

Revelation and Illumination

I. The Spirit as Revealer of the Father and Christ

- John 16:14: The Spirit will glorify the Son by declaring him to us.
- The Spirit is regularly *speaking*: 1 John 5:6: “And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.”
- The Spirit is the true author of the OT:
 - Matt 22:43: “[Jesus] said to them, ‘How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, [quotes Ps 110].’”
 - Heb 3:7: “Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, ‘Today, if you hear his voice, [goes on to quote Ps 95].’”
 - Heb 9:7: “By this [OT Scripture] the Spirit indicates ...”
 - Heb 10:15: “The Holy Spirit also bears witness to us ... [quotes OT]”
- The Spirit is the true author of the NT and the apostles’ authoritative preaching:
 - John 16:13: “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”
 - Eph 3:5: the apostles have new and better revelation by the Spirit.
 - 1 Thess 1:5: “our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.”
 - 1 Thess 4:8: to disregard the apostles’ teaching is to disregard the Spirit.
 - “Hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (7x in Rev 2–3)
 - 1 Tim 4:1: “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith ...”
- Bavinck: The Holy Spirit is the great original witness to Christ; the apostles are such only by derivation from the Spirit.
- He uses ordinary people, carrying them along so they speak infallibly, as they never could have done otherwise.
 - 2 Tim 3:16: “All Scripture is breathed out by God ...” (remember that the Spirit is the breath of God).
 - 2 Pet 1:21: “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God *as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*”
 - 1 Pet 1:11: The OT prophets were “inquiring what person or time *the Spirit of Christ in them* was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.”
 - Rev 19:10: “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”
- God’s light shines through each human author distinctively, like light through stained glass (Poythress).
- Horton: in writing Scripture, “The Spirit does not subvert but rather sanctifies [the human authors’] speech, employing their ordinary linguistic, cultural, social, and personal idiosyncrasies that he himself has brought forth in his providential activity throughout their life to that point. ... It requires a greater miracle to ‘bring forth’ an inerrant text from sinful prophets and apostles than if their own personality and agency had been suspended, rendering them as mere secretaries of the Spirit’s dictation.”

II. The Spirit enables us to recognize God's revelation as divine and true

- The Spirit enables the good confession that Christ has come (1 John 4:2).
- 1 Cor 2:14: "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are [S]piritually discerned." (capitalizing the S! Discerned *by the Spirit*)
- Bavinck: as Christ is our intercessor with the Father in heaven, so also the Spirit is the Father's intercessor in our hearts.
- WCF 1.5: "our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority [of the Bible], is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts."
 - Self-attestation: *the Bible is its own proof*: its divine excellencies demonstrate its uniqueness as God's Word, and we are able to recognize those excellencies by God the Holy Spirit, who is in us.
 - The Bible itself points to self-attestation as how people perceive its truth (John 10:4, 27; 1 Cor 2:10–16; 1 Thess 2:13)
 - The internal witness of the Spirit is not a still, small voice in our heads. Rather, it is the conviction that the Spirit gives of the Bible's divine authority which arises *as we encounter the Bible*.
- *If you want to know whether the Bible is true, read it!* It will speak for itself. If the Spirit is at work in you to give you eyes to see, you will say, "No one ever spoke like this!" (John 7:46)

III. The Spirit enables us to understand the Bible

- Col 1:9 "And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all [S]piritual wisdom and understanding ..."
- WCF 1.6: "the inward illumination of the Spirit of God [is] necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word." (cf. John 6:45)
- WLC 155: The Spirit makes the reading and preaching of the word effectual for salvation.
- The Spirit still speaks today! Through the living and active word (Heb 4:12). The Bible is living and active because of the Spirit.
 - WCF 19.7: The Word and Spirit are how the risen Christ subdues us.
 - WCF 8.8: The Word and Spirit are how the risen Christ governs us today.
 - WCF 1.10: The final authority for everything we face in life is the Spirit in speaking through Scripture.
- Conclusion: from first to last, our knowledge of God is the work of the Spirit:
 - The Spirit knows God exhaustively (1 Cor 2:10–11)
 - The Spirit infallibly communicates God's truth through human authors (1 Cor 2:13)
 - The Spirit is on the receiving end too—in us, enabling us to receive the word, such that we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:12, 14, 16).