

Theopneustos: The Process that Produced the Bible

Theopneustos: God at Work in the Life of Every Christian

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TH 301-1 Systematic Theology

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Introduction—I myself hold fast to the divine inspiration of the Bible by God Himself, and my purpose is not to argue against such, but to clarify indeed what it means when the Bible is said to be “inspired” by God, and to faithfully assert the relation of this doctrine to how God works in the life of every believer—past, present, and future.

- I. What does Scripture say about its origin?
- II. Inconsistencies and problems related to what Scripture says
- III. The process of inspiration
- IV. Inspiration clarified
- V. *Theopneustos* applied

Conclusion— I think the *theopneustos* of Scripture most closely resembles the incarnation of Christ—Scripture has been committed to us in such a way that is on our level of understanding and existence, and that it exists in a manner that is perceivable to the senses; Scripture illuminates truths through God’s Spirit moving within them; Scripture points to God’s ultimate goodness and love of all His creation, especially humans; Scripture teaches, testifies, and witnesses the truth of God’s existence; and Scripture clearly points to the way of salvation. If we as Christians are living our lives the way that we ought, we will find that we do all those things that Scripture does, which just so happens to be all the things that Christ has done, and by deduction just as Christ and His Word are *theopneustos*—so are we “God-Spirited,” so are we, amen.

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Undoubtedly the Bible's text has generated more inquisitions to produce definitive terms that effectively and completely describe the nature of deployment that so produced it than any other written work in the world. Most assuredly such inquisitions have arisen from the terminology that has been employed to define the mode that produced its text by the Christian community throughout the history of the church. Terminology alone though has not produced the daunting task of truly understanding how the texts of the Bible came to be, but how such terminology has been broadly explained to the exclusion of the finer points has been the main ingredient for tensions and a lack of consensus among believers and theologians alike throughout the years. Truly, such tensions can be narrowed to the broad defining of, and the over-emphasis on the ends over the means of one infamous, seemingly simple term, "inspiration." The definition of inspiration has been so burdened by the presuppositions of the divine and human authorship of the Bible that the explanation of the actual process of inspiration has been largely ignored, and the implications of such ignorance virtually unrecognized. For all general purposes, it seems to me that the greater part of the discussion regarding inspiration has merely been to satisfy the authority of the Scriptures that the communities of faith adhere to in the face of adversarial opponents. And such is not necessarily without merit, but a greater part of the

discussion has been neglected, therefore leaving each individual to his or her own devices in how to explain this action of inspiration, or to neglect the process altogether, adhering blindly to the predominate view that infiltrates the minds of well-meaning Christians. Based on many conversations and mild-tempered arguments with a variety of believers regarding this subject, it is my opinion that the general consensus is that the process of inspiration that God so used on the biblical authors is something totally alien to the way that God deals with His children today, and that these authors must have been influenced by a higher degree of illumination from God than is normal, which points to an inconsistency in the operations of God, which in turn is contrary to His very nature. Most that adhere to the idea of this heightened illumination, whether consciously or by default, see it at no fault, and border fanatical tendencies when asserting it to be true. Most adherents also hold one heretical if he or she proposes an alternate explanation, though it may fit with God's character and influence in the life of every believer it never fits with their prejudices that spawn from their certainty of the broad doctrine of God's inspiration of the Bible. I myself hold fast to the divine inspiration of the Bible by God Himself, and my purpose is not to argue against such, but to clarify indeed what it means when the Bible is said to be "inspired" by God, and to faithfully assert the relation of this doctrine to how God works in the life of every believer—past, present, and future.

To properly discuss the doctrine of inspiration it is of first necessity to detail exactly where we as Christians get our inclination to claim the Bible to be the Word of God. Simply, we assert such based on what Scripture has to say about itself (Achte-meier 92, Allert 148-149, Gaussen 33, Haldane 109, Jeremiah 19). Most notably, the doctrine of inspiration as is recognized by modern biblical scholars comes from one phrase, and mainly one word found

within Paul's second epistle to Timothy (3:16 NKJV) that is translated "inspiration." This *hapax legomenon*, or word only found once within Paul's writings or the Bible in whole, is *theopneustos*. According to Strong's this Greek word is a combination of two other words, *theos*, "God," and *pneo*, "breezed" or "breathed," and it should be noted that *pneo* is the root of the word *pneuma* that is often translated "Spirit" within the New Testament. Put into context, "All Scripture is God-breathed," or "God-Spirited." I myself prefer the latter as it gives emphasis to the Agent of this process, but many more have constituted the former for this solitary term (Achteimeier 93, Allert 149, Hodge 5, Jeremiah 17), both being correct in my opinion—the former more in literal interpretation, the latter more in inherent emphasis. The inherent emphasis of "God-Spirited" is more readily seen when the context of Second Peter, chapter one, verses nineteen through twenty-one are examined, which are other verses often cited to emphasize the doctrine of inspiration as drawn from the word found in Second Timothy (Achteimeier 94, Allert 156, Haldane 114, Jeremiah 18). Within these verses, it is clear that Peter is asserting the surety of the teachings and information found within Scripture, that though it has been given by men in transmission its ultimate source was borne by the Holy Spirit, being "God-Spirited" (my assimilation). These two verse sections are where the most content regarding the discussion of inspiration has been derived from, but are not the only places of Scripture that assert God as being the ultimate source and author of its content. The verses that apply to such are too numerous to list here, but with regards to other portions of my argument, some of these verses fit more appropriately when discussed from within other contexts and will be treated further, onward. Suffice it to say that Scripture asserts in many other verses that God had commanded the writing of His words, and that by extension many others followed the example

by instruction of God, whether they are explicit instructions that are relayed to the reader or not. It is by interpretation and application of these many verses, coupled with those from Second Timothy and Second Peter, that the doctrine of inspiration has come to life and assumed its current disjointed personas.

Though there is very compelling evidence proposed by Scripture itself as to the divine inspiration of Scripture by God, the same text often proposes more complex difficulties to what exactly inspiration details. One of the main problems of the doctrine of inspiration is that it applies to the *autographa*, or the original documents, and does not apply by necessity to all the many current renderings of the text in multiple, diverse languages that exist today (Haldane 112, Hodge 6). This presents several problems as to what we can assert in specifics about inspiration based on the *Sola Scriptura* principle of biblical hermeneutics. Even in what we do have as far as our modern translations are concerned are living testaments to the many understandings and misunderstandings of what inspiration details in Scripture. Take for instance the verse from Second Timothy. This verse is the predominate verse used in the discussion of inspiration, and at the same time it is a verse that seems to inspire just as much contention among biblical inspiration scholars. As Allert has said, “This passage is well known in evangelical circles as proof that the Bible is the direct product of God,” and, “...often been a battleground” (149). Not every person who has written on this subject agrees that this verse’s real authorial intent was to say anything about the inspiration of Scripture conclusively, but that in context it is meant to point to the intent of the Scriptures as being profitable for instruction to and from Timothy with regards to salvation, and by application all Christians (Achteimer 92-94, Allert 149-151). This is not to say that the verse does not touch on the subject of inspiration of the Bible, but that it

more focuses on the intent, or function, for which it is inspired (Allert 149), and the nature of that inspiration is minimal and secondary to that intent (Achtemeier 94). Of course then there are others like Haldane and Jeremiah who assert that this same passage not only refers to function, but no less asserts the very nature of how this inspiration occurred and how it permeates to every word ever written in the Scriptures (114 and 17 respectively). Still within the context that this verse finds itself there is still much debate about what actually were the “Holy Scriptures” that Paul mentions above it in verse fifteen and what constitutes “Scriptures” in the verse itself. Achtemeier is going to say that the Greek terms translated “Holy Scriptures” (NKJV) in verse fifteen references the Old Testament documents (93), as well as Haldane (111). But Allert is going to assert otherwise, against them and Warfield, that these Greek terms do not expressly mean the Old Testament as there is little evidence to support a closed canon of the Old Testament by the time of this writing by Paul, and that this must reference the Hebrew Scriptures which probably contained noncanonical works as well (152). Most do agree though that this reference in verse fifteen does not include the New Testament specifically either, mainly because this Epistle where it is found is not considered to be “Scripture” or included in a New Testament closed canon at the time of writing (Allert 152). Still there are even inconsistencies of what scholars have to say about the infamous term *theopneustos* itself as it appears in Second Timothy. Allert is going to assert that the term’s most common definition of “God-breathed” is not accurate because it is logically absurd to assume that such a compound word holds a meaning that fits with its etymology (153). He quotes D. A. Carson as explaining this as the “root fallacy,” which assumes that every word has a meaning determined by its formation (153). He further emphasizes this point of his by referencing the Latin term *nescius* which means

“ignorant” but is the root of the English word “nice,” and that the English equivalent does not hold in any way the root word’s actual meaning (153-154). He further says that for anyone to say that they know in full the meaning of *theopneustos* is to say more than the Bible says itself, and that this term cannot be used to triumphantly define the doctrine of biblical inspiration in its lonesome as some have tried to entertain (154). All of this is very congruent with his assertion that this particular verse does not speak to the inspiration of Scripture conclusively as I mentioned above. But then there are those such as Haldane that want to exclusively use the term *theopneustos* as the capstone to their view of inspiration while not examining the context at all in which it is found. Haldane is going to say that this term constitutes the thing that the Greek “heathens” applied to the idea that their dreams were breathed into men by any of the gods, and that this is exactly what Paul had in mind when he used this word (113). In reading further along through Haldane, one will find that this accurately represents what his notions are for his particular brand of inspiration theory as it applies to the very text itself, and that his argument is internally consistent. The verse section from Second Peter is not going to get as much technical discussion from any of the authors I have read other than Achtemeier and Allert, but this does not mean that there is any less inconsistency with what is asserted from these verses as with those from Second Timothy. Both of these scholars are going to assert that the verses from Second Peter most often used to support inspiration as outlined from Second Timothy have nothing to do with the actual inspiration of Scripture, but that they have a functional purpose in asserting the intent for which Scripture has come about, mainly to again instruct in matters of the Christian faith (Achtemeier 95-97, Allert 156-157). In the instances where these verses or portions of them are quoted by Haldane and Jeremiah as giving credence to their understandings

of inspiration from Second Timothy, one gets the impression that they do not agree with Achtemeier and Allert's assumptions, but feel that these verses speak to the very formation of even the words of all Scripture (114 and 18 respectively). Even though this treatment of the inconsistencies of the ideas surrounding biblical inspiration is very brief in comparison to the amount of the discussions among scholars concerning such, I feel that it is sufficient in showing just how little congruency is maintained throughout members of the Christian faith in regards to this most important doctrine concerning the Word of God as is found in the two main biblical sources for it.

Another main point of contention for scholars in regards to inspiration has been and will be indefinitely the explanation of the process of inspiration used by God on the biblical authors to produce the Scriptures. Without doubt it is the fact that the Bible was produced by complimentary efforts by both human authors and by God Himself that causes such an inconsistency among scholars to explain inspiration in a way that does not undermine the authority of the Scriptures. Even so, there have been many attempts to find an all-inclusive theory that defines exactly how the Bible was formed, most of which in my opinion are not completely correct or incorrect, nor are they sufficient in explaining with all certainty how exactly the text of the Bible came to be formed. To be quite honest, the attempts that have tried to produce the all-inclusive theory of inspiration that applies universally to all of Scripture have failed in several ways, becoming more harmful than beneficial in providing the Christian with a solid foundation on which to build his or her faith and trust in their personal relationship with God and His Holy Spirit. Typically it would be wise to use the *Sola Scriptura* principle to further define the specifics of inspiration, but unfortunately the Bible is not always clear as to the

exact process that God used to inspire the biblical authors. Gaussen has a very notable opinion on the subject that I feel is appropriate to quote at some length because I believe that many scholars share this same conviction whether they specifically say so or not:

The power then put forth on those men of God, and of which they themselves were sensible only in very different degrees, has not been precisely defined to us. Nothing authorizes us to explain it. Scripture has never presented either its manner or its measure as an object of study. ...we do not know; that it does not behove (misspelled in the text) us to know; and that it is in the same ignorance, and with a faith quite of the same kind, that we receive the doctrine of the new birth and sanctification of a soul by the Holy Ghost. ...we have found in our duty to be content never to know the means by which this is done [new birth, sanctification]. Be it the same, then, with regard to divine inspiration. (25, 26)

Again, from my study and personal experience, this appears to be the predominate view that most have as regards the actual process that God used on the biblical authors. There also seems to be one view of inspiration in particular that agrees with what Scripture seems to teach regarding some of the production of its content, but seems to be completely excluded when the verbal plenary view or others like it called by various names is employed. The dictation view asserts that God dictated, or told the biblical authors what to write and they wrote such verbatim. Marshall will say that this view finds no support among modern scholars, even though he will make mention of several places in the Bible's text that require such a formation (32), and Jeremiah will not give this view credence at all, however faulty, by saying that if such was the case that each Gospel would have the same wording (14). Notably this view has many

opponents because it cannot be said to be universal throughout the whole text of the Bible as being the constructing influence, but biblical evidence will prove that this method was often employed and should not be so disregarded as it has in past and modern scholarly circles.

So how then is it possible to clarify inspiration, and what exactly are my thoughts on the several aspects of this doctrine that have been reviewed formerly? First, I have to begin with the main verse from Second Timothy. Within this verse I have to agree with the inclinations that I noted above by Achtemeier and Allert that this passage is not meant to specifically assert any doctrine as to the inspiration of Scripture as its first priority. It is clear that within the context that this verse appears that the main focus is on the functional capacity that Scripture plays in instructing and leading one into a life that is acceptable to God. But I also agree with Jeremiah and Haldane that this verse does have something to say, something very specific in fact of the nature of Scripture that makes its functional capacity a possibility. I think this is most readily seen by the word *theopneustos* itself, and I have to say that I disagree with what Allert has said that coincides with Carson that assumes that it is a fallacy to assert this term as being “God-breathed” because of an exemplification of the English word “nice.” The problem with Allert and Carson’s reasoning is that they are using a Latin term and its use as a root for an English word, whereas the term in question is of Greek origin and has no bearing whatsoever on our use of the word “inspiration.” To me their argument doesn’t seem to be substantiated by any clear reasoning. I think the problem that exists between Achtemeier and Allert, and that of Haldane and Jeremiah is that they have not put all the pieces together from this verse but have chosen to view it from opposite sides. Haldane and Jeremiah have chosen to ignore the contextual aspect

of the verse, and Achtemeier and Allert have chosen to see the clear wording of the Greek term *theopneustos* as unimportant to the context. To me I think the Greek term in question supports the context in which the verse is found, giving the text more credence as being able to perform that thing for which it was produced. The Scriptures in this verse, which are not clearly the Old Testament conclusively as Achtemeier and Haldane assert that they are, are any of the things that have been proved to be from God in ultimate origin, which includes even this epistle now, though at the time of composition that was not in sight of the original writer. The reason that the Scriptures can lead one into righteousness and instruct in matters of the Christian faith is because they have been produced by God in a very special way, being “God-breathed,” or even better defined as “God-Spirited” because it is ultimately God that is leading and instructing through these Scriptures through His Spirit. This clearer assertion is seen by the verse section from Second Peter that is most often used to compliment the view of inspiration gathered from Second Timothy. Achtemeier and Allert are correct in my opinion in their assertion that the verses from Second Peter are more of an explanation of a functional capacity of Scripture, and specifically within the context they are found as being a very trustworthy source of witness and instruction in the Christian faith. Also though I believe that Haldane and Jeremiah are correct in their assertion that this verse section supports the formation of even the words of Scripture as coming from God (to some extent though not as fully as most would like to assume not even Haldane and Jeremiah), even though the context implies only the prophetic portions of the text. I think their assertion is clear from the phrase, “but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (NKJV). This implies that the words these men spoke, and by assimilation the words that they wrote, came from God in such a way that affirms their trustworthiness. To me, this word

that is translated “move” from the Greek, *phero*, carries with it the idea of being led by something, being carried by something, or being pushed in a direction by something, and it should be seen that this corresponds directly to *theopneustos*, or “God-Spirited” because God is the direct force from which these men spoke and wrote such words for witness and instruction. I will say that I do not completely agree though that this means that every word was given by God for each man to write, as this to me would imply that God dictated the entire text of the Bible, making the human authors nothing more than instruments. It is clear though that within the verses of Second Peter that the author is referring specifically to prophecy, which could be better explained as the decrees and proclamations and judgments that were spoken by God through the prophets in the Old Testament. This is absolutely what the context of these verses from Second Peter implies, only to Scripture as a whole by assimilation. But how then does this fit with the denial of dictation being a proper mode of production for some of the Bible (not the whole)? Simply it does not, and these verses from Second Peter coincide with plenty of other verses of the Bible, as well as coincide with what must be gathered from a multitude of texts within it that could have had no other witness than God. First with Moses we seen in numerous occasions where God had told him to write all that had taken place, or all that God had said (Exodus 17:14, 24:4, 34:27; Deuteronomy 31:9, 31:22-26). Also with the prophet Jeremiah we see God commanding him to write all the things that He had told him to proclaim to the people (36:1-4; vv. 27-28). Also with the prophet Habakkuk there is a similar command by God (2:2). Of course this is not all of the biblical examples of dictation. Take for instance this clear phrase, or variations of it, that appear throughout all the prophetic books and even some of the narratives of the Bible: “Thus says the Lord.” Even though the places where these phrases are found may

not appear to have to been dictated by God to the author as far as when the writing was composed, they were still dictated at some point to the author, otherwise they would not be identified as being clearly words of God. This to me implies very much that extremely large portions of the content of the Old Testament were given in the form of dictation. But there are other examples of dictation as well as with regards to content found in the Bible. Take for instance what Marshall has said regarding such:

How, for example, did the author of Genesis know what had happened in the Garden of Eden—assuming that what he has given us is a historical report of the matter? ...then we must suppose that God dictated the story directly to the author of Genesis. Likewise, when Luke tells us about conversations held behind closed doors (e.g. Acts 26:30-32), then we must assume that, if nobody leaked the information to him, God must have told him precisely what was said. (32)

It is clear to me that there is more biblical evidence to support the dictation theory as being a substantial component to the production of Scripture than any other view. Again though the problem is that scholars wish to find an all-inclusive theory that explains the whole of the Bible and not just large portions of it. It is my opinion that one cannot propose any all-inclusive theory without giving mention to the substantial portions of the Bible that have been produced either directly or indirectly from dictation by God. Some would say that to apply dictation as a serious component of the Scripture's composition is to deny the human aspect of the text, and to make the writers nothing more than instruments, or God's pen (Gaussen 24, Jeremiah 14, Marshall 33). To me this assertion stands against what Scripture clearly teaches about dictation and stands to be a formidable component of my personal definition of the inspiration of the Bible. To me it

does not downplay the human aspect of the composition of the Bible, or “depersonalize” the human authors or God in any way to say that inspiration did at times involve dictation (Marshall 33). The reason being that it would simply signify more of a personalized relationship taking place between God and the human authors if they can clearly understand God speaking to them and His clear instructions to copy those words verbatim, not undermine that relationship. Also through clear reasoning the human component of Scripture is still very much intact because God did not take up the utensil and write the words Himself but still commissioned man for that very act, making the human author a very prominent component of the task at hand. Also what about the mysterious component of the composition of the Scriptures that I believe most adhere to just as I quoted Gaussen attaining to above? I think that through clear reading and application of the Bible one can stand to reason that in the places where dictation is not present, whether direct or indirect, and the places where the text does not clearly state that God told the human authors to write, that the authors used their own techniques to write the Word of God. This does not mean that what they wrote is any less inspired by God. It should be seen that using such techniques does not make the text any less the Word of God, but really it should be seen as fitting more with God’s known character and the free will that we as humans possess. As Haldane has said, “We are not however required to suppose, that while inspired, the ordinary exercise of the faculties of the penmen of the Scriptures was counteracted or suspended, or that their minds did not entirely go along with what was communicated to them” (116). Hodge’s words have something very similar to say, and I feel it necessary to quote them at some length as well:

Of the manner in which God may inform and direct a free intelligence without violating its laws we have a familiar analogy in Nature in the relation of instinct to free intelligence. Intelligence is personal, and involves self-consciousness and liberty.

Instinct is impersonal, unconscious, and not free. Both exist alike in man, with whom intelligence predominates, and in the higher animals, with whom instinct predominates.

In every case the instinct of the creature is the intelligence of the Creator working through the creature's spontaneity, informing and directing, yet never violating any of the laws of his free intelligence. ...and that this activity [supernatural inspiration] of God, as in instinct or otherwise, does not in any wise reveal itself, either in consciousness or in the character of the action to which it prompts, as interfering with the personal attributes or the free rational activities of the creature. (10, 11)

Marshall also makes a valid point that must be expressed in this as well, as there are several instances where the content of the Bible is a recording of other documents. He says, "Sometimes the biblical writers quote secular sources, such as Persian archives (e.g. Ezra 7:11-26). ...it is farcical to suggest that they became inspired when they were copied out by Ezra" (33). Does this mean that what Ezra wrote is any less inspired than the rest of the text? No, what it means is that just like any other writer he used multiple sources to construct his portion of the Word of God. Does this mean that it is by Ezra's sole reasoning that such archives found their way into the text? No, God is still the impetus behind the reason why they are included, mainly because they are used in such a way to exemplify how God was working at that time, and they still stand to testify and witness to what He was doing; therefore, the text is still inspired. These facts bring to the forefront another point of focus as to the functional capacity of the Scriptures, but it will have

to be dealt with momentarily. To even further exemplify the quality of the Scriptures as coming from normal human writing processes while still being inspired, I think it is necessary to look at the Book of Joshua. Nowhere within this text is it given to the reader that God commanded Joshua to write all the words of the Lord, or to keep an account of all the workings of the Lord during Joshua's time. But it is clear from the text that Joshua did keep a record of it (24:26), and that it was so esteemed that it was included with the Book of the Law. Does this imply that what Joshua wrote was less the word of God and more his own account, or does this imply that the text is not inspired? I think not! It is clear to me that the text is inspired in just the same fashion as the rest of the Scriptures because it again is witnessing God's work in the life of His people, He is the defining impetus for the writing, and coming to some sort of knowledge of Him is the function that this writing serves, even though it is Joshua's words that were written. Still again there is another clear example of this same process going on in the Gospel of Luke. "Luke tells us that other people before him had attempted to write the story of Jesus, and the implication of his statement (Luke 1:1-4), which is confirmed by a study of his gospel, is that he consulted their works and made use of them in compiling his own" (Marshall 32). Marshall goes on further to say, "The whole tenor of what the biblical writers say about themselves is that they composed their books by using normal human mental processes" (33). But if this is the case, as is seen from Ezra, Joshua, and Luke, how can inspiration effect even the chosen words of Scripture and still not violate the laws of our nature or more importantly God's nature? This is where I have to be a little more technical and specific so as to not sound as a heretic. I do believe that God so inspired the Bible that even the words that are present in the *autographa* are what God would have, which coincides with others as well (Haldane 114, Jeremiah 17), but I do not believe nor

do I consider truthful those that assert that this happened in a process that is so mysterious that it cannot be explained, or that of necessity imply that dictation (in the places where dictation, whether direct or indirect, is not present) must have been used in some round-about way. The technical side of this is that I feel that some words that are present in the Bible were used by the authors themselves, and were not necessarily words that were given to them by God through the Holy Spirit. This is not to say they are not inspired, and I feel that reasoning from above stands as evidence of this, but that they are words that God allowed to be used through His permissive will, not His decretive and optative wills. Again, does this mean they are any less the words of God? No, I do not think so, but I feel that they are factors of the human authors themselves that stand to testify to the cooperation that existed between God and them that does not defy other things that we know, assert, and teach to be true about our human nature and God's nature. Still another factor that has presented itself in all my previous examples that asserts that the biblical writers used very common human reasoning skills to compose their portions of the Word of God, is the fact that no matter how the text was composed, either by method or by person, it always points to something else other than itself, even to Someone other than the human author. Achtemeier says it this way, "One gets the impression from Scripture that its chief task is to point away from itself to something or someone who is far more important" (92). This Someone is God, most specifically Jesus Christ, and the something is the salvation that is found through faith in Him and living a life to serve and honor Him.

So then, how exactly would I define the inspiration of the Bible, both in function and process? First and foremost, *theopneustos* means "God-Spirited" as is found in Second Timothy, chapter two, verse sixteen. "God-Spirited" refers most prominently to the undeniable fact that all

of the Scriptures, Old Testament and New Testament alike, are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work,” and most importantly function to “make,” one, “wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (3:15)—because the text has for it as revealing God in Jesus Christ as its main function, and has God as the main reason for text’s very existence—making it quite literally “God-Spirited.” Secondly, all Scripture functions as a trustworthy witness to the coming of, the death and resurrection of, and the final salvation of Jesus Christ that extends to believers. Scripture is trustworthy, even to the words of the *autographa* in that it provides a sure witness to this salvation, and it does this through words that are “God-Spirited;” and that such words at some times came from Divine dictation by God to the human author both directly and indirectly; and at other times come from the human author himself, whether from other sources and documents or his own character and vocabulary, but always are permissive to God’s will in regards to what He would have revealed and how He would have it revealed; and again at other times coming to composition by a combination of these two methods; though diverse, never lacking their “God-Spirited” quality because God is the reason the words have been formed, God is the reason the words were chosen to be shared, and God and His Son Jesus Christ and His salvation are always, whether directly or indirectly, the main topics of all the words of the all the Scriptures. The Scriptures are “God-Spirited” because they have for themselves a life that has God at its center.

What then is the conclusion to this matter? How does this clarified description of inspiration affect the lives of believers? The most prominent thing that comes to mind when thinking of what implications a better understanding of inspiration, and a better understanding of

the term most commonly responsible for the doctrine of inspiration, *theopneustos*, is of God's divine hand working in the life of all those who believe. I think my take on inspiration gets to the heart of the matter, to the reality that biblical inspiration is not some mystical, supra-supernatural act of God that defies all understandings of His ways and actions through history. I think it shows more of God's immanence and personal conduct towards the biblical authors, more the personal side of God, and not so much the extraordinary and unexplainable of God that is most often in focus with other views of inspiration. That is not to say that the extraordinary and unexplainable of God are not important, but I think that when one tries to encompass inspiration as fitting into those categories there seems to be a real burden to see God as personal and immanent in the lives of the biblical authors, and by assimilation in the lives of the believers throughout history. To me, without this clarification, the doctrine of inspiration becomes a means of separating current believers from those of the past, namely the biblical writers, which should not be so. I think truly that if some were here to share with us today that they would emphasize the personal relationship that they had with God and not the things that they could not explain. There is a sense within all their writings that other than to give an accurate representation of the revelation that was revealed to them, that they are really trying to convey the fact that God touched their lives, that He had an amazing role to play in their lives and in the lives of all people, even those estranged from Him, namely that everything they experienced was "God-Spirited." I think this too, that the word *theopneustos* really exemplifies how God touches lives. And not only touches them, but just like He moved and led the biblical authors into such profound expositions of the knowledge of Him, He leads and moves us as believers into a very profound relationship with Him. From the knowledge that we possess about the indwelling of

the Spirit, I think it is very clear that we live lives that are *theopneustos*, “God-Spirited.” God is the very reason we exist, and to know Him is the very function for which we were created—“God-Spirited.” I think the *theopneustos* of Scripture most closely resembles the incarnation of Christ—Scripture has been committed to us in such a way that is on our level of understanding and existence, and that it exists in a manner that is perceivable to the senses; Scripture illuminates truths through God’s Spirit moving within them; Scripture points to God’s ultimate goodness and love of all His creation, especially humans; Scripture teaches, testifies, and witnesses the truth of God’s existence; and Scripture clearly points to the way of salvation. If we as Christians are living our lives the way that we ought, we will find that we do all those things that Scripture does, which just so happens to be all the things that Christ has done, and by deduction just as Christ and His Word are *theopneustos*—so are we “God-Spirited,” so are we, amen.

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