THE EMPHASIS OF THE ZURICH REFORMERS ON THE
SUBJECTIVE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
IN THE INTERPRETER

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The purpose of this study is to analyze the teachings of Huldrych Zwingli and Heinrich Bullinger on the subject of the subjective work of the Holy Spirit as it relates to the interpreter of Scripture. This emphasis on the necessity of the Spirit's work within the interpreter is an important element in the Reformers' doctrine of Scripture and exposition of the Word of God. For the purposes of this article, the teachings of Zwingli on this subject will be limited to his sermon “Of the Clarity and Certainty or Power of the Word of God” and relevant secondary sources. The emphasis on this topic in the work of Bullinger will be drawn for the most part from his Decades and the Second Helvetic Confession. In conclusion, we will relate the teachings of both Zwingli and Bullinger to the symbolic statements in the Second Helvetic Confession in an attempt to outline the position of the Zurich tradition on this subject.

I. Huldrych Zwingli

The most explicit statement of Zwingli in regard to the subjective illumination of the Biblical interpreter by the Holy Spirit is found in his sermon “Of the Clarity and Certainty or Power of the Word of God.” Preached at the Oetenbach convent near Zurich in the summer of 1522, this sermon asserts the doctrine of the Word of God from two aspects, its ability to bring to pass that which it declares and its power to bring with it its own inward illumination so that it is clearly understood and interpreted by him.1 Although a learned scholar himself and fully aware of the importance of scholarly exegesis, Zwingli believed that since the Word of God was mediated through the documents of Scripture, the Holy Spirit needed to direct and apply this divine content to the faithful reader. The Word is light and life, but it does not automatically give light and life to all who read the Scriptures. Even though the Word may be outwardly understood, the Holy Spirit still needs to give inward illumination.2

Imago dei

In the opening section of “Clarity and Certainty,” Zwingli shows that as man was created in the image of God, this imago dei consisted not in a physical likeness to God, for the basic problem of Mephitius and the Anthropomorphites was to conceive of God as having a corporeal existence. Man was made in the image of God in respect of his mind or soul. Augustine and the early doctors stressed that man was in the image of God in the faculties of the intellect, will, and memory (intelllectus, voluntas et memoria).3 Zwingli, however, feels that more than these are involved in the likeness to God. “There is in particular that looking to God and to the words of God which is a sure sign of the divine relationship, image and similitude within us,” he says.4 He proceeds to show from several Biblical passages that man has a universal thirst after God and a desire for eternal blessedness after this life. If there are those who do not have this longing for blessedness, it is a result of the despair and lust into which they have sunk. Thus the desire for salvation is present within us by nature, by virtue of the likeness which “God the masterworkman has impressed upon us.” This He did by breathing into Adam that lifegiving breath which is to be understood as the Spirit of God.5

In Colossians 3, St. Paul exhorts to put off the “old man” and put on the “new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” Therefore, this universal longing for God is renewed and increased by the redemptive work of Christ so that the new man tries more and more to come to a knowledge of Him who implanted this image in Him. Thus, as the old man is more and more overcome by Christ, the new man is “renewed day by day,” II Cor. 4. This new man has a desire to live according to the law and will of God, but is opposed by the old, outward man, although the grace of Christ assists the believers and gives him cause to delight in the Word of God. This Word of God gives food to the soul and great joy and assurance because it is in God’s image.6

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This section on the image of God, then, suggests that Zwingli sees the image of God as being darkened, but not obliterated by the fall, and that the imago dei can be nourished and renewed by the Word of God. Just as Adam was made alive by the inbreathing of God, so the imago may be nourished and revivified so that its desire for spiritual food may be increased by the inbreathing of the Holy Spirit who works with and through the Word of God.

Certainty or Power of Word of God

The following section of the sermon deals with the certainty or power of the Word of God. By the certainty of the Word of God, Zwingli means that it has the power to bring to pass that which it speaks. All things are brought into conformity with its purpose. The proof of this certainty or purpose is seen in numerous examples found in both the Old and New Testaments. In Genesis 1, God said, “Let there be light, and there was light.” The Word is alive and strong, and even brings into existence those things which did not exist. Furthermore, the Word speaks judgment upon the disobedient, such as is seen in the curse upon Eve and the toil and death laid upon Adam and his descendants when the ground is cursed with thorns and thistles. The disobedient in Noah’s day were lost when what the Word spoke came to pass. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and of Lot’s wife came to pass when the commands of the Word were disobeyed. On the other hand, great miracles occurred in fulfillment of the promises of the Word. For example, what God through Moses accomplished exemplifies the power of the Word, as is also seen in the lives and deeds of Joshua, Gideon, Jephthah, Saul, David, and Solomon.

This same strength and certainty and power of God’s Word is seen in the New Testament. The divine promise to Zechariah and the barren Elizabeth came to pass in John the Baptist. The Word of God conceived the Saviour of the world in the Virgin Mary without any detraction from her purity. The divine prophecies were fulfilled in the ministry and miracles of Christ. God punishes or saves according to His word. Zwingli thus concludes that “the Word of God is so alive and strong and powerful that all things have necessarily to obey it . . . The whole teaching of the Gospel is a sure demonstration that what God has promised will certainly be performed.” With the Word of God proven certain, Zwingli would then exhort us to conform our lives to its commands or else suffer its certain judgments.

Clarity of the Word of God

Zwingli begins his section on the clarity of the Word by showing that God has revealed Himself in parables, proverbs, and riddles in former times, and now He has revealed Himself fully in Jesus Christ. Parables and proverbs have provoked us to search out hidden meanings and they have shown us that God has attempted to give His message to us in a gentle and attractive way. God’s intent has always been to communicate His Word clearly to men. Those who have not understood have failed to do so because their own iniquities have blinded them. Zwingli’s thesis is that he who desires to understand the Word of God and lays aside his own understanding with an eye toward learning from the Word of God and giving himself wholly to God, will be given understanding. In contrast, he who comes to the Scriptures with his own opinion and interpretation and wrests Scripture into conformity with his own preconceptions, will not receive anything, but will be blinded by his own wickedness. This is the same kind of hardness of heart which brought God’s judgment upon Israel.

As in the section of the imago dei, Zwingli points out that it is the rightful function of the creature to love the Word of God and to profit from it. If there are those who cannot bear to receive it, they are sick. In itself, the Word of God is always clear, right, and good. It is never His will for us to fail to understand Him.

In substantiating his contention that the Word of God shines on human understanding to enlighten it in such a way that it understands and confesses the Word, Zwingli turns to Biblical evidence. David says in Psalm 118, “The entrance of thy words, O Lord, giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.” Thus, those who humble themselves as little children will receive understanding, just as the simple shepherds understood clearly the words of the angels at Jesus’ birth. Further examples demonstrate the clarity of the Word as seen in the Old Testament.

1. Noah understood God’s command to build the ark, even though other men continued their lives as usual. He did not interpret God’s Word as a delusion, for the Word brought with it its own enlightenment so that Noah could know that it was from God, and not another (Gen. 6).

2. Abraham understood God’s command to sacrifice Isaac in spite of the human questions which must have challenged its authenticity. The Word so enlightened him that he knew it to be the Word of God. Although his reason could not accept the command, his faith gained the victory and he obeyed. His faith was thus enabled only by the light which the Word of God brought with it (Gen. 21, 22).

3. When Moses had brought Israel into a precarious situation with the sea in front and the enemy behind, God directed him to stretch out his hand over the sea and divide it. He did not despair or think that the
voice of God was a delusion, but recognized it with utter certainty. This voice he recognized because it contained the light of the Word of God which came with clarity and assurance (Exod. 14).

4. When Jacob heard the voice of the One who stood at the top of the ladder he recognized and clearly understood it, not because he had previously seen or heard God, but because God’s Word brought with it its own clarity and enlightenment (Gen. 28).

5. Micah recognized the voice of God and prophesied according to it even though 700 prophets contradicted him and the power of two kings might have intimidated him. But the Word of God revealed itself to him and brought its own clarity to assure the prophet’s understanding (I Kings 22).

6. Jeremiah proclaimed the Word of God without fear even when his life was threatened, because he trusted the Word of God and had been taught by God to understand it (Jer. 26).

7. Elijah, even when he believed that he was completely alone, obeyed God against the prophets of Baal because he was divinely enlightened (I Kings 19).

Zwingli concludes his Old Testament substantiation of the clarity of the Word by stating:

These seven passages from the Old Testament will be enough to show conclusively that God’s Word can be understood by a man without any human direction: not that this is due to man’s own understanding, but to the light and Spirit of God, illuminating and inspiring the words in such a way that the light of the divine content is seen in his own light, as it says in Psalm 35 (A.V. 36): “For with thee, Lord, is the well of light, and in thy light shall we see light.” And similarly in John 1.14

Through numerous New Testament passages, Zwingli substantiates his thesis that the Word is clarity itself and it lights every man who comes into the world (John 1). His thrust in this section takes three major directions: 1. the clarity of the Word validates individual interpretation through the illumination of the Holy Spirit in contrast to the official and authoritative interpretations of the Caiphas’s and Annas’s; 2. the Word illuminates the individual only if he is willing to discard prior presuppositions and allow it to speak; 3. faith is basic to the correct understanding of the clear Word of God.

1. Clarity of individual interpretations

Anything which we receive and understand must come to us from above, not from other men. If we allow our comprehension and understanding of divine doctrine to come from other interpreters rather than from above, we are just as liable as Balaam to be led astray. If Christians are to be taught of God (Isaiah 54), let them learn from Christ who is the caput ecclesiae, rather than to subject the truth to the Annas’s and Caiphas’s, the official interpreters. The true teacher of doctrine is not the doctores, and patres, the pope, the cathedra, nor the concilia, but the Father of Jesus Christ. Zwingli declares:

Even if you hear the gospel of Jesus Christ from an apostle, you cannot act upon it unless the heavenly Father teach and draw you by the Spirit. The words are clear; enlightenment, instruction, and assurance are by divine teaching without any intervention on part of that which is human.15

Christ says (John 6): “Therefore I said, that no man can come to me except it be given him of my Father.” If the Father leads to Christ and gives understanding of Him, why is there need for any other teacher or interpreter? The disciples knew of no teacher other than Christ, for “Thou hast the words of eternal life.” It is significant that Zwingli interchanges the work of Christ, or the Spirit, and the Father as the only Teachers of doctrine. His understanding, then, of the internal illumination of the Christian as he hears the Word is a Trinitarian one. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work as One in the Word.16

Zwingli continues to emphasize the concept that one is taught only by God. If God instructs, there is no need to ask of men. As in I Corinthians 2, Paul says that he speaks not that which was received from the spirit of the world, but those things which he was taught by the Holy Ghost, so must the Christian realize that God does not allow Himself to be known by the spirit of this world. He reveals Himself to babes, not to a council of bishops who are too lofty and distant for Him. “God reveals himself by his own Spirit, and we cannot learn of him without his Spirit.”17 It is only through the anointing of the Holy Ghost that one can abide in and be taught by the Spirit of God. Only through the Spirit can one receive certainty of truth as the mind is brought into captivity to God who alone gives inward certainty and assurance.18 Thus, the Spirit is the agent through whom knowledge of the Word of God and of the Father is given. Any attempt to arrive at this knowledge from the words of men or councils is doomed to barrenness and death.

Furthermore, any attempt to conclude that an interpretation of the majority is correct merely because its supporters are numerous is absurd. Truth is not necessarily with the majority, for even popes and councils have erred, such as in the Arian heresy. Ultimately, only God can teach us the truth with certainty. “We do not need human interpreters, but his anointing, which is the Spirit, teaches us of all things . . .”19 We must leave the wisdom of men and be theodidacti, taught of God, not of men.20

The result of this reliance upon God alone is the destruction of
the theologica scholastica, which is merely a system of man by which he thinks divine teaching is to be judged and perverted by infallible human wisdom. Worldly or human wisdom is confounded and overthrown by those whose inward longing and faith have led them to true divine doctrine. This spiritual man brings to the Word the mind given him by God, and not his own mind of human wisdom. With this illumination, even the lowliest can speak on Scripture when the leading prophets have missed the truth.21

2. Discarding of human presuppositions

Even though one may sincerely desire to let the Word speak to him, human biases and presuppositions may be imposed upon the Word so that it cannot be clearly heard. One of the most damaging obstructions to a clear perception of the Word is the tendency to want to find support in Scripture for our own view, and we thus wrest it to make it say what we want it to say.22 Zwingli himself confesses that for many years his reliance upon philosophy and theology, human teaching, prevented him from learning the doctrine of God directly from the Scriptures. The proper procedure of study is first to consult the mind of the Spirit of God (Ps. 84). Ask God for His grace, that you may have the mind of the Spirit to lay hold on His opinion, not yours. Correct interpretation, then, comes from the subjection of oneself to the Word in humility, not from an arrogant overestimation of one's own feeble understanding.23

3. Necessity of faith

How may one overcome the problems which distort true doctrine from the Word? First, one must put his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and his atonement for us. The moment one believes, he is drawn by God, and the work of the Spirit of God becomes operative within him.24 Allowing the Father to draw one to the Word (John 6) is to believe firmly in the Word of God rather than the wisdom of men. This inward longing and faith confounds and overthrows worldly wisdom.25 In a sense, then, in faith, man becomes free for God. His biases and his worldly wisdom are overcome by his dependence upon the Word to bring its own illumination through the Holy Spirit. Faith is thus the antithesis to all human reasoning and authoritative interpretations which are built upon fallible human understandings. Interpretation grows out of the illumination of the reader as he reads the Word made clear by the Holy Spirit.

Zwingli directs his thoughts concerning the clarity and certainty of the Word of God to a very practical conclusion. He is not interested simply in academic discussion, but more particularly in applying his very perceptive insights to practical performance. In his conclusion he sets down twelve principles by which a sincere Christian can gain instruction in understanding the Word of God and may personally experience the fact of being taught of God. Essentially, these principles are that the Christian must pray that the old, worldly mind may be killed off so that God's Spirit may infill and reveal the Word and give assurance and joy that God's grace will magnify itself within him so that the Word will become clear.26

Summary and Conclusion

Zwingli recognizes man's need for the Word of God as this need is reflected in the imago dei. The Word of God fills this need because it has the power to accomplish what it promises. If the reader will but open his heart to the Word, it will speak to him in all clarity, and will give him illumination for his life.

By clarity, Zwingli means that the Word brings with it its own inward enlightenment. The Spirit of God teaches all things and applies the message of the Word of God to the Christian who receives it in faith and penitence.27 The knowledge of God which man desires is found in His Word, and this Word is lucid in and of itself.28

Zwingli realizes the importance of scholarship and a knowledge of the original languages, and also the fact that the essential message of the Bible is within the grasp of rational understanding alone. The scholar's work is necessary to open up more difficult passages or to fix the exact meanings of certain passages. Yet, as Bromiley observes, "Zwingli does see clearly that the Word is more than the external letter of Scripture, and that it has its effect and carries with it inward conviction only in so far as the Holy Spirit applies it as the living Word."29 Oswald Myconius, Zwingli's associate and friend, also observes the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit in Zwingli's thought: . . . in the judgment of learned persons, he was a thorough master of the Holy Scriptures, but, unlike the scholars of his day, he needed more and more the knowledge of original languages, for he knew that only such knowledge could fill certain gaps . . . . He learned from Peter (2 Peter 1:21) that interpretation of Scripture is beyond the unaided capacities of the children of men and he looked above to his master, the Holy Spirit, praying that he make him understand God's thoughts aright. And in order not to err, or lead others astray with a false picture of the Spirit, he compared Scriptural passages with each other, explaining the obscure ones with the clear ones. In order that everybody could recognize the Holy Spirit's teaching, as opposed to that of human wisdom . . . .30
Thus, it seems that Zwingli's emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in the interpreter of Scripture is the key to his concept of the clarity of Scripture. It is because the Word is the Word of God that the Spirit of God gives testimony to it and an inner apprehension of it. In Zwingli's Trinitarian understanding of the work of the Word, there is a dynamic relationship among the Father and the Son and the Spirit, all of whom find expression as God through the Word. Hence, there is not an attempt to differentiate between the Word and Scripture, for he considers the Word to be expressed through Scripture, but only when the believer apprehends the utterance of God Himself through the Spirit. The Scripture is the Word, but it does not become alive in the reader apart from the activity of God through the Holy Spirit. He does not separate between form and content, Word spoken and Word written, as some theologians attempt to do, even though he does see that the Word is more than written content of Scripture. The Word is expressed in the external forms of speech and writing which can be apprehended rationally, but it has power and authority only when it becomes dynamically operative through the work of the Holy Spirit, who applies it as the living Word. Thus, Zwingli sees no valid interpretation of the Word, whether by bishops, cardinals, popes, or councils, without the inward presentation and apprehension of the Word by the Spirit.

II. Heinrich Bullinger

Bullinger concurs with Zwingli that the true sense of Scripture may be corrupted by bringing one's own opinion and fancies to it. The Arian church did not refuse the Word of God, but they thoroughly corrupted the right meaning of it by their blasphemous interpretations. One should not interpret Scripture according to his own fantasies, but according to the mind and meaning of Him who first revealed the Scriptures (II Peter 1:20,21). "Therefore," he says, "the true and proper sense of God's word must be taken out of the scriptures themselves, and not forcibly thrust upon the scriptures..." Furthermore, Bullinger thinks that a knowledge of languages and the liberal sciences is a scholarly requisite to sound interpretation. In this emphasis he again reflects Zwingli's scholarly interpretative methods.

He also feels that the Word of God is not dark, but should be read of all men, God's will is to have His Word understood; therefore He spoke in the common language, and the writers of Scripture wrote in plain and easy phrases. Although Satan tends to blind the under-

standing, especially of unbelievers, most difficulties may be overcome by study, diligence, faith, and the means of skilful interpreters. Although Bullinger presented several other principles of interpretation such as the fact that the exposition of Scripture must not be contrary to the articles of belief in the church of the Reformers, exposition should not be contrary to the love of God and our neighbor, the context should be considered, and the dark and obscure passages must be understood in the light of the clearer and more evident, the most effectual rule is, he says, the need to expound the Scriptures with a heart zealous for God and only after earnest prayer. Scripture may not be properly interpreted by a heart full of pride and vainglory, heresies and evil affections. Only that heart "which doth continually pray to God for his holy Spirit, that, as by it the scripture was revealed and inspired, so also by the same Spirit it may be expounded to the glory of God and safeguard of the faithful." Thus, the Spirit who revealed Scripture is required to properly expound it. It is the Spirit who causes the seed of God's Word to be quickened in our hearts, and the hearing of the Word must be joined with faith. "For what will it avail to hear the word of God without faith, and without the Holy Spirit of God to work or stir inwardly in our hearts," he reasons. His emphasis on the need for the inner working of the Holy Spirit in the interpreter is basic to his hermeneutic. Although all scholarly methods should be used, the interpreter does not attain to a satisfactory spiritual interpretation of Scripture by these means alone. We may most clearly conclude his position on the work of the Holy Spirit by quoting him as follows:

If therefore that the word of God do sound in our ears, and thereby the Spirit of God do shew forth his power in our hearts, and that we in faith do truly receive the word of God, then hath the word of God a mighty force and wonderful effect in us... Let us therefore beseech our Lord God to pour into our minds his holy Spirit, by whose virtue the seed of God's Word may be quickened in our hearts, to the bringing forth of much fruit to the salvation of our souls, and the glory of God our Father.

III. The Second Helvetic Confession

The account of Bullinger's composition of the Second Helvetic Confession and its subsequent translation and publication by the Elector Frederick III is well-known. Composed by Bullinger for his own use, this Confession is substantially a restatement and amplification of the First Helvetic Confession, which was drawn up at Basle in 1536, with the help of several of Zwingli's associates, among whom were Bullinger, Myconius, and Leo Judae. Since the Second Helvetic Confession con-
tains essentially the content of the First Helvetic, we shall confine our discussion to the Second as a creed which is the symbolical statement of the Zurich Reformers.

In Chapter I, "Of the Holy Scripture Being the True Word of God," Bullinger declares that both Testaments are the true Word of God and do not derive their authority from men. God who spoke to the writers of Scripture still speaks to us through the Holy Scriptures. It is His living voice that we hear in the Word, and in this Holy Scripture is proclaimed all that is necessary for salvation. The Scriptures give true wisdom and godliness, they give instructions for the reformation and government of churches, they instruct in all duties of piety, they confirm doctrines and confute errors (II Tim. 3:16,17). Thus, in the Word of Scripture, the Spirit of the Father speaks (Matt. 10:20; Luke 10:16; John 13:20).

Because its very content is spoken of God in the Scriptures and in the proclamation of preachers lawfully called, the Word of God itself is preached and received by the faithful. Thus, preaching as it rightfully is grounded in Scripture is the Word of God. At this point the Confession deals with the subjective work of the Holy Spirit in the reader or hearer of the Word. Bullinger points out that although it is the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit which instructs in true religion, this inward instruction cannot be separated from the outward content of the Word as it is preached. He thus does not separate inner apprehension of the Word from correct and sound objective exegetical and homiletical procedure. The study of the original languages and of sound exegetical and interpretive methods is not minimized. Even though God could illuminate whom He will without the external ministry of the Word, He has not chosen to do so. The heresies are detestable because they attempt to separate the outer statements of the Scriptures from the inner workings of the Holy Spirit. The heretics maximize inner illumination of themselves without any reference to the outer Word of Scripture, hence asserting new revelations and interpolations to be the Word of God. Bullinger abhors this practice and insists that the Spirit speaks to us only in and through Scripture and the proclamation of the Word. Thus, the inner ministry of the Holy Spirit is not to be separated from the outward ministry of the Word in Scripture and preaching.40

More specifically related to the theme of this study is Chapter II, "Of Interpreting the Scriptures; And of Fathers, Councils, and Traditions." Bullinger here sets forth several very basic hermeneutical principles which relate primarily to his refutation of the Roman Catholic method of authoritative interpretations, but he also emphasizes that irresponsible individual interpretations must also be rejected. First of all, he insists that the authoritative interpretations called "the meaning of the Church of Rome" cannot be forced upon all men as the "true and natural interpretation of the Scriptures." The interpretations which are orthodox are those which are taken from the Scriptures themselves as they are read in the original languages, not those which are merely based on some translation, however widely used it may be. Here he strikes a blow at the exclusive use of the Vulgate as the basis for all Roman interpretations. Bullinger realizes that translations may very well reflect the biases of the translators who then turn again to the translation to support the biases left there in the first place.41 Here is reflected the scholarly emphasis of both Zwingli and Bullinger, as well as their desire to discard human presuppositions in coming to the Word.

Next, Bullinger points out that the historical circumstances surrounding the Scripture passages must be taken into account. For God speaks within the context of history, and historical meanings must not be carelessly extracted from their original settings. This principle would call to account any method, Roman or otherwise, which attempted to abstract from the historical meaning of Scripture a sense which would do violence to the clear meaning of a passage. Zwingli's emphasis on the clarity of the Word of God is no doubt reflected here. The plain, historical interpretation must prevail over that which is abstracted, allegorized, and made authoritative by arbitrary ecclesiastical decisions, and the clear passages must explain the difficult ones.

Furthermore, the correct interpretation must be in accord with the rule of faith and charity. As we have shown above, Bullinger teaches that any exposition of Scripture which is not in harmony with the expression of love toward God and one's neighbor is to be rejected. The loving and true interpretation will thus make for God's glory and man's salvation, rather than for the strengthening of the tyranny of authoritarianism.42

At this point Bullinger states that even though we do not despise the interpretations of the Greek and Latin fathers, and do not reject these secondary sources insofar as they agree with the Scriptures, we do modestly dissent from them when they are found to set forth things which differ from, or are contrary to, the Scriptures. Bullinger further applies this same principle to the decrees and canons of the councils. It is interesting to note here that although Zwingli would agree with this principle, his statement of it would probably be less moderate and balanced in tone than Bullinger's. Where Zwingli would find a father or a council contrary to Scripture, he would be more likely to call them the "Anna's and Caiaphas's" than to "modestly dissent."
Bullinger refuses to be intimidated in his interpretation by the "bare testimonies of fathers or decrees of councils; much less with received customs, or with the multitude of men being of one judgment, or with prescription of long time." In matters of faith, there is no other judge than God Himself, who pronounces by the Scriptures what is true or false, what is to be followed or avoided. The judgment of spiritual men based on the Word of God is the only trustworthy guide. This is a direct refutation of the Vincentian canon, the principle of universality which was articulated by Vincent of Lerins in the fifth century. Vincent crystallized the trend toward authoritarian interpretation by his dictum, *quod ubique, quod sumper, et quod ab omnibus creditum est*, that is true which has been believed everywhere, always, and by all. Thus, his principles of ecumenicity, antiquity, and consensus formed the structure for authoritative interpretation. Bullinger directly refutes this ancient formula for testing orthodoxy by showing that the assemblies of priests in the Old Testament were sometimes condemned by the prophets. Zwingli, likewise, pointed out as shown above that any attempt to conclude that an interpretation of the majority is correct merely because its interpreters are more numerous is absurd. Truth is not necessarily with the majority, but with God, who alone can teach men the correct interpretation. Thus, the true test of orthodoxy is not based on antiquity or majority, but on that which is attested to by the Spirit of God.

In conclusion, it may be noted that although the Second Helvetic Confession stresses the work of the inner illumination of the Holy Spirit in the proclamation of the Word, it does not explicitly develop the subjective work of the Holy Spirit in the interpreter in the section on interpreting the Scriptures. However, one must read this section in the phasizes the need for faith in understanding true doctrine. The Word of God is clear because the Holy Spirit illuminates and guides the man of faith in interpreting it. Bullinger also emphasizes that the interpreter must approach the Scriptures only after earnest prayer for the help of the Holy Spirit in expounding the Word and quickening it to his heart. Thus, the need for the inner working of the Holy Spirit in the interpreter is important for Bullinger's hermeneutic, just as for Zwingli's. And although he does not develop this emphasis explicitly in the Second Helvetic Confession, he certainly considers it to be basic, and he thus takes this emphasis for granted. It is from this awareness that he insists that the judgment of "spiritual men" must be trusted above the ideas of the "bare testimonies of the fathers" or the decrees of councils.**
18Ibid., p. 83.
19Ibid., pp. 87, 88.
20Ibid., p. 89.
21Ibid., pp. 89, 91, 93.
22Ibid., p. 88.
23Ibid., pp. 88, 89, 91.
24Ibid., p. 86.
25Ibid., p. 89.
26Ibid., pp. 93-95.
27Bromiley, op. cit., pp. 55, 57.
29Bromiley, op. cit., pp. 55, 57; quote on p. 57.
30Myconius (cited by Courvoisier, Ibid., p. 18).
31Ibid., pp. 55-57.


33Ibid.
34Ibid., p. 71.
35Ibid., p. 79.
36Ibid., pp. 66f.
37Ibid., pp. 67, 69.
40Ibid., Vol. III, p. 833.
41Ibid., Vol. III, p. 834.
42Loc. cit.
43Ibid., vol. III, p. 834.
46See footnote 19, above.