

INSPIRATION: TRUE AND FALSE

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” – 1 Peter 1:23

The foundation of the individual Christian’s faith is the Bible. It is from the Bible that the Christian derives his doctrines, beliefs, and, indeed, his entire worldview. The reason that the Christian ascribes this importance to the Bible is that he believes that God Himself has Inspired it. It is, therefore, more than a book – it is *The Book*. As such, there can be no more important doctrine for the Christian than the Doctrine of Inspiration. For if the Bible is NOT inspired it becomes just another ‘great’ book and not the Christian’s final authority in all matters of faith and practice. As Dr. Merrill F. Unger noted:

“(T)he doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture is of immense importance. This is at once apparent when one considers that all evangelical Christian doctrines are developed from the Bible and rest upon its authority. L. Bottner is correct when he calls the Biblical teaching of inspiration the mother and guardian of all the others.”¹

It is no surprise, then, that the Doctrine of Inspiration would become a point of contention between those who believe that the King James Bible is the inspired word of God and those who believe that only the Original Manuscripts were inspired and that no translation is inspired or perfect. The question that each Christian must ask himself is do I hold an inspired Bible in my hand, or, as many theologians maintain, merely a “reliable translation”? That is the issue this pamphlet will address.

The idea that only the Originals were inspired is considered orthodoxy by most theologians today. However, it is actually a relatively new concept, only gaining wide acceptance in the late 19th century. The historical orthodox position had always been that God had perfectly preserved His words and that Inspiration was carried on in this preservation. As the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647 states:

¹ Unger’s Bible Dictionary, Merrill F. Unger, Moody Press, Chicago, 3rd ed., 1966, p. 527.

*“(T)he Old Testament in Hebrew (which is the native language of the people of God of old) and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations) being immediately inspired by God **and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages are therefore authentic** (emphasis mine).”²*

Thus, the idea that the Scriptures were not perfectly preserved by the Providence of God would have been thought ridiculous to Christians before the 19th century.³ It wasn’t until the 1880’s that the “Autographs Only” idea began to gain adherents among scholars.⁴ As Dr. James H. Sightler notes in A Testimony Founded For Ever:

*“The Princeton Theologians Archibald Alexander Hodge and Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, in 1881, were the first to claim inspiration for the original autographs only and to exchange the doctrine of providential preservation for restoration of the text by critics...Actually it was Warfield’s teacher and predecessor at Princeton, Charles Hodge, ...who was the first to take up naturalistic text criticism and abandon the doctrine of providential preservation. It (was) the Niagara Creed of 1878 adopted at the Niagara Conference on Prophecy, which was dominated by a coalition of Princeton graduates and followers of J. N. Darby, (that) may well have been the first document to claim inspiration for every word of scripture **provided such word is found in the original manuscripts.**”⁵*

Yet, as we shall see, the “Autograph Only” school’s only purpose was to undermine confidence in the King James Bible.

² Creeds Of Christendom, Ed. Philip Schaff, Revised David S. Schaff, 3 Vols, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1990, (Reprinted from 1931 edition by Harper & Row), Vol. 3, p. 604.

³ The view that only the Originals were inspired was originally received with scorn and sarcasm. As one writer pointed out “nobody can use those lost autographs; [therefore] the Bible on our table is not the inerrant and infallible word of God, and so today the church has no inerrant Bible by which to live, and preaching is thereby made impossible because it would be founded on the uninspired word of man”, Inerrancy, pp. 158-159.

⁴ It is no coincidence that this occurred at the end of the 1800’s. At that time Satan was moving on many fronts. In 1885, the Westcott and Hort Greek text and the Revised English Version were released. This was also the time of great social, economic, and political upheaval in the United States, England and Germany (Darwin, Marx, Freud, Westcott and Hort). See The Fateful Turn, from Individualism to Collectivism 1880-1960, The Foundation for Economic Education, Inc. Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, 1963.

⁵ A Testimony Founded For Ever by James H. Sightler, Sightler Publishing, Greenville S.C., 1999.

“Original autographs has proved itself to be a term with a mission and that mission is the destruction of the Textus Receptus⁶ which after more than a century of attack still carries majestically on far superior to any of its rivals”⁷

Since the 1880's, the idea that inspiration extended only to the original autographs has been taught and repeated so often that it is now actually considered a defense of Scripture. Indeed, we find such notable men as Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, writing the following:

*“The claim for verbal, plenary inspiration is made only for the **original writings and does not extend to any transcriptions or translations**. It is also true that no original manuscript is now available. (Emphasis mine)”⁸*

C. I. Scofield, editor of the classic Scofield Reference Bible, stated it this way:

*“The writers of Scripture invariably affirm, where the subject is mentioned by them at all, that the words of their writings are divinely taught. **This, of necessity, refers to the original documents, not to translations and versions** (Emphasis mine).”^{9, 10}*

⁶ Textus Receptus is a term given for the Received Greek text (Erasmus, Stephanus, Beza, and Elzevir all put out editions) that the King James Bible was translated from. The term itself was found in the preface to the 1633 edition put out by the Elzevir brothers. The Received Greek text is the pure text originating in Antioch and stands in contrast to the Alexandrian text, a corrupt text which originated in Alexandria, Egypt. **It is the Alexandrian text type that is the basis for all new versions.** (NOTE: The New King James Version (NKJV) purports to use the Received Text, however, it sneaks in Alexandrian readings and where it does retain the King James reading it casts doubt on them with footnotes.)

⁷ Ibid, p. 137.

⁸ Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology (8Vol), Dallas Seminary Press, 1947, Vol. 1, p.87.

⁹ C.I. Scofield, The Scofield Reference Bible, Oxford University Press, New York, 1917, p. 1213.

¹⁰ It was, in fact, the venerable Scofield Bible that planted the seeds among dispensational fundamentalists for the acceptance of all the “New Age” versions plaguing the Church today. (Also see New Age Versions by G. A. Riplinger, 1993, which shows the spirit behind all the new bible versions printed since 1885 using basically the Westcott and Hort Greek text.) Scofield introduced into his reference Bible a new chain reference system based on topics not words. The Scofield editors believed that the old system of references was based solely upon the “accident” of the English words and, therefore, was unscientific and misleading. Thus, topical chain references were born, breaking the association to the specific words in the text. Topical chain references are based on the association of “ideas” rather than words. This allowed for changing the words of the text as long as the “doctrine” was left fundamentally in tact. In addition, the Scofield Reference Bible also introduced margin notes with the notation that “*such emendations of the text (a)s scholarship demands have been placed in the margins* (Emphasis mine)”. Therefore, although the 1907 / 1917 Scofield Reference Bible used the Authorized Version as its text, Scofield did not believe it was perfect and he advocated “other readings”. This began to prepare the Church for the

Lastly, Dr. Charles C. Ryrie, known for his “Ryrie Study Bibles”, wrote the following statement in his 1994 Expanded Ryrie KJV Study Bible:

*“My own definition of biblical inspiration is that it is God’s superintendence of the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the **original autographs**. (Emphasis mine)”¹¹*

These men represent conservative, premillennial, dispensational theology. As such, they have had a profound influence. It is, therefore, not surprising that their adherence to the Hodge/Warfield position on the Doctrine of Inspiration has become the commonly held view among most modern theologians and their students who eventually became Pastors.

When modern scholars teach future Pastors that there are no perfect translations, only perfect Originals, the question naturally arises...Why didn’t God think it important enough to preserve them perfectly? In other words, why would God give us the exact words He wanted mankind to know and then allow some of them to disappear? Modern scholarship reassures us that the new versions are *almost* perfect – but not quite! In fact, they often confidently assert that they have 99% of the Original text!¹² Yet, no one has ever seen the “Original Text” so how is this possible? How do they know that the changes they have made to the King James readings are correct? Scholars will even go so far as to suggest that even *if* readings are wrong in the new versions, it doesn’t really matter because the translations are, on the whole, “reliable”, and that no fundamental of the faith has been affected.¹³ In

more extreme changes that would later be made in the name of “science”. See Appendix A, Carl Graham, The Scofield Reference Bible Compared To Science Falsely So-Called.

¹¹ Charles Ryrie, Ryrie Study Bible (Expanded Edition) King James Version, Moody Press, 1986, p. 1985.

¹² As far as scholars are concerned, the closest Greek text that best represent the Original text is the Alexandrian text, which can be found in two major manuscripts, Uncials Vaticanus and Sinaiticus (Uncials are manuscripts which were written only in capital letters). These two manuscripts are two of the most corrupt manuscripts in existence. It is also amazing that after 150 new versions over the course of the last hundred years, they haven’t yet eliminated that last fraction of “error”.

¹³ In fact, this hunt for the “Original” text is nothing more than a ruse used by those who seek to overthrow the authority of the King James Bible. When called upon, many scholars will appeal to the vast amount of evidence they have for the ‘Greek Text’. The Christian is assured that “*All the*

other words, God did not intend for us to have His actual words but only His “message”.¹⁴ Thus, any natural inclination to question the modern view of Inspiration is countered with the idea that God is satisfied with 99% preservation so we should be too. Yet, the entire concept of “verbal” Inspiration rests on the idea that **every** word is important! Even Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer wrote:

*“To the same measure, to have left out one page **one word** (emphasis mine) that was inspired and designed of God with a view to its place in the canon would have marred as disastrously the faultless Word of God. Through the permission of ... these hypothetical defects, the Bible would have been rendered unworthy of its divine Author.”¹⁵*

Another hurdle modern scholarship must overcome in its race to destroy the concept of Biblical preservation is 2 Timothy 3:16 which is the proof text for the Doctrine of Inspiration.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”

data plus all of the scholarly work that has been done assures us that we possess today an accurate and reliable text of the New Testament.” (Ryrie Study Bible KJV, p. 1992) What the scholars don’t tell you is that the overwhelming amount of evidence, the 5000 manuscripts, the vast majority of the papyri, the lectionaries and church Fathers all support the King James readings. It is primarily the 3 major Uncials (Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Alexandrinus) that stand against the Textus Receptus, and they do not agree with each other in over 3000 places! Yet, whenever any of these ‘great’ Uncials contradict or disagree with that “vast amount of evidence”, the scholars will still choose the Uncial readings over the KJV (i.e., over the “vast evidence”)! Why? Because, in their view, the Uncials are the true representatives of the ‘Originals’. In this regard, they throw out 99% of the evidence. Modern scholars hold the Textus Receptus in very low regard. So, the proofs of the ‘reliability of Scripture’ that the scholars are fond of citing, i.e., the massive manuscript evidence etc., to allay any fears that the Christian might have that his Bible is not ‘reliable’ are in fact disregarded by the scholars themselves in favor of the few Alexandrian manuscripts.

¹⁴ This is Neo-orthodoxy. Neo-orthodoxy was a system that attempted to compromise with liberal theology by accepting textual criticism and philosophical thought while maintaining certain orthodox doctrines. The neo-orthodox view of Scripture is that it was the ‘message’ that was important and not the ‘actual words’. Although conservatives do their best to keep from being associated with neo-orthodoxy, *their conclusions are the same*.

¹⁵ Chafer, Systematic Theology, Vol. 1, p. 95.

It is not until this verse is “wrested” that the future Pastor can be fully indoctrinated into the Autograph Only¹⁶ school. Therefore, we must look at this verse in some depth. Two words in the verse are at issue. The first word is that little word “is”.¹⁷ The second word is the word “inspiration” and will be dealt with momentarily.

In our proof text, 2 Timothy 3:16, the word “is” is in the **present** tense. Paul has just stated in the previous verse (verse 15) that Timothy should study the Scriptures. In the next verse, verse 16, Paul is telling Timothy **why** he can be confident in the Holy Scriptures, because they are given by inspiration of God for our edification. Paul is *not* explaining how Scripture came to be inspired at some point in the past. If he were, then the verse would be translated “all scripture **was** given by inspiration” and no translation ever translates the verse as such. Yet, this is exactly how the scholar must translate the verse in his mind in order to support his position. He must make a mental adjustment to switch the “*is*” to “**was**” the word of God (in the Originals). It is this mental change from “*is*” to “**was**” that allows the theologian to convince himself (and others) that he believes the Bible **is** the word of God, when what he **really** means is that it **was** the word of God (in the Originals). (If this bit of mental gymnastics seems farfetched to the reader, a similar phenomenon was recently witnessed on the national stage, when the nation found itself in a debate on what the meaning of the word “*is*” is with regard to the current President!) Moreover, modern scholars always give 2 Peter 1:21 as a reference verse next to 2 Timothy 3:16, implying that both verses refer to the origination of Scripture. However, note that 2 Peter 1:21, which indeed does refer to the origin of Scripture, is in the *past tense*:

*“For the prophecy **came** [past tense] not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God **spake** [past tense] as they were **moved** [past tense] by the Holy Ghost.”*

¹⁶ For a good discussion of the logical fallacies and assumptions of the “Autograph Only” crowd, see Timothy S. Morton’s pamphlet, The Arrogant Assumptions of the Autograph Only, Morton Publications, 2101 Morton Road, Sutton, West Virginia, 26601.

¹⁷ The word ‘is’ is not in the Greek but is necessary to translate the sentence correctly. That is why in the King James the word is in italics. It is used in all major translations.

This connection between 2 Peter 1:21 and 2 Timothy 3:16 is an artificial one. While Peter is describing an historical fact, Paul is explaining a current reality. Peter explains how God moved men to speak his words, while Paul explains how the written words are preserved. Peter reveals how we obtained Scripture, Paul, its' value.¹⁸

The second word that must be dealt with in 2 Timothy 3:16 is the word "inspiration". Modern scholars began ignoring the English word "inspiration", and, instead, began referring to the Greek word "theopneustos", which literally means "God-Breathed". Chafer stated:

*"(I)t is doubtful whether any one original New Testament word has been more scrutinized under the searching rays of scholarship than has theopneustos...The question at issue is one as to whether the term God-breathed is to be taken in the passive form which implies only that, as to its source, all Scripture is the breath of God - its distinctive characteristic being the fact that it originates in, and proceeds from God, **or whether it is to be taken in its active form which would imply that the Scripture is permeated and pregnant with the breath of God - its distinctive characteristic being the fact it has received by impartation or inspiration the breath of God.** (Emphasis mine)"*¹⁹

In reference to "theopneustos", Dr. B. B. Warfield made the following comment:

*"The Greek term has...nothing to say of...inspiration: it speaks only of a 'spiring' or 'spiration'".*²⁰

J. I. Packer stated it this way:

¹⁸ The importance placed by the Autograph Only School on this connection between the two verses cannot be overstated. As Chafer states, "The two passages are supplementary and **together** (emphasis mine) form the entire revelation" (i.e., their interpretation of 2 Timothy 3:16 and the Autographs Only position), Systematic Theology, Volume I, p. 80.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 77.

²⁰ While maintaining that no scripture was inspired by God (just 'spired'), Warfield also made the statement: "In the beginning of Genesis to the Amen of the Apocalypse, **breathed into by God, and breathing out God to every devout reader**...(Emphasis mine)." The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, Benjamin B. Warfield, edited by Samuel Craig, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1948, p. 125.

“As B.B. Warfield showed, this Greek word actually means breathed out by God...not so much in-spired as ex-spired.”²¹

Yet, the King James English says “inspired” not “expired”. The word “inspired” means to “*breath into*”. In fact, Dr. Ryrie admits in his KJV Study Bible, “Strictly speaking, inspiration means ‘filling or breathing’ into”. He then quickly backtracks and restates the Warfield definition, “In 2 Timothy 3:16, the word usually translated ‘inspiration’ is more accurately ‘spiration,’ that is, ‘God-breathed’. Hence, the NIV translation, ‘all scripture is God breathed’.”²² This semantic sleight of hand is played for one reason only, to avoid recognizing the fact that the Bible is “quick and powerful” (Hebrews 4:12).²³ It is a Book that has God’s life (breath) in it and not merely a collection of dead manuscripts as modern scholars would have us believe. In fact, the correct understanding of both the English and the Greek taken in the context is that God breathes His life *into* Scripture.

Finally, modern scholars themselves are forced to admit that when Scripture is referred to in the Bible, it always means the actual words. Dr. Ryrie states:

“Christ attested to the fact that inspiration extends to the very words...Paul quoted Deuteronomy and Luke as Scripture...Peter declared Paul’s epistles to be Scripture....”²⁴

Here Dr. Ryrie concedes that Christ Himself attested to the fact that inspiration extends to the very words. However, using Ryrie’s own definition, we must surmise

²¹ Fundamentalism and the Word of God, J.I. Packer, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids Michigan, 1990, p. 77.

²² Ryrie KJV Study Bible, p. 1985.

²³ The lengths to which scholars will go to avoid this fact are illustrated by Dr. Ryrie’s lamenting on how hard it is now to explain their position, “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.’ Today, one has to say ‘the plenary, verbally, infallable, inspired and inerrant-in-the-original-manuscripts Word of God.’, and even then he may not communicate clearly!” Ryrie KJV Study Bible, p. 1986. (Author’s note: No, Dr. Ryrie, on the contrary, the problem is that your meaning is becoming quite clear – simply put, you have no Bible.)

²⁴ Ryrie KJV Study Bible. p. 1838.

that since the “Originals” were long gone by the time of the writing, no one – not The Lord Jesus Christ, nor Paul, nor Timothy, had ever seen Old Testament Scripture. They only had reliable copies which for some reason they called Scripture. And yet, because of 2 Timothy 3:16, Scripture cannot be called Scripture if it is not Inspired.

In conclusion, we must realize the significance of the words that we have in our Bible. Scholars downplay the importance of the specific words maintaining that it is the “doctrine” not the “words” that are important. Yet we must remember that it is the **words** with which we formulate Christian doctrines.

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” (1Corinthians 2:13)

The danger in ignoring this fact is pointed out by Dr. Peter Ruckman:

“Wherever Apostasy sets in, it is preceded by an attack on the WORDS of the Received Text...Those words in Greek were attacked by the church fathers preceding the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.); they were attacked in Germany by German scholars preceding German Rationism (1700-1850 A.D.); and they were attacked (in English) by A.T. Robertson, J.G. Machen, R.A. Torrey, Philip Schaff, John R. Sampey, C.I. Scofield, Bullinger, and other Conservatives, before the final sell out of Biblical Christianity (1945-1972 A.D.).”²⁵

This truth was further brought home in a recent Zola Levitt newsletter that pointed out a number of seminaries, including Dallas Theological Seminary, Moody Bible Institute, and Talbot Seminary, have grown lukewarm in defending and teaching Biblical Dispensationalism and had begun to accept the growing heresy known as “Progressive Dispensationalism.”²⁶ This falling away is a natural result of having no final authority, no Holy Scriptures. The scholars have only their own opinions to guide them. As one astute reader wrote in,

²⁵ The Bible Believers Commentary Series – The Book of Acts, Dr. Peter S. Ruckman, Bible Baptist Bookstore, Pensacola, Fl., 1974, p. 95.

²⁶ Progressive Dispensationalism is a blending of classical Dispensationalism and amillennial theology.

*"I watch your program. I'm an old, uneducated Baptist. Well, I did go through high school and I'm 82 years old. For many years, I've read the Bible (King James) through each year. I read that Israel was given to the Jews for an everlasting possession. God's firstborn nation, He began with the Jews and He will end with the Jews. God says He changes not. They are His Chosen People. I just cannot understand how people can come up with something different, unless some Bibles are translated differently from the King James Version. If God could create this world, He certainly must be able to watch over His Word."*²⁷

There is a war being fought today inside the Church. It is a secret war²⁸; a war fought behind seminary walls and the doors of book publishers and in the libraries of ministers. It is a war that Satan wants to keep in the shadows until it is too late, and Satan is using his tremendous power for deceiving subtlety as his primary weapon. This is a war to disarm the Church. It is a war of misinformation, distortion and lies²⁹. In the last one hundred years Satan has accomplished much. He has created "new" and "improved" Hebrew and Greek texts. These texts have resulted in the printing of over 150 counterfeit bible "versions". All of this was done with one goal in mind...to destroy the faith of the people in the one Book, the King James Bible. Over a hundred years ago a warning was issued:

²⁷ Levitt Letter, Vol. 22, Number 3, March 2000.

²⁸ See Author's booklet, The Secret War Against The King James Bible.

²⁹ As Dean Burgon (1883) pointed out, "the history of the New Testament text is the history of a conflict between God and Satan. Soon after the New Testament books were written Satan corrupted their texts by means of heretics and misguided critics whom he had raised up. These assaults, however, on the integrity of the Word were repulsed by the providence of God, who guided true believers to reject the false readings and preserved the True Text in the majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts. And at the end of the middle ages this True Text was placed in print and became the Textus Receptus, the foundation of the glorious Protestant Reformation. But Satan was not defeated. Instead he staged a clever comeback by means of naturalistic New Testament textual criticism. Old corrupt manuscripts, which had been discarded by the God-guided usage of the believing Church, were brought out of their hiding places and re-instated.... And today thousands of Bible-believing Christians are falling into this devil's trap through their use of modern-speech versions which are based on naturalistic textual criticism and so introduce the reader to the naturalistic point of view. By means of these modern-speech versions Satan deprives his victims of both the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit and leaves them unarmed and helpless before the terrors and temptations of the modern, apostate world." The King James Version Defended, Edward F. Hills, Christian Research Press, Des Moines, IA, 1996, p.231. For the historical nature of this war see the classic work by David Otis Fuller, Which Bible, Institute For Biblical Textual Studies, Grand Rapids, MI, 1995. For the spiritual nature of the conflict see Gail Riplinger's, New Age Versions, AV Publications, 1993.

“It seemed to me that the time had fully come, for the friends of the Bible, as it is, to speak once more...Does anyone suppose that a question of conscience touching the integrity of the word of God, can be given up by Christian people even to avoid trouble in the church of God, much less trouble with a secular society?...The word of God is, next to the Spirit itself, the most precious gift of Christ to his church; and if the church has any clear duty upon earth, one duty is to preserve that Divine Word in purity...and here is a new standard English Bible, changed...in somewhere about 24,000 particulars...we are told they have discovered...in the text and punctuation alone...and then they distinctly assert, that of all these 24,000 variations ... there is not one which mars the integrity of the text, or affects any doctrine or precept of the Bible ... the principle on which the procedure has been undertaken and carried through, are perilous in the highest degree... the results reached are evil, and only evil.”³⁰

The results **are** evil and only evil. That condemnation can be applied to every new translation since 1885. The condemnation can also be applied to the view that God did not preserve His words perfectly for His Church on earth. God promised He would and He did.

“The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever.” (Psalms12:6-7)

Thus, there has always been a perfect, inspired word of God in the hands of Bible believers.³¹ Today, that word is preserved for the English-speaking world in the King James 1611 Authorized Version.

³⁰ Robert J. Breckinridge, The American Bible Society's Committee on Versions and Its New Bible, (Danville, KY, Robert J. Breckinridge, Oct. 30, 1857), p. 4-7, cited in “A Testimony Founded For Ever”, James H. Sightler, p. 36.

³¹ See Forever Settled - A Survey of the Documents and History of the Bible, compiled by Jack Moorman, 1985