

INSPIRATION AND INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE: AN EXEGETICAL INTERPRETATION OF 1TIM 3,16

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Abstract

To a man in the street and indeed to all Christian believers, the bible is the word of God. The general translation of 1Tim 3,16 forms the background for this belief. Over the years, people have taken steps to do what they would not have reasonably done if not because they are told that the bible says. One needs to get into the city to be appalled at the number of ecclesial bodies springing up daily, each with followers who are ready to die defending their biblical belief. This paper is intended to waken believers to certain curiosity. It examines the idea of inspiration and the consequent inerrancy from the backdrop of 1Tim 3,16. Appalled at certain evident and hidden contradictions and aporias in the bible, the paper questions the authenticity of inspiration with reference to the bible as a whole. If every part of the bible is inspired, then, can God really be the author of the contradictions? Could it be that He forgets easily as to inspire one thing here and another in the next place? If God is definitively an *ens perfectissimum*, then who is the author of the noticeable inconsistencies? Again, when 1Tim 3,16 talks of inspiration does it include the New Testament that was not as at then in existence or is it limited to the Old Testament? Taking a giant stride into some of these sacred areas in the plot of this research paper. It seeks to wake researchers from slumber by employing exegetical tools to give a critical interpretation of 1Tim 3,16 with a view to a better understanding of the meaning of the inspiration of the bible. Some part of the paper may sound offensive to fundamentalists but skeptics who may think that this is another epitaph designed to be a bomb shell against the bible may end up disappointed. The paper is

an academic exercise structured for enlightenment with open mindedness.

Introduction

The sola scriptura of Martin Luther is an ended revolution only in the paper. In reality, our people believe only what they see in the bible. The generality of Christians are mostly vulnerable to this as they fall victim to sweet tongued preachers who quote the bible even out of context to get what they want. If the problem is limited to overt fundamentalists, it will be manageable. It is much more worrisome especially as some intellectuals, priests and lay faithful who ought to know champion the same in our local churches. Only a blind and thoughtless unconcerned one will not get increasingly concerned with the perilous influence of biblicism on the Christians. Bible is cited as resourceful authority for these aberrations. Psalms are given and recited for particular problems as if they are magical. Fasting is given to clients without a single knowledge of their health conditions. Tithes and sowing of seed have taken the place of free will donations to the church. Bible is quoted to support each of these. The problem is obvious. People believe these things because they have gotten convinced to the truism that the bible is the word of God. A literary and critical reading of the bible brings one face to face with aporias, inconsistencies, contradictions, omissions and lapses in the bible. In the maze of all these, one big question remains to be answered – IS GOD RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE LIMITATIONS? If He is, could it be that he is not a perfect God? If it is wrong to conceive of God as imperfect, then who is the author of the imperfections in the bible? In other words, is the bible truly inspired? The researcher attempts to delve into these thought provoking questions. The paper uses exegetical lens to look at 1Tim 3,16 in order to explain inspiration and inerrancy of the bible. It is the conviction of the author that one needs to be enlightened to have reasons for belief (1Pet 3,15).

It is against this background that this paper is structured to delve deeply into the primary import of inspiration and scriptural inerrancy. It employs exegetical kaleidoscope to raise thoughtful questions with a view to helping the non-initiate curb fundamentalistic tendencies. It is believed that this paper will also rescue many from the dangerous claws of Biblicism and deceptions. This will not be possible without appropriating the dividends of intellectual empiricism, open mindedness and phenomenological results from uncorrupt hermeneutical exposé of the fact as it is. If believers get more convinced, balanced and stronger after reading this work and unbelievers have reasons to doubt their stand, then the paper has achieved its purpose.

Inspiration Defined

The word "inspiration" comes from the Latin noun *inspiratio* and from the verb *inspirare*. *Inspirare* is a compound term resulting from the Latin prefix *in* (inside, into) and the verb *spirare* (to breathe). *Inspirare* meant originally "to blow into", as for example in the sentence of the Roman poet Ovid: "*conchae [...] sonanti inspirare iubet*" ("he orders to blow into the resonant [...] shell"). In classic Roman times, *inspirare* had already come to mean "to breathe deeply" and assumed also the figurative sense of "to instill [something] in the heart or in the mind of someone".

In Christian theology, the Latin word *inspirare* was already used by some Church Fathers in the first centuries to translate the Greek term *pnéo*. When Jerome translated the Greek text of the Bible into the language of the common people of Latinum (the region of central western Italy in which the city of Rome is located), in the passage of the 2 Tim 3.16-17 he translated the Greek *theopneustos* as *divinitus inspirata* ("divinely breathed into"). (In English that passage reads: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God [*theopneustos*], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God

may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.")

Theopneustos is rendered in the Vulgate as the Latin *divinitus inspirata* ("divinely breathed into"), but some modern English translations opt for "God-breathed" (NIV) or "breathed out by God" (ESV) and avoid "inspiration" altogether, since its connotation, unlike its Latin root, leans toward *breathing in* instead of *breathing out*.

The Church Fathers often referred to writings other than the documents that formed or would form the biblical canon as "inspired".

Inspiration is the doctrine in Christian theology that the authors and editors of the Bible were led or influenced by God with the result that their writings may be designated in some sense *the word of God*.

When you break the doctrine of inspiration down to its essential elements, there are seven key factors:

- Divine origin and causality;
- Human agency;
- Written verbally (in words);
- Plenary (all of Scripture is inspired, not just parts of it);
- Only the "Autographs" (the original documents penned by the biblical authors) are inspired;
- Because Scripture is inspired, it is inerrant; and
- Because Scripture is inspired and inerrant, it alone has final authority.

Statement of the Problem

The problem is not always with nomenclatures or claims. One can always get big names but the problem is whether one is truly what he claims to be. The scriptures, divinely inspired though they may be, still appear in human words. They were hand-copied, saved and passed on generations after generations. The question is whether they were shielded from the imperfections of the copyists and human writers! Even after the invention of the printing press making production easier, the fact remains that human agents were still needed to proof read printed copies. The science of textual criticism, i.e the study concerned with detecting what is wrong with the text and either looking for a better and more accurate manuscript, or suggesting a better reading otherwise called lower criticism has come up with greater insights into some problems inherent in our inspired texts. In his encyclical letter, *Divino Afflante spiritu*, Pope Pius XII footnoted Augustine and encouraged scholars to restore the inspired texts to the original texts as perfectly as possible. In an effort to do this, some difficulties were encountered:

- a. Ancient Hebrew, the language of the bible was written only in consonants. Rendering this in English or other languages became difficult. For eg. the Heb text may read: kng Dvd klld th mn. In English should we read man or men? If we see kng Dvd lvd. Is it king David loved or lived?
- b. Since the ancients had no printing press, all the texts were hand-copied and there were no proofreaders to check spelling errors before publications. The scribe could get tired while copying or even distracted and could thus omit part of his text or copy it twice. Again, similar endings may make the eye leap ahead to similar ending down the page leading to the omission of an entire section. The opposite may happen leading to a repetition of a section. This is called a dittography or writing twice. 2Kgs 18,17 is an eg.
- c. There is also the problem of intentional addition to correct

an error in the original or as a comment leading to corruption of the original.

At the end of the book, *Misquoting Jesus*, Ehrman summarizes his findings as follows:

The more I studied the manuscript tradition of the New Testament, the more I realized just how radically the text has been altered over the years at the hands of scribes, who were not only conserving scripture but also changing it. To be sure, of all the hundreds of thousands of textual changes found among our manuscripts, most of them are completely insignificant, immaterial, of no real importance for anything other than showing that scribes could not spell or keep focused any better than the rest of us. It would be wrong, however, to say -- as people sometimes do -- that the changes in our text have no real bearing on what the texts mean or on the theological conclusions that one draws from them. We have seen, in fact, that just the opposite is the case.

In some instances, the very meaning of the text is at stake, depending on how one resolves a textual problem: Was Jesus an angry man [Mark 1.41]? Was he completely distraught in the face of death [Hebrews 2.8–9]? Did he tell his disciples that they could drink poison without being harmed [Mark 16.9–20]? Did he let an adulteress off the hook with nothing but a mild warning [John 7.53–8.11]? Is the doctrine of the Trinity explicitly taught in the New Testament [1 John 5.7–8]? Is Jesus actually called the “unique God” there [John 1.18]? Does the New Testament indicate that even the Son of God himself does not know when the end will come [Matthew 24.36]? The questions go on and on, and all of them are related to how one resolves difficulties in the manuscript tradition as it has come down to us.

The question is: in the midst of these clear problems, is biblical

inspiration a reality and to what extent if so!

Belief in inspiration

Inspiration as we have today goes back to the Israelite belief in the inspiration of Moses, of the prophets, the authors of wisdom literature, the priests in giving priestly instructions. These differ depending on the duty. Jer 18,18 speaks of a triple charisma: the instruction of the priest, the counsel of the wise and the word of the prophet.

Between 400 B.C and AD 100, there was already a firm belief in the divine origin of the scriptures. The Rabbis attributed the highest grade of inspiration to the Pentateuch and the lower grade to the prophets and then still lower to writings. Inspiration was then understood as dictation by which God communicated the words of the text to the inspired writer.

OT Evidence of Inspiration

The OT is cited more than 350 x in the NT showing that Jesus and the NT authors admit the belief of Judaism in the divine origin and authority of the sacred books.

Towards the end of the 2nd BC, the translator of Sirach posited the normative character of the Law, the Prophets and other writings for the Jewish people. This is also evident in 1Mac 1,59-60; 7,16-17; 12,9; 2Mac 2,13; Dan 9,2. The authority of these books are founded on their prophetic origin. Moses and other prophets were very conscious of speaking to the people in the name of God cf. Ex. 4,15-16; 19,7-8; Jer 1,9; 20,7-9; Ezek 38,1. The phenomenon of prophecy was attributed to the Spirit of God that possessed the prophet cf. Num 11,25-26; 1Sam 10,6; Hos 9,7. The same spirit is believed to work in the priest and the psalmist cf. 2Chr 24,20; 2Sam 23,2.

NT Evidence

The NT idea of inspiration goes back to 2Tim 3,14-17 and 2Pet 1,19-21. The former is the source of the word 'inspiration' but does not suggest the idea of verbal dictation. Even 2Pet depict the idea of impulse and never the idea of verbal dictation. The NT never claimed inspiration. The origin of the idea is not traceable. The early church however believes that it had the charisma of prophecy which Israel had possessed cf. Acts 2,16-20; 11,27; 13,1; 1Cor 12,28;14,37; Eph 4,11.

The Apocalypse claims its own divine origin (1,1-3) and in 2Pet 3,16 the epistles of Paul are treated as Scripture. Again the apostles claim for themselves and their teaching an authority superior to their predecessors (2Cor 3,7-8; Eph 3,5; Col 1,26; 1Thes 2,13; 2Thes 2,15).

Inspiration in the Tradition of the Church

The NT were equally treated with the OT by the middle of the 2nd Century (cf. Justin Martyr *Apol* 1.66,67 *Dial* c. Trypho 119; Irenaeus *Adv. Haer* 3.1.1-2; Theophilus of Antioch *Ad Autolyicum* 3.12; Hippolytus *In Cant.* 2.8). Among the antiquities, Christians in their prayers and theologies regard the OT and NT as works of the Holy Spirit. The Fathers of the Church believe unanimously that scriptures are free from error and from all contradictions. Though some other ecclesiastical writings like the works of Clement of Rome (1Clem 63,2); Gregory Nazianzus, Basil In Hex. Proem., Augustine, Jerome etc were taken to be inspired, the scripture is of a special and higher class.

The patristics from the beginning accept the concept of the divine origin of the bible. Some of them even borrowed the idea of 'dictation' (ὑπαγορεύειν) from Judaism to explain inspiration. However, when this word is used by the Magisterium, it connotes a wider sense than mechanical and verbal dictation. It expresses

origin, causality and responsibility. They believe that God is the author of the bible; the human author is God's instrument. Even though they lacked the tool for investigation, some of the fathers like Antiochenes, Jerome, and Augustine noted the importance of investigating the character, style, and work of the human writers (Jerome In Am. Prol., PL 25:990; Augustine, In Evang. Ioh. 1.1; Civ 17.6.2; Cons. Evang. 2.12.27-29). In Epist. 82 for eg. Augustine wrote: "If I do find anything in these books which seems contrary to truth, I decide that either the text is corrupt or the translator did not follow what was really said, or that I failed to understand it" (FathCh 9.392).

It must be noted that though the Fathers treated the Scriptures as letters from God to His people, it was not until the time of St. Gregory the Great (Moralia in Job Paef 1.2, PL 75:517) that it is explicitly applied to God. In her defence against the heretics like Marcion, Gnosticism and Manichees, catholic writers as well as the Magisterium insisted that one and the same God was the origin of both the OT and the NT.

It was not until the 19th c with the rise of rationalism and positivism that the question of biblical inspiration became a theological problem. Textual, literary and historical criticism discovered many imperfections, apparent errors and seeming contradictions in the bible. The human origins of the bible appeared to be irreconcilable with the divine inspiration. Outside the Church the idea of inspiration was reduced to a religious and poetic genius. Within the Church, some catholics like D. Haneberg believed that the church simply made some books sacred scriptures by giving approval to outstanding human works. Others like M. Jahn thought that God protected the authors from errors only in matters of faith and morals. There was no declaration from the church until the Council of Vatican 1 in 1870. The Council declared that the church accepts the sacred books not because they are approved by her authority,

although of human origin, nor because they contain revelation free from error, but because God is their author through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (EnchBibl 77); the rejection of the divine inspiration of the bible is condemned as heresy. This declaration initiated hot theological debates. In 1893, Pope Leo XIII intervened with his encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* and declared that 'God so moved the inspired writers by His supernatural operation that he incited them to write, and assisted them in their writing so that they correctly conceived, accurately wrote down and truthfully expressed all that He intended and only what He intended; and only thus can God be the author of the Bible.' This affirmation that God is active as principal cause in all the essential operations of the composition of a book laid down the lines upon which theological speculation since 1893 has operated.

The Extent of Biblical Inspiration

This deals with the parameter with which to determine the books that are inspired and secondly, whether every portion of the single books of the bible are inspired.

Inspiration is not an experiential fact and therefore cannot be attested by the form and character of the book. With the rejection of dogma by the Reformers, the question of the determination of which books that are inspired became more urgent. They could not streamline any criteria for inspiration. They only accepted the inner testimony of the spirit speaking to the reader. They also developed the criterion of prophecy and apostleship. Modern scholarship makes these criteria unacceptable. The Catholic holds firmly to her tradition as the only criterion, for there is no other medium through which revelation comes to man and inspiration can only be known by divine revelation.

Concerning the portions of each book that were inspired, some theologians believe due to exegetical difficulties that inspiration

was not equally extended to all parts of the text. For such theologians like Holden (1662); Rohling (1872) and Newman (1884), only texts with revealed doctrines were inspired. Their theory was rejected by Pp Leo XIII in his *Providentissimus Deus*.

Theological Theory of Inspiration

The data of belief in inspiration is seen in three elements: inspiration, divine authorship and the word of God. These elements look alike but are not the same. Through inspiration, God is not author of the bible in such a way that the bible is His word. Theology has its task to explain these beliefs.

Most Rabbis defend the concept of verbal dictation. Until the 19th C, it was the theory that dominated both the catholic and protestant theology. The theory does not take into account the differences in form and style of the individual books. Leonard Lessius (1587) opined that a book composed by human effort could become inspired by subsequent divine acceptance and approbation. Sixtus of Siena (1575) believed that mere ecclesiastical approbation is sufficient to regard a book as inspired. Haneberg (1850) revived the theory shortly before Vatican Council. Jahn in the early 19th C contended that inspiration consisted in the charisma of inerrancy. Vatican Council rejected both positions of Sixtus and Jahn.

Some theologians also thought that inspiration consists in the influence of the divine upon the composition of the sacred books which is more than subsequent divine or ecclesiastical approbation or negative assistance against error. Thus there emerges a distinction between inspiration which produces the sacred books and revelation which is the attestation of a truth by God. What is written by the inspired writer is a revelation to the readers but not necessarily revelation to the writer, who may acquire his knowledge in the normal human manner.

Franzelin in 1870 proposed a theory of revelation which distinguished the ideas of the bible and their verbal formulation. For him, only the ideas were inspired and are communicated to the writer via revelation or suggestion of ideas which he already possessed. The author has the responsibility of making the verbal formulation without any divine influence except negative assistance against error. Recent study of literary forms makes it difficult to divorce form and content this way and so renders the Franzelin's position, untenable. Again, the bible does not just have doctrinal ideas. It expresses hopes, fears, desires, anger and other psychological processes.

Between 1895-1896, Lagrange M-J abstracted from Franzelin's theory of idea of author to build upon the idea of inspiration. He explains that the cooperation of God and human writer is to be understood as a cooperation of principal and instrumental causality. The instrumental cause has its own proper virtue but attains the effect through its application and elevation by the virtue of the principal cause. Thus God is the principal cause of the scriptures while man is the instrumental cause. God as the principal cause, assumes the entire man in history, his personality, habits and thought without changing them but applying them to the desired end. Since the whole man is assumed as he is, the book which he produces is his and not another's. He added St. Thomas' idea of 'prophetic illumination' which aids the prophet to understand the truth which he expresses, whether this truth be revealed or learned by experience. This illumination helps the author get an insight above the natural conditions of his powers. Thus for Lagrange, both the verbal expression and ideas are inspired.

P. Benoit improved on Lagrange's teaching. He argues that understanding is not the problem of the writer but communication. Thus for him, 'prophetic illumination' is a practical movement enabling the writer to chose the form and style best suited for his

purpose.

Karl Rahner sees inspiration as a charisma of the primitive church which did not pass on the subsequent generation. For him, the church wrote the NT rather than the individual writers.

If inspiration is taken as understood, it has an implication for the sacred text, namely, inerrancy.

Inspiration and Inerrancy

a. The importance of biblical inerrancy

Some consider the arguments about inerrancy as a tempest in the teapot and a mere distraction to the peace of the church since it does irrelevant to the faith. The issue is that theology is not just about uncooked faith. If the bible is not completely without error then it must have at least one error. If there is an error in the bible, then, how can I trust the bible. Some who oppose the study of inerrancy have their reasons:

- I. The bible does not say anything about it and so we must not. This position is not tenable since there are many things we uphold in Christianity which are not overtly said in the bible, example, the doctrine of the Trinity. Scholars like Robert Alley (1978) of the University of Richmond argue that Jesus is not God because he does not claim to be so in the bible. His view caused furor among Southern American Baptists. Thus there are many things that are not said in the bible which we take as truth coming from the bible because it is implied.

Some say that the doctrine of inerrancy is only a theoretical one since we do not really have the original manuscripts and inerrancy is only about those manuscripts. To maintain such a position is tantamount to denying inspiration totally since the inspiration is only about the originals.

- ii. Some argue against it on the ground that it is a recent teaching in the church. Truth value of a teaching is not dependent on time or history. However, it has been there in the teachings of the great Theologians of the church. For example, Augustine (354-430) in his *Epistula* (p. 28) teaches that it would be of disastrous consequences if we follow our belief that anything false is found in the sacred books. Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) in his *Summa Theologica* 1.1.10 ad. 3 holds that nothing false can underlie the literary sense of the Scripture. Luther also says, “I have learned to ascribe this honour, i.e. infallibility, only to books which are termed canonical, so that I confidently believe that not one of their authors erred”. John Wesley, the Founder of Methodist church says, “Nay, if there be any mistakes in the Bible there may well be a thousand. If there is one falsehood in that book it did not come from the God of truth” (Journal VI:117).

b. Inerrancy: Meaning

Inerrancy is not synonymous with infallibility. Davis (1977) succinctly differentiates both when he says that: “The bible is infallible, as I define that term, but not inerrant. That is, there are historical and scientific errors in the Bible, but I have found none on matters of faith and practice”. Lausanne Covenant declared the Bible to be “inerrant in all that it affirms” meaning that there could be errors in particular areas like creation where the bible is not affirming historical facts.

The dictionary defines inerrancy negatively as “being without error”. Put more positively and contextually, “the inerrancy of the bible means simply that the Bible tells the truth. Truth can and does include approximations, free quotations, language of appearances, and different accounts of the same event as long as those do not contradict.” (Ryrie, C.C. 1981 p.30). Thus, 1Cor 10,8 says 23,000 died in one day and Num 25,9 records 24,000 but does not add the restriction 'in one day'. Both accounts are still correct by

approximation i.e. the number that died in one day and others that died later.

Inerrancy has never been an object of definition in the church, yet theologians and indeed many have believed it to be an article of faith because of its long standing existence and acceptance by many. It is actually a corollary of inspiration. Because of some exegetical difficulties, some scholars attempted a more accurate conception of inerrancy. Lenormant (1880) suggested that Genesis expresses truths via myths which are false. Di Bartolo (1889) and Didiot (1891) limited inerrancy to matters of faith and morals, like the infallibility of the church. D'Hulst (1893) distinguishes between revelation, which is infallible and deals with faith and morals, and inspiration, which is not infallible. Loisy (1892) proposed a theory of relative truth. For him, there is no absolute truth but only propositions which are true only within their historical and cultural context. Zanechia (1903) applied the idea of relative truth to mean that the concepts of one culture are not those of another culture. Modern exegesis came up with basic principles to concept of inerrancy.

- a. The words of the bible are always true in the sense which the human author conveys them and only in this sense.
- b. One must distinguish the fallible man from the infallible writer. The man may have erroneous beliefs which will certainly betray themselves at times. Inerrancy means that these are not affirmed, not that they are imperceptible.
- c. Inerrancy must be understood in terms of customary human linguistic usage the bible uses nontechnical language, figures of speech, paradox, approximation, telescoped narrative, nonchronological narrative, inexact quotations, folklore, legend, myth.
- d. Inerrancy must take account of the oriental mind and of the character of the semitic languages. The oriental mind is not metaphysical or dialectic. Hebrew cannot express sustained

abstract thought and subtle distinctions; its propositions have all the same grammatical weight and are not nuanced.

- e. Inerrancy must be conceived in terms of literary forms; and also in terms of personal style of the writers.
- f. The writer does not always intend to speak of things as they are in themselves. Thus things are described according to their external appearance, common inaccurate designation are used, advice is given which is valid only in a particular context, the argumentum ad hominem is employed.

Inspiration and Canonicity

All the books in the canon are taken to be inspired. It is however debated as to whether there could be a book that is inspired but it is not in the canon because it was lost. The church has not concluded on the matter but it is generally believed that some inspired books are lost and are not in the canon. In 1Cor 5,9, St. Paul made a reference to a previous letter of his and in 2Cor 2,3-9; 7,8-12 he made a reference to an earlier letter different from 1Cor. In Col 4,16 Paul refers to a letter he wrote to the Laodiceans. The OT mentions lost books which may have been inspired (1Chr 29,29; 2Chr 9,29; 12,15).

Biblical Inspiration: A Hoax?

The primary text of contention is 2Tim 3,16: πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγμὸν, πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ.

Translators have generally rendered this text to read: “All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness”. Unfortunately, many are not lettered in the original language of the bible. Majority are therefore vulnerable to the renderings we get from translators. Analysis of the text under study proves the veracity of the Spanish aphorism: *traduttore traditore* (a translator is a traitor). The

researcher is convinced that believers and preachers have remained victims of mistranslation in history. This is true not just on the backdrop of the expositions above but even from the literary analysis of the text studied.

The key word is θεόπνευστος. It could be seen as used attributively or predicatively. The later sense has remained more popular probably because it brings out the sense of the Jewish and Christian beliefs. In the predicative sense, it means "...is inspired" or "...is God breathed". This paper allies with the attributive rendering. It is an adjective nominative singular. Schweizer (1968) describes it as an *hapax legoumenon* seen only in 2Tim 3,16 in the entire New Testament. Betz (2000) holds that it is used attributively by Paul to describe γραφή (scripture) as holy. The emphasis is however on ὠφέλιμος. Thus, Paul's primary concern is to differentiate the writings ordained by God from other secular works.

A more correct rendering of the text in English would therefore be: "Every writing inspired by God is also profitable for ...". To render it as "Every scripture is inspired ..." is overtly a mistranslation because it negates the attributive sense of the key term and makes it predicative. Many translators fall for the later probably because they want to avoid the problem with και or for the purposes of the Jewish and Christian conception of inspiration. To do this is simply an escapist maneuver and interpolation. Actually, several versions and Fathers omitted και (Metzger 1971). Mounce (2000) interprets the και as adjunctive. Lock (1971) is of the opinion that the text is no complete definition of the purposes of Holy Scripture, and cannot be quoted as ruling out other purposes. Here stress is laid on such as affect the teacher's task in face of misleading teaching.

If one settles for a predicative interpretation of θεόπνευστος then one still gets into a problem. This is because as at the time Paul was writing to Timothy, it must be remembered that only the OT was

known as scripture. For him to say “every scripture is inspired . . .” it means only the OT and also implies that Timothy did not believe in the sacredness of the OT. The attributive interpretation of the word gets one out of this mess. This is so because, the attributive sense gives the nuance that the OT and indeed any other work that forms part of the canonized Scripture are all inspired.

Evaluation and Conclusion

Believers have always taken the bible to be inspired word of God. This has been the general position since the history of scholarship. A thorough reading of the bible especially with the lens of historical criticism confronts one with lots of apparent inconsistencies, contradictions and less probable claims. Ehrman (2009) laments that some of the discrepancies are irreconcilable. In the face of this obvious fact, one's faith could be called to question except if one responds to the yawning of inquisitive mind. This is exactly what this paper has attempted to do. It has explored the history of and the teachings on inspiration to its general acceptance among believers. Taken 2Tim 3,16 as the reference, the paper exposes the point of confusion and so insists that despite the looming discrepancies evident in the pages and books of the bible, the general message of salvation still remains undoubtedly inspired.

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