

The Doctrine of Progressive Inspiration

A Report by the Always-Right Reverend Doctor Isaiah J. Trin (Doc Trin, for short)

I was bruising the internet (or is it browsing?) the other day, in my Reverendly spare time, when I came upon a wonderful web site dedicated to scriptural and spiritual truth. I believe it is operated by a Reverend Cumulo Nimbus, and there are many remarkable things on the site. Would you believe, for instance, that there are lists of churches all over the United States that are recommended by Reverend Nimbus, in case the inquirer is looking for a place to legally worship. He prefers independent Baptist churches, which is certainly a step in the right direction, in the writer's humble opinion. He defines "independent Baptist" as "a church which is Baptist in polity and which is unaffiliated with a denominational structure." The churches he really likes are given two asterisks. I notice that most of those churches seem to be Baptist Bible Fellowship churches. One wonders if they meet his definition since, if they are unaffiliated, they would not find it necessary to "get out of" the BBF when they decide to leave. Just a thought to ponder.

Another characteristic of churches most highly recommended by Reverend Nimbus is that they are non-Calvinistic, because "we do not want to see people trained in a theology which we believe is unscriptural." Now, as a doctrinal expert, I must here mention that "Calvinistic" theology (always defined by the user's perspective) spans the spectrum, from anyone who prays that the Holy Spirit go before them in visitation, to those who get their sub tangled around their supra and lapse into Arianism. I notice some churches have the name of a flower after the church name. A church for the 60's, no doubt. And while "Calvinist" means many things to many people, I am sure that some who hold certain biblical doctrines as precious, would just as soon not be called by the name of one who persecuted their spiritual forefathers. That also means, of course, that a church unfortunate enough to have the likes of Charles

Spurgeon as pastor could not make the double-asterisk qualification, since he was prone to making such callous remarks as:

I do not come into this pulpit hoping that perhaps somebody will of his own free will return to Christ. My hope lies in another quarter. I hope that my Master will lay hold of some of them and say "you are mine, and you shall be mine. I claim you for myself." My hope arises from the freeness of grace, and not from the freedom of the will.

I then began to peruse his references on the defense of the King James Version of the bible. Now I need to preface all of this by saying that if you want to know what Doc Trin believes about the King James Version, you can read the tract *Use the Bible God Uses*, by that superlative writer, E.L. Bynum. Just remember that these issues have to do with THE TEXT.

I was browsing (got it!) through an on-line encyclopedia of religious terms, on Bro. Nimbus's site, when I came across the word *Easter*. The word *Easter*, as all Reverends (especially the Always-Right ones) know, is a source of contention in version defense, since it appears, in Acts 12:4, as a translation of the Greek word *pascha*. The word is translated some 28 times as *Passover* in the KJV, and once as *Easter*. Most people didn't notice it too much until all the nouveau-textual critics who don't know Greek became experts by putting as much faith into the writing of humans on the subject as they put in the Holy Ghost. Now we just all quote our favorite author and yell at one another.

Anyway (Anyone have a Diet Coke?), the comment under *Easter* says that "Some say that this should be translated 'passover' and they point to this as an error in the KJV, but they are wrong....'Easter' is a proper translation to distinguish it from the Jewish Passover, and the KJV translators were wise in their choice of this word. In using the term 'Easter' in Acts 12:4, the King James Translators (don't ask me why this term is capitalized in the text – *doc*) merely left intact the reading of Tyndale, Matthews, and the Geneva Bible."

Now I have to ask myself what kind of muck we are about to sink in here. I got out my 1599 Geneva Bible (yes, I admit it. I believe the Word of God existed before 1611 – Tyndale must have died for something). I

turned with great trepidation to the book of Acts, found chapter 12, and read down to verse *four*:

And when he had caught him, he put him in prifon, and delivered him to foure quarternians of fouldiours to be kept, intending after the paffeouer to bring him foorth to the people.

Now here I am in a real fix. Do I believe the Reverend Nimbus, or do I believe my copy of the Geneva Bible? (not to mention Adam Clarke, the worthy devine who said “The Geneva Bible very properly renders it *the passover*.” Did the printer of my Bible do this just to cause trouble, knowing that he wouldn’t have to answer to me four hundred years later? Does my doctrinally-overburdened mind need this kind of gamesmanship to confuse me? Do I now hide the truth to defend the truth?

I did some research on the issue, and if my sources can be believed, the word *Passover* was invented by Tyndale. Originally, it seems that he used *Easter* in his translation of the new testament in all the places, because the term *Easter* meant, to the English-speaking people, the season of Passover. He used *ester* or *easter* fourteen times, *esterlambe* eleven times, *esterfest* once and *paschal lambe* three times. But when he went to translate the old testament, he figured it would seem a little strange to use a word no-one would have known, so he invented the word *Passover*. It now means something in English. And, since it means something in English, we can now criticize the KJV translators for not using the new word Tyndale created, but instead using an old word that may have a different meaning to some, and probably has pagan leanings (Astarte, goddess of fertility – *comprenez?*) Wycliffe hadn’t translated the word. He just left it as *pask* or *paske* when he translated from the Latin. Wise man, Wycliffe. Saved a lot of argument. Eventually, *Passover* replaced *Easter* in the New Testament. The KJV translators left it in this one place, just for us to fight over. Now we are obligated to defend it. Or are we? Should we defend it any more than we should defend the other instances where Tyndale used it to begin with? Do we defend all of Tyndale’s versions, or just the ones that support the version we now defend?

I read a long article defending the use of *Easter* because the Passover was one day, and the “days of unleavened bread” followed, so

the translation should be *Easter* in this one place, since it had to do with the period after Passover. Now here is my question. Please listen very carefully as I ask this. This is not a trick question.

DID LUKE KNOW WHAT HE WAS WRITING?

Luke wrote *pascha* (in Greek, of course), or a reasonable facsimile, in Acts 12:4, and we are supposed to now believe that he knew it was different from the *pascha* that he wrote in Luke 22:1. I wonder if he knew he was writing two different things. I wonder if he knew he was *distinguishing* between “Passover” and “the days of unleavened bread” by writing *pascha* in one place, and *pascha* in another? Obviously different. And if he did know, how do we know he knew? By revelation? (Oh, that’s another author)

So now, if we say that the King James translators were “inspired” to write it two different ways, because they knew it was two different things, and actually applied to two different periods of time, I figure they must have known something Luke didn’t know. So we now have a new doctrine. I have named this new doctrine, because I am imminently qualified to do so, as the **Doctrine of Progressive Inspiration**. This doctrine is defined as occurring when we know more of God’s word after the translation than before, because we have been inspired by God to understand what he meant, even if he meant something different than the writer thought he meant when God breathed it through him. We can now understand things that the writers of the Bible did not understand by benefit of this newly-defined doctrine. I will graciously and humbly accept all accolades for this milestone in theological management.

Or, if we don’t really want any more new doctrines, perhaps there is another option. There are many cases where one word in Greek is translated more than one way in English, and we accept it as a valid translation because it means something to us in the language into which it is translated. We do not necessarily call it an error and blame God for inappropriate breathing. If we look up *Easter* in Webster’s (the 1913

unabridged was the oldest I could find), it says it's the Jewish Passover.
Exegetical Bingo!!!

So is my Geneva Bible uninspired because it says *Passover*? Is the KJV uninspired because it says *Easter*? Would *Passover* have been a better word (as Matthew Henry, Matthew Poole, Adam Clarke, etc, hold?) Were Tyndale's earlier versions uninspired because they used *Easter* more than once, and failed to properly differentiate the "days of unleavened bread" as we now assert? Or is, perhaps, the Word of God inspired because it is the Word of God, the writers actually did know what they were writing, and translations are valid if the meaning of the correct text is properly and wholly conveyed in the language into which it is being translated?

Isn't that better than relying on statements that seem to be less than true to defend our own statements that may be false?

Oh, well. So much for making the approved church list.

Yours for the sake of paranoia.

Doc Trin