretation* easily fits a prophetic utterance, for prophets often, if not usually, explained visions and dreams. There is no instance of this word referring to the interpretation of *scripture*, however, suggesting that if *interpretation* is the meaning, it is the prophet's interpretation of his own vision. (4) The γάρ (*gar*) at the beginning of v. 21 gives the basis for the truth of the proposition in v. 20. The connection that makes the most satisfactory sense is that prophets did not invent their own prophecies (v. 20), for their impulse for prophesying came from God (v. 21).[90]

"**Moved**" is the nominative masculine plural present passive participle form of the verb *pherō* (φέρω), which means "to be moved, to be influenced, to be driven" since it pertains to causing one to follow a certain course in direction or conduct.

Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the word influence: (1) Capacity or power of persons or things to produce effects on others by

hapax legomenon A Greek phrase meaning "a thing said once," referring to words used only one time in the Greek NT

[90] Biblical Studies Press. (2006). *The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible*. Biblical Studies Press.

intangible or indirect means. (2) Action or process of producing effects on others by intangible or indirect means. (3) A person or thing that exerts influence.

If we were to paraphrase Webster's definition of the word, Peter is telling his readers that the Old Testament prophets were influenced by the omnipotence (intangible means) of the Holy Spirit's (Person) which enabled them to communicate in writing with perfect accuracy (effects), God the Father's sovereign will.

The present tense of the verb *pherō* can be interpreted as a gnomic present which is used to make a statement of a general, timeless fact. Thus it would indicate that Peter is saying that the prophets of Israel "as an eternal spiritual truth" were influenced or moved by the Holy Spirit from God.

The present tense could also be interpreted as a customary or stative present indicating that the prophets of Israel existed in the state of being influenced or moved by the Holy Spirit from God.

The passive voice of the verb *pherō* means that the subject receives the action of the verb from either an expressed or unexpressed agency. Here the subject is of course the prophets of Israel. The agency is expressed and is the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the passive voice indicates that the Old Testament prophets as the subject, received the action of being influenced by the Holy Spirit when they communicated their prophecies in writing.

The participle form of the verb could be interpreted as a temporal participle since in relation to its controlling verb *laleō*, "**spoke**" it answers the question "when?" This would indicate that the prophets spoke "while" being influenced or moved by the Holy Spirit from God. The participle form of this verb could also be interpreted as a causal participle meaning it indicates the cause or reason or ground of the action of the finite verb which is *laleō*, "**spoke**." This would indicate that the Old Testament prophets of Israel spoke from God because of being influenced by the Holy Spirit. The latter would appear to be the better interpretation because it is more explicit than the former in that it presents to the reader the explicit reason why the Old Testament prophets spoke from God. They spoke from God because of being influenced by the Holy Spirit.

Thoughts on 2 Peter 1:20-21

The apostle Peter's statement in verse 20 means that the prophecies that were written by the prophets of Israel that appear in the Old Testament did not originate with them.

Wiersbe writes "In 2 Peter 1:20, Peter was not prohibiting the private study of the Bible. Some religious groups have taught that only the 'spiritual leaders' may interpret Scripture, and they have used this verse as their defense. But Peter was

not writing primarily about the interpretation of Scripture, but the origin of Scripture: it came by the Holy Spirit through holy men of God. And since it came by the Spirit, it must be taught by the Spirit. The word translated 'private' simply means 'one's own' or 'its own.' The suggestion is, since all Scripture is inspired by the Spirit it must all 'hang together' and no one Scripture should be divorced from the others. You can use the Bible to prove almost anything if you isolate verses from their proper context, which is exactly the approach the false teachers use. Peter stated that the witness of the Apostles confirmed the witness of the prophetic Word; there is one message with no contradiction. Therefore, the only way these false teachers can 'prove' their heretical doctrines is by misusing the Word of God. Isolated texts, apart from contexts, become pretexts. The Word of God was written to common people, not to theological professors. The writers assumed that common people could read it, understand it, and apply it, led by the same Holy Spirit who inspired it. The humble individual believer can learn about God as he reads and meditates on the Word of God; he does not need the 'experts' to show him truth. However, this does not deny the ministry of teachers in the church (Eph. 4:11), special people who have a gift for explaining and applying the Scriptures. Nor does it deny the 'collective wisdom' of the church as, over the ages, these doctrines have been defined and refined. Teachers and creeds have their place, but they must not usurp the authority of the Word over the conscience of the individual believer.[91]

Anderson writes "In the ancient world many documents were produced. Some of the writers claimed that the gods were inspiring them to record significant things. Peter is telling his readers that the trustworthiness of Scripture is proved by the fulfillment in time and history of the Old Testament prophets' writings. If they had just made things up out of their own imaginations, subsequent events would have found them out, and their writings would have been forgotten long ago."[92]

In 2 Peter 1:20-21, the apostle Peter is emphatically denying that Old Testament prophecy originates from human initiative. He also equally emphatically asserts that Old Testament prophetic literature originates with God. Peter is teaching his readers that the Old Testament prophets were influenced by the omnipotence of the person of the Holy Spirit, which enabled them to communicate in writing with perfect accuracy, God the Father's sovereign will. The Old Testament prophets received the action of being influenced by the Holy Spirit when they communicated their prophecies in writing. The Old Testament prophets of Israel spoke from God because of being influenced by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we can see that like Paul's statement in 2 Timothy 3:16, here in 2 Peter 1:20-21, Peter is

[91] Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, pp. 445–446). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
[92] Anderson, C. (2007). *Opening up 2 Peter* (p. 51). Leominster: Day One Publications.

asserting the divine origin of the Old Testament canon. Not only this, but both men are teaching that God spoke to mankind through the instrumentality of men.

The Old Testament and Inspiration

The Old Testament prophets distinguish themselves in their writings and public speeches that they were God's spokesmen. They were of the conviction that they were speaking about God and His works as well as His sovereign will. They declared that the commands and prohibitions which they issued to Israel originated from God Himself. The fulfillment of prophecy demonstrated this fact.

The Old Testament contains many references to individual instances of inspiration, and some of these seem to imply direct dictation. The book of Exodus and Deuteronomy record Moses receiving the tablets of stone inscribed "by the finger of God" (Exodus 31:18; 24:4; compare Deuteronomy 31:9; 31:22). The prophets of Israel who followed Moses as covenant enforcers state that they spoke the word of God: "the word of Yahweh came to Samuel" (1 Samuel 15:10); "the word of Yahweh came to the prophet Gad" (2 Samuel 24:11); "the word of Yahweh came to Solomon" (1 Kings 6:11); "the word of Yahweh came to Elijah" (1 Kings 18:1; 21:17, 28), "the word of Yahweh came to Isaiah" (Isa 38:4).

There are many passages which refer to prophets writing down the words they received from God (compare 1 Samuel 10:25; Jeremiah 36; Isaiah 8:1; and Ecclesiastes 12:12). Therefore, these passages imply that the original authors saw at least some instances of inspiration as being by direct dictation regardless of whether they viewed canonical works as a whole as having been dictated.

Jesus' View of Scripture

Throughout His ministry, Jesus of Nazareth appealed to the Old Testament Scriptures while teaching and considered them authoritative because they were the Word of God. This is never more evident than in John 10:34-35.

John 10:34-35 Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? 35 If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)." (NASB95)

In this passage, the Lord when defending Himself from attacks from His enemies quotes the Old Testament. Specifically He quotes Psalm 82:6 and then says that this "Scripture can never be broken." This statement makes clear that He considered the Old Testament canon as being the supreme authority in judging matters.

Jesus again declares the Old Testament as from God in the Sermon on the Mount discourse.

Matthew 5:17 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (NASB95)

Notice again Jesus appeals to the authority of the Scripture and says that it is eternal and indestructible implying it is from God since God is eternal and indestructible. He also appealed to Scripture when dealing with the temptations of Satan (Luke 4).

Throughout the Gospels, one can see Jesus asking the question "Have you never read in the Scriptures?" Our Lord's confidence in the Old Testament canon also appears in Matthew 19:4 when addressing the issue of divorce. He appeals to the account of Adam and Eve in Genesis to reaffirm God's original design for marriage.

We can see that throughout the Gospels, Jesus testified that whatever is written in the Old Testament is the Word of God. He not only was of this conviction before His resurrection but also after it (Luke 24:25-46).

The Inspiration of the Old Testament within the New Testament

The New Testament frequently refers to the Old Testament as "scripture" (Matthew 21:42.) which clearly implies a well-known body of literature considered authoritative both by the Christian and Jewish communities. Jesus Christ Himself referred to this authoritative literature in the same manner as did His contemporaries (Matthew 19:4).

The apostle Paul does the same (Romans 1:17 et. al.). They both introduce quotations from the Old Testament with the phrase "it is written." First Corinthians 15:3–7 is an early Christian creed which demonstrates how the orthodox Jewish view of Scripture was brought over into even pre-Pauline Christianity since it twice describes the death and resurrection of Christ with the words "according to Scripture" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

The Inspiration of the New Testament.

In his epistles, the apostle Paul declares often the authoritative nature of his own writings (see 1 Corinthians 12:28; 7:25; 14:37; 1 Thessalonians 4:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14; Galatians 1:8–11; Ephesians 2:20; 3:5). The second epistle of the apostle Peter which was considered by many one of the latest New

Testament letters, combines the commands of the apostles of Jesus Christ together with the words of the Old Testament prophets in the sense that both are authoritative (2 Peter 3:2). In this epistle, Peter states that his fellow apostle Paul wrote according to the "wisdom that was given him (2 Peter 3:15). The book of Revelation written by the apostle John also makes direct claims to its own authority in that it promises blessings to those who obey its precepts (Revelation 1:3), and warning those who might add to or take away from it (Revelation 22:10).

The Early Church and the Middle Ages

In the second, third and fourth centuries of the church's history, she accepted without question that both the Old and New Testament had come from God through human agents. Irenaeus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Gregory of Nyssa, as well as Augustine express this in their writings. However, there are differences among them regarding inspiration. Some church fathers leaned toward a dictation view while on the other hand others to a looser interpretation. Athenagoras believed that the human authors were like a flute which the Holy Spirit as the flutist played. Augustine and Origin, who assigned more agency to the human authors, are examples of the latter. Despite this, Christians of the first millennium believed the Scriptures were inerrant and originated from God. This view of Scripture remained unchallenged throughout the Middle Ages with a few exceptions such as Peter Abelard who began to question Scripture's inerrancy.

The Reformation and Inspiration

When we come to the Reformation, we see that men like Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli understood the Scriptures as possessing divine authority, and should thus be considered by all Christians as the ultimate authority for the church which they called *sola scriptura*. Martin Luther regarded the human authors as the "tongue" of the Spirit, and Calvin liked to quote Isaiah 59:21, with its reference to "My Spirit which rests on you and my words which I have put into your mouth." Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli all affirmed the inspiration of Scripture as God's word. Luther did question the inclusion of James in the canon because he believed it contradicted Paul however this of course was not a question of inspiration, but of a letter's canonicity.

The Enlightenment and Inspiration

We must remember that before the Enlightenment, reason had been viewed as a custodian and servant of divine revelation meaning a person submitted their reason

to the authority of Scripture and of the church. However, the Enlightenment reversed all this in that it made revelation the servant of reason in the sense that one examines truth with one's own intellect, and decides for oneself what is true or false. Therefore, the Enlightenment presented a direct challenge to scriptural authority, and thus inspiration.

Liberal Views of Inspiration

In 1799, in his work "On Religion," Friedrich Schleiermacher rejected outright the cognitive approach of the Enlightenment by making the claim that theology was the study of the experience of God, and that the Bible was the record of religious experience of a particular group of people. This view challenged traditional views of inspiration as well as in the case with modernity.

Schleiermacher considered a religious experience as "a feeling of absolute dependence" and not the communication of substantive fact. Other liberal theologians viewed Scripture as having "varying degrees of 'inspiration." They understood inspiration in terms of a heightened literary genius found in the writers of Scripture as we noted earlier in this article (Donald McKim, What Christians Believe About the Bible, 45). Albert Ritschl and Adolf Van Harnack, continued to modernize approaches to the Bible.

Higher criticism would follow this by questioning the Bible's authenticity, dating, and origins. The most famous being Julius Wellhausen whose documentary hypothesis called into question the dating and authorship of the Pentateuch. In 1835, David F. Strauss began the movement that is still around in the twenty-first century, namely the "quest for the historical Jesus," which sought to get behind the suspected superstitious elements of the Gospel accounts and discover the "true" Jesus of Nazareth (Nichols and Brandt, Ancient Word, Changing Worlds).

Conservative Views of Inspiration

Despite the challenge of modernity and higher criticism, the nineteenth and twentieth century had several conservative scholars uphold the inspiration of the Bible. James Orr, Charles Hodge and his son A. A. Hodge, as well as B. B. Warfield were more than up for the challenge waged by those who rejected the inspiration of Scripture. Orr leaned toward soteriological infallibility, while Warfield held to a verbal, plenary, view of inspiration.

Hodge and Warfield described inspiration as the "superintendence by God of the writers in the entire process of their writing" which resulted in the "absolute infallibility of the record in which the revelation, once generated, appears in the original autographs" (Hodge and Warfield, Inspiration, 6). The verbal plenary view

of inspiration held by Warfield and Hodge became a foundational tenet of American fundamentalism and the evangelical movement which would follow it.

This view regards the apostles and the early church to have believed likewise regarding inspiration while on the other hand others have suggested that the Bible has only ever been considered infallible and inerrant in matters of faith and practice or in other words, not in matters of history, geography, or science. Thus, they believe that the original authors were inspired, but only intended those matters within the text that pertain to Christian instruction to be inerrant. We mentioned this view earlier in this article (see Rogers and McKim, The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible, 1980).

Geisler writes "In the ferment of ideas set loose in the controversies following the publication of Darwin's The Origin of Species on November 24, 1859,[93] and the establishment of the higher critical theories following the lead of Karl H. Graf (1815–1869), Abraham Kuenen (1828–1891), and Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918),[94] orthodox Christians found champions for their cause in A. A. Hodge and B.B. Warfield. Their article entitled 'Inspiration' became something of a normative statement for most conservative Christians since the time it was first published in 1881.[95] In contrast to those who were beginning to espouse the notion that the Bible contains the Word of God, they affirmed that the Bible is the Word of God, saying, 'The New Testament continually asserts of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and of the several books which constitute it, that they ARE THE WORD OF GOD. What their writers said God said.'[96] For them, it is not merely the thoughts but the very words of Scripture that are infallible, for every element of Scripture, whether doctrine or history, of which God has guaranteed the infallibility, must be infallible in its verbal expression. No matter how in other respects generated, the Scriptures are a product of human thought, and every process of human thought involves language.…Besides this, the Scriptures are a record of divine revelations, and as such consist of words.… Infallible thought must be definite thought, and definite thought implies words.… Whatever discrepancies or other human limitations may attach to the sacred record, the line (of inspired or not inspired, of fallible or infallible) can never rationally be drawn

[93] Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. The first edition of 1,250 copies was published November 24, 1859, and was sold out on that very day. It stirred up such controversy that it was reprinted within seven weeks. For an excellent treatment of this period see H. D. McDonald, *Theories of Revelation: An Historical Study, 1700–1960*, 2:198–99.

[94] Julius Wellhausen published his *Die Geschichte Israels* in 1878, and it was translated into English in 1883. Its second edition was released as the two-volume *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* in 1883. Continuing to build on the work of others, he published *Die Komposition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bucher des Alten Testaments* in 1885. According to J. D. Douglas (*The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 1033), although Wellhausen spent the remainder of his life working in a similar vein on New Testament studies, his *History of Israel* gave him a place in biblical studies comparable, it was said, to that of Darwin in biology.

[95] Archibald A. Hodge and Benjamin B. Warfield, *Inspiration*. Roger R. Nicole has supplied or written an introduction and several appendixes for this reprint of *Inspiration*, which had been published earlier as an article in *Presbyterian Review* 2 (April 1881): 225–60. It was published again in Robert Howie, ed., *The Westminster Doctrine Anent Holy Scripture: Tractates by A. A. Hodge and Warfield, with Notes on Recent Discussions.* Selections from the reprint edition of this work are cited by Geisler, *Decide for Yourself*, pp. 49–55.

[96] Hodge and Warfield, *Inspiration*, p. 29 (emphasis theirs).

between the thoughts and the words of Scripture.[97] Hodge and Warfield argue that Holy Scripture is 'the result of the cooperation, in various ways, of the human agency, both in the histories out of which the Scriptures sprang, and their immediate composition and inscription, is everywhere apparent, and gives substance and form to the entire collection of writings.'[98] They go on to assert that they do not wish to 'deny an everywhere-present human element in the Scriptures. No mark of the effect of this human element, therefore in style of thought or wording can be urged against inspiration unless it can be shown to result in untruth.'[99] The obvious humanness of Scripture eliminates any notion of a 'mechanical' or 'verbal dictation' view of inspiration, because 'each sacred writer was by God specially formed, endowed, educated, providentially conditioned, and then supplied with knowledge naturally, supernaturally or spiritually conveyed, so that he, and he alone, could, and freely would, produce his allotted part.'[100] Thus, according to Hodge and Warfield, what biblical writers produced by the inspiration of Scripture is a verbal, plenary, infallible, and inerrant book, the Bible. They indicate as much in their definition of plenary, as they write, 'the word means simply "full," "complete," perfectly adequate for the attainment of the end designed, whatever that might have been.'[101] And the expression verbal inspiration 'does not hold that what the sacred writers do not affirm is infallibly true, but only that what they do affirm is infallibly true.'[102] That is accomplished because 'throughout the whole of his work the Holy Spirit was present, causing his energies to flow into the spontaneous exercises of the writer's faculties, elevating and directing where need be, and everywhere securing the errorless expression in language of the thought designed by God. This last element is what we call "Inspiration."'[103] Not every copy of Scripture is inerrant, according to Hodge and Warfield; they say, for example, 'We do not assert that the common text, but only that the original autographic text, was inspired.'[104] 'In view of all the facts known to us,' they write, 'we affirm that a candid inspection of all the ascertained phenomena of the original text of Scripture will leave unmodified the ancient faith of the Church. In all their real affirmations these books are without error.'[105] In response to the rise of negative higher criticism, ushered in by Graf, Kuenen, Wellhausen, and others, Hodge and Warfield write that the present writers … admit freely that the traditional belief as to the dates and origin of the several

[97] Ibid., pp. 21–23. Parenthesis and emphasis theirs.
[98] Ibid., p. 12.
[99] Ibid., p. 42.
[100] Ibid., pp. 14–15.
[101] Ibid., p. 18.
[102] Ibid., Appendix 2, The Truth of Inspiration," p. 80.
[103] Ibid., p. 16.
[104] Ibid., p. 42.
[105] Ibid., p. 27.

books may be brought into question without involving any doubt as to their inspiration, yet confidently affirm that any theories of the origin or authorship of any book of either Testament which ascribe to them a purely naturalistic genesis, or dates or authors inconsistent with either their own natural claims or the assertions of other Scripture, are plainly inconsistent with the doctrine of inspiration taught by the Church.[106] Their position is consistent with the basic orthodox teaching about Scripture that had been held from the first century onward. It is also the position espoused by J. Gresham Machen and others into the present setting. In fact, the position of Hodge and Warfield is essentially the same as that held by leading evangelicals in November 1978 as defined by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. That body drafted 'A Short Statement,' which attests that 1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks the truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself. 2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises. 3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning. 4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives. 5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.[107] Thus, the orthodox doctrine that the Bible is the infallible, inerrant Word of God in its original manuscripts has maintained itself from the first century to the present. This position holds that the Bible is without error in everything that it affirms. Indeed, according to the traditional teaching of the Christian church, what the Bible says, God Himself says. That includes all matters of history, science, and any other matter on which it touches. Any results of higher criticism

[106] Ibid., p. 39. In his treatment of "Biblical Literalism," Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800–1930*, pp. 103–31, has an extended discussion of the Princeton theology. In that presentation, he argues that the shift to inerrancy came with Warfield rather than his predecessors. That notion is incorrect, as is his "notion that the doctrine of inerrancy did not exist in Europe or America prior to its foundation in the last half century' by American Fundamentalists, … and by Princetonian theologians in particular." See also Ernest Sandeen, *The Origins of Fundamentalism: Toward a Historical Interpretation*, p. 14, and his article, "The Princeton Theology: One Source of Biblical Literalism in American Protestantism," pp. 307–21, both of which are cited in Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, vol. 4: *God Who Speaks and Shows: Fifteen Theses, Part Three*, p. 379.

[107] *The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy*. This "Short Statement" is accompanied by a "Preface" as well as nineteen "Articles of Affirmation and Denial" (which are printed in chap. 10).

that are contrary to this teaching are incompatible with the traditional doctrine of the inspiration and authority of Scripture as it has been held throughout church history. Being at variance with the traditional teaching of the Christian church in its broadest context, such contrary views of Scripture are actually unorthodox. It is to those unorthodox views of Scripture that we must now turn."[108]

The Catholic Church has always maintained that God is the author of the Bible. In the twentieth century, the Second Vatican council reaffirmed this by writing (in *Dei Verbum*): "The divinely revealed realities, which are contained and presented in the text of Sacred Scripture, have been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit." That is, "[t]o compose the sacred books, God chose certain men who, all the while he employed them in this task, made full use of their own faculties and powers so that, though he acted in them and by them, it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever he wanted written, and no more" (*Dei Verbum*, Catechism).

This view of inspiration produces their view of inerrancy: "Since therefore all that the inspired authors or sacred writers affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures" (*Dei Verbum*, Catechism).

However, this Catholic view differs from conservative views primarily in regards to interpretation: "The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God […] has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone. […] Yet this [teaching authority] is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it listens to this devotedly, guards it with dedication and expounds it faithfully. All that it proposes for belief as being divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith" (*Dei Verbum*, Catechism).

Contemporary Approaches to Inspiration

Karl Barth (1886–1968) was of the conviction that the Bible was secondary as revelation to the revelation in and through Jesus Christ, and that the Bible became God's Word when God spoke through it. Thus, we can see that although Barth held a high view of Scripture, his primary concern was to preserve the preeminence of Christ and the sovereignty of God. Paul Tilich (1886–1965) believed in the inspiration of Scripture as mediator between revelatory events recorded in the Bible and the contemporary experiences of the reader (McKim, 106). Liberation

[108] Geisler, N. L., & Nix, W. E. (1986). *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Rev. and expanded., pp. 153–156). Chicago: Moody Press.

theologians did not have a high view of Scripture, but instead view it through the lens of oppressive systems, a "hermeneutic of suspicion," and thus advocate for the overthrow of such systems (McKim, 134–138). Process theologians understand all things, including God, as "in process" and thus as constantly changing and adapting to contemporary reality. Scripture then, in this view, is one potential source that helps us to see our own story in the unfolding story of God (McKim, 114–115). Feminist theologians view approach Scripture with a critical eye toward anything oppressive toward women, and are willing to reject those portions of Scripture that might foster the subjugation of women (McKim, 148). Postmodernism challenges the notion that authorial intent (whether human or divine) is knowable and available to provide meaning. Thus, postmodernism opposes both the interpretations of a "liberal" as well as those of a "conservative" as the product of reading too much into the text.

Erroneous Views of Inspiration

There are many scholars who disagree with our view of inspiration.

Ryrie writes "1. Some hold that the writers of the Bible were men of great genius, but that their writings were inspired no more than those of other geniuses throughout history. This has been called the view of natural inspiration, for there is no supernatural dimension to it. 2. A step up is the view which may be labeled the mystical or illumination view of inspiration, which sees the writers of the Bible as Spirit-filled and guided believers just as any believer may be even today. Logically, one might conclude that any Spirit-filled Christian could write Scripture today. Similar to this is the idea that the biblical writers were inspired to a greater degree than others. 3. The usual caricature of 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 the definition proposed above incorporates the idea that God allowed the writers varying degrees of self-expression as they wrote. 4. Partial inspiration views certain parts of the Bible as supernaturally inspired, namely, portions which would otherwise have been unknowable (accounts of creation, prophecy, etc.). 5. A very popular concept of inspiration is that only the concepts but not the very words were inspired. This seems to allow for a measure of authority without the necessity of the words being completely accurate. 6. The neoorthodox or Barthian view of inspiration is that the Bible is a witness to the Word of God, though a Barthian would not be adverse to saying also that the Bible is the Word of God. But this is true only in a secondary sense (Christ being primarily the Word), and his Bible is full of errors because it is merely the product of fallible writers. The Barthian accepts the teachings of

liberalism concerning the Bible and then tries to give it a measure of authority on the ground that in a fallible way it does point to Christ. 7. Among many conservatives today a view is held that might be labeled the inspired purpose view of the Bible. This simply means that while the Bible contains factual errors and insoluble discrepancies in its content, it does have 'doctrinal integrity' and thus accomplishes perfectly God's purpose for it. Those who hold this idea can and do use the words infallible and inerrant, but it is important to notice that they carefully limit the Bible's infallibility to the main purpose or principal emphasis of the Bible and do not extend it to include the accuracy of all its historical facts and parallel accounts. One recent writer put it this way: 'I confess the infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures in accomplishing God's purpose for them—to give man the revelation of God in His redemptive love through Jesus Christ.'[109] In other words, the principal revelation of God—salvation—has been transmitted infallibly by means of the records which, nevertheless, are quite fallible. In contrast to Barthians, those who hold this concept of inspiration would hold a more conservative view toward matters like authorship and dates of the books of the Bible and would in general consider the Bible as a whole more trustworthy. But it is still fallible and errant; and if that be so in historical matters, who can be sure it is not also fallible in doctrinal matters? Besides, how can one separate doctrine and history? Try to in relation to the great events of Christ's life. Those doctrines depend on the accuracy of the historical facts. Just to illustrate how times have changed, not many years ago all one had to say to affirm his belief in the full inspiration of the Bible was that he believed it was 'the Word of God.' Then it became necessary to add 'the inspired Word of God.' Later he had to include 'the verbally, inspired Word of God.' Then to mean the same thing he had to say 'the plenary (fully), verbally, inspired Word of God.' Then came the necessity to say 'the plenary, verbally, infallible, inspired Word of God.' Today one has to say 'the plenary, verbally, infallible, inspired, and inerrant-in-the original-manuscripts Word of God.' And even then, he may not communicate clearly!"[110]

Natural Inspiration

This view denies the supernatural element in biblical inspiration in that it contends that the human authors of Scripture were basically men of extraordinary genius who possessed a special insight into moral and spiritual truth. This view argues that these men wrote the books of the Bible through their unique abilities just like an individual might write any book. Those who adhere to this view believe

[109] Ray Summers, "How God Said It," *Baptist Standard*, Feb. 4, 1970, p. 12.
[110] Ryrie, C. C. (1972). *A survey of Bible doctrine*. Chicago: Moody Press.

the human authors of Scripture wrote about God in the same way Shakespeare wrote literature. Thus this view contends that they wrote by their own will.

Spiritual or Mystical Illumination

As Ryrie noted, this view of inspiration goes a step farther than natural inspiration in that it conceives of the writers as more than natural geniuses in that they were also Spirit-filled and guided. This view contends that anyone can write Scripture who is illuminated by the Spirit.

Degree Inspiration

This erroneous view adheres to the inspiration of Scripture. However, it also adheres to the idea that some parts of the Bible are more inspired than others. Though it is true that some parts of Scripture are more relevant than others to certain groups of people like the church, but 2 Timothy 3:16 rejects this view teaching all of Scripture is equally inspired and accurate, and it all has an important place in the overall revelation of God.

Partial Inspiration

This false view of inspiration teaches that some parts of the Bible are inspired and some parts are not. They say that the parts of the Bible related to matters of salvation and faith are inspired, but those parts that deal with history, science, chronology, or other non-faith matters may in fact be in error. This erroneous view contends that even though some material in the Bible may be factually in error, God still preserves the message of salvation in the Bible. So they say that we can trust the Bible in spiritual matters, but in some areas, we might find error. The partial view of inspiration clearly rejects both verbal inspiration (that inspiration extends to the words of Scripture) and plenary inspiration (that inspiration extends to the entirety of Scripture). Ryrie refutes this view.

Conceptual Inspiration

This false view of inspiration believes that the concepts or ideas of the writers of the Bible are inspired but not the words. Thus they contend that God communicated the concepts to the human author, but not the words. God did not dictate Scripture. However, He did superintend or supernaturally directed the authors so that the words they used from their own vocabularies were guided by the Holy Spirit.

Divine Dictation

The dictation view of inspiration maintains that the entire Bible was dictated word for word by God and that the human authors of the Bible were passive, in the same way as secretaries or stenographers who sat and wrote down what was given to them. Although some parts of the Bible were given by dictation as when God gave the Ten Commandments, the books of the Bible reveal a distinct contrast in style and vocabulary, which would indicate that the authors were not mere robots. However, if one reads the Greek New Testament, one will find that the apostle John's writing style and vocabulary is different than Paul's or Peter's. Therefore, if the dictation view is true, the style of the books of the Bible would be uniform. However, they are clearly not.

Neo-orthodox or Barthian View

This view argues that the Bible is not the Word of God, but only becomes the Word of God through a special encounter when God speaks to a person in some kind of subjective experience. In other words, the Bible only witnesses to the Word of God, but it is not the Word of God. They contend that the Bible is enshrouded in myth necessitating a demythologizing of the Bible to discover what actually took place. They say that the historicity of the events recorded in the Bible is unimportant. For example, whether or not Christ actually rose from the dead in time and space is unimportant to the neo-orthodox adherent. The important thing is the experiential encounter that is possible even though the Bible is tainted with factual errors. In this view the authority is the subjective experience of the individual rather than the Scriptures themselves.

J. Hampton Keathley III writes "This final view is a very dangerous view because those who hold it often sound evangelical, but they are actually often very liberal in their theology. This view teaches the Bible is not the Word of God, but only becomes the Word of God through a special encounter when God speaks to a person in some kind of subjective experience. In other words, the Bible only witnesses to the Word of God, but it is not the Word of God. Moreover, the Bible is enshrouded in myth necessitating a demythologizing of the Bible to discover what actually took place. The historicity of the events is unimportant. For example, whether or not Christ actually rose from the dead in time and space is unimportant to the neo-orthodox adherent. The important thing is the experiential encounter that is possible even though the Bible is tainted with factual errors. In this view the authority is the subjective experience of the individual rather than the Scriptures

themselves.[111] Ryrie concludes his comments on Barthianism with these words: Can such a Bible have any kind of authority? Yes, declares the Barthian. Its authority is in the encounter of faith with the Christ of Scripture. The Bible, because it points to Christ, has instrumental authority, not inherent authority. And those parts which do point to Christ have more authority than those which do not. Yet all the parts contain errors. To sum up: Barthianism teaches that the Bible (B) points to Christ the Word (C). But in reality we do not know anything about C apart from B. It is not that we already have a clear concept of C by which we can test the accuracy of B, the pointer. Actually the Bible is the painter of C; that is, what we know about Christ comes from the Bible. So if the Bible has errors in it, the portrait of Christ is erroneous. And make no mistake about it, the Barthian Bible does have errors in it.[112] Regardless of whether a person responds or has an encounter with God through the Bible, it is the objective and authoritative Word of God. The Thessalonian Christians accepted it as the Word of God, but Paul's comment regarding their response was not that they had an encounter so that their message became the word of God, but rather 'when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe' (1 Thess. 2:13). They did come to know God through the Word, but Paul emphatically affirms it was the Word of God regardless. In conclusion, the strongest defense for the verbal plenary inspiration of the Scriptures is the testimony of Jesus Christ. He testified to the inspiration of the entire Scriptures, the various books of the Old Testament and the actual words of Scripture as they were originally recorded. The fact that He based His arguments on the precise wording of Scripture testifies to His exalted view of Scripture. We will demonstrate Christ's view of Scripture under the concept of inerrancy. In addition, Paul declared all Scripture to be God-breathed; man was God's instrument, being guided by God in the writing of Scripture. Peter confirmed the truth by emphasizing that the authors were carried along by the Holy Spirit in the writing of Scripture. The testimony of each of these witnesses draws attention to the verbal plenary inspiration of Scripture."[113]

Conclusion

As we have seen from this study, the Bible itself claims to be and demonstrates itself to be the Word of God. These claims are both specific and general for the Bible as a whole, specific sections as well as individual books.

[111] Enns, p. 162.
[112] Ryrie.
[113] Bibliology: The Doctrine of the Written Word; page 25; Biblical Studies Press 1997

There are many sources which support the Bible's claim as being the written Word of God. First of all, of course we have the very nature of the Bible itself. There is also the internal witness of the Holy Spirit who testifies to the believer's human spirit that the Bible is inspired by God. Thirdly, many believers throughout history have testified even up to this present day that the Bible is inspired by God due to the fact that it has transformed their lives. There is then the very unity of the Bible despite the fact that the Bible has many authors from diverse backgrounds, and languages. There is a great diversity of topics in the Bible that are addressed, yet the Bible is unified. A fifth source is that of history in the sense that many archaeological discoveries have confirmed the Bible's claims thus they defend the Bible's claim of being a divine book. There is also the testimony of Jesus Christ Himself who throughout His ministry appealed to Scripture when defending Himself against His enemies or teaching His disciples. He clearly was of the conviction that the Old Testament was inspired by God. We also can't overlook the fact that fulfilled prophecy demonstrates that the Bible is inspired by God. Furthermore no other book of antiquity or in human history has had a greater influenced than the Bible which supports its claims of being inspired by God. Another interesting fact about the Bible which supports its claims of being a divine book is that no other book has been attacked like the Bible or has faced greater scrutiny from men as the Bible has. This too supports its claim of being a book which originates with God.

