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THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE INTERPRETATION
OF THE WORD OF GOD

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THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE INTERPRETATION
OF THE WORD OF GOD

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To Priscilla,
my love, my glory
and to
Rev. Moses Kim,
my father, my mentor

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------|--|
| <i>BSac</i> | <i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i> |
| BDAG | Walter Bauer, Frederick W. Danker, William Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament</i> |
| BECNT | Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament |
| <i>IJFM</i> | <i>International Journal of Frontier Mission</i> |
| <i>JETS</i> | <i>Journal of Evangelical Theological Society</i> |
| <i>PRS</i> | <i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i> |
| <i>SBET</i> | <i>Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology</i> |
| <i>TDNT</i> | <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> |
| <i>WTJ</i> | <i>Westminster Theological Journal</i> |

PREFACE

By the grace of God, this work has benefitted me more ways than I can fully express here. Not only is it a culmination of my theological studies and theological interests, but it was a training ground for the very topic that I am writing about: interpretation of Scripture by the help of the Spirit. I confess that there were probably more times that I was not depending on the guidance of the Spirit than I was. But I can also confidently acknowledge that the result is all His work, minus all my shortcomings. During the course of the writing of this dissertation, I have grown both in studying the Word of God more closely and in depending on the Holy Spirit for his guidance. The more I grow in beholding the glory of Jesus Christ in his Word, the more I am humbled at what little I know, and the deeper I grow in my hunger to know him.

The first person to whom I owe this blessing is my wife, Priscilla, whose sacrifice, patience, support, love, and prayer has sustained me through many years of doctoral studies and the spiritual battles I engaged in during the writing of this dissertation. In that sense, I can honestly say that this work is more hers than mine. I also want to thank my father, Moses, for being the spiritual backbone of my life. I know that this work is a fruit of his countless hours of prayers and spiritual encouragement. This work is a fruit of his faith in Jesus Christ and his faithfulness to the Word of God in the midst of all his trials. I thank my mother for just being there for me, always.

I am especially indebted to Dr. Gregg Allison for his many years of patience, encouragement, theological leadership, and meticulous, loving guidance at every stage of my dissertation.

There are many others to whom I owe deep gratitude. Our children, John, Hesed, and Nathan, have always supported me with their patience and love. John, in particular, was helpful in being my sounding board for the many ideas that I could not sort out by myself. I thank my brother and his wife, Dr. Issac and Mrs. Kay Kim, for their prayers and support, for bringing their friends together to give me a feedback, and for sharing my joys regarding the thesis and its implications for ministry. I am also indebted to two motherly figures. Mrs. Su Chung Chay provided much emotional support in the years when I began to write this dissertation. Prof. Esther Shin provided the means to return to the Louisville campus to continue writing. I also thank Evangelia University and iVision Community Church for supporting me financially and emotionally during the bulk of this writing. Special thanks to Dr. Joseph Park for his scrupulous reading of my proposal. There are many other family members, friends, and church members whom I could not name but who have been praying for me. I give my heartfelt thanks to each one of them.

David Kim

Louisville, Kentucky

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the introduction to his book on the role of the Spirit in interpretation of Scripture, John Owen penned these words: “The two springs of all our interest in Christian religion are the belief of the Scripture to be the Word of God and understanding the mind and the will of God as revealed in the Word.”¹ Both are caused by the Holy Spirit:² first, the belief in the Bible as the supernatural revelation and the objective source of the knowledge of salvation; second, understanding the content of the Word, both for salvation and for sanctification. Of all the issues in the Christian religion, Owen considered these the “two springs” which bring forth vitality in the lives of believers and the church.

It is with the same conviction that this dissertation seeks to revisit the issue of the role of the Holy Spirit in the interpretation of Scripture in evangelicalism.³ Much discussion has been focused throughout history on the first spring in terms of the “internal testimony of the Spirit,” a doctrine which Bavinck says “most theologians again

¹John Owen, “Causes, Ways, and Means of Understanding the Mind of God,” in *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 4, ed. William Goold (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), 121.

²*Ibid.*, 130.

³Although the definition of “evangelicalism” is still being debated and can contain many elements, for the purpose of this dissertation, I would define it as “Christian tradition that holds to the entire Bible to be the Word of God in its autograph, that God is a Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each an uncreated person, one in essence, equal in power and glory, and that one is saved by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone.” I would not consider those who deny the inerrancy of Scripture in the sense accepted by the Evangelical Theological Society to be an evangelical, but I am interacting with Stanley Grenz because many consider him to be an evangelical.

include in dogmatics” in his time.⁴ In contrast, the discussion about the role of the Spirit in interpretation has been virtually absent throughout history since Owen.⁵ This situation has improved in recent years, with a restored interest in the Holy Spirit and the growing field of hermeneutics, and a concomitant growth of interest in the topic of the role of the Spirit in the interpretation of Scripture.⁶ Yet, given the complex nature of this topic,⁷ the

⁴Herman Bavinck, *Prolegomena*, vol. 1 of *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 584-85.

⁵Paul Brown states that “there does not seem to have been any major effort to extend the teaching and revealing ministry of the Holy Spirit into the realm of interpreting and understanding the Bible, apart from the work of the Puritan theologian John Owen.” Paul Brown, *The Holy Spirit: The Spirit’s Interpreting Role in Relation to Biblical Hermeneutics* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2002), 10. The only exceptions are the works of William Whitaker, Jonathan Edwards, and Karl Barth. William Whitaker, *A Disputation on Holy Scripture, against Papists, especially Bellarmine and Stapleton*, ed. and trans. William Fitzgerald (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1849), 402-95; Jonathan Edwards, “A Spiritual Understanding of Divine Things,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 14, *Sermons and Discourses, 1723-1729*, ed. Kenneth P. Minkema (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 67-96; idem, “A Divine and Supernatural Light,” in *The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 121-40; Karl Barth, “The Holy Spirit the Subjective Reality and Possibility of Revelation,” in *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, vol. 1, pt. 2 of *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromily and T. F. Torrance, trans. G. T. Thompson and Harold Knight (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 203-79.

⁶This is attested by several prominent evangelical theologians. Gerald Bray, “Recent Trends in Pneumatology,” *Evangel* (Spring 1989): 13-15; John Frame, “The Spirit and the Scriptures,” in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Academic, 1986), 219; Fred Klooster, “The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Hermeneutic Process,” in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 451; Clark Pinnock, “The Role of the Spirit in Interpretation,” *JETS* 36 (1993): 492. Others who have written on the topic of the role of the Spirit in interpretation include Bernard Ramm, *Witness of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960); Daniel P. Fuller, “The Holy Spirit’s Role in Biblical Interpretation,” in *Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and William Sanford LaSor (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978); Millard Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993); Roy B. Zuck, “The Role of the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics,” *BSac* 141 (1984); Stanley Grenz, “The Spirit and the Word: The World-Creating Function of the Text,” *Theology Today* 57 (2000); James de Young and Sarah Hurty, *Beyond the Obvious: Discover the Deeper Meaning of Scripture* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004); Daniel Wallace, “The Holy Spirit and Hermeneutics” [on-line]; accessed 6 July 2007; available from <http://bible.org/article/holy-spirit-and-hermeneutics>; Internet; Douglas Kennard, “Evangelical Views on Illumination of Scripture and Critique,” *JETS* 49, no. 4 (2006); Richard Averbeck, “God, People and the Bible: The Relationship between the Illumination and Biblical Scholarship,” in *Who’s Afraid of the Holy Spirit?*, ed. M. James Sawyer and Daniel B. Wallace (Dallas: Biblical Studies, 2005); Edmund Keith DeZago, “Word and Spirit in Doctrinal Formation” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006).

⁷Bernard Ramm acknowledges that the topic of the Spirit’s witness to the truth is a complex doctrine. Bernard Ramm, *The Witness of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 66-67. Kevin

diversity of traditions within evangelicalism,⁸ and new hermeneutical challenges from postmodernism,⁹ evangelicalism is without a consensus on how the Spirit affects interpretation. As Dan Treier claims, “probably the chief evangelical tension over biblical hermeneutics concerns the contemporary work of the Holy Spirit in the reader(s), relative to Scripture’s communication as written text(s).”¹⁰ In view of this problem, this dissertation seeks to clarify the role of the Spirit in interpretation through an examination of the critical biblical passages regarding this topic.

Current Debate on the Role of the Spirit in Interpretation

A survey of evangelical literature on the role of the Spirit in interpretation reveals that there are a few theologians who have made the role of the Spirit in interpretation a significant piece in their entire theological method. Each of these theologians also has sought to incorporate certain aspects of postmodernist insight into their theological method. They include Bernard Ramm,¹¹ Donald Bloesch,¹² Clark

Vanhoozer adds, “The role of the Holy Spirit in biblical interpretation is a justly famous problem.” Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 407.

⁸Dan Treier says that evangelicals will not be able to agree in detail on the relationship of the Word and Spirit because of their diverse traditions. Dan Treier, “Scripture and Hermeneutics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology*, ed. Timothy Larson and Daniel J. Treier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 42.

⁹In writing about the state of the evangelical theological method, Alister McGrath notes that “things have shifted since the 1960s and evangelicals need to relate to the new issues that have accompanied the rise of postmodernism.” Alister E. McGrath, “Evangelical Theological Method: The State of the Art,” in *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 33-34.

¹⁰Treier, “Scripture and Hermeneutics,” 41.

¹¹Bernard Ramm, *The Pattern of Religious Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959); idem, *The Witness of the Spirit*; idem, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1980).

¹²Donald Bloesch, *A Theology of Word and Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992).

Pinnock,¹³ Stanley Grenz,¹⁴ Kevin Vanhoozer,¹⁵ and Millard Erickson.¹⁶ Others whose works contain discussions of the role of the Spirit in interpretation, but whose discussions are not as significant to their theological method, include Michael Horton¹⁷ and Gary Badcock.¹⁸ One monograph has been written on the role of the Spirit in interpretation¹⁹ and one on the authority of the Spirit in interpretation.²⁰ There are a few articles in books²¹ and journals,²² and one dissertation.²³

¹³Clark Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996); idem, *The Scripture Principle* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984).

¹⁴Stanley Grenz and John Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

¹⁵Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*

¹⁶Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation*.

¹⁷Michael Horton, *Covenant and Eschatology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 206-19.

¹⁸Gary D. Badcock, *Light of Truth & Fire of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

¹⁹Paul Brown, *The Holy Spirit: The Spirit's Interpreting Role in Relation to Biblical Hermeneutics* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2002).

²⁰John Studebaker, *The Lord Is the Spirit: The Authority of the Holy Spirit in Contemporary Theology and Church Practice* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2008).

²¹DeYoung and Hurty, *Beyond the Obvious*; Klooster, "The Role of the Holy Spirit"; John Frame, "The Spirit and the Scriptures," in *Hermeneutics, Authority and Canon*, ed. D. A. Carson and J. D. Woodbridge (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1986), 217-35; Averbek, "God, People and the Bible," 137-66.

²²Alexander McKelway, "The Spirit and the Letter," in *Reformed Theology: Identity and Ecumenicity II: Biblical Interpretation in the Reformed tradition*, ed. Wallace M. Alston Jr. and Michael Welker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); Daniel Fuller, "The Holy Spirit's Role in Biblical Interpretation," *IJFM* 14 (1997): 91-95; Wallace, "The Holy Spirit and Hermeneutics"; Zuck, "The Role of the Holy Spirit"; Jan Veenhof, "The Holy Spirit and Hermeneutics," *SBET* 5 (1987): 105-22; Moises Silva, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in Biblical Interpretation," *Fides Reformata* 2, no. 2 (1997): 89-96; Kennard, "Evangelical Views on Illumination"; Carl F. H. Henry, "The Spirit and the Written Word," *BSac* 111 (1954): 302-16.

²³DeZago, "Word and Spirit in Doctrinal Formation."

An analysis of the way these theologians conceive of the role of the Spirit in the process of interpretation shows that there are many variations at many points. Although these variations are not necessarily conflicting and may even complement one another, there are significant differences at key points. For the purpose of this dissertation, these differences can be grouped into four categories or approaches, which I name “the postconservative view,” “the cognition view,” “the reception view,” and the “speech-act view.” The “postconservative view” is different from the last three views, which I refer to as the “conservative views,” in that the postconservative view does not hold to the infallibility and the supreme authority of Scripture, while the conservative views do.²⁴ The postconservative view also holds that the Holy Spirit works personally in all aspects of interpretation but that he is not limited to Scripture as the source of knowledge for salvation.

In contrast, the three conservative views hold to a limited and/or impersonal role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation. The cognition view places the locus of the Spirit’s influence primarily on believers’ ability to understand the meaning of Scripture and secondarily on believers’ reception (acceptance, conviction) of that meaning into his heart. It believes that the Spirit personally guides the mind in interpretation. But the way the Holy Spirit guides understanding is not by guiding the ordinary use of reason, but by

²⁴Vanhoozer considers himself a “postconservative” because he believes that “a postconservative theology recognizes the cognitive significance of literary forms other than assertorical statements,” and that “conservative” implies that the cognitive dimension of theology is reduced to the propositional statements. See Kevin Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 278; idem, “Lost in Interpretation,” 108 n. 58. Vanhoozer, thus, does not deny the full biblical authority as the unique source of God’s revelation. Furthermore, Gregg Allison has pointed out that Vanhoozer does not need to limit inerrancy or cognition to propositional elements. Gregg Allison, “Speech-act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of the Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” *Philosophia Christi* 18 (1995): 1-23. In contrast, the other postconservative theologians use the label in a way that rejects Scripture as the unique source of revelation. For this reason, I am not considering Vanhoozer as a postconservative for the purpose of this study. See chap. 2 n. 1.

providing a flash of insight that is beyond ordinary cognition. The result is a deeper understanding of the aspects of the meaning in the Word that are not related to salvation.

This view stands in contrast with the reception view, which places the locus of the Spirit's influence primarily on the reception of the message of the text. The activity of the interpretation of the meaning of the text is seen as limited to the human act, and not also as an area of influence of the Holy Spirit. The speech-act view understands the Spirit as speaking indirectly through the text, that is, the text itself "speaks" to the reader, rather than the Spirit causing the mind to understand the text.

A comparative analysis of these various views is significant because each of these views is represented by at least one leading evangelical theologian and upheld by many others, and that the representatives of each view claim to remain faithful to the evangelical tenet of the inseparability of the Word and Spirit. Even more significantly, each of these views is based on different interpretations of a set of common key passages in the Scriptures, which are 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; 2 Corinthians 3:16-4:6; John 14:26, 16:13; and 1 John 2:20-27. Several lines of evidences support this conclusion. First, the sheer preponderance of these passages in literature regarding the role of the Spirit in interpretation attests to their importance.²⁵ While various authors consider a few other passages, they usually do so in a way that supports their exegesis of these key passages.²⁶ Second, all of these passages (except 2 Cor 3:16-4:6) appear as scriptural proofs in the

²⁵Detailed studies in chaps. 2 and 3 will prove this.

²⁶These will be noted in the analysis of the respective views in chap. 2. Some of the less cited and less debated passages are Ps 119:18, Isa 55:11, Matt 13:14-15, 16:17, Luke 24:44-45, John 3:19-21, 6:45, 7:17, Acts 8:26-35, 15:28, 1 Cor 14:37, Eph 1:17-19, Col 1:9, 1 Thess 1:5-6, 2 Thess 2:13-15, Titus 3:5, Heb 4:12. In this dissertation, I will interact with these and other passages only when they are used by the view-holders as a significant evidence for their view. As for the wide usage of the key passages, see the summaries of each view below.

relevant passages in the Westminster Confession of Faith. As for the 2 Corinthian passage, ever since Ernst Käsemann made his thesis in 1969 that “the Pauline distinction of πνεῦμα (Spirit) and γράμμα (letter) is the primary fundamental consideration of hermeneutics in the New Testament,”²⁷ it has received attention for its relevance in the discussion about the role of the Spirit in interpretation.²⁸

Thesis

In view of these different interpretations of the same key passages, this dissertation provides a fresh examination of these texts so as to articulate a clearer understanding of the role of the Spirit in interpretation.²⁹ The resulting view stated and defended in this dissertation is called the “comprehensively personal authoritative view” (the CPA view, hereafter). This dissertation argues that the Holy Spirit comprehensively and personally guides every aspect of the process of believers’ interpretation of the authoritative Word of God. Terms are defined first, followed by a brief description of the different aspects of the Spirit’s guidance.

²⁷Ernst Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today* (London: S. C. M., 1969), 260-85.

²⁸Peter Richardson, “Spirit and Letter: A Foundation for Hermeneutics,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 45 (1973): 208-18; Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel: The Letter/Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2005).

²⁹I have chosen to speak of the “role of the Spirit in interpretation” rather than the “illumination of the Spirit” since the term “illumination” seems to have different connotations for different people and much debate have been over exactly what it means. When I do occasionally refer to the word “illumination,” I am using it in a comprehensive sense to refer to the “external and internal work of the Holy Spirit in causing believers to understand the Word of God.” Owen, *Works*, 3:133-34. Similarly, J. I. Packer defines it as “[t]he process by which God’s Holy Spirit enables us to understand His word and apply it to our lives.” James Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), 153. To indicate what the Spirit does internally, I would simply add an adjective and call it “internal illumination.”

Terms

The term “comprehensively” denotes the Spirit’s guidance of both the proposal of the message to believers and the reception of that message by believers. The proposal to believers includes the Spirit’s inspiration of the text of Scripture and subsequent human communication of the Word such as the sharing of the gospel by an evangelist. The reception by believers includes all aspects of believers’ response to the gospel that is proposed. These aspects include believing with the heart the message that is heard and applying the Word to life. The term “personal” denotes that the Holy Spirit is personally involved in using all external factors (Word, teachers, evangelist, hermeneutical tools, etc.) and internal factors (a person’s heart, mind, conscience, etc.) to guide believers at every stage and aspect of interpretation. The Spirit’s work of causing illumination of the mind through the heart is also considered personal, although the mind is influenced by means of the sanctification of the heart.³⁰ In sum, “personal” means that the person of the Holy Spirit is intimately involved in both immediately guiding the mind to understand the Word of God, and mediately renewing the heart and guiding the reader’s use of all secondary means. “Personal” does not signify the following: (1) The Spirit internally reveals Scriptural content without believers’ hearing or reading of the Word,³¹ (2) the Spirit works without the instrument of reason,³² (3) the Spirit internally reveals new information outside the Scripture.³³

³⁰Some of the view-holders that I will introduce in this dissertation believe that the Spirit works on the mind “indirectly” through the heart, meaning that the Holy Spirit personally guides the heart, and the heart guides the mind. They believe that it is the moral transformation that influences our interpretation of Scripture, and not the personal guidance of the Spirit. Against such view, I believe that the Holy Spirit personally guides the mind, even when that involves the Spirit’s guidance of the mind by means of moral transformation.

³¹This principle applies to the way the Holy Spirit inspired prophets and the authors of the biblical canon and not to the way the Holy Spirit guides interpretation of Scripture.

Finally, the term “authoritative” denotes the objective, supreme authority of Scripture in all matters of life and faith.³⁴ That is to say, Scripture has objective authority even apart from the continuing work of the Spirit. It is the definitive revelation of God in the objective form. This ought to be distinguished from Grenz’s use of “authoritative” which denies the objective authority of Scripture.³⁵

Aspects of the Spirit’s Guidance

The guidance of the Holy Spirit in interpretation includes bringing the Word to believers, enabling believers’ mind to grasp the truths of God in the Word, both negatively by removing the noetic effect of sin and positively by guiding the mind throughout the interpretive process, sanctifying the heart of believers in a way that affects the understanding of the Word, guiding believers to see how all truths in the Word are ultimately related to and fulfilled in Christ, and teaching believers to evaluate all of life in light of Scripture and to apply Scripture to all situations.

³²There are aspects of the work of the Spirit that does not involve reason, such as the Spirit’s role of testifying to our spirit (Rom 8:16). However, the Spirit does not bypass reason in the process of interpreting Scripture.

³³I believe that the Holy Spirit may use “new information” in shedding light on the objective meaning in Scripture, but not to reveal new meaning that is not in the Scriptures..

³⁴I hold to the inerrancy of the autographs of Scripture and the infallibility of Scripture and believe that these doctrines matter greatly to one’s faith and to the interpretation of Scripture. I subscribe to both the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy and the Westminster Confession of Faith on the doctrine of Scripture, in spite of some of the ambiguities I have mentioned earlier. I am using “authoritative” rather than “inerrancy and infallibility” in order to avoid bringing in issues related to the latter terms that are not germane to the topic of this dissertation.

³⁵For example, Stanley Grenz denies that the meaning is bound up in Bible. Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 73. Although he speaks of Scripture’s “authority,” he adds a conditional clause: “The Bible is the final authority in the church precisely as the Spirit pours further light through the text.” Here, Grenz is referring to the ongoing work of the Spirit, so he does not believe in the objective authority of Scripture. *Ibid.*, 67.

Each of these points is briefly expanded here. Bringing the Word to believers describes the Spirit's sovereign guidance of both the process of inscripturation and the human communication of the Word. Enabling the mind consists of guiding the mind to function properly by removing sin's noetic effect. Yet a properly functioning mind by itself is not sufficient for understanding the things of God; it needs the supernatural light of the Holy Spirit to understand the supernatural things of God. This does not mean that the mind understands up to a point and the Spirit reveals the rest; rather, the Holy Spirit guides the mind in such a way that it recognizes the supernatural things of God in the Word itself. The Holy Spirit also influences understanding by sanctifying the heart, that is, by bringing about a moral transformation of the heart.

The Spirit has a specific interpretive purpose of guiding believers to see how all of the Scriptures are related to and fulfilled in Christ. Furthermore, true understanding is not merely intellectual. A genuine understanding of the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ is possible only in the context of a personal relationship with Christ, a relationship that is also guided by the Holy Spirit.

Finally, the Spirit guides the entire process of applying Scripture to all areas of life. Although application of Scripture to life is different than understanding the meaning of Scripture, such application requires spiritual discernment and therefore the ongoing help of the Holy Spirit.

The CPA view described above is not new, but stands in a long line of proponents that begin with the Reformers³⁶ and includes a small number of current

³⁶Martin Luther and John Calvin (see Klaas Runia, "The Hermeneutics of the Reformers," *Calvin Theological Journal* 19 [1984]: 121-52); Ulrich Zwingli, Heinrich Bullinger, Martin Bucer (see George Allen Turner, "The Holy Spirit in the Hermeneutics of the Reformation and the Radical Reformation," in *Essays on Apostolic Themes*, ed. Paul Elbert [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985]); Whitaker, *A Disputation on Holy Scripture*; Richard Sibbes, "The Spirit and the Word," in *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith*, ed. Geoffrey Nuttall (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 21-33; John Owen,

theologians.³⁷ Yet, as I have mentioned above, this view has not found a detailed exposition until John Owen, and thereafter fell into disregard. With that in mind, this dissertation is an attempt to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth examinations of the key passages in question than the previous efforts and also to bring biblical clarity to the issue, in light of the postmodern challenges and the current lack of consensus in evangelicalism on this subject.

Background

This dissertation is a culmination of my interest in theological hermeneutics and the work of the Holy Spirit, the former being more related with my academic training and the latter being more related with my pastoral and ministerial experience. My interest in theological hermeneutics comes from a mixture of training in biblical hermeneutics from Westminster Theological Seminary, Augustinian and postmodern literary theories from Baylor University, and studies of theological methodologies of John Calvin, Herman Bavinck, and Carl F. H. Henry at the Southern Theological Seminary. These studies have helped me to appreciate the rich complexity of the art of interpretation. In particular, I have come to believe deeply that while the truth of the Word of God is absolute and objective, no interpretation of that Word can remain objective and unbiased because the act of interpretation itself is a confessional activity, and not merely an intellectual activity. That is, a proper interpretation seeks not merely an orthodoxy (right belief), but also an orthopraxis (right living).

“Causes, Ways, and Means”; Edwards, “A Spiritual Understanding of Divine Things”; idem, “A Divine and Supernatural Light”; Bavinck, *Prolegomena*, 590-600.

³⁷See J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (Old Tappan, NJ: Power Books, 1984), 239; Horton, *Covenant and Eschatology*, 206-19; Frame, “The Spirit and the Scriptures,” 217-35.

My interest in the work of the Holy Spirit comes from growing up as a Presbyterian within the context of Korean-American church. In terms of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, church leadership is usually theologically conservative, while in practice, many church members practice tongue-speaking, healing, and other gifts of the Spirit. This happens even among the Presbyterians because different Korean-American denominations have similar ecclesiology in practice, and church members easily change denominational affiliations. Thus, I grew up in an environment where there is a deep confusion about the role of Spirit in the life of believers. After about a decade of ministry among the Korean-Americans I have come to realize how important and urgent it is to establish a clear understanding regarding the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.

Such an interest in theological hermeneutics and the work of the Holy Spirit led to my focused interest in the role of the Spirit in interpretation, with the conviction that a right reading (as well as hearing and speaking) of God's Word leads to a right living. The conviction that results from such study can be summarized with one of my favorite images of the blessed life in general, and the work of the Holy Spirit in particular: A river, bountifully and vigorously flowing within the bounds of the banks of a river, where the flowing water represents the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit, the path of the river represents every aspect of a believer's life, and the river banks represent the boundaries of the Word of God. When the water spills over beyond the banks of the river, it is wasteful and harmful; when it runs low in the river path, it does not bring forth the fullness of vitality in the river. But when the water fills up to the banks of the river, the full force of the river brings about maximum vitality.

Originally, I started with the assumption that current evangelicalism's understanding of the role of the Spirit in interpretation was adequate and that it was simply being challenged by the postconservative theologians with their postmodern

agendas. However, in examining the evangelical landscape on the role of the Spirit in interpretation more closely, I discovered that the evangelical conservatives were far from having a unified understanding of the role of the Spirit in interpretation. Furthermore, I came to realize that this lack of consensus hindered the evangelical conservatives from effectively responding to the questions raised in the rapidly growing field of theological hermeneutics, especially questions posed by postconservatives.

Limitations

The dissertation is limited in several ways. First, only the role of the Spirit is treated, and not the role of God the Father and the Son. The dissertation assumes that interpretation of Scripture is fully Trinitarian. God the Father sends the Spirit to show the glory of triune God in Christ in the Scriptures. The dissertation deals with the role of the Father and the Son briefly in the exegesis of the Spirit passages in the Farewell Discourse, and interacts with Vanhoozer's understanding of the role of the Trinity in interpretation. However, the dissertation itself will be limited to the role of the Holy Spirit.

Second, the topic deals with the role of the Spirit in *interpretation*. This limitation means that the dissertation does not deal with the role of the Spirit in the inspiration of the Word or other aspects of life (e.g., sanctification), although it deals with other aspects to the extent that they are related to the role of the Spirit in interpretation.

Third, the Spirit's use of secondary means goes beyond the focus of this dissertation. Primary means refers to Scripture, and secondary means include prayer, exegetical skills, mentors, church, culture, and language.

Fourth, while including a discussion of the relationship between the role of the Spirit and the role of the human reason/mind in the interpretation of the Word of God, this dissertation does not deal with the broader topic of the relationship between revelation and reason, or the role of natural theology, or the relationship between

theology and philosophy, or the relationship between special and general hermeneutics. The hope, however, is that the results of this study contributes to these broader topics.

Fifth, this dissertation also does not deal with a construction of a theological hermeneutic based on its proposed view, for several reasons. The field of theological hermeneutics is a recent one, and one that is quickly expanding.³⁸ Literature regarding the role of the Spirit in this expanding field is still scarce and experimental in character. Although I feel that various leading evangelical theologians have used their understanding of the role of the Spirit as a central piece in their overall approach to theology (i.e., theological hermeneutics), they make generally weak connections between their understanding of the role of the Spirit and their theological method. For these reasons, the dissertation is limited to the exegetical basis for, and the construction of, an evangelical view of the role of the Spirit in interpretation.

Sixth, the dissertation is also limited to four exegetical passages. Although I believe that these four passages are sufficient to prove the view proposed, the desire to provide an in-depth coverage of arguably the most significant passages on this topic does not allow space to cover other secondary passages. These secondary passages are

³⁸Here is a partial list of growing literature on theological hermeneutics in recent years: Craig Bartholomew et al., *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 1 of *The Scripture and Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000) and six other volumes in the series; Kevin Vanhoozer, *First Theology: God, Scripture, and Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002); Vincent Bacote, Laura C. Miguez, and Dennis L. Okholm, eds., *Evangelicals and Scripture: Tradition, Authority, and Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004); John R. Franke, *The Character of Theology: An Introduction to Its Nature, Task, and Purpose* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005); Jens Zimmerman, *Recovering Theological Hermeneutics: An Incarnational-Trinitarian Theory of Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004); Kevin Vanhoozer, ed., *A Dictionary of Theological Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005); Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007); Markus Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study*, Studies in Theological Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006); Stephen E. Fowl and L. Gregory Jones, *Reading in Communion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991); Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim that God Speaks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Mark Alan Bowald, *Rendering the Word in Theological Hermeneutics: Mapping Divine and Human Agency* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007).

mentioned only tangentially to the extent that they are either used by the representatives of the four views or by me in support of the four key passages.

Finally, there is a limitation on the historical work. Although I have provided a historical background leading to the current debate on the topic and have pointed out the historical reasons for the importance and the necessity for further development of this topic, much work needs to be done on the works in the past (though they are sparse).

Outline

Chapter 1 provides the introduction to the topic of the role of the Spirit in interpretation. It begins with the importance and the need to address this topic. Then it provides a general survey of the current debate on this subject within evangelicalism, and a brief description of the four basic evangelical views and the four common key biblical passages that are in contention. Then the thesis is stated, with its terms and parts explained in more detail. This is followed by the background that led me to write this dissertation, limitations and this outline of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 begins with a historical background to the topic of the role of the Spirit in interpretation. It then describes the challenges that are presented to evangelicalism, and the current lack of consensus. Then the chapter examines the four evangelical representative views in detail. For each view, the works of two or three representatives are examined, except for the speech-act view, which is sufficiently represented by Kevin Vanhoozer. For each theologian, a summary of his exegetical work is provided, followed by a summary of the construction of his view based on his own exegesis.

Chapter 3 provides the exegetical foundation for the alternative proposal (the CPA view) for understanding the role of the Spirit in interpretation. A directed exegesis

is done on each of the four sets of passages: 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; 2 Corinthians 3:16-4:6; John 14:26, 16:13; 1 John 2:20-27.

Chapter 4 constructs the CPA view based on the exegetical work in chapter 3. Various aspects of the role of the Spirit in interpretation are constructed in a coherent manner.

Chapter 5 provides a critique of the four representative evangelical views, both biblically and theologically. For each view, anticipated objections from that view toward the CPA view are addressed.

Chapter 6 concludes by arguing how the CPA view is a better model in terms of its exegetical support, its internal coherence which incorporates the strengths of the other views while minimizing their weaknesses, and its ability to respond to the postmodern challenge. The chapter also provides suggestions for further exploration.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND FOUR REPRESENTATIVE EVANGELICAL VIEWS

Historical Background

An overview of the history of the role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation of Scripture helps in understanding the current situation on the topic. From the early church through the Middle Ages, Origen's view had a dominant influence. Origen, who represented the Alexandrian school of interpretation, separated the letter and the spirit, and posited that a true understanding of the Scripture lies in its spiritual rather than the literal meaning of the text.¹ The role of the Spirit was to go beyond the letter of the text and "pour" what he reveals into "those who are capable of understanding the divine wisdom."² In contrast, the Antiochene school emphasized the importance of the literal meaning that is embedded both in the text and in history.³ Augustine, on the other hand, did not completely overcome the problem of separation between the literal and the spiritual meaning. Although he affirmed the importance of the literal meaning, a neo-Platonic tendency can be seen in his view that the Spirit implants the love of God and neighbor in the reader, as a result of which the reader himself ascends from the sign (the

¹Origen, *On First Principles* 4.2.9-15, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts et al. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1952), 4:357-64.

²Ibid., 4:1:14.

³Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson, *A History of Biblical Interpretation: The Ancient Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 43-47.

text) to the signified (the spiritual realities) through the purification of the mind from sensible forms and carnal attachments.⁴ Thus, the view that saw the role of the Spirit as showing the spiritual meaning in addition to the literal meaning dominated the church until the twelfth century.⁵

With the Reformation, a view of the role of the Spirit emerged that emphasized the sovereignty of the Spirit in interpretation, while also insisting that the Spirit does not go beyond Scripture and works directly on believers' mind and heart. Luther, for example, spoke of the twofold clarity of Scripture.

The *clearness* of the Scripture is twofold; even as the *obscurity* is twofold also. The one is *external*, placed in the ministry of the word; the other *internal*, placed in the understanding of the heart. If you speak of the internal clearness, no man sees one iota in the Scriptures, but he that hath the Spirit of God.⁶

Here, Luther makes it clear that the reader depends on the Spirit to understand every single thing (“one iota”) in Scripture. Calvin reinforced Luther’s idea of the twofold clarity of Scripture with a vivid illustration: “Both these points are to be observed with care, that knowledge of all academic discipline is mere smoke where the heavenly wisdom of Christ is lacking, and that a man on his own with all his wits is as capable of

⁴Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997), 2.6.7; idem, *Confessions*, trans. Garry Wills (New York: Penguin, 2006), 7.3.23-24.

⁵Theologians led by Hugh of St. Victor devised a new exegetical method that insisted that spiritual meaning ought to be rooted in the literal meaning. Christopher Ocker, *Biblical Poetics before Humanism and Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). In the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas also insisted that the spiritual meanings of Scripture depend on the literal sense (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae* [Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1989], Introduction, 10). Yet, unlike the sixteenth-century Reformers, Aquinas did not believe that the activity of the interpretation of Scripture required special grace because knowledge of God was more wedded to philosophy and tradition than to exegesis. Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible* (Wheaton: Victor, 1994), 92.

⁶Martin Luther, “On the Bondage of the Will,” in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*, ed. E. Gordon Rupp and Philip S. Watson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 7.4.

understanding the mysteries of God as an ass is unsuited for music.”⁷ Calvin also took it a step further and developed the celebrated doctrine of the *testimonium Sancti Spiritus internum* (“internal testimony of the Holy Spirit”) which emphasized the inseparability of the Word and the Spirit and the inseparability of understanding and the relational aspect of knowledge.⁸

For the Lord has so knit together the certainty of his word and his Spirit, that our minds are duly imbued with reverence for the word when the Spirit shining upon it enables us there to behold the face of God; and, on the other hand, we embrace the Spirit with no danger of delusion when we recognize him in his image, that is, in his Word. . . . He sent down the same Spirit by whose power he had dispensed the Word, to complete his work by the efficacious confirmation of the Word.⁹

After the Reformation, the necessity of continuous guidance for the interpretation of Scripture was maintained by Lutheran theologians such as Abraham Calov, Johann Quenstedt, and David Hollaz. These theologians emphasized that while the Scripture in itself is clear, “the regenerate interpreter of Scripture requires the continual aid and enlightenment of the Spirit, because he is never free of his corrupt reason and sinful curiosity.”¹⁰ They also believed that the Word itself was united with the Spirit, so that the Word is always actually capable of working marvelous results in

⁷John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 93.

⁸Werner Krusche shows that Calvin’s concept of the internal testimony of the Spirit tied together several aspects of the work of the Spirit that includes certainty of the divine authority of Scripture, certainty of salvation, certainty of divine adoption, and illumination to understand the Scripture. Werner Krusche, *Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1957), 263.

⁹John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. 20 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press), 1:9:3, 95.

¹⁰Robert Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism: A Study of Theological Prolegomena* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 320.

sinner,¹¹ except when its work is removed and impeded by a person's willful, resistance.¹²

The teaching about the role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation reached its climax with John Owen, who dedicated two books to this topic.¹³ Whereas Luther and Calvin wrote about the role of the Spirit in the interpretation of Scripture primarily from the perspective of defending the authority of Scripture over against the Catholic Church,¹⁴ Owen was motivated to develop further the role of the Spirit in interpretation partly in order to stem the proliferation of the Socinians, who denied any role of the Spirit in understanding Scripture. Owen pointed out that human beings are subject to two conditions which make it impossible for them to appropriate God's revelation: their essential finiteness and their sinful depravity.¹⁵ Accordingly, the Holy Spirit both removes the darkness from the human rational faculties and raises those faculties to a level far above what they could achieve by themselves.¹⁶ Moreover, Owen makes it clear

¹¹David Hollaz explains that "when the unregenerate man is teachable and carefully reads the Word of God and actually hears the voice being taught, the Holy Spirit is illuminating in such a way for the true sense of the divine Word to be perceived and properly applied." David Hollaz, *Examen Theologicum Acroamaticum*, published in 1707, is available as *Aeromaticum Universam Theologiam Thetico-Polemicam Complectens* (Rostochii et Lipsiae: J. H. Russwormium, 1725), 173.

¹²Preus, *Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 377.

¹³John Owen, "The Reason of Faith" and "Causes, Means and Ways of Understanding the Mind of God," in *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 4, ed. William Goold (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2004). The topic is also embedded in Owen's book on the work of the Spirit in general. Idem, *A Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit* in *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 3, ed. William Goold (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2004).

¹⁴Herman Bavinck points out that Calvin was too one-sided in applying the "witness of the Spirit" to the authority of Scripture. Herman Bavinck, *Prolegomena*, vol. 1 of *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 584-85. Klaas Runia also points out that although Luther and Calvin also believed in the necessity of the Holy Spirit for understanding the Word, they did not develop the dynamic of how the Holy Spirit causes understanding. Klaas Runia, "Hermeneutics of the Reformers," *Calvin Theological Journal* 19 (1984): 136, 145-46.

¹⁵Owen, *Works* 4:137-38.

that the activity of the Holy Spirit does not stand over against human rationality, but rather works to perfect that rationality as a part of the restored image of God.¹⁷ In other words, the work of the Holy Spirit is sovereign and absolutely necessary for every aspect of interpretation, and that work is distinct from, yet necessary for, man's proper use of his rational faculty.

Such a high view of the role of the Spirit in interpretation quickly fell into disrepute in the generations that followed Owen. Bavinck attests that the doctrine of the "internal testimony" or the illumination of the Spirit was weakened already by the time of Turretin, Amyraut, and Molina; indeed, not "even orthodox theologians dared any longer to speak of the 'internal testimony'."¹⁸ Furthermore, in 1771 and 1775, Johann Semler eliminated the distinction between the Holy Spirit and man's own rational insight, and even equated Calvin's internal testimony of the Holy Spirit with man's own rational conviction.¹⁹ According to Semler, the worth of canonical books of the Old and New Testaments was now only determined "by their moral, general value."²⁰

This general disregard for the work of the Holy Spirit and a commensurate increase in the use of tradition and reason in the interpretation of Scripture can also be

¹⁶Ibid., *Works* 4:126. This insight has been previously recognized by Carl Trueman, *The Claims of Truth: John Owen's Trinitarian Theology* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1998), 75-76. For an excellent analysis of John Owen's theological methodology that includes a brief section on the role of the Spirit in interpretation, see Sebastian Rehnman, *Divine Discourse: The Theological Methodology of John Owen* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002).

¹⁷Owen, *Works* 3:125.

¹⁸Bavinck, *Prolegomena*, 584-85.

¹⁹Peter Stuhlmacher, "The Hermeneutical Significance," *Tradition and Interpretation in the NT: Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 330.

²⁰Johann Salomo Semler, *Abhandlung von freier Untersuchung des Canon* (Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2001), 32.

found within post-Reformation Reformed orthodoxy.²¹ An evidence of this is the notable absence of any discussion about the role of the Spirit in interpretation in Richard Muller’s massive work on post-Reformation orthodoxy.²² To be sure, Muller is correct in pointing out that the Protestant orthodox theologians did not think of the role of reason as an autonomous power in man but as an instrument always subordinate to the divinely given truths of Scripture.²³ Furthermore, Reformed orthodox theologians such as Franciscus Junius, Gisbertus Voetius, and Francis Turretin all taught the necessity of the internal illumination of the Holy Spirit. Yet, each of these theologians emphasized reason to the point that the sovereign role of the Holy Spirit was downplayed. For example, Junius interpreted the relationship between the Scripture and the Holy Spirit using the Aristotelian categories of material cause and efficient cause, respectively. This eventually led Voetius and Turretin to classify Scripture as the “external principle” (*principium externum*) of faith and the illumination of the Spirit as the “internal principle” (*principium internum*). This classification departed from Calvin’s understanding of the internal testimony as including the Spirit’s use of the objective source of understanding, and not as a subjective counterpart of the external authority of Scripture.²⁴

Such a separate classification of the Scripture and the work of the Spirit had the unfortunate result of minimizing the role of the Spirit and overemphasizing the role of

²¹Alexander McKelway, “The Spirit and the Letter,” in *Reformed Theology: Identity and Ecumenicity II: Biblical Interpretation in the Reformed tradition*, ed. Wallace M. Alston Jr. and Michael Welker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmann, 2007), 208-10.

²²Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, Ca. 1520 to Ca. 1725*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003).

²³*Ibid.*, 1:398.

²⁴Henk van den Belt suspects that this classification was influenced by the emphasis on the human subject (à la Descartes) in early modernity. Henk van den Belt, *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology: Truth and Trust* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 174-75.

the reason. Turretin, for example, placed the marks (*notae*) of the Scripture above the testimony of the Spirit in accepting the authority of Scripture.²⁵ Voetius called human reason a “principle” (*principium*) of faith.²⁶ Finally, a lack of development about the role of the Spirit in interpretation would cause Cocceius to make the statement that “reason is the instrument and means by which we may be led to faith.”²⁷ This emphasis on reason drew Alexander McKelway’s comment that “it is not strange that both [Heinrich] Heppe and [Karl] Barth find in these aspects of orthodox scholasticism the beginnings of modern Protestantism, its theology, and exegesis.”²⁸ Such is the background that lead up to the twentieth century, which witnessed a renewed interest in the Holy Spirit in general and his role in the interpretation of Scripture in particular.

Current Challenges to Evangelical Views

Twentieth century brought two challenges to the topic of the role of the Spirit in interpretation: Pentecostal/charismatic movement and postmodernism. Pentecostal/charismatic movement presented the practical challenge of historically unprecedented interest in the person and the work of the Spirit in various movements that include Pentecostalism that began at the beginning of the twentieth century, the

²⁵This is in contrast to Calvin who placed the testimony of the Spirit above the marks of the Scripture in accepting the authority of Scripture. *Ibid.*, 163.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 174.

²⁷Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics, Set Out and Illustrated from the Sources*, ed. Ernst Bizer, trans. G. T. Thompson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1950), 7-8. The full sentence in which this quote is found is as follows: “Although reason is the instrument or the means by which we may be led to faith, it is not the principle on which dogmas of faith are proved or the foundation on which they rest.” That foundation is the Word. *Ibid.*, 8. Here, Cocceius denies that reason can be the foundation of our faith, yet acknowledges that reason, without any association with the Holy Spirit, may be the instrument by which we are led to faith.

²⁸McKelway, “The Spirit and the Letter,” 210.

charismatic movement that emerged in the middle of the twentieth century, and the recent third-wave evangelicalism.²⁹ Postmodernism presented the theoretical challenge in the field of hermeneutics, emphasizing “a particular way of experiencing, interpreting, and being in the world,”³⁰ and an “incredulity toward metanarrative,”³¹ a direct attack against an all-encompassing worldview.

One result of these new challenges for evangelicals was the formation of “postconservative” evangelicals who emphasized the work of the Holy Spirit, attacked conservative theologians for their modernistic tendencies, and proposed a new theological method in which the role of the Spirit in interpretation is seen to go above or beyond Scripture.³² Such proposals drew reactions from conservative evangelicals. Carl Henry, for example, in a chapter entitled “the Spirit and the Scriptures,” maintained the importance of both the objective authority of the Scripture and the necessity of the Spirit for understanding, and warned against those who compromised the authority or the perspicuity of the Scriptures.³³ More recently, in response to Stanley Grenz’s *Renewing*

²⁹Even at the time *God, Revelation, and Authority* was first published in 1976, Henry reported that of the twenty to twenty-five million Protestants, “four-fifths of them are Pentecostals.” Carl Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 4, *God Who Speaks and Shows* (1976; reprint, Wheaton: Crossway, 1999), 285.

³⁰David Harvey, *Conditions of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 53.

³¹Similarly, Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

³²Edmund DeZago helpfully categorizes this position into three categories of the relationship between the Spirit and the Word: Spirit “above” the Word (represented by Donald Bloesch), Spirit “beyond” the Word (represented by Howard Marshall), Spirit “through” the Word (represented by Stanley Grenz). Edmund Keith DeZago, “Word and Spirit in Doctrinal Formation” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006).

³³Henry, *Revelation*, 4:256-71. For example, he commented “The carping comment that the Holy Spirit has been gagged by evangelicals, who emphasize the completion of the canon, is an outright caricature. The far greater danger is that human beings will snap a lock on the Bible.” *Ibid.*, 283.

the Center, which included a postconservative proposal of revisioning the role of the Spirit in interpretation, conservative evangelical theologians offered *Reclaiming the Center*.³⁴ In this book, various authors present an effective critique of Grenz' proposal and defend biblical authority.³⁵

Notwithstanding these excellent critiques, however, conservative evangelicals lack an awareness of two positive challenges presented by postmodernism, particularly as it relates to hermeneutics and the role of the Spirit in interpretation. The first challenge is that of highlighting the importance of the process of interpretation. Grant Osborne has captured well the importance of the process of interpretation is his concept of "hermeneutical spiral," where the reader begins not with the attitude of the assumption of neutrality, but of humility, acknowledging that one's presuppositions will be shaped by the presuppositions of Scripture through the process of engaging with Scripture.

The second challenge is the seismic shift in hermeneutics from focusing on what the reader does to what happens to the reader. Vanhoozer cites Gadamer in describing the postmodern transformation in hermeneutics, from epistemology (a mode of knowing) to ontology (a mode of being), and from defining understanding as what the subject (human reader) does to what happens to the subject.³⁶ In other words, there is

³⁴Millard J. Erickson, Paul Kjoss Helseth, and Justin Taylor, eds., *Reclaiming the Center: Confronting Evangelical Accommodation in Postmodern Times* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004).

³⁵Douglas Groothuis defends the correspondence theory of truth (Groothuis, "Truth Defined and Defended," in *Reclaiming the Center*, 59-80), J. P. Moreland and Garry Deweese defend a modest foundationalism (Moreland and Deweese, "The Premature Report of Foundationalism's Demise," in *Reclaiming the Center*, 81-108), and Stephen Wellum defends biblical authority (Wellum, "Postconservatism, Biblical Authority, and Recent Proposals for Re-doing Evangelical Theology: A Critical Analysis," in *Reclaiming the Center*, 161-98).

³⁶Kevin Vanhoozer, "Discourse on Matter: Hermeneutics and the 'Miracle' of Understanding," in *Hermeneutics at the Crossroads*, ed. Kevin Vanhoozer et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 13-16.

recognition that the understanding of the text is dependent not only upon the reader's interpretive skills, but also upon how the reader is affected by the text and the author (divine/human). This dynamic understanding of interpretation has important implications for the role of the Spirit in interpretation. Traditionally, the discussion of the Spirit's role in interpretation was generally limited to either defending the authority or the necessity of the Spirit in interpretation, or attributing the result of understanding to the Spirit. In contrast, what now comes to the forefront is the Spirit's role in the *process* of interpretation that *leads* to understanding. How does the Holy Spirit work upon a person to produce understanding? Does the Holy Spirit affect only the understanding of the meaning of Scripture, or only the reception/application of the meaning, or both? How does the Spirit guide human reason in such a way to produce understanding? How does the Holy Spirit work with the Word in order to lead to right interpretation and right understanding? What is it in the Scripture that the Holy Spirit is illuminating? And what constitutes a true understanding of that content? Faced with these new questions and challenges, evangelicals are currently divided over the issue of the role of the Spirit in interpretation.

Sources of Lack of Consensus

Before we examine the nature of the division within evangelicalism regarding the role of the Spirit in interpretation, it is necessary to revisit three sources from which evangelicalism draws much of its understanding on the role of the Spirit in interpretation: Chicago Statements, Westminster Confession of Faith, and Bernard Ramm. An examination of the relevant statements in these sources shows that there are sufficient ambiguities within them to lead to a lack of consensus.

Chicago Statements

Evangelicalism emerged in the twentieth century with the task of shaping a new identity, in line with historic Protestantism and in distinction from liberalism and fundamentalism. One part of that identity-shaping had to do with the issue regarding the role of the Spirit in interpretation. In 1978, about three hundred evangelicals gathered in Chicago and drew up the “Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy” to articulate the evangelical view on inerrancy.³⁷ The Statement addressed the subtopic of the role of the Spirit in interpretation. In 1982, evangelicals met again to draw up the “Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics”³⁸ to clarify some earlier statements, particularly regarding biblical interpretation. Although these statements have brought consensus in general, the portions that deal with the role of the Spirit in interpretation suffer from lack of clarity and inconsistencies, raising questions about the extent of the consensus on this topic.

The “Inerrancy” document itself has no inconsistent statement about the role of the Spirit in interpretation.³⁹ The “Short Statement 3” states,

The Holy Spirit, Scripture’s divine author, both authenticates it to us by his inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.⁴⁰

³⁷“The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy,” in Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, vol. 4 (Waco: Word, 1979), 211-19. The undersigners came from a variety of evangelical denominations and included James Montgomery Boice, Carl F. H. Henry, Roger Nicole, J. I. Packer, Francis Schaeffer, and R. C. Sproul.

³⁸“Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics, with Commentary by Norman L. Geisler” [on-line]; accessed 4 January 2009; available from <http://www.bible-researcher.com/chicago2.html>; Internet. The commentary is an official commentary of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, and Geisler is one of the authors of the statement.

³⁹The structure of the Statement consists of the following: Five Short Statements; Nineteen articles, each with short statements of affirmations and denials; Four pages of “Exposition.”

⁴⁰“Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.”

In addition, Article XVII states,

WE AFFIRM that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God’s written Word.

WE DENY that this witness of the Holy Spirit operates in isolation from or against Scripture.⁴¹

Another line from the “Exposition” to the document explains,

No new revelation (as distinct from Spirit-given understanding of existing revelation) will be given until Christ comes again.

Together, these statements indicate that the role of the Holy Spirit includes bearing witness to the truthfulness of the written Word and guiding the reader of Scripture to understand the meaning of Scripture. The phrase “opens our minds” indicates that the Spirit is actively involved in guiding the reader to understand.

However, it is within the “Hermeneutics” document that one finds inconsistencies. The reader of the document is left to wonder whether the role of the Spirit involves guiding the reader to understand the meaning of Scripture or is limited to guiding application of Scripture. First, the “Preface” to the “Hermeneutics” states that the document addresses the problem of understanding the *meaning* of Scripture.⁴²

The work of Summit I had hardly been completed when it became evident that there was yet another major task to be tackled. While we recognize that belief in the inerrancy of Scripture is basic to maintaining its authority, the values of that commitment are only as real as one’s understanding of the meaning of Scripture. Thus, the need for Summit II.⁴³

Furthermore, Article V seems to suggest that the role of the Spirit includes guiding the understanding of the meaning of Scripture.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²The articles address the hermeneutical principles such as single meaning, authorial intent, grammatical-historical method, and genre sensitivity, among others.

⁴³Ibid.

We AFFIRM that the Holy Spirit enables believers to appropriate and apply Scripture to their lives.

We DENY that the natural man is able to discern spiritually the biblical message apart from the Holy Spirit.⁴⁴

The phrase “appropriate and apply Scripture to their lives” refers to the Spirit’s role of guiding application of Scripture, while the idea of “discerning the biblical message” in the denial statement suggests that the Holy Spirit guides the understanding of Scripture.

However, the official “Commentary” to this article V suggests that it is addressing only the role of the Spirit in the reception of the message.

The design of this article is to indicate that the ministry of the Holy Spirit extends beyond the inspiration of Scripture to its very application to the lives of believers. Just as no one calls Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:3), so no one can appropriate the message of Scripture to his life apart from the gracious work of the Holy Spirit.

The Denial stresses the truth that the natural man does not receive the spiritual message of Scripture. Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit there is no welcome for its truth in an unregenerate heart.

This does not imply that a non-Christian is unable to understand the meaning of any Scripture. It means that whatever he may perceive of the message of Scripture, without the Holy Spirit’s work he will not welcome the message in his heart.⁴⁵

Articles IX also limits the Spirit’s role to guiding the reception.

The primary thrust of this Affirmation is definitional. It desires to clarify the meaning of the term hermeneutics by indicating that it includes not only perception of the declared meaning of a text but also an understanding of the implications that text has for one’s life. Thus, hermeneutics is more than biblical exegesis. It is not only the science that leads forth the meaning of a passage but also that which enables one (by

⁴⁴“Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics.”

⁴⁵Ibid.

the Holy Spirit) to understand the spiritual implications the truth(s) of this passage has for Christian living.⁴⁶

The placement of the phrase “by the Holy Spirit” in parenthesis, rather than commas, suggests that the phrase applies only to its immediate antecedent, which is the Spirit’s role of guiding the application of Scripture to Christian living. The grammar indicates that it is the *science* that “leads forth the meaning of a passage,” whereas the role of the Spirit enables the understanding of the spiritual implications of the truth for Christian living.

In sum, there is a discrepancy between the Commentary to the Article V, and the Article V itself in the “Hermeneutics” document. The Commentary indicates that the role of the Spirit is in the reception of the message in the heart; the Article indicates that the role of the Spirit includes “discerning spiritually the biblical message.” This is assuming that the word “discern” here is used in the biblical sense of understanding the meaning of a specific content.⁴⁷ But even if the word “discern” is used only in the sense of receiving the message in the heart, there would still be inconsistency between the “Hermeneutics” document and the “Inerrancy” document, which clearly indicates that the Spirit guides the understanding of the meaning of Scripture.

Westminster Confession of Faith

Another statement that also suffers from a lack of clarity is the Article 1.10 in the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF), which many evangelicals, including two key theologians considered in this dissertation—Stanley Grenz and Kevin Vanhoozer⁴⁸

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷See 1 Cor 2:14; Rom 12:2; Eph 5:10.

⁴⁸Stanley Grenz and John Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 64-65; Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning?*, 425-28.

—used as a key controlling principle in their understanding of the role of the Spirit in interpretation:

The supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.⁴⁹

Before pointing out the ambiguity of this article, it is first necessary to distinguish it from the other articles. This is not the same as article 1.5, which is about the role of the Spirit in bearing witness to the divinity of Scripture. It is also not the same as 1.6, which has to do with the necessity of the illumination of the Spirit for a saving understanding of the Scripture. Furthermore, it is not the same as 1.9, which is known as the “analogy of faith” and has to do with the use of Scripture in biblical interpretation. Article 1.10 has to do with settling controversies of religion and adjudicating claims of proper interpretation. It has to do with who has the final authority in interpretation. However, ambiguity lies in the locus of that authority: the Holy Spirit, Scripture, or both.⁵⁰ For Stanley Grenz, this statement supports his theory that the subjective authority of the Spirit has higher authority in interpretation.⁵¹ On the other hand, Vanhoozer uses the same phrase to support his theory in which the Spirit addresses the reader indirectly

⁴⁹Westminster Confession of Faith, 1.10, in *The Westminster Standards* (Philadelphia: Great Commission Publications, 2003).

⁵⁰B. B. Warfield says that “the phrase must be read as asserting that, as a matter of fact, whenever and wherever Scripture speaks, that is the Holy Spirit speaking; and as a matter of duty, every controversy in religion shall be held to be settled by the Word of Scripture.” Benjamin Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931), 255. Warfield may be right, but then this point would not be any different from the point made in article 1.9.

⁵¹Stanley Grenz, “Toward an Undomesticated Gospel: A Response to D. A. Carson,” *PRS* 30 (2003): 455-61; John Franke, “Reforming Theology: Toward a Postmodern Reformed Dogmatics,” *WTJ* 65 (2003): 1-26; idem, “Postmodern and Reformed? A Response to Professors Trueman and Gaffin,” *WTJ* 65 (2003): 331-43.

through the medium of Scripture.⁵² Thus, at least between Grenz and Vanhoozer, the ambiguity in WCF provides a lack of consensus rather than consensus.

Bernard Ramm

A third source of lack of consensus is Bernard Ramm, who in the early stages of the formation of evangelicalism, spent much energy trying to further “develop the idea of the *testimonium* to the Protestant doctrine of authority,”⁵³ but whose gradual shift toward Barthian views opened the door for many different readings of his view. In *After Fundamentalism*, which was written toward the end of his life, Ramm gave an interesting account of being asked by a student to define “American evangelical theology” and experiencing inward panic: “Like a drowning man who sees parts of his life pass before him at great speed . . . so my theology passed before my eyes. I saw my theology as series of doctrines picked up here and there, like a rag-bag collection.”⁵⁴

An example of the different and even conflicting ways in which Ramm has influenced others regarding the role of the Spirit in interpretation is found in the conflicting interpretation of Ramm’s view by Millard Erickson, Kevin Vanhoozer, and Stanley Grenz. Erickson utilized Ramm’s understanding that the Holy Spirit provides an extraordinary cognitive power that is non-discursive and intuitive to support his own cognitive view of the Spirit’s illumination.⁵⁵ Vanhoozer’s starting point for his proposal

⁵²Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning?*, 427.

⁵³Bernard Ramm, *The Witness of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 70.

⁵⁴Bernard Ramm, *After Fundamentalism: The Future of Evangelical Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 1. Ramm’s doctrine of the role of the Spirit in interpretation is concentrated mostly in the following: Ramm, *The Witness of the Spirit*; idem, *The Pattern of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957); idem, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1980), 13-14, 18.

⁵⁵Millard Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 43-44, 52.

of evangelical theological method was Ramm's recommendation to understand God's special revelation in terms of "communicative acts."⁵⁶ Finally, Grenz began his proposal for evangelical theological method with Ramm's idea of the "Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures," which Grenz understood as supporting his own view of the Spirit's illumination, where the source of the Spirit's illumination is not limited to Scripture.⁵⁷

It is significant to note that each of these three theologians find their starting point with some aspect of Ramm's understanding of the role of the Spirit in understanding Scripture. It is beyond the limits of this dissertation to provide a detailed analysis of Ramm's view or an analysis of the conflicting interpretations of Ramm by these three theologians. For now, two examples will suffice regarding ambiguity within Ramm's own understanding of the role of the Spirit in interpretation. First, on the one hand, Ramm emphasized clear distinction between inspiration and illumination;⁵⁸ on the other hand, especially in later years, after accepting Barth's understanding of inspiration and illumination, Ramm blurred the distinction between the two.⁵⁹ Second, while Ramm firmly defended the idea that the Holy Spirit guides the understanding of the cognitive content of revelation,⁶⁰ he also described the role of the Spirit as affecting only the

⁵⁶Kevin Vanhoozer, "Programmatic Proposals," in *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method*, ed. John G. Stackhouse, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 67-69.

⁵⁷Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 64-65, 72-74. In *After Fundamentalism*, Ramm offers Barth's theological method as the most adequate paradigm for the evangelicals. Accordingly, he supports Barth's acceptance of higher criticism and Barth's understanding of the Scripture as a "witness" to revelation. Ramm, *After Fundamentalism*, 101-25.

⁵⁸Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 14.

⁵⁹Fred Klooster, "Barth and the Future of Evangelical Theology," *WTJ* 41 (1985): 307-12. In *After Fundamentalism*, Ramm compares the older with the newer (Barthian) understanding of inspiration: "In short, the older view of inspiration *materializes* [italics his] the Holy Scripture, and in so materializing it robbed Scripture of its spiritual and dynamic qualities, which enable it ever anew to speak the Word of God in the church." Ramm, *After Fundamentalism*, 122.

⁶⁰Ramm, *Witness of the Spirit*, 66

intuitive and non-discursive reasoning.⁶¹ It is these inconsistencies that became a source of different interpretation by various theologians.

In sum, observations from this section and the previous section indicate that the current lack of consensus on the role of the Spirit in interpretation stems partly from a lack of development of the role of the Spirit in interpretation in the face of new challenges in hermeneutics, as well as from ambiguities and inconsistencies within key evangelical sources.

Four Representative Evangelical Views

Postconservative View

The proponents of the postconservative view believe that the Holy Spirit *personally* aids our interpretation of God's Word, and that the revelation of the Spirit goes beyond the Scripture.⁶² Although there are subtle variations within the postconservative model, they have these two above features in common. The Holy Spirit reveals directly in the sense of personally guiding believers in the process of interpretation. But the objective truth which the Spirit reveals is not located simply "in" the Word of God. The Spirit may speak "above" the Word, "beyond" the Word, or "through" the Word. The content of revelation emerges from a conjoined context of the Word *and* believers (including culture, tradition and reason). In other words, the

⁶¹Ibid., 84.

⁶²Edward A. Dowey Jr., *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 108; Donald Bloesch, *A Theology of Word & Spirit: Authority & Method in Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 14; Clark Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 225; I. Howard Marshall, *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 79; Stanley Grenz, "The Spirit and the Word," 362; John Franke, "Reforming Theology: Toward a Postmodern Reformed Dogmatics," *WTJ* 65 (2003): 1-26; Amos Yong, "The Word and the Spirit and the Spirit and the Word: Exploring the Boundaries of Evangelicalism in Relationship to Modern Pentecostalism," *Trinity Journal* 23 (2002): 247.

postconservative view does not make a sharp distinction between the objective meaning of truth and its relevance for believers. To understand the biblical basis and theological construction of this view, I examine the works of Stanley Grenz, who rejects the absolute authority of Scripture and James DeYoung and Sarah Hurty, who hold to the absolute authority of Scripture.

Non-Authoritative: Stanley Grenz. Stanley Grenz is considered to be the key theologian of the postconservative movement by its own adherents.⁶³ He is an important figure because, more than anyone else within the postconservative movement, he has written prolifically and comprehensively in revising the task of theology. Grenz seeks to revise the task of theology in an effort to resolve the problem between liberals and conservatives. For liberals, religious experience is the foundation for theology, and the task of the theologian is to seek the “abiding experiences” that stand underneath the biblical materials.⁶⁴ For conservatives, the Bible is primarily a propositional revelation from God and a doctrinal resource and the task of the theologian is to extract the propositions from the text.⁶⁵ In these ways, Grenz argues, both liberals and conservatives have silenced the voice of the text itself and replaced it with religious experience and propositional doctrines, respectively. Both liberals and conservatives have separated the Spirit and the Word, liberals searching for the voice of the Spirit apart from the Word and

⁶³Roger E. Olson, *Reformed and Always Reforming: The Postconservative Approach to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 15. John Franke is the coauthor of *Beyond Foundationalism*. However, inasmuch as Grenz began and developed the concept of the “Spirit speaking through the Word” and has written several books and articles leading up to *Beyond Foundationalism*, and because the relevant sections in Franke’s *The Character of Theology* are virtually the same as in *Beyond Foundationalism*, Franke will not be treated separately.

⁶⁴Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 67.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 61-62.

the conservatives searching for the propositions apart from the voice of the Spirit. In view of this, Grenz proposes to recover the voice of the text by “bringing Scripture and Spirit together.”⁶⁶ He seeks to

draw from contemporary theological and philosophical insights so as to set forth an understanding of the manner in which the Spirit speaks through the Word, so as to sketch a doctrine of Scripture that can contribute to the renewal of the role of Scripture in the church.⁶⁷

Grenz redefines the relationship between Scripture and Spirit in biblical authority by revising the classical understanding of inspiration and illumination. According to classical understanding, inspiration and illumination are clearly distinguished, inspiration being the work of the Spirit in producing the objective Word and illumination being the work of the Spirit in explaining to the reader the meaning of the Word. Grenz wants to show that “inspiration and illumination . . . are two dimensions of the one activity of the Spirit,”⁶⁸ but he does this by speaking of a “broader conception of the Spirit’s illumination in the production of scripture (inspiration) and the ongoing life of the community.”⁶⁹ In other words, Grenz does not distinguish between the self-authenticating, objective authority of Scripture and the authority of the Holy Spirit in bringing about understanding of that Scripture. He merges the two together under a new concept of illumination in which the objective authority of Scripture is rejected and the source of revelation goes beyond Scripture to include tradition and culture. The evidence of Grenz’ rejection is found in his interpretation of the concept of biblical authority in the

⁶⁶Ibid., 65.

⁶⁷Grenz, “The Spirit and the Word,” 357.

⁶⁸Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 383.

⁶⁹Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 118.

Westminster Confession of Faith, where he adds the preposition “through” in the phrase “Spirit speaking in scripture”:

The declaration that the Spirit speaking in or *through* scripture is our final authority The Bible is authoritative in that it is the vehicle through which the Spirit speaks. Taking the idea a step further, the authority of the Bible is in the end the authority of the Spirit whose instrumentality it is. . . . We believe that the Spirit has chosen, now chooses, and will continue to choose to speak with authority through the biblical texts.⁷⁰

In this statement, Grenz implies that he rejects the notion of the objective authority of Scripture when he says that “the authority of the Bible is in the end the authority of the Spirit whose instrumentality it is.” He makes this point explicit a little later: “It is not the Bible as a book that is authoritative, but the Bible as the instrumentality of the Spirit.”⁷¹ As for Grenz’s understanding of the “Spirit speaking in or through Scripture,” it becomes more evident that Grenz’s insertion of the word “through” signals a departure from the classical understanding of the Spirit/Word relationship in interpretation of Scripture.⁷² In order to understand Grenz’ conception of illumination, which is closely related to the topic of the role of the Spirit in interpretation, it is necessary to follow Grenz’ treatment of the biblical basis for both inspiration and illumination.

Biblical basis. In explaining this broad conception of illumination, Grenz first discusses 2 Timothy 3:16-17 in regards to inspiration and then a set of passages

⁷⁰Ibid. Emphasis added.

⁷¹Ibid., 69. This clearly goes against Westminster Confession of Faith, articles I, II, and IV.

⁷²Although I have noted the ambiguity inherent in the statement “Spirit speaking in the Scripture” in WCF 1.10 as to the precise locus of authority in interpretation (see chap. 1), in contrast to Grenz’s view, the WCF keeps the concept of inspiration and illumination distinct (Articles IV, V, VI) and the source of revelation is limited to the written Scripture (Article VI).

consisting of 1 John 5:7, 11; 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; 2 Corinthians 3:14-17; John 14:26 regarding illumination. On the interpretation of 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Grenz minimizes the importance of the inerrancy of the autograph and the objective authority of Scripture, and emphasizes the Spirit as the agent of inspiration and the agent of recognition of the inspired Scripture. He argues that

through the rare use of the word *theopneustos* in 2 Tim 3:16-17, which may intend an allusion to God's breathing into the nostrils of Adam making him spring to life, Paul declared that "God breathes into the Scripture" thereby making it useful. As the evangelical Greek scholar Edward Goodrick concludes, the text focuses on the surpassing value of the Spirit-energized scriptures and not on some purported "pristine character of the autographs." The church, in short, came to confess the inspiration of Scripture because the early believers experienced the power and truth of the Spirit of God through these writings.⁷³

Notable in this interpretation is that the phrase "Spirit-energized scripture" is set against the phrase "pristine character of the autographs." In other words, inspiration is not so much about Scripture as the product of the work of the Spirit, but about the Spirit as the agent of inspiration. Grenz explicitly states, "We may define 'inspiration' as primarily an activity [of the Holy Spirit] and secondarily a deposit."⁷⁴

Having shown the priority of the activity of the Holy Spirit in inspiration, Grenz proceeds to argue that the Spirit works in a similar way in illumination: "The same illuminating work of the Spirit that served to guide the community in the process of the composition, compilation, and canonization of scripture, continues to lead and direct that community by speaking through the texts of scripture."⁷⁵ Grenz ties inspiration and

⁷³Ibid., 65.

⁷⁴Grenz, *Community of God*, 382. Although Grenz says "secondarily as a deposit," it is difficult to understand how Grenz reconciles this with his other statement that "the Bible as a book is not authoritative."

⁷⁵Ibid., 118.

illumination together by the term “illuminating work” of the Spirit. Further, Grenz believes that inspiration and illumination takes place through the community, rather than through individuals.

In a section titled “authority and illumination,” Grenz cites 1 John 5:7, 11; 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; 2 Corinthians 3:14-17; John 14:26 as the biblical basis for his understanding of illumination, commenting that “theologians routinely find the background for the idea of illumination” in these verses.⁷⁶ Based on these verses, Grenz describes illumination as the Spirit’s continual activity of “pouring further light through the text.”⁷⁷ He does not offer any exegetical reason for his interpretation, but makes the comment that “on the basis of these texts, Christians have always anticipated that the Spirit would guide them as well” and how such an expectation led to the idea of “further light” among the English Puritans.⁷⁸ What Grenz means by “further light” becomes clearer when he cites Northrop Frye’s comment that “biblical texts seem to invite the reader to bring their own experiences into a conversation with them, resulting in an ongoing interpretation of each in the light of the other.”⁷⁹ In sum, Grenz’ biblical basis for his understanding of inspiration and illumination is scanty. Yet, its conclusions are clear: the authority behind the inspiration and illumination is the Holy Spirit, and just as inspired Scripture came through the Spirit’s illumination of a community, proper interpretation of Scripture comes through the Spirit’s illumination of a community.

⁷⁶Ibid., 66.

⁷⁷Ibid., 67.

⁷⁸Ibid., 66. He gives the example of John Robinson, a Puritan pastor who came to the New World and admonished his flock to look for further light that the Spirit of God would yet pour forth from the Scriptures. Ibid.

⁷⁹Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), 225, cited in Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 67.

Construction. Grenz goes on to clarify “his broadened conception of illumination” by drawing from the philosophical insights of J. L. Austin’s speech-act theory. According to this theory, a speech-act has three components: locution (what is said), illocution (intention of the author), and perlocution (the goal of the speech). Grenz associates his concept of “Spirit speaking through the Bible” with only the illocutionary act.⁸⁰ Even though the locution (the text) is appropriated by the Spirit to address the community, “the Spirit’s address is not bound up simply and totally with the text’s supposed internal meaning.”⁸¹ Furthermore, the Spirit, by his illocutionary force (the Spirit’s intention), appropriates the text (locution) to help the community of believers to achieve their goal (perlocution) of “forming their world,” or forming a vision of the “eschatological world God intends for creation.”⁸² Believers are able to form this vision as the Spirit helps them to view themselves and all reality in light of the “paradigmatic events” (story-forming events) of Scripture.⁸³

Yet, the source of world-formation is not limited to Scripture. Grenz goes on to describe in separate chapters the role of tradition and culture in biblical interpretation. Concerning tradition, Grenz spells out what he had only implied so far regarding the structure of authority in interpretation.

In this conception [of the Spirit speaking through Scripture], the authority of both scripture and tradition is ultimately an authority derived from the work of the Spirit. . . . In other words, neither scripture nor tradition is inherently authoritative. . . . The authority of each—tradition as well as scripture—is contingent on the work of the Spirit, and both scripture and tradition are

⁸⁰Ibid., 73.

⁸¹Ibid., 74.

⁸²Ibid., 77.

⁸³Ibid., 80-81.

fundamental components within an interrelated web of beliefs that constitutes the Christian faith.⁸⁴

To Grenz, neither Scripture nor tradition is inherently authoritative, and the authority of each is derived from the work of the Spirit.

Concerning culture, Grenz claims that the Spirit speaks in particular historical-cultural context.⁸⁵ But in speaking of that context, Grenz blurs the distinction between Scripture and the cultural context as the source of special revelation. Grenz makes an explicit statement about hearing the Spirit's voice in the culture: "Because the life-giving Creator Spirit is present wherever life flourishes, the Spirit's voice can conceivably resound through many media, including the media of human culture."⁸⁶ The "world construction does not lie in the text itself, even though it is closely bound to the text."⁸⁷ Rather, the world is socially constructed, that is, through the Spirit's guidance in the created world.⁸⁸ In sum, for Stanley Grenz, the role of the Spirit in interpretation is that the Spirit speaks equally through Scripture as well as tradition and culture.

Authoritative: James B. DeYoung and Sarah L. Hurty. A much more thorough exegetical work on a similar view can be found in James DeYoung and Sarah L. Hurty's (hereafter called "DeYoung and Hurty")⁸⁹ *Beyond the Obvious: Discover the Deeper Meaning of Scripture*.⁹⁰ DeYoung and Hurty's position is different from that of

⁸⁴Ibid., 117.

⁸⁵Ibid., 161.

⁸⁶Ibid., 162.

⁸⁷Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 77.

⁸⁸Grenz, "The Spirit and the Word," 363, 368, 371,

⁸⁹From here on, I will use the pronoun "he" to refer to DeYoung and Hurty, since DeYoung was the professor and Hurty was his student when they wrote this together.

⁹⁰James DeYoung and Sarah L. Hurty, *Beyond the Obvious: Discover the Deeper Meaning of*

Stanley Grenz in that whereas for Grenz the source of continual revelation is a joined context of Scripture, culture and tradition, for DeYoung and Hurty, the source of additional revelation comes from the Holy Spirit himself. Unlike Grenz who emphasizes the Spirit's current yet *mediated* revelation through a conjunction of the Scripture, culture and tradition, DeYoung and Hurty emphasize the Spirit's *unmediated* revelation of new truths, that is, truths directly from the Holy Spirit himself. DeYoung and Hurty is also different in that he distinguishes between the norm of the Scripture and the authority of the Spirit's continuing revelation, whereas Grenz' concept of authority flows across the boundaries of Scripture, community, and tradition.

Biblical basis. DeYoung and Hurty's exegetical work deals with exactly the four passages covered in this dissertation. His most significant exegesis is that of 1 Corinthians 2:10-14. De Young/Hurty understands 2:12 and 14 as referring to the Spirit's guidance in interpreting the meaning as well as receiving it. But he takes "revealed" in 2:10 and the phrase "in words taught by the Spirit" in 2:13 as referring to an entirely different role of the Spirit—that of providing ongoing, new, immediate revelations apart from the written text, revelations that go beyond Scripture.⁹¹ The Holy Spirit gave direct, immediate revelation to Paul and other apostles, and he may grant it to all believers.⁹² He says that the context has nothing to do with the written Word, but with the preaching of the gospel, the spoken word.⁹³ Paul is not referring to the Old Testament, but to God's wisdom hidden beforehand (2:7), that is, the full revelation in Jesus Christ.⁹⁴

Scripture (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004).

⁹¹Ibid., 130-32.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid., 131.

“Words taught by the Spirit” in 2:13 is understood as the Spirit’s provision of both the new content and new form (new words).⁹⁵

DeYoung and Hurty’s exegesis of the other three passages confirm his conclusions of the first. Second Corinthians 3-4 confirms the idea that the Spirit guides both the mind (4:4) and the heart (4:6), thus aiding believers in understanding the meaning as well as the significance of Scriptural truths.⁹⁶ DeYoung and Hurty take the phrase “the Spirit will teach you all things” in John 14:26 to mean that the Spirit will go beyond reminding all believers of what Christ said and teach new things.⁹⁷ Similarly, the Spirit’s role of being the witness of Christ in John 15:26-27 and the clause “he will tell you what is yet to come” in John 16:13 are both taken to refer to the Spirit’s promise to reveal “new truth . . . at least for the apostles.”⁹⁸ The promise of the Spirit’s guiding is not only retrospective but also prospective, leading them to new truth that expands and develops what they already know.

Finally, DeYoung and Hurty interpret 1 John 2:27 as the Spirit’s promise to teach new revelations;⁹⁹ “all things” refer to present and future things.¹⁰⁰ In summary, he argues that “none of these passages from Paul and John can be limited to illuminating the biblical text, for most of the New Testament was unwritten at the time of 1 and 2 Corinthians (AD 55 and 57). If John’s writing is the latest, then much of the writing of

⁹⁴Ibid., 375 n. 17.

⁹⁵Ibid., 131.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Ibid., 133.

⁹⁸Ibid., 134.

⁹⁹Ibid., 135-36.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 135.

the text has already been completed; but the promises in John 14 and 16 and especially 1 John seem to suggest that truth and teaching was yet to be revealed.”¹⁰¹

Construction. The Holy Spirit both guides the interpretation of the present Word and provides new revelations beyond the Word. The Spirit is seen as a second source of revelation who works in accord with Scripture.¹⁰² Regarding the content of revelation, the Spirit either (1) communicates specific, personal instructions and personal applications of Scripture for our guidance, (2) or helps us to solve exegetical questions and create new theological constructs, as well as other matters and truth.¹⁰³

To the objection about how “new revelation” can be reconciled with a closed canon, DeYoung and Hurty respond by making a distinction between “normative” and “authoritative” truth. The normative truth is the canon of Scripture, which is “closed and acts as the standard to test all subsequent claims to truth to see if they are indeed from the Spirit.”¹⁰⁴ The new revelations are authoritative, but not normative, since these new revelations apply only to a “subset of the church and not the whole church.”¹⁰⁵ These revelations are new in the sense that they are contents that have not been revealed in Scripture and that the Spirit still teaches today (1 John 2:27), and they are new in the sense of the doctrinal developments in history.¹⁰⁶ In putting this view into practice, DeYoung and Hurty encourage the practice of “contemplative exegesis” which includes

¹⁰¹Ibid., 135-36.

¹⁰²Ibid., 374 n. 17.

¹⁰³Ibid., 141.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 146.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 145.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 142-43

grammatical-historical exegesis, as well as the practice of directly listening to the Spirit.¹⁰⁷

In sum, the postconservative view holds that the Spirit guides believers in their interpretation of Scripture today in the same way he has guided the apostles in writing Scripture—by providing new revelations. Grenz emphasizes the Spirit’s use of the joined contexts of Scripture, tradition, and culture; DeYoung and Hurty emphasize the Spirit’s immediate action. But they both believe that the Spirit provides new contents beyond Scripture.

Cognition View

According to the cognition view, the Holy Spirit personally aids the mind in grasping the truth of Scripture.¹⁰⁸ This view is similar to the postconservative view in that both view the Spirit as personally affecting the understanding of the meaning of scriptural truths. The two views are different in that the cognition view believes the Spirit does not go beyond Scripture in what he illumines. The cognition view is also different from the other conservative views in that it emphasizes the Spirit’s role in personally affecting cognition over volition. For this view, works of two leading evangelical theologians are examined: Millard Erickson and D. A. Carson.

Millard Erickson. The chief proponent of this view is Millard Erickson. His position on the role of the Spirit in interpretation is understood best in his interaction with the position of Daniel Fuller, which Erickson explains in *Christian Theology* and *Evangelical Interpretation*. Briefly put, Fuller denies that the Spirit directly influences

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 151-52.

¹⁰⁸Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 241–65; idem, *Evangelical Interpretation: Perspectives on Hermeneutical Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 50–54.

the cognitive understanding of Scripture; rather, the Spirit influences only a believer's volition (conviction). For Fuller, Christians and non-Christians alike can understand the meaning of Scripture. The problem is with a person's unwillingness to accept the meaning of Scripture.

In contrast to Fuller who "assumes that only man's will, not his reason, is affected by sin,"¹⁰⁹ Erickson believes that the "unbeliever does not accept, at least in part, because he does not understand," due to the ontological difference between God and the human being, and in part, due to the noetic effect of sin.¹¹⁰ Thus, Erickson agrees with Calvin's position that the problem of lack of understanding is due to the total depravity of man that includes reason. This deficit can be overcome only by the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.¹¹¹

Furthermore, whereas Fuller believes that there is only one level of meaning (grammatical-historical) which is understandable by both believers and non-believers, Erickson believes that there are three levels of meaning, which correspond to three levels of perception.¹¹² Non-believers can understand at levels of physical perception and cognition.¹¹³ These two levels are functions of the "senses" and the "mind," respectively.¹¹⁴ The third level is that of spiritual perception, and is understood only by believers. Enabled by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, believers' spiritual perception

¹⁰⁹Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 255.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 247, 256.

¹¹¹Ibid., 256.

¹¹²Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation*, 52.

¹¹³Erickson describes these two faculties as functions of the "senses" and the "mind," respectively. Ibid.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

is “beyond hearing and seeing with the senses . . . [and] with the mind” and is “an inward power, or ability, or faculty in man which is deeper than the ordinary cognitive power.”¹¹⁵ There is an understanding of the text that cannot be obtained simply through intellectual study, but which the Holy Spirit gives in illumination.¹¹⁶ To be sure, the Spirit is not opposed to a careful study of the biblical text and works through that information.¹¹⁷ Yet, the deeper meaning into which the Spirit gives insight into beyond that which the person unaided by the Spirit would discover discursively through exegetical methodology.¹¹⁸ Thus, although he agrees with Fuller that non-believers can understand at the grammatical-historical level, Erickson believes that there is a deeper level of meaning which only believers can understand through the illumination of the Spirit.

Biblical basis. The key verse over which Erickson debated with Fuller is 1 Corinthians 2:14. Fuller interpreted the three key terms in this verse (*δέχομαι*, *γινώσκω*, *ἀνακρίνω*) to be referring to the problem of man’s reception (willing acceptance of the meaning as applicable to one’s life) but not cognition of meaning. Erickson reacted by showing that none of these terms necessarily refers to the problem of reception. He agreed with Fuller that *δέχομαι* includes the idea of accepting. Yet, the basis of not accepting is not certain from the phrase “οὐ δέχομαι.” It may be that those who would receive understand but reject what is there because they find it disagreeable; or it may be

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 50.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 54.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 50, 52.

that failing to understand they do not know whether they wish to receive it or not.¹¹⁹ The other two terms are clearer. Γινώσκω refers to “cognitive knowledge of things,” and ἀνακρίνω refers to “investigation aimed at coming to understand that which goes beyond mere surface meaning.”¹²⁰ From these words, Erickson concludes that the work of the Spirit involves aiding cognitive understanding of Scripture.

Another important exegetical point that Erickson makes is that “the context of 1 Corinthians 2:14 contains corroborating evidence that humans cannot understand without the Spirit’s aid.”¹²¹ Verse 11 emphasizes that only the Spirit of God comprehends the things of God. First Corinthians 1:20-21 and 2:11 are further evidence that the world does not know God without the Spirit. The deep things of God are imparted in words taught by the Spirit (2:13). Erickson concludes, “From all of these considerations, it appears that Paul is not saying that unspiritual persons understand but do not accept. Rather, they do not accept, at least in part, because they do not understand.”¹²²

Erickson also interprets 2 Corinthians 3:16-18, 4:3-6 as indicating the work of the Holy Spirit relative to the cognitive dimension of the human in conversion.¹²³ Erickson argues that 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 shows that the difference between a believer and an unbeliever is that whereas the unbeliever cannot understand the truth even though the light of the gospel is there, believers can understand the truth because the light shines on

¹¹⁹Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation*, 40.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 248. Erickson does not discuss at all the term ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος which is strong evidence in his favor.

¹²²Ibid., 249.

¹²³Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation*, 41.

him. Believers can clearly see the truth, but not the unbeliever.¹²⁴ This inability to understand is also seen in the context of the preceding passage, where the language of the taking away of the veil in 3:16 is seen as the act of illumination.¹²⁵ Along with a few other passages (Matt 13:13-15; Rom 1:21; 11:8-10), Erickson takes this passage as arguing for the need of some special work of the Spirit to enhance man's perception and understanding.¹²⁶ So far, Erickson describes the work of the Spirit at the beginning of a Christian's life.

Erickson then turns to the Johannine passages (John 14:17, 26; 15:26; 16:13, 15) which deal with the continuing work of the Spirit in the life of believers. He believes that the promise about the teaching of the Holy Spirit in these passages are not restricted to the disciples of Jesus and are intended for all believers, and that these verses promise the Spirit's role of communicating and elucidating the truth.¹²⁷ The prepositional phrase τῆς ἀληθείας ("of truth") in the title "Spirit of truth" (John 14:17) signifies that the nature of the Spirit is truth, suggesting that the Spirit is the one who communicates the truth.¹²⁸

Furthermore, according to John 14:17, "the world is not able to receive (λαμβάνω, simple reception, as opposed to δέχομαι, acceptance) him, because it neither sees him nor knows him."¹²⁹ In contrast, believers "know him (γινώσκω) because he abides with them and will be in them."¹³⁰ Erickson sees in this verse clear evidence that

¹²⁴Ibid., 43.

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 248.

¹²⁷Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation*, 41-42.

¹²⁸Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 250.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Ibid.

one is not able to receive because one does not know. Erickson also notes how Jesus “makes several assertions about the work of the Spirit that seem to involve granting understanding that those who do not have the Spirit will not receive: he ‘will teach you all things and will remind you everything I have said to you’ (14:26); ‘testify about me’ (15:26), ‘guide you into all truth’ (16:13), and ‘take from what is mine and make it known to you’ (16:15).”¹³¹

Erickson also cites John 14-16 passage to talk about his understanding of the relationship between language and the illumination of the Spirit.¹³² He says that “the meaning conveyed by language is objectively present in the symbols used. It is not always, however, present in the surface meaning of those symbols in such a way that it can be fully explicated by pointing directly to features of those symbols.”¹³³ An example of language used in the Bible whose symbols elicit insight into its meaning is the parables of Jesus. Jesus used figures of speech or images that arouse understanding in his hearers.¹³⁴ However, when Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit would guide the disciples into all the truth (16:13) by bringing the teachings to their remembrance (14:26), he is indicating that the Holy Spirit would give a “*disclosure* [italics his] of meaning.” That is to say, the insight or discernment into the objective meaning is given by the Holy Spirit and not elicited by any feature of the language used.¹³⁵ In support of this interpretation,

¹³¹Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation*, 41.

¹³²Millard Erickson, “Language: Human Vehicle for Divine Truth,” in *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction to Interpreting Scripture*, ed. Bruce Corley et al. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 208-16.

¹³³*Ibid.*, 213.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, 214.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*

Erickson also adduces the example of Matthew 16:17 where Jesus tells Peter that his confession regarding Christ was “not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.”¹³⁶

Finally, Erickson follows Bernard Ramm and calls the perceptive function in human being by which the Holy Spirit causes this special insight to take place “spiritual perception.” Erickson cites Ramm and describes this “third-level perception”¹³⁷ as an “inward power or ability which, when sound and whole, has an intuitive power for recognizing God and his truth.”¹³⁸ The biblical basis for these are passages that speak of eyes of the heart (Eph 1:18), seeing God (Matt 5:8; 1 John 3:6), seeing the kingdom of God (John 3:3), and spiritual hearing (John 5:24; 10:3; Rom 10:17).

Construction. On such biblical basis, Erickson constructs a view of the role of the Spirit in interpretation that emphasizes the Spirit’s influence on cognition rather than reception of biblical truth. First, this is based on passages such as Matthew 13:13-15, Romans 1:21 and 2 Corinthians 4:4, which indicate the necessity of special work of the Spirit to enhance man’s perception and understanding. For Erickson, “illumination is necessary because of sin’s effect on the noetic powers of human beings.”¹³⁹ Thus, illumination consists of the work of the Spirit in the life of believers, “witnessing to the truth and countering the effects of sin so the inherent meaning of the Bible can be seen.”¹⁴⁰ Second, on the basis of his interpretation of 1 Corinthians 2:14 and John 14: 17

¹³⁶Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation*, 44.

¹³⁷First two levels, physical perception and cognition, are natural functions that do not require special illumination of the Spirit. *Ibid.*, 52.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, 33.

and in contrast to Fuller who believes that one cannot understand because one does not accept the biblical truth, Erickson believes that one cannot accept because one cannot understand. Third, based on John 14:26, the Spirit is seen as disclosing insight into the meaning of the passage. In contrast to Fuller who denies the Spirit's aid in interpretation, Erickson believes in "a direct work [of the Holy Spirit] at the point of exposure to the content of Scripture."¹⁴¹ By "direct work," Erickson does not mean the communication of new information,¹⁴² but the provision of an insight, "a deeper understanding of the meaning that is there" in the Scripture, although it cannot be pointed out exegetically.¹⁴³

Regarding the relationship between the natural and the supernatural in the interpretation process, Erickson calls himself a "supernaturalist" who believes that understanding of the text cannot be obtained simply through intellectual study, but which the Holy Spirit gives in illumination. "It is the flash of understanding, which may come suddenly and dramatically or more gradually and quietly, but in which we come to see that which we had not previously understood."¹⁴⁴ This is in contrast to Fuller whom he criticizes for being a "practical naturalist," who assumes that the meaning of a biblical passage can be obtained simply by applying the canons of interpretation used on any type of literature to the literature of the Bible. Interpretation of Scripture "is related to the objective, scientific study of the Bible in much the same way that the supernatural

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 33.

¹⁴²Ibid., 54.

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

working of God stands in relationship to natural laws in a miracle,” where God can “contravene natural laws.”¹⁴⁵

In speaking about the work of the Spirit being direct and inaccessible through exegetical means, Erickson is concerned not to go in completely the opposite direction of eliminating the need for exegetical work. Erickson’s solution is to strike a balance by following Ramm’s categorization of three levels of perception, where the first two levels of meaning (physical perception, cognition) can be accessed through exegetical means, but the third level of meaning (spiritual perception) can be accessed only by the illumination of the Spirit. A final implication which Erickson draws from his construction of the role of the Spirit in interpretation is regarding what level of meaning believers and unbelievers understand.

It should be noted, however, that the basic, and most crucial dimensions of Christian truth are considerably more direct and obviously on the surface of the text, so that honest and objective unbelievers can see them as well. As important as the deeper dimensions of understanding that come only through the illumination or enlightenment given by the Holy Spirit are, they are not essential to salvation or to Christian fellowship.¹⁴⁶

In sum, for Erickson, an understanding of the deepest level of meaning of Scripture which are not essential to salvation is provided only by the immediate illumination of the Holy Spirit.

D. A. Carson. D. A. Carson’s view focuses on the Spirit’s influence in both cognition and reception. However, his position may be considered under the cognition view because of his emphasis on the noetic effect of sin and the Spirit’s role in overcoming it. Furthermore, while Carson shares several key points with Erickson, his

¹⁴⁵Ibid., 49, 50.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

view is significantly different from that of Erickson to warrant a separate consideration. Like Erickson, Carson responds critically to those who say that the Spirit does not enable us to understand the text but only helps in applying it to ourselves. Carson shares Erickson's view that the problem is both the human inability to understand and the unwillingness to accept. Carson also believes that without the Holy Spirit, a believer cannot properly understand the things of God in Scripture.

Yet, Carson's view is different from that of Erickson in several ways. First, while Erickson wants to emphasize the idea that one cannot accept the biblical truth because one cannot understand, Carson emphasizes the reverse: that one cannot understand because one is self-centered. Second, Erickson and Carson differ in what the Spirit helps in understanding. For Erickson, the Spirit helps to understand the aspects of biblical meaning that are non-essential to salvation. For Carson, the Spirit helps to understand the aspects of biblical meaning that are relevant to salvation.

Thus, the two also differ on how the Holy Spirit overcomes the noetic effect of sin and causes proper interpretation of Scripture. For Erickson, the Spirit provides a flash of understanding that is beyond ordinary cognitive power. For Carson, the Spirit's illumination takes place by the Spirit's overcoming of self-centeredness and enabling ordinary cognition.¹⁴⁷ He views human cognition as something that needs to be restored to its proper function,¹⁴⁸ whereas for Erickson, in addition to restoration, ordinary cognition is something that needs to be transcended by the Holy Spirit.

Carson compares his view of the role of the Spirit in interpretation with two common extreme views. One view assumes that if you have the Holy Spirit, you can

¹⁴⁷D. A. Carson, *The Cross and the Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 66.

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 53, 55.

make judgments about all things and tend to justify any kind of interpretation,¹⁴⁹ and a second view assumes that the Spirit does not help at all to understand the truth, but only to help apply the truth.¹⁵⁰ Carson proposes a third view, which he believes existed from the Reformation on, which says that “those without the Spirit are so dead that it is folly to think that arguments can bring them to faith In other words, the Holy Spirit himself must do an antecedent work in our hearts and minds if we are going to believe.”¹⁵¹ According to Carson, then, the problem with the two extreme views is that they do not sufficiently emphasize the deadness of the heart and the mind without the Spirit, and that the role of the Spirit in interpretation is seen chiefly as overcoming that problem.

Biblical basis. Carson’s view is most clearly expressed in his exposition of 1 Corinthians 2:6-16.¹⁵² His interprets this passage in terms of three contrasts. The first contrast is between those who receive God’s wisdom and those who do not (2:6-10a). Those who receive God’s wisdom are called “mature” (2:6), which refers to all Christians because they have come to terms with the message of the cross, while all others, by definition, have not.¹⁵³ Furthermore, the wisdom of God, which had been hidden for long ages past and is now revealed, can be understood by those who have the Spirit (2:10). By contrast, those who do not have the Spirit cannot understand the wisdom of God.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., 44. Carson does not point out directly, but this criticism may include Erickson, since Erickson believes that the Holy Spirit *gives* meaning intuitively.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 44-45. Carson is referring to a position akin to the reception view.

¹⁵¹Ibid., 45, 52.

¹⁵²Ibid.

¹⁵³Ibid., 47.

The reason the rulers could not understand the wisdom of God (1 Cor 2:8) is due to both their own sinfulness and the veiled character of revelation.¹⁵⁴ “It was his matchless grace and wisdom that provided revelation clear enough to be understood after the events to which it pointed had occurred, but veiled enough that rebellious sinners would in some measure misinterpret it and put it together in wrong ways.”¹⁵⁵ “No eye has seen, nor ear heard” (1 Cor 2:9) because “God’s wise plan was at that point still ‘secret,’ still in ‘mystery,’ largely hidden.”¹⁵⁶ But once the wisdom of God is fully revealed, the only hindrance to seeing the gospel is the problem of unbelief. So, “God has revealed it by his Spirit” (2:10). Carson takes this work of the Spirit in 2:10 to refer to both his work of revealing the hiddenness of the gospel (external revelation)¹⁵⁷ and renewing believers’ sinful heart and mind (internal revelation) so that he may understand the gospel.¹⁵⁸

The second contrast is between the Spirit of God and the spirit of the world (2:10b-13). There are two problems in revelation:

The problem is not only that God is much greater than we are, but that we are so rebellious that we distort much of the information about himself that he has graciously provided. The possibility of knowing God and of understanding his ways does not belong to any human being as an essential component of his or her being. The distance is too great; our self-centeredness is too deep.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴Ibid., 49-50.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., 50.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., 51.

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., 52.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., 53.

These two problems are resolved by “two primary dimensions of revelation.” The first dimension is revelation in the public arena. This is the cross of the Messiah which openly “displays God’s unfathomable wisdom, bringing to open display a plan that had mercifully been ‘hidden’ in ages past.”¹⁶⁰ This is the “things freely given us by God” (2:12b). But an understanding of such revelation is “dependent on a second dimension of revelation, one that takes place within the individual”:

Our obtuseness, our deep self-centeredness, our love of pomp and power and prestige, simply would not have allowed us to understand the cross or our need of it. In short, our very lostness demanded the work of the Spirit of God, to the end that we might “understand what God has freely given us” (2:12).¹⁶¹

Here, Carson confirms his conclusion in the first contrast, namely that the work of the Spirit after the event of the cross involves only the overcoming of “lostness,” or the sinfulness of human being in understanding the external, “public” revelation. The problem of human finitude has been resolved by the public revelation of the cross of Christ.

The third contrast is between the ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος (“natural person”) and the πνευματικὸς (“spiritual person”) in 2:14-16, the former being a person with, and the latter without, the Spirit. The natural person has two problems. First, he does not accept the things that come from God. Second, the natural person cannot understand them. The focus of this expression is on the utter inability to understand Scripture without the Spirit.¹⁶² As to the cause of this inability, Carson states,

What we must constantly remember is that this human inability to understand spiritual things is a *culpable* inability. It is not that God makes us constitutionally

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 54.

¹⁶¹Ibid., 55.

¹⁶²Ibid., 57.

unable to understand him, and then toys with us for his own amusement. Rather, he has made us for himself, but we have run from him. The heart of our lostness is our profound self-focus. We do not *want* to know him.¹⁶³

Carson makes it clear that God has made human beings constitutionally able to understand God. Thus, there is no problem of finitude within a human being which the Spirit needs to overcome. This is a reaffirmation of earlier conclusion that the only problem behind misunderstanding of the things of God is sinfulness.

In contrast to the “natural man,” there is the “spiritual man” (2:15a) a phrase that does not refer to an elite coterie of Christians but to all Christians. In explaining that this “spiritual man makes judgment about all things (2:15),” Paul refers to believers’ ability to “assess what goes on in the spiritual realm” to which those without the Spirit do not have access.¹⁶⁴ Since the world does not understand spiritual things, it cannot understand those who have “the mind of Christ” (2:16) either.

Construction. In drawing conclusions from the study of 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, Carson anticipates an objection to his interpretation:

How shall we respond, then, to those who say this sounds too much like an esoteric approach to knowledge, one that can safely put aside disciplined exegesis... and exchange it all for some subjective claim to being led by the Spirit? Should we safeguard ourselves from this charge by siding with those who say that the Spirit does not enable us to understand the text, but simply to apply it to ourselves?¹⁶⁵

Carson responds to both those who simply claim the Spirit’s guidance and those who interpret without the Spirit’s help by drawing the following conclusions from his exegesis. First, 1 Corinthians 2 is not addressing how one comes to the knowledge of

¹⁶³Ibid., 58.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 59-61.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 64.

what any passage of Scripture means.¹⁶⁶ Paul’s focus is on the parts of Scripture that deal with the fundamental message of the crucified Messiah. Second, some may articulate the message of the cross but do not believe it.¹⁶⁷ But this does not mean that they understand the message. At the deepest level, they have not really understood it.¹⁶⁸ “Consciously or unconsciously, they have bought into one of the ‘wisdoms’ of this world and have therefore not grasped the message of the cross at all.”¹⁶⁹ Third, the reason for this failure lies in human waywardness, culpable self-interest, and alienation from God.¹⁷⁰ Fourth, to overcome such lostness and grasp the message of Christ crucified, believers need the power of the Spirit of God.¹⁷¹

Carson adduces the example of Paul regarding the manner in which the Holy Spirit overcomes this lostness and its implication for the role of the Spirit in interpretation. Before his conversion, Paul knew enough of what Christians believed about the cross so that he could summarize it accurately. In that sense he “understood” the message of the cross. But he did not truly understand the message of the cross apart from brokenness, contrition, repentance, and faith. “What the Spirit accomplishes in us is more than application of truth already grasped. Paul’s point is that truly grasping the truth of the cross and being transformed cannot be separated—and both are utterly dependent on the work of the Spirit.”¹⁷²

¹⁶⁶Ibid.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., 64-65.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., 65.

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

¹⁷⁰Ibid.

¹⁷¹Ibid., 66.

¹⁷²Ibid., 65.

Paul's example shows that the Spirit does not so much provide a flash of insight as with Erickson, but causes the reader to understand the message of the cross by causing them to experience the power of the cross and restoring their cognitive functions. Carson does not consider this to be an indirect work of the Spirit in causing understanding; the Spirit's sanctifying power works equally on the mind as well as the heart.

In sum, both Erickson and Carson emphasize the personal work of the Spirit in causing understanding of biblical truths. Both believe that the Spirit does this by means of removing the noetic effect of sin. However, Erickson believes that in addition to the removal of the noetic effect of sin, the Spirit provides a flash of insight into the deeper meaning of Scripture.

Reception View

In contrast to the cognition view, the reception view sees the work of the Spirit as lying primarily in the realm of reception (acceptance of the message) rather than cognition. On the prognosis of the problem, while the cognition view understands the problem of understanding the meaning of Scripture as primarily a problem of the mind, the reception view sees the problem as primarily that of an unwilling heart. Furthermore, while the cognition view holds that a lack of understanding causes a lack of reception, the reception view holds that the unwilling heart causes a lack of understanding.

Among those who hold the reception view,¹⁷³ some believe that the Spirit does not affect the interpretation of Scripture at all.¹⁷⁴ Others believe that the Spirit aids

¹⁷³Daniel Wallace, "The Holy Spirit and Hermeneutics" [on-line]; accessed 6 July 2007; available from <http://bible.org/article/holy-spirit-and-hermeneutics>"; Douglas Kennard, "Evangelical Views on Illumination of Scripture and Critique," *JETS* 49, no. 4 (2006); Daniel Fuller, "The Holy Spirit's Role in Biblical Interpretation" in *Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and William Sanford LaSor (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 189-98; Robert H. Stein, *A Basic Guide to Interpreting*

believers' understanding of Scripture indirectly. That is, the Spirit aids believers in receiving and applying the message of Scripture, and the resulting sanctification in turn affects the interpretation of Scripture.¹⁷⁵ Yet others believe that the Spirit directly aids in understanding the Word, but that the Spirit's work of illumination is not complete until it persuades and convicts believers.¹⁷⁶ Here, we look at the exegetical arguments and constructions of three representatives: Daniel Fuller, Daniel Wallace, and Douglas Kennard.

Daniel Fuller. Of the three, Daniel Fuller is the first to articulate this view with exegetical support. He begins his essay "The Holy Spirit's Role in Biblical Interpretation" by describing the problem that he seeks to overcome.

There have been some in the history of the Church who have insisted that the proper understanding of a passage in the Bible is gained only by those who go beyond the wording of the text and seek the illumination that the Holy Spirit provides....The problem with this understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in biblical interpretation is that the words of the text can play no essential role in conveying its intended meaning, even though it is these very words which the writers were inspired to use in transmitting God's message to men."¹⁷⁷

the Bible: Playing by the Rules (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 65-69; Zuck, "The Role of the Holy Spirit"; DeZago, "Word and Spirit in Doctrinal Formation"; Fred Klooster, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Hermeneutic Process," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984).

¹⁷⁴Fuller, "The Holy Spirit's Role," 192; Kennard, "Evangelical Views on Illumination," 803, 806.

¹⁷⁵Wallace calls it "boomerang effect." Daniel Wallace, "The Holy Spirit and Hermeneutics"; Richard Averbeck calls it "backlash effect." Richard Averbeck, "God, People and the Bible: The Relationship between the Illumination and Biblical Scholarship," in *Who's Afraid of the Holy Spirit?*, ed. M. James Sawyer and Daniel B. Wallace (Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 2005), 149; Fuller, "The Holy Spirit's Role," 92. The assumption here is that the Holy Spirit causes sanctification, and sanctification in turn causes understanding.

¹⁷⁶Zuck, "The Role of the Holy Spirit," 128; Klooster, "The Role of the Holy Spirit," 462-63; Wallace, "The Holy Spirit and Hermeneutics."

¹⁷⁷Fuller, "The Holy Spirit's Role," 91.

Thus, it is with this concern to refute those who go beyond the text and to protect the intended meaning of the text that Fuller examines 1 Corinthians 2:14.

Biblical basis. Regarding 1 Corinthians 2:14a, Fuller comments that *δέχομαι* is used instead of *λαμβάνω*. The former term means “to accept some requested offering willingly and with pleasure” and the latter term means “simply to receive something.”¹⁷⁸ Based on this observation, Fuller states that the problem with the natural man is that he does not welcome the things of the Spirit of God, not that he does not understand them. “In fact,” he argues, the fact that the natural man “experiences a revulsion against a biblical teaching presupposes a prior cognition of that teaching.”¹⁷⁹ Fuller also contends that the word “foolishness” (*μωρία*) does not mean that biblical teachings are unintelligible, but applies more appropriately to what is understood and yet regarded as false.¹⁸⁰ In support of the idea that the gospel is intelligible even to non-believers, he provides examples of Paul arguing with the Jews in the synagogues (Acts 18:4), and persuading the Greeks (Acts 17:22-31, 19:8-9; 24:24-25, 26:26).¹⁸¹ He comments that verbs like “arguing” (*διαλέγομαι*) and “persuading” (*πείθω*) refer to appeal to coherence and common ground. Further, he argues that considering the gospel as foolish is closely associated with the problem of boasting (1 Cor 1:29, 31; 3:18-21), which is a problem of the will.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸Ibid.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., 92.

¹⁸⁰Ibid.

¹⁸¹Ibid., 93.

¹⁸²Ibid.

Turning to the word *γινώσκω* in 1 Corinthians 2:14b, Fuller cites from the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* and distinguishes the word *γινώσκω*, which means “embracing things as they really are,” from *οἶδα*, which means “mere perception or cognition.”¹⁸³ Furthermore, the natural man does not “know” the things of God because they are “spiritually discerned (*πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται*).”¹⁸⁴ Fuller takes the word *ἀνακρίνω* to mean “an investigative action carried on for the purpose of rendering an appraisal or evaluation.”¹⁸⁵ Not being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the natural man has no ability to see the worth, or value, of biblical teaching.¹⁸⁶

Construction. Based on the exegesis of these verses, Fuller concludes that

The Holy Spirit’s role in biblical interpretation does not consist in giving the interpreter cognition of what the Bible is saying, which would involve dispensing additional information, beyond the historical-grammatical data that are already there for everyone to work with. Rather, the Holy Spirit’s role is to change the heart of the interpreter, so that he loves the message that is conveyed by nothing more than the historical-grammatical data.¹⁸⁷

Fuller deduces from his interpretation of 1 Corinthians 2:14 that the Spirit’s role is to change the heart to love the message. Since without the Spirit, one cannot accept the message that is already known by reason alone, the Spirit is necessary for one to accept and love the message. Negatively, “the biblical interpreter [should] not look to the Holy Spirit to give him the meaning of a biblical text.”¹⁸⁸ Positively, Fuller encourages “those

¹⁸³Ibid., 92.

¹⁸⁴Ibid.

¹⁸⁵Ibid.

¹⁸⁶Ibid.

¹⁸⁷Ibid.

¹⁸⁸Ibid.

who engage in the task of interpreting the Bible . . . to spare no effort to perfect their skills of exegesis. But they must also look to God to enable them to have and maintain that humble and contrite spirit (Isa 57:15).”¹⁸⁹

Daniel Wallace. Daniel Wallace begins by noting that on the popular level, many Christians “believe that if they simply pray, the Holy Spirit will give them the proper interpretation.”¹⁹⁰ He criticizes that this attitude is “the doctrine of the priesthood of believers run amok.”¹⁹¹ He also notes that there is also increasingly large gap between conservative scholars on the role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation, and cites DeYoung and Hurty as an example of a conservative scholar seeking for a greater role of the Holy Spirit.¹⁹² So, Wallace begins with a deep awareness that both on popular and conservative scholarly levels, there are those who strongly believe in a greater role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation. As for the cause behind such a movement, he provides four reasons: a shift toward postmodernism, unwillingness to do hard study, a reaction against rationalism in evangelicalism, and evangelicals’ shift toward postconservatism in which tolerance rather than conviction is the proper stance on many issues.¹⁹³ With that observation, Wallace identifies three key issues regarding the role of the Holy Spirit in the interpretation of Scripture: (1) Any evangelical view of the role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation must be based on the biblical text; (2) any view must take into

¹⁸⁹Ibid., 95.

¹⁹⁰Wallace, “The Holy Spirit and Hermeneutics,” introduction.

¹⁹¹Ibid.

¹⁹²Wallace quotes James DeYoung and Hurty as saying, “When it comes to scholarly methods of interpreting the Bible, the Holy Spirit may as well be dead.” Wallace, “The Holy Spirit and Hermeneutics,” introduction. See DeYoung and Hurty, *Beyond the Obvious*, 126.

¹⁹³Ibid., introduction.

consideration the fact that understanding can take place even among non-believers; (3) and we need to recognize the unique revelatory status of Scripture.¹⁹⁴

Biblical basis. Wallace believes that 1 Corinthians 2:12-14 and 1 John 2:20, 27 serve as the *crux interpretum* on which one's view depends. Within the first passage, he considers 2:13 as being too "oblique" to deal with and that clearer passages needed to be sought. As for 2:14, the key issue for Wallace is whether δέχομαι and γινώσκω are parallel or oppositional. Wallace weighs both sides, but concludes on the side of parallelism. The argument is as follows:

The simple καὶ that joins the two clauses would normally be unconvincing as an indicator of apposition (although an exegetical καὶ is, of course, possible): *prima facie*, the two clauses of v.14 look to be parallel points. However, on behalf of apposition is the fact that Semitic parallels (such as synonymous or synthetic parallels) were often employed even in the New Testament; if Paul is [using a Semitic parallel], he may well have the notion of the apposition in mind. The problem with this view is that γινώσκω is a rather [a plain] term for "know" (in spite of the protestations of some). In other words, if this clause is in some sense oppositional to the preceding, we might have expected another word, such as οἶδα. The presence of γινώσκω seems to indicate that two separate notions are involved: the natural person does not properly understand revelation because of sin's effect on his will and on his mind.¹⁹⁵

In sum, "1 Corinthians 2:12-14 is saying that non-Christians will not accept spiritual truths *and* [italics his] cannot understand them." Wallace qualifies this conclusion by saying that "non-believers do indeed plainly understand the gospel message at times; yet, there is a level to which non-believers cannot attain."¹⁹⁶ Wallace

¹⁹⁴Ibid.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., sec. 2.

¹⁹⁶Ibid.

differs from Fuller who believes that non-believers do not have a problem in understanding the meaning of Scripture.

On 1 John 2:20, 27, Wallace interprets “anointing” as “the inner witness of the Spirit” (cf. Rom 8:16) and as “the Spirit ministering to [believers] in an immediate, non-discursive role, convincing them of their relationship to God.”¹⁹⁷ In support of this interpretation, Wallace points out that the verb *οἶδα* (2:20) indicates knowledge from personal experience.¹⁹⁸ He assumes that if the Spirit’s role were discursive (using the reasoning power), then John would have used the word *γινώσκω* instead.

Yet the non-discursive nature of the Spirit’s work does not mean that the Spirit has nothing to do with interpretation of Scripture. In understanding the manner in which the Spirit influences the interpretation of Scripture, Wallace points to several exegetical clues. First, the clause “you have no need that anyone should teach you” (2:27) is not saying that no one should teach anything at all, since the author is teaching in this letter.¹⁹⁹ Second, Wallace emphasizes reading the clause “his anointing teaches you concerning all things” (2:27) in its proper context.

The author is contrasting these believers with heretics who have removed themselves from the believing community (cf. 2:19). The author stresses *what* these believers know: that Christ has come in the flesh, that he will come again, and that they are the children of God. He also stresses *how* these believers discern the *essential* truths of the faith: they have the Spirit of God.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷Ibid.

¹⁹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹⁹Wallace, “The Holy Spirit and Hermeneutics,” 1 John 2:20, 27.

²⁰⁰Ibid. Wallace provides a list of central truths which the Holy Spirit reveals: one’s filial relationship to God, the bodily resurrection of Christ, the humanity of Christ, the bodily return of Christ, the deity of Christ, and the nature of salvation as a free gift from God. Ibid., conclusion.

From these observations, Wallace concludes that “on the one hand, 1 John 2:20, 27 does not indicate that the Holy Spirit circumvents the interpretive process. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit does work on our hearts, convincing us of the essential truths of the faith.”²⁰¹

Construction. Based on these interpretations of the two passages, Wallace draws the general conclusion that the Spirit’s work is primarily in the realm of conviction rather than cognition.²⁰² More specifically, Wallace concludes that such work of the Spirit breaks down into two kinds: 1) the inner witness of the Spirit, which provides central truths non-discursively, 2) the Spirit’s indirect influence on interpretation through sanctification.²⁰³ The first specific conclusion is based on Wallace’s observation that it is by the help of the Spirit that believers in Johannine community have come to know the central truths, and that the manner of the Spirit’s work is non-discursive, suggested by the terms “anointing” and *οἶδα* in 1 John 2:20.

The second specific conclusion is based on the following three interpretive points: First, part of the problem of non-Christians is their heart’s refusal to accept the gospel (1 Cor 2:14); second, the Holy Spirit works on our hearts convincing of the truths of Scripture (1 John 2:20, 27); third, non-central truths are left for the reader to examine using the best of our rational and empirical resources.²⁰⁴ Wallace reasons that if there are certain parts of Scripture that are left to the reader to interpret, but a proper interpretation

²⁰¹Ibid.

²⁰²Ibid.

²⁰³Ibid.

²⁰⁴Wallace, “The Holy Spirit and Hermeneutics,” conclusion, pt. 6. This point is deduced from the statement that the Spirit provides central truths non-discursively.

is hindered partly because of the problem of the heart, and the Holy Spirit works on the reader's heart, sanctifying him so that he will be convinced of the truth, then it can be concluded that the Holy Spirit influences the interpretation of Scripture indirectly through sanctification.

Regarding this indirect work of the Spirit, Wallace draws some further implications. First, experiential knowledge has a "boomerang effect" back on intellectual comprehension. To the extent that one has experienced what is being proposed, one can comprehend it.²⁰⁵ Second, to the extent that one is obedient to Scripture, one will be in a better position to understand it and deal with it honestly. Third, recognition that the Bible is both a divine and a human book will help to appreciate the progressive revelation in Scripture. Fourth, those who embrace in principle a belief in the supernatural are in a better position to interpret both miracles and prophecy. Thus, the Spirit helps Christians to experience and obey the truth, believe in the divinity/humanity of Scripture, and embrace the supernatural work of God. These convictions, in turn, help believers to interpret Scripture better than non-believers.

Douglas Kennard. In his article "Evangelical Views on Illumination of Scripture and Critique,"²⁰⁶ Kennard begins with the conviction that contemporary evangelical views of illumination emerge from Lutheran pietism, which developed into two views: cognitive-illumination view and transformational-illumination view.²⁰⁷ The cognitive-illumination view was influenced by Spener, Quenstedt, and Hollaz and its adherents believed that "the Holy Spirit is promised to every Christian so that they might

²⁰⁵Ibid., pt. 2.

²⁰⁶Douglas Kennard, "Evangelical Views on Illumination," *JETS* 49 (2006): 797.

²⁰⁷Ibid., 798.

understand the biblical text better.”²⁰⁸ The transformational-illumination view was introduced by August Franke who considered the illumination of the Spirit as producing a “living” knowledge of the biblical text, a knowledge that will bring about spiritual affection.²⁰⁹ In the end, for both, the illumination from the Holy Spirit is seen as rendering clear the authoritative message of the Word of God.²¹⁰

As a proof of this legacy within evangelicalism, Kennard cites the fifth article of the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics: “WE AFFIRM that the Holy Spirit enables believers to appropriate and apply Scripture to their lives. WE DENY that the natural man is able to discern spiritually the biblical message apart from the Holy Spirit.”²¹¹ According to Kennard, the first statement is evidence of the influence of the transformational-illumination view, while the second statement is evidence of the influence of the cognitive-illumination view.²¹² Overall, this statement reflects the emphasis in evangelicalism that the Holy Spirit aids the individual use of hermeneutics. He goes on to note that, in conservative circles, these illumination views are often supported through textual appeals to John 14:26; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; and 1 John 2:27. In response, Kennard seeks to prove that these texts do not teach such illumination view. His view is similar to that of Fuller in that both deny any role of the Spirit in interpretation. Kennard is considered here because he is the most recent voice and because he provides more critique of the biblical passages on illumination.

²⁰⁸Ibid., 797.

²⁰⁹Ibid., 798.

²¹⁰Ibid.

²¹¹Ibid., cited from Radmacher and Preus, *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*, 891.

²¹²Kennard, “Evangelical Views on Illumination,” 798.

Biblical basis. Noting that most of the statements in the upper room discourse (John 13-16) are in second person plural, Kennard concludes that they apply only to the disciples who were with Jesus. He cites several examples (e.g., 14:26 and 16:13) which speak about the work of the Spirit. A clue that those Spirit-passages are addressed only to the disciples is the fact that immediately following these statements, Jesus speaks of his impending departure (John 14:27-28; 16:16-19).²¹³ In sum,

This means that John 14:26 and 16:12-15 are special promises of the [Spirit's] revelation to the eleven disciples present in the upper room so that they might remember Jesus' words in the inspiration of the Scriptures and its communication to found Christianity, and they are not promises of Holy Spirit enablement to help the Christian properly to interpret passages in Scripture.²¹⁴

In the 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 passage, Kennard takes the word ἀποκαλύψεν (“revealed”) in “revealed to us by the Spirit” (2:10) in the sense of inspiration rather than illumination.²¹⁵ On the difference between a “spiritual” or “mature” person (1 Cor 2:15, πνευματικός; 1 Cor 2:6, τελείως) and a “soulish” (1 Cor 2:14, ψυχικός) person, the former appreciates, and the latter does not appreciate, the gospel revealed by the Spirit.²¹⁶ While some use the gospel perspective, or the “mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16), to examine or appraise all other things,²¹⁷ others unfortunately reject this gospel as foolishness.²¹⁸ Kennard does not provide an account of how a spiritual person comes to appreciate the gospel or to have the mind of Christ. In short, “the issue in 1 Corinthians 1-2 is not that

²¹³Ibid., 800.

²¹⁴Ibid.

²¹⁵Ibid., 801.

²¹⁶Ibid., 802.

²¹⁷Ibid.

²¹⁸Ibid.

the Holy Spirit aids in interpreting Bible passages but that the gospel focusing on Christ is revealed by the Spirit.”²¹⁹ As for the Spirit’s role of transforming a person, Kennard describes it as follows:

Furthermore, the Spirit’s work to make believers in the gospel spiritual is a transformation of the Christian to think through the Spirit’s world view. This is not a hermeneutical promise for understanding the biblical text but rather a transformed life that can serve as the basis for evaluating everything in life.²²⁰

This statement shows that Kennard believes the 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 passage teaches the transformational illumination view, but he does not substantiate it exegetically.

Turning to the 1 John 2:18-27 passage, Kennard identifies *χρῖσμα* (2:20, 27, “anointing”) with the truth heard (2:21, 24) and translates 2:20-22 as saying: “We are anointed with truth centering on publicly acknowledging Jesus as the Christ.”²²¹

Accordingly, he interprets 2:27 to mean, “the message, centered on Christ and gospel, teaches you about all things.” Perhaps sensing the awkwardness of this statement, he adds, “that is, knowing the gospel puts all other things into perspective.”²²²

Construction. Based on his exegetical work, Kennard concludes, “None of these passages promise a work from God for the Holy Spirit to cognitively help us understand and interpret biblical passages. . . . These passages actually highlight that the gospel has implications . . . that the Holy Spirit is the guarantor of growth.”²²³ He adds that reading the Law through the Spirit rather than by mere letter in Paul²²⁴ “is not

²¹⁹Ibid.

²²⁰Ibid.

²²¹Ibid.

²²²Ibid.

²²³Ibid., 803.

illumination aid but the Holy Spirit's New Covenant ministry within believers which transforms them to serve with righteousness and fruit of Spirit. . . . This is not a ministry for understanding the biblical text, nor is it actually a ministry of the Spirit to apply the biblical text into our lives."²²⁵

Besides the exegetical support, Kennard provides other arguments to prove that "this broadly evangelical illumination view [Spirit-aided interpretation] is foreign to the Scripture."²²⁶ First, he states that his brief summaries of these passages (John 14:26; 16:12-15; 1 Cor 2:6-16; and 1 John 2:27) are in line with scholarly comments on these passages.²²⁷ Second, he argues that if the Spirit provided illumination aid, then it would unify Christian commentaries, but the fact is that godly commentators disagree with one another on many points. Third, he argues that if the Spirit provided illumination aid, Christians would always be able to produce superior commentaries, but sometimes non-Christians in fact have produced the best commentaries on a book of the Bible.²²⁸ He concludes,

We can thank the Spirit for transforming us, but the responsibility Paul places us under when it comes to interpretation is that we should study to show ourselves approved as a workman rightly handling the Word of God (2 Tim 2:15). Interpretation is our responsibility. Likewise, abuse of the biblical text is also our

²²⁴Kennard lists the following passages: Jer 31:33-34; Rom 2:14-15, 29; 7:6; 8:2, 4-17; 14:17-18; 2 Cor 3:3, 6, 9, 17-18; Gal 5:13-26. Ibid., 804.

²²⁵Ibid.

²²⁶Ibid., 803.

²²⁷Kennard mentions the following commentators: Raymond Brown, Leon Morris, Frederic Godet, Craig Keener, Barnabas Lindars, B. F. Westcott, James Dunn, C. K. Barrett, F. F. Bruce, Gordon Fee, F. W. Grosheide, William Orr and James Walther, Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, Anthony Thiselton, W. Robert Cook, Robert Law. Ibid.

²²⁸Ibid., 804.

responsibility (e.g. 2 Pet 3:16). The Holy Spirit neither takes the credit nor the blame for our interpretations.²²⁹

Summing up the reception view, the Holy Spirit helps believers to accept and be convicted by the message of Scripture. The sanctification which the Spirit causes indirectly helps the interpretation of Scripture. The Spirit does not directly guide the interpretation of Scripture. The reader can understand the meaning of the texts by means of the work of exegesis. A variation within this view is that whereas Wallace believes that the Spirit immediately provides the central truths of Scripture without the work of exegesis, Fuller and Kennard believes that the Spirit merely guides the acceptance of the message, whether central or not.

Speech-act View

A final view that is considered here is the speech-act view as propounded by Kevin Vanhoozer.²³⁰ There are others such as Stanley Grenz and Michael Horton who have appropriated the speech-act theory of J. L. Austin and John Searle in explaining their theological method. But speech-act theory does not play a central role in Grenz or Horton as it does in Vanhoozer. Furthermore, Vanhoozer's use of the speech-act theory is more faithful to the original theory than that of Grenz in that for Vanhoozer, the

²²⁹Ibid., 805.

²³⁰Kevin Vanhoozer is the major proponent of this view. There are others such as Stanley Grenz and Michael Horton who have appropriated the speech-act theory of J. L. Austin and John Searle in explaining their theological method. But speech-act theory does not play a central role in Grenz or Horton as it does in Vanhoozer. Furthermore, Vanhoozer's use of the speech-act theory is more faithful to the original theory than that of Grenz in that for Vanhoozer, the perlocutionary effect is firmly rooted in the illocution. For these reasons, in this dissertation, "speech-act view" will refer to Vanhoozer's version of speech-act theory and those who support him. See Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning?*, 413; idem, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 197-210; A. B. Caneday, "Is Theological Truth Functional or Propositional?" in *Reclaiming the Center*, ed. Millard Erickson et al. (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004), 156; Averbek, "God, People and the Bible," 137-66.

perlocutionary effect is firmly rooted in the illocution. For these reasons, in this dissertation, “speech-act view” will refer to Vanhoozer’s version of the speech-act theory.

In comparison with the reception and the cognition views, the speech-act view is closer to the reception view than the cognition view in that the Spirit’s role is seen as sanctifying believers so that they can accept what is in the text, and that the Spirit does not directly affect the understanding of the text. It is also similar to the reception view in its assumption that the natural human mind is able to properly interpret the testimony of Scripture.²³¹ However, it is different from both the reception view and the cognition view in that the “event” of understanding is understood not so much as a result of cognition (ordinary or extraordinary) that is independent of sanctification, but as a result of the interpersonal interaction of the Spirit of God with the reader of the Bible. Understanding is seen not so much as what a person does, but what is done to a person. The speech-act view is also different from the reception and cognition views in that the Spirit is seen as speaking through the illocutionary force of the text. In other words, the text itself “speaks” as the voice of the Spirit.

In comparison with the postconservative view, the speech-act view is similar in that it seeks to be “postpropositionalist . . . and postfoundational.”²³² By “postpropositionalist,” Vanhoozer means that biblical truth is more than simply a matter

²³¹Kevin Vanhoozer, “The Voice and the Actor: A Dramatic Proposal about the Ministry and Minstrelsy of Theology,” in *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method*, ed. John G. Stackhouse, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 87-89; idem, *Is there a Meaning?*, 288-90; idem, “Discourse on Matter,” 29.

²³²It is partly for this constructive critique that the proposals of Stanley Grenz and Kevin Vanhoozer on theological method have been selected as two alternative models for the future of evangelical theological method. Stanley Grenz, “Articulating the Christian Belief-Mosaic: Theological Method after the Demise of Foundationalism,” in *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method*, ed. John G. Stackhouse, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 107-36; Vanhoozer, “The Voice and the Actor,” 61-106.

of conveying information.²³³ He uses speech-act theory to show that biblical words are “a set of divine communicative acts,” every act of which has a propositional component, but which also may include assertions to be believed, commands to be obeyed, songs to be sung, and other speech-acts.²³⁴ By “postfoundationalist,” he means that understanding God’s Word is more than the individual’s common sense interpretation of the Word. Understanding God’s Word requires the help of the Spirit to restore cognitive functions and to cultivate humility to redeem one’s interpretive claims.²³⁵

In contrast to the postconservative view and similar to the reception and cognition views, the speech-act view sees the role of the Spirit as not going beyond Scripture but being limited to Scripture.²³⁶ The Spirit persuades and convinces the reader of what the Spirit has intended in the text.

Biblical basis. Vanhoozer uses a few key biblical texts with minimum exegesis throughout his works, particularly as they are related to the topic of the role of the Spirit in interpretation. Yet, these few key texts play a significant role in shaping his view. The three key passages that Vanhoozer uses to undergird his view are: Acts 8:26-39,²³⁷ John 16:13,²³⁸ and 1 Corinthians 2:14.²³⁹

²³³Vanhoozer, “The Voice and the Actor,” 75.

²³⁴Ibid., 76.

²³⁵Ibid., 87-89.

²³⁶Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 199.

²³⁷Ibid., 116-20, 210; idem, *First Theology*, 207; idem, “Discourse on Matter,” 3-5, 18, 21.

²³⁸Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 197, 198, 199, 208; idem, *First Theology*, 207, 224; idem, *Is There a Meaning?*, 409, 415, 421, 424.

²³⁹Vanhoozer, *First Theology*, 225; idem, *Is There a Meaning?*, 428; idem, “Discourse on Matter,” 3

From the story of Philip and the Ethiopian in Acts 8:26-39, Vanhoozer draws several insights regarding the role of the Spirit in interpretation. He first considers the nature of the guidance for which the eunuch asks (Acts 8:31). Is it the guidance of tradition, community participation, canonical context, or the guidance of the Spirit?²⁴⁰ After surveying various proposals, Vanhoozer concludes that “the Spirit of understanding” in all hermeneutics, both general and special, is the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that is ultimately behind the interpreting tradition and community, as well as the one who causes the reader to accept the text and its subject matter.²⁴¹

Vanhoozer then asks more specifically what the role of Philip represents. Does he stand for the apostolic tradition, teaching office of the church, consensus of the faithful, or biblical criticism?²⁴² He concludes that Philip stands for the church’s tradition, or more specifically, the church’s practice of canonical reading, that is, reading the Scriptures typologically in light of the person and the work of Christ.²⁴³ He bases this on the fact that “beginning with this Scripture, Philip preached the gospel” (εὐηγγελίσατο, Acts 8:35).²⁴⁴ But Vanhoozer is careful to distinguish between the magisterial (normative) function of Scripture and the ministerial role of the church’s tradition. Scripture is like the sun; tradition is like the moon. The church has authority only to the extent that it reflects the light of the Son that shines forth from the canon.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁰Vanhoozer, *First Theology*, 207.

²⁴¹Ibid., 231.

²⁴²Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 116-17.

²⁴³Ibid., 119.

²⁴⁴Ibid., 118-19.

²⁴⁵Ibid., 210.

Another insight which Vanhoozer draws from Acts 8:26-39 is the notion of Christocentric authorial discourse. Vanhoozer asks, “To what extent is the event of understanding intelligible without recourse to the notion of authorial discourse?”²⁴⁶ By “authorial discourse,” he means what the authors (both human and divine) are speaking about. He argues that what the Ethiopian could not understand was not the *what* (grammatical-historical meaning) but the *what about* of the Isaian text: “About whom, pray, does the prophet say this, about himself or someone else?” (Acts 8:34).²⁴⁷

Vanhoozer concludes, without pointing to any exegetical feature in the passage and with help from Gadamer’s insight, that it is not so much that the reader understands the subject matter (*Sache*) of the text, but that it is the subject matter, Jesus Christ the living logos, that enlightens the reader.²⁴⁸ True understanding of Scripture takes place not so much when the reader takes charge of interpretation, but when the reader submits to Christ’s sovereign guidance.²⁴⁹ In this sense, understanding Scripture is a miracle and involves a kind of “grace.”²⁵⁰ At this point, Vanhoozer is careful to distinguish his view from that of Barth, where the understanding takes place in a mystical encounter between Christ and the reader apart from Scripture. “A robust doctrine of Incarnation demands that we reject the notion of disembodied discourse and give due attention and respect to *corporeal* discourse: what someone in a particular time and place and language says to someone about something.”²⁵¹ Christ presents himself in Scripture using human

²⁴⁶Vanhoozer, “Discourse on Matter,” 5.

²⁴⁷Ibid., 5.

²⁴⁸Ibid., 28.

²⁴⁹Ibid., 11.

²⁵⁰Ibid., 27.

discourse. Furthermore, it is Christ who ultimately sanctifies the reader and causes the human mind to understand Scripture as well as all things.²⁵² Summarizing Vanhoozer's interpretation of Acts 8:26-29: the Spirit guides the church in tradition, represented by Philip, to read Scripture canonically, that is, in light of Christ's person and work. In addition to this general work, the Spirit directly guides the reader such as the Ethiopian to respond to the text as the voice of Christ himself.

Regarding what this direct and special work of the Spirit on the reader entails, Vanhoozer turns to John 16:13. In explaining the role of the Spirit in relation to the statement, "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13a), Vanhoozer uses speech-act theory:

I propose rethinking the relation of Word and Spirit with the aid of speech act theory. The third term in speech-act theory—perlocution—has a special affinity with the third person of the Trinity. The perlocutionary effect... refers to what the speech act aims to accomplish in the reader, over and beyond the illocutionary effect of producing understanding.... As the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, so the literary act proceeds from the author, and so too does the perlocution (persuading, convincing) proceed from the illocution (claiming, asserting).²⁵³

In short, the direct role of the Spirit in interpretation is to produce the effect of understanding, and not so much the understanding itself.

This view of the role of the Spirit is reaffirmed in Vanhoozer's interpretation of the following statements in John 16:13: "[The Spirit] will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears." Vanhoozer avoids two extreme interpretations. On the one hand, he distinguishes his view from the view in which the Spirit causes the church to discover new meanings in the biblical text by fusing the horizons of the text and the

²⁵¹Ibid., 26.

²⁵²Ibid., 28-29.

²⁵³Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning?*, 410.

reader.²⁵⁴ On the other hand, he also distinguishes his view from the view in which the meaning of the text is reduced to its propositions. Rather, the Spirit causes the reader to understand the diverse and inexhaustible significance of the text, while not changing its original meaning.²⁵⁵ In support of this understanding of the role of the Spirit, Vanhoozer explains that the final statement in John 16:13 (“what is yet to come”) refers to “the Spirit’s interpreting in relation to each coming generation the contemporary significance of what Jesus has said and done.”²⁵⁶ Here, Vanhoozer does not provide an exegesis and only cites the remarks of few commentators.²⁵⁷

Another key text that Vanhoozer uses to support his view on the role of the Spirit in interpretation is 1 Corinthians 2:14. He understands the statement “A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God” (1 Cor 2:14) as referring to the Spirit’s perlocutionary effect, which is defined as “what the speech-acts accomplish in the addressee, beyond the illocutionary effects of producing understanding.”²⁵⁸ Following Daniel Fuller’s position, he interprets οὐ δέχεται (“not accept”) to mean the natural man’s failure “to believe [the Bible’s] truth or to see its significance.”²⁵⁹

²⁵⁴Ibid., 415.

²⁵⁵Ibid., 416.

²⁵⁶Ibid., 421.

²⁵⁷In his support, Vanhoozer cites Raymond Brown, “The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel,” *New Testament Studies* 13 (1966-67): 116; George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 36 (Dallas: Word, 1987), 283; Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 575, cited in *Is There a Meaning?*, 421 nn. 231-33.

²⁵⁸Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning?*, 428.

²⁵⁹Ibid. Vanhoozer adds, “For a more complete defense of the use of ‘accept’ as adopted here, see Fuller (The Holy Spirit’s Role in Biblical Interpretation), . . . For a contrary view, see Millard Erickson, who says the problem is that unbelievers do not accept because they do not understand.” Ibid., n. 259. He also quotes 1 Cor 2:14 again in *First Theology* (225), but in both places, he does not deal with the second half of the verse which deals with cognition.

Construction. Vanhoozer summarizes his view regarding the role of the Spirit in interpretation using speech-act theory:

1. The Spirit *convicts* us that the Bible is the locution of God, that bears authoritative witness to the living Word (and thus that we should view it as a unity).
2. The Spirit *illuminates* the letter by impressing upon us the full force of its communicative action, its illocutions.
3. Third, the Spirit *sanctifies* us and so helps us to accept what is in the text instead of preferring our own interpretations. . . . To read in the Spirit . . . means to apply [by the Spirit's help] the letter rightly to one's life.²⁶⁰

The first and the third are rather clear, but the question arises as to what Vanhoozer means by the second. Does the Spirit directly guide the reader in understanding the meaning of the text? Vanhoozer provides several explanations to answer this question in the negative. First, the Spirit provides “heart knowledge” as opposed to “head knowledge.”²⁶¹ He acknowledges that he borrowed the term “heart knowledge” from Fred Klooster, who commented that “the aim of Spirit-illuminated interpretation should be heart-understanding,” by which Klooster means the worship and service of God.²⁶² Vanhoozer adds that “illumination has to do with the quality and the force of our appreciation of the literal sense.”²⁶³ Second, he states that “the notion of communicative action allows us to distinguish two kinds of efficacy, illocutionary and perlocutionary, and to associate the Spirit particularly with the latter.”²⁶⁴

²⁶⁰Vanhoozer, *First Theology*, 233-34; Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning?*, 413-14.

²⁶¹Vanhoozer, *First Theology*, 234.

²⁶²Ibid., 99, cited from Klooster, “The Role of the Holy Spirit,” 468.

²⁶³Vanhoozer, *First Theology*, 234.

²⁶⁴Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning?*, 427.

Third, he explains the connection between the second and the third roles of the Spirit (of the three above): “What precisely does the Spirit illumine: head or heart?...The Spirit’s illumination of our minds is therefore dependent on his prior transformation of our hearts.”²⁶⁵ In sum, the Spirit sanctifies the reader so that they can accept and apply the biblical texts, and such sanctification in turn causes appreciation of the texts. The Spirit does not cause an understanding of the meaning of the text, but restores the reader to their senses when that understanding is distorted due to sin.²⁶⁶ This restoring function of the Holy Spirit, however, cannot be considered as a special work of the Spirit in aiding the understanding of the meaning of the text. Rather, it is a general work of the Spirit that corresponds to the image of God in humanity that enables the reader to recognize the illocutionary intent of the text.²⁶⁷

Such an understanding of the Spirit’s role seems to make the speech-act view virtually the same as one of the versions of the reception view. However, the speech-act view is distinguished from the reception view in several regards. First, it is distinguishable in regards to what the Spirit causes the reader to understand: the canonical testimony about Christ. Vanhoozer interprets the Spirit as guiding Philip in such a canonical reading in Acts 8:35: “Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture [Isa 53:7,8], he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus” (Acts 8:35).²⁶⁸ This is not to say that the reception view denies that the Spirit reveals Christ. However,

²⁶⁵Ibid., 413.

²⁶⁶Ibid., 428.

²⁶⁷Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning?*, 428. Vanhoozer also uses Augustine’s idea illumination where the human mind, without a special help of the Spirit, participates in the divine light. Vanhoozer, “Discourse on Matter,” 29.

²⁶⁸Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 210.

whereas the reception view understands meaning mainly in terms of propositions, the speech-act view understands meaning in terms of Christ-centered dramatic narrative.

Second, the speech-act view is distinguishable in the way the Spirit reveals. Like the reception view, the Spirit indirectly illumines the mind through sanctification. Unlike the reception view, however, the Spirit does not merely produce a right attitude of reception, but also guides the reader to “become ‘thickly related’ to Christ by believing Scripture’s assertions, obeying its commands, and trusting its promises.”²⁶⁹ The Spirit produces the perlocutionary effects (what the speech-act aims to accomplish in the reader) by helping individuals and community of believers to participate in the drama of redemption by responding to the full range of illocutionary forces.²⁷⁰

Third, the speech-act view is distinguishable in its specifically trinitarian character. Vanhoozer correlates speech-act theory with the three persons of the triune God, where God the Father correlates with locution, the Son with illocution, and the Spirit with perlocution.²⁷¹ Illocution is the intended meaning of the speech and perlocution is the resulting effect (application) of the speech. There are several parallels between how the three persons of the Godhead work together and how the three components of speech-act theory work together. First, as the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (*filoque*), the efficacy of the speech act follows from the locution and the illocution.²⁷² Second, as the Spirit proceeds from the Son, application must be governed by explication.²⁷³ Third, as the Son sends the Spirit, understanding includes a

²⁶⁹Ibid., 202.

²⁷⁰Ibid., 208.

²⁷¹Vanhoozer, *First Theology*, 227.

²⁷²Ibid., 228.

moment of appropriation.²⁷⁴ Fourth, as the Spirit points back to Christ, understanding takes place ultimately “in Christ.”²⁷⁵ That is, Christ is both the one who ultimately guides the process of interpretation, as well as the content of understanding. It is in light of Christ that both the Old and the New Testaments can be understood. Christ is both “the material and the formal principle of the canon: its substance and its hermeneutic.”²⁷⁶

In sum, according to the speech-act view, the Holy Spirit indirectly influences the reader’s understanding of the meaning of the text by sanctifying the reader’s heart, which in turn leads to a restoration of the cognitive functions, so that they will read, with the help of the church throughout history, Scripture dramatically, with Christ as the focus of that drama. The Holy Spirit does not directly guide the interpretation of the text. The Holy Spirit also helps the reader to respond to the text as the voice of Christ and apply the text to their lives.

Conclusion

The above examination of the exegetical roots of the evangelical understanding of the role of the Spirit in interpretation allows us to make several conclusions. First, each view considered here is careful to avoid extremes regarding the role of the Spirit in interpretation: (1) interpretation without any involvement of the Spirit, and (2) interpretation with the help of the Spirit but without the work of exegesis. Even the

²⁷³Ibid.

²⁷⁴Ibid., 227.

²⁷⁵Ibid.

²⁷⁶Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 195.

proponents of the reception view, who deny any direct role of the Spirit in interpretation, acknowledge the importance of the Spirit's indirect role in interpretation.

Second, each view has given an account of the relative role of the Spirit and the Word. The postconservative view sees the Word as a mere instrument of the Spirit so that the Spirit has the ultimate authority in interpretation; the Spirit is either not bound to the text and is able to reveal new information beyond Scripture (Grenz) or works in accord with the text in revealing new information beyond Scripture (DeYoung). The three conservative views see Scripture as the only source of revelation which the Spirit causes the reader to understand. The cognition view divides biblical meaning into aspects which can be accessed by ordinary human cognition, and aspects which require the help of the Spirit to understand. The reception view believes that the Spirit does not directly aid the interpretation of the meaning of the text, and only indirectly aids interpretation through sanctification. The speech-act view sees the Spirit as producing perlocutionary effect in accordance with the illocutionary force of the text. The Spirit's role is seen not so much as helping the reader to understand the meaning of the text but in helping them to respond faithfully to what the Spirit intends in Scripture. Understanding is seen as a part of that response and interaction with Christ who is the subject matter of Scripture.

Third, each view has given an account of the relative role of the Spirit and the human readers of Scripture. The postconservative view sees the role of the Spirit as guiding the community of believers in forming a vision of the future; but since Scripture provides only a framework, the Spirit helps believers to interact with the tradition and culture and creatively construct the society (Grenz). The Spirit may speak authoritatively to believers beyond Scripture, although in accordance to it (DeYoung). For the cognition view, the Spirit restores the cognitive functions of the mind by removing the noetic effect of sin. Additionally, in Erickson's case, the Spirit is seen as providing extraordinary

cognitive insight. The reception view sees the problem of interpretation as chiefly that of the will and not the mind. Thus, it is possible for both believers and non-believers to understand the meaning of the text; but it is only believers who will be able to accept and be convicted by the message by the help of the Spirit. The speech-act view sees the problem as that of the will, but the problem is not merely a failure to accept what one understands, but a failure to respond to the voice of the Spirit in the various illocutionary forces (assertions, commands, promises, praises) of Scripture. Accordingly, the role of the Spirit is seen as sanctifying the reader so that they may properly respond to the text which results in understanding.

CHAPTER 3

EXEGESIS OF KEY PASSAGES

As seen above, the most commonly cited passages regarding the role of the Spirit in interpretation are 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; 2 Corinthians 3:16-4:6; John 14:26, 16:13; 1 John 2:18-29. It is notable that so many variations of interpretations can arise from a common set of passages. Yet, many of these interpretations do not provide a thorough and detailed exegesis for these passages. A detailed, directed exegesis of these key passages provides the foundation of a clearer understanding of the role of the Spirit in interpretation.

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Regarding the 1 Corinthian 2:6-16 passage, Gordon Fee comments, “This passage is at once one of the most significant and most abused of the Spirit passages in the Pauline corpus. . . . The abuse is basically the result of not recognizing—or not caring—how it fits into Paul’s argument.”¹ Accordingly, within its proper context, this passage reveals some of the most important teachings in Scripture regarding the role of the Spirit in interpretation.

The Spirit Reveals the Gospel of Jesus Christ

The first thing that is considered is what the Spirit reveals in 1 Corinthians 2:10— α (“these things,” 2:9). This is important because in this passage the object of the

¹Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 95.

Spirit's revelation is related to the role of the Spirit in understanding the gospel. I argue that the reference of α is the same as that of the "word of the cross" (1 Cor 1:18) and "wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:21, 2:7)—the gospel of Jesus Christ,² rather than Paul's own teaching that is distinct from the gospel in 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5,³ or application of the gospel to life.⁴

Grammatically, the object of the Spirit's revelation is α $\eta\tau\omicron\iota\mu\alpha\sigma\epsilon\nu$ \acute{o} $\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ ("what God has prepared," 2:9), which, connected by the conjunction $\alpha\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}$ at the beginning of 2:9, refers to that which the rulers of this age could not understand (2:8), which, connected by the demonstrative $\tau\acute{o}\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$, refers to the wisdom of God (2:6, 7). The phrase "wisdom of God" (1 Cor 2:7) is used twice in the previous section 1:18-31 (21, 24) to refer to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus, that which the Spirit reveals is the wisdom which the apostles impart, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That the apostles⁵ impart the same wisdom as the wisdom in section 1:18-31 is supported by the parallel construction between 2:6-8 ("we impart . . . wisdom of God . . . crucified the Lord of glory") and 1:23, 24 ("we preach Christ crucified . . . wisdom of

²Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: Clark, 1914), 39; William F. Orr and James Walther, *1 Corinthians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 163; Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (Allen, TX: Benziger, 1991), 250; Gordon Fee. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 110; David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 92.

³Jean Hering, *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians*, trans. A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock (London: Epworth, 1962), 15.

⁴Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 123.

⁵The "we" used in 2:6-7, 13 may be the editorial "we" and refers at least to Paul in his apostolic capacity since it follows immediately after 2:1-5, where the focus is on Paul's apostolic proclamations to the church of Corinth. In 1 Cor 3:9-10, when Paul says, "We are God's fellow workers, you are God's field, God's building," he is speaking about the foundational role which the apostles play in building the church of Christ. Ciampa and Rosner, *First Letter*, 121-22.

God”). Another indications that the two sections (1:18-31, 2:6-16) are tied together by the theme of the wisdom of God is the contrast between the “wisdom of God” (1:21, 24; 2:7) and the “wisdom of the world” (1:19, 20, 25, 26; 2:6) in both sections.⁶ Furthermore, the phrase “this age,” indicating the realm of the worldly wisdom, is used in both sections (1:20 and 2:6, 8). These parallel constructions and antecedents together indicate that the Spirit reveals the gospel of Jesus Christ in 2:10.

Accordingly, the phrase *μυστηριω τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην* in 2:7 does not refer to some secret wisdom of God apart from the gospel of Jesus Christ,⁷ but rather to the fact that the wisdom of God, which had not been fully revealed before, is now fully revealed in Jesus Christ. Paul refers to the gospel as the *μυστηρίων θεοῦ* (1 Cor. 2:1,⁸ 4:1), that which has been kept secret for a long time, but which is finally revealed (Rom 16:25, Eph 3:9, Col 1:26).⁹ That God “decreed this wisdom of God before the ages for our glory” also refers to God’s election of the elect in Christ, which he makes it known in the fullness of time (Eph 1:4, 8-10). Along the same line, *βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ* (“the deep things of God”) does not refer to some special knowledge apart from the gospel, but to the inmost heart of God, from which the wisdom of God comes (Rom 11:33).¹⁰

⁶Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 91.

⁷Hering thinks that this wisdom denotes “a superior stage of Christian teaching . . . reserved for a Christian elite.” Hering, *First Epistle*, 15.

⁸Some manuscripts have it that Paul came to proclaim the *μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ* (“mystery of God,” 1 Cor 2:1).

⁹Bockmuehl argues that in Pauline concept of mystery, emphasis falls on *revealed* mysteries as against human discovery. Markus Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 164.

¹⁰Thiselton suggests that this inmost heart of God gives the Christological focus toward which Paul is working in 2:16. Anthony C Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 257.

Finally, the α in 2:9-10 serves as the antecedent to the $\tau\alpha$ $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron$ $\theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\theta\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\alpha$ (“things freely given us by God”) in 2:12. The $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$ (“for”) at the beginning of 2:11 indicates that 2:11 serves to explain 2:10, and that 2:12 resumes the thought of 2:10.¹¹ Thus, the freely given things which the Spirit helps believers to understand (2:12) is the wisdom of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Spirit Guides the Understanding of the Gospel in the *Apostolic Word*

The “wisdom of God,” which the Spirit reveals, is not some kind of knowledge delivered internally (immediately, intuitively) to believers without the mediation of the revealed Word. That is to say, believers do not understand the wisdom of God without hearing the Word of God. Thus, the wisdom of God which the Spirit reveals is the gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed by the apostles, which the Holy Spirit guides believers to understand.

In 2:4-5, in the early visit of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians, the Holy Spirit demonstrated his power through δ $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ $\mu\omicron\upsilon$ $\kappa\alpha\iota$ $\tau\omicron$ $\kappa\acute{\eta}\rho\upsilon\gamma\mu\acute{\alpha}$ (the word and proclamation) of the apostle Paul. The word $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\delta\epsilon\iota\chi\iota\varsigma$ (“demonstration”) was used in contrast to $\pi\epsilon\iota\theta\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ (“persuasive”) in secular rhetoric in Paul’s time. $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\delta\epsilon\iota\chi\iota\varsigma$ means “proof from a *verbal* demonstration” and focuses on the logical proof inherent within the text.¹² In contrast, $\pi\epsilon\iota\theta\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ is related to “rhetorical methods to sway you to *gnosis*...clever arguments based on opinion.”¹³ So, $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\delta\epsilon\iota\chi\iota\varsigma$ $\pi\upsilon\omicron\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ can be translated as, “by transparent proof brought

¹¹Fee calls the $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ at the beginning of 2:12 the “resumptive” link and that it is best translated as “now.” Fee, *First Corinthians*, 112 n. 61.

¹²Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*. 5.10.7, cited in Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 87.

¹³Stephen M. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians* (Atlanta: The Society of Biblical Literature, 1992), 138. Aristotle agrees with Plato that logical proof should have clear privilege over the dressing up of “opinions” to make [the audience] seem convincing. George A. Kennedy, *Classic Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (London:

home powerfully by the Holy Spirit.”¹⁴ In other words, the demonstration contains both an external and an internal component: The external proof is in the words of the speech and the Spirit causes internal persuasion of that external proof.¹⁵ This is contrasted with *πειθός*, which consists neither of an objective, external proof nor of an internal work of the Spirit. Externally, words are manipulated; internally, the gullible sensibility of the audience is targeted.

In 2:6-16, the same manner of operation continues: the Holy Spirit causes believers to understand (2:12) the gospel spoken (*λαλοῦμεν*) by the apostles (2:6). The importance of such role of the Spirit is seen again in 2:13, where the words spoken by the apostles are “taught by the Spirit.” The fact that the Spirit teaches apostles what to say may be apostolic pronouncements of the gospel (2:1) or words used in explaining the gospel,¹⁶ but in either case it indicates that the Spirit reveals mediately through the apostolic word. Structurally, the section 2:6-13 is bracketed at both ends by the phrase “we impart” (2:6, 7, 13), indicating that the object of what the apostles are imparting is the very thing which the Spirit reveals (2:10) and causes to understand (2:12).

Croom Helm, 1980), 64.

¹⁴Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 218. C. K. Barrett suggest that the genitive form in “of the Spirit and of power” (*πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως*) are most likely both subjective and objective in the sense that on the one hand, the Holy Spirit brings proof and conviction, and on the other hand, the Spirit and power are manifested in the communication process. C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1968), 65.

¹⁵Thiselton believes that such an understanding of the operation of the Holy Spirit “coheres well with Paul’s wider theology of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit witnesses to his own presence and activity precisely by witnessing to Christ, to the effectiveness of the gospel, and to other effects which are themselves the work of the trinitarian God.” Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 222; see also Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 87.

¹⁶Carl Holladay, *The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 1984), 47; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 115. Contra Walter Kaiser who argues that Paul is speaking of the Spirit’s activity in producing Scripture. Walter Kaiser, “A Neglected Text in Bibliology Discussions: 1 Corinthians 2:6-16,” *WTJ* 43 (1981): 301-19.

The Spirit Guides Believers to Understand the Gospel

The fact that the Spirit reveals mediately through the gospel preached by the apostles, however, does not mean that the gospel, which the Spirit inspires the apostles to preach, makes itself understood to believers—that is, without the help of the Spirit to believers. Rather, it is plainly stated in 2:12 that the activity of the Spirit is on believers,¹⁷ helping them to understand the gospel which is given to them through the apostolic witness. That is not to deny in any way that the Holy Spirit works in and through the apostles and their preaching. The focus of section 2:6-16, however, is on the direct and personal work of the Spirit on believers to understand the gospel that has been spoken to them.

It is in light of this role of the Spirit in 2:12 that ἀπεκάλυψεν (“revealed”) in 2:10 ought to be understood. As we have seen above, verse 10 and verse 12 are grammatically joined together, where 2:12 serves as an expanded restatement of 2:10, so that ἀπεκάλυψεν refers to the work of the Holy Spirit in helping believers to understand the gospel, and not the Spirit’s work of inspiring the apostles for the sake of inscripturation.¹⁸

There are other indications that the verb ἀπεκάλυψεν refers to the Spirit’s work on believers, rather than the Spirit’s work of inspiration. First, the verb ἀπεκάλυψεν is aorist tense, not the perfect, thus connoting “God’s act of removing any barrier which keeps the content of the predetermined purpose secret” (2:9).¹⁹ Second, the use of “but”

¹⁷The reference to “us” in 2:10 and “we” in 2:12 and 2:16 all refer to believers in general, since the Holy Spirit is given to all believers, and the contrast is between those with the Spirit and those without.

¹⁸So Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 164-65; Douglas Kennard, “Evangelical Views on Illumination of Scripture and Critique,” *JETS* (2006): 801.

¹⁹Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 256. Regarding the phrase “God revealed them to us,” Calvin makes a similar point: “Having shut up all mankind in blindness, and having taken away from the human intellect the power of attaining to a knowledge of God by its own resources, he now shows in what way believers

(ἀλλὰ) at the beginning of 2:9 denotes a contrast with 2:8. So the Spirit’s revelation in 2:10 refers to the Spirit’s causing of understanding which the rulers in 2:8 did not have. Third, the use of “δέ” at the beginning of 2:10 should be interpreted as the explanatory “for” (NAS) rather than “but” (NIV, KJV),²⁰ so that ἡμῖν in 2:10 refers to τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν in 2:9.²¹ Together, the flow of the argument is as follows: The rulers of this age could not understand the gospel preached by the apostles. But what no one can understand without the Spirit, God made it possible for all believers to understand by means of the Spirit.²²

The Spirit Guides the Mind To Understand the Gospel

Then how does the Holy Spirit bring about this understanding in believers? Many throughout history have assumed that Paul’s view in 2:6-16 have been influenced by the mystery religions with gnostic overtones,²³ so that Paul, in 2:15, teaches that Christians can have special insight or power from the Holy Spirit, that is, insights given intuitively without the use of reason.²⁴ Others have translated γινώσκω in 2:14 as

are exempted from this blindness—by the Lord’s honoring them with a special illumination of the Spirit.” John Calvin, *The First Epistle of the Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans. J. W. Fraser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 110.

²⁰Fee argues convincingly for this case “on the analogy of Rom 15:3-4 and on the basis of its excellent support.” Fee, *First Corinthians*, 109.

²¹Fee, *First Corinthians*, 109 n. 51; Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 255; Robertson and Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, 43; Marion Soards, *1 Corinthians*, reprint (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 60.

²²Frid suggests that the grammar of 2:9-10 becomes simple and straightforward as soon as we recognize that Paul uses indirect communication through “an elliptical mode of expression.” He explains that “Paul in his liveliness leaves aside the verb ἔγνωκαμεν [at the end of 2:9] and leaps to his statement in verse 10a, connected by δε, which gives the reason why it is possible actually to have knowledge of a divine and hidden wisdom.” Bo Frid, “The Enigmatic ἀλλὰ 1 Cor. 2:9,” *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985): 606-08.

²³Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 225: “Many interpreters have seen in these verses the influence of the Graeco-Roman or Graeco-Oriental mystery religions which also used the terms Paul uses in the text, such as ‘mature’ (ἐν τοῖς τελείοις, 2:6), ‘in a mystery’ (ἐν μυστηρίῳ, 2:7), and the difference between ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος (2:14) and ὁ πνευματικὸς (2:15)”]; Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 112.

“acknowledge” rather than “understand,” and claim that the Spirit aids believers not to understand, but only to recognize or accept.²⁵ In contrast to these positions, I argue that 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 teaches that the Spirit helps to understand the gospel by guiding the mind.

First, *γινώσκω* (2:8, 14, 16) is plain Greek for the act of knowing that involves cognition.²⁶ It is most commonly translated as “understand” (NIV, NAS, ESV, NLT) or “know”²⁷ (ASV, KJV, NKJ). A further proof that *γινώσκω* indicates cognition is the clause *ὅτι πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται* (“because they are spiritually discerned”). The word *ἀνακρίνω* means “investigate,” “examine” or “appraise” (1 Cor 10:25, 27), not “judge” (*κρίνω*), and is close to “search” (*ἐραυνάω*) in 2:10.²⁸ The word denotes an intensive process of investigation of Scripture (cf. Acts 17:11). The verb appears most frequently in 1 Corinthians, and in every case the Spirit-worked enablement of the discernment lies in the foreground.²⁹ When 2:14 is read with this definition in mind, one may interpret the verse as saying, “the person without the Spirit could not understand because he did not

²⁴Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 272.

²⁵Ian Scott, *Paul's Way of Knowing: Story, Experience, and the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 41-48; Daniel P. Fuller, “The Holy Spirit’s Role in Biblical Interpretation,” in *Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and William Sanford LaSor (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 92.

²⁶Regarding *γινώσκω*, Daniel Wallace says that “in spite of the protestations of some, *γινώσκω* is a rather vanilla term for ‘to know,’” and that in the context of 1 Cor 2:14, it suggests a problem with cognition.

²⁷Ian Scott accepts the translation of *γινώσκω* into “know” but still maintains that the verb does not involve cognition. But then, even he acknowledges the difficulty of understanding what it means in 2:8 for the rulers not to “know” (*ἐγνώκεν*) God’s hidden wisdom, if it does not involve cognition. He suggests that the rulers were not “aware” of the content of the gospel. Scott, *Paul's Way*, 47, 129. But it is impossible to be aware of something without cognition.

²⁸Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 101.

²⁹Schrage, *Der Erste Brief*, 265. The other occurrences in 1 Cor are 2:15; 4:3, 4; 9:3; 10:25, 27; 14:24.

have the help of the Spirit to investigate and evaluate.” Γινώσκω appears again in 2:16 (ἐγνώ), in the context of speaking about the formation in believers the “mind of Christ,” a phrase which Paul quotes from the Isaian context in which the cognitive aspects of the Spirit’s activity (“counsel,” 40:13b, 14a; “understand,” “knowledge,” 40:14) is emphasized.

Second, the word εἰδῶμεν in 2:12 (“that we might understand”) also refers to a cognitive activity, since it is the same verb used in 2:11 (οἶδεν) for man’s knowledge of himself. It is significant that the same word is used in these two instances, since in 2:11, the word is used to indicate the activity of the spirit of the man (πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) in knowing himself, and in 2:12, the word is used to indicate the activity of the man in knowing the things of God. This twofold usage indicates that the common activity of human cognition is at work even when a believer is in the process of understanding the things of God by the help of the Spirit.

All these points indicate that the Spirit renews and activates cognition, so that it is through the instrument of the mind that the wisdom of God in Jesus Christ is understood. Evidences of this relationship between the Spirit and the mind are also found in other parts of Pauline literature (Rom 8:5; 12:1-2; Eph 1:17-18, 4:23).³⁰

³⁰For exegetical work showing that the work of the Spirit causes the renewal of the mind in these passages, see P. Pokorný, *Der Brief an die Epheser* ThHK 10/2 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1992), 64; R. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser* EKK 10 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), 55; Hans Dieter Betz, “Das Probleme der Grundlagen der paulinischen Ethik (Röm 12:1-2),” in *Paulinische Studien: Gesammelte Aufsätze* III (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1994), 200; Wolfgang Schrage, *Die konkreten Einzelgebote in der paulinischen Paränese: Ein Beitrag zur Neutestamentlichen Ethik* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1961), 164.

The Spirit Guides the Mind to Understand the Things of God in a Supernatural Way

The fact that the Spirit guides the mind does not mean that the Spirit merely restores its natural function. There are several points within 2:6-16 that indicate that the work of the Spirit guides the mind to work in a supernatural way.

First, the apostle Paul states negatively that ψυχικός άνθρωπος cannot understand the things of God (2:14). The term ψυχικός άνθρωπος refers to a person in his natural capacity, one without the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jude 19).³¹ It does not refer to a carnal person because Paul uses two other terms, σαρκίνοι (3:1) and σαρκικοί (3:3), to refer to the Corinthians as carnal persons. Ψυχικός άνθρωπος is set in contrast with πνευματικός, in a similar way ψυχικός is set in contrast with πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians 15:46, in which ψυχικός refers to the “earthly” (1 Cor 15:46) or natural quality of Adam. Thus, a natural human being cannot understand the things of God because he can only think naturally.³² The verb οὐ δύναται γινῶναι (“cannot understand”) indicates inability of capacity to understand,³³ and not mere unwillingness (indicated by “οὐ δέχεται”) to understand. This impossibility of understanding by the natural mind is also indicated in 2:9: “what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor the heart of man imagined.” This statement is a citation from Isaiah 64:4 and 65:16-17. One significant modification by Paul is the addition of the word ἀνθρώπου (ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ

³¹Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 100; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 116. Thiselton translates the term as “the person who lives on an entirely human level, man without the Spirit.” Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 268.

³²Paul most likely has in mind the widely used sense of ψυχικός used in later Greek classical literature—“of the human nature, focusing somewhat more on so-called higher endowment of personality” as opposed to σαρκικός which is “of the material or physical, with the possible implication of inferior.” Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, “Natural” and “Physical,” *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, vol.1 (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 79.1, 79.5. Paul’s point, then, is that the most accomplished humans cannot understand the things of God.

³³Thiselton clarifies that “this *cannot* is . . . a logical rather than an empirical cannot.” Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 270.

ἀνέβη) so that the emphasis in this context is that God’s wisdom is something that no *human* mind has conceived.³⁴ The impossibility is also indicated by the statement: “No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God” (2:11).

What Paul implies negatively regarding the reason for not understanding, he also states positively in 2:14b: “because they are spiritually discerned” (ὅτι πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται). Understood in light of 2:12, to discern spiritually is to be guided by the Spirit to understand the supernatural things of God in a supernatural way. The phrase “the Spirit who is from God” (πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ) indicates not so much the origin of the Spirit, but the status of the Spirit as the divine supernatural Being, in contrast to the creaturely natural being.³⁵ And since only the Spirit knows the depths of God and believers have received the Holy Spirit, the Spirit will help believers to understand the supernatural things of God.³⁶

To discern the supernatural things of God supernaturally, however, does not mean that this discernment bypasses reason, since the word ἀνακρίνεται, which can be translated as “discern,” is used to indicate the intensive mental process by which a person searches for the truth (cf. Acts 17:11).³⁷ Thus, a Spirit-guided discernment is a supernatural discernment that uses the human reasoning process, although it is not a

³⁴Fee, *First Corinthians*, 107; Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 249; Raymond Collins, *First Corinthians* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006), 132. Fee notes that NIV has left out this word, thus missing the point altogether. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 107.

³⁵Michael Haykin correctly points out that Athanasius’ statement about ἐκ is not a statement about origin but about the status of the Spirit as the supernatural being whom finite creatures depend upon. Michael Haykin, *The Spirit of God: The Exegesis of 1 and 2 Corinthians in the Pneumatomachian Controversy of the Fourth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 79.

³⁶Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 99.

³⁷Ανακρίνεται may be used with a nuance of “to judge,” as in a court (e.g., 1 Cor 4:3, Luke 23:14, Acts 12:19), but even then, the focus is on the examination and evaluation of evidences, rather than on passing a critical judgment.

natural discernment. The natural person analyzes divine truth with his earthbound faculties and finds this truth wanting; but in a spiritual person, the Holy Spirit guides the mind to work in a supernatural way to understand the supernatural truths of God.³⁸

The Spiritual Discernment is Not A Possessed Power but an Enablement of the Mind

A spiritual discernment is not, however, a power to be wielded like a tool that is possessed by believers, a power that gives them an elite status. Corinthians were relying on worldly wisdom (1:17, 2:4, 3:18), particularly in understanding the gospel (2:12). Relying on worldly wisdom made them boast (1:29, 3:21) of their own knowledge (8:1). By contrast, there is no room for boasting in having a spiritual discernment, since it is not a human skill that one possesses. The contrast in 2:12 is disjunctive: The personal guidance of the Spirit is contrasted with the “spirit of the world,” which is not some demonic power, but a reliance on the wisdom of this age (2:6), i.e., reliance on man’s power.³⁹ Instead of boasting, one who has spiritual discernment humbly desires to continue to rely on the guidance of the Spirit, as exemplified by Paul (2:3).

³⁸This corresponds with other scriptural witnesses. In Luke 24:45, Jesus “opened [the disciples’] minds” to understand the Scripture. In Ps 119:18, the Psalmist prays, “open my eyes, that I may behold the wondrous things out of your law.” “Opening the mind” and “opening the eyes” are used as metaphors for illumination of the mind to see the supernatural truths of God. In Eph 1:17-18, Paul prays for “a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened.” Here, the “spirit of wisdom” refers to the Holy Spirit, since it parallels a clearer phrase in Col 1:9 and the rest of the Ephesians speak about the work of the Spirit in revealing knowledge (Eph 3:5, 16). Paul prays this prayer because he knows that knowing the “riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,” and “what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe” (1:18-19) are all supernatural things that cannot be received with natural ability.

³⁹Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 99; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 112; Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 260-61.

When Paul proclaimed the gospel to the Corinthians in the earlier visit, he knew that it was necessary for the Corinthians to “rest” (NIV, ESV, NAS, ἤ, 2:5) in the power of the Holy Spirit in order to understand the gospel. Resting in the power of the Spirit assumes continuous personal guidance of the Spirit, rather than the reception of some ability or power from the Spirit. The present tense of the verb ἀνακρίνεται (2:14) is a further indication that the personal guidance of the Spirit is continuous.

The need to continue to rely on the Holy Spirit in understanding the gospel continues in 1 Corinthians 3, in the context of speaking about growing together as a church. In 3:16, Paul asks “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” (3:16). He follows this rhetorical question with warnings: “let no one deceive himself. If anyone thinks he is wise. . .” (3:18) and, “the Lord knows the thoughts of the wise” (3:20). Here, Paul is bringing back the contrast between following the wisdom of the world and the power of the Holy Spirit (2:4, 12, 13). Those who think they are wise, those who rely on the wisdom of this age and not the Holy Spirit, are deceiving themselves and are futile in their thinking (διαλογισμοὺς, “reasoning”). Here, Paul is encouraging the Corinthians to continue to rely on the Holy Spirit so that their thoughts may not become futile but wise, which, in light of 2:6-16, means to understand the wisdom of God.

The Spirit-Guided Discernment Results in Understanding the Mind of Christ

Personal guidance of the Holy Spirit also does not mean that believers have a license for free interpretation. Rather, the Spirit-guided discernment has results in believers’ having the “mind of Christ” (2:16). Since Paul has already argued that the Spirit makes it possible to know God in 2:11, he goes on to point out that the Spirit accomplishes this by guiding believers to understand the mind of Christ. The parallel structure between the clause “we have the mind of Christ” (νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν) and the

previous clause “who has understood the mind of the Lord” (τίς ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου), indicates that to have the mind of Christ is to understand the mind of Christ. To understand the mind of the Lord, then, is to know Christ and him crucified (2:2).⁴⁰ Paul quotes the phrase “mind of the Lord” from Isaiah 40:13 (“Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord?”), substituting the LXX word “mind” instead of “Spirit.” Paul also modifies the sentence to “Who has *understood* (rather than “direct”) the mind of the Lord?” Yet these changes do not depart from the original context, because the original context emphasizes *understanding* the Spirit of the Lord (Isa 40:14).⁴¹ In sum, Spirit-guided discernment results in understanding the mind of Jesus Christ.

Spirit-Guided Discernment Leads to Christ-minded Discernment of All Things

Spirit-guided discernment results not only in understanding the mind of Christ, but also in discerning all things in light of Christ. The γὰρ (“for”) at the beginning of 2:16 indicates that “having the mind of Christ” provides the rationale behind how the spiritual person is able to discern all things in 2:15: Those who are guided by the Spirit are able to discern all things, because they have (understand, see above) the mind of Christ. All things are discerned in light of Christ (cf. Ps 36:9).

“All things” include the gospel of Jesus Christ, since the contrast between the natural person in 2:14 and the spiritual person in 2:15 indicates that “all things” include the “things of the Spirit of God” (2:14), things which the Spirit helps to understand (2:12), the wisdom of God. Discernment of “all things” also includes a discernment of people. This is confirmed by the second clause in 2:15: “but . . . discerned by no one.” In other

⁴⁰Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 101; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 119; Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 275.

⁴¹Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 101.

words, although spiritual persons cannot be discerned by those without the Spirit, those with the Spirit can discern those without the Spirit. Discernment of people does not mean passing judgment on people (1 Cor. 4:3-4), but discerning the spiritual condition of people, which is what Paul is doing regarding the Corinthians in 3:1ff.

Another way of describing Christ-minded discernment of all of life is being “wise by becoming a fool” (3:18). Paul encourages the Corinthians who think they are wise (worldly wise) in this age to become fools so that they may become (truly) wise (σοφός 3:19). To become a fool is to believe in Jesus Christ as the wisdom of God, which is foolishness to the world (1:21). And when one believes in Christ, one becomes wise. In contrast to those whose thoughts are futile (μάταιοι, 3:20), those who know Christ are truly wise. And the only way not to be deceived by the wisdom of the world (3:18) and to have such a Christ-minded discernment is to rest in the Holy Spirit who dwells in believers (3:16).

Reconciling the “Mature” in 2:6 and “Infants” in 3:1

How are the Corinthians “mature” (2:6) on the one hand and like infants (3:1) on the other hand? This apparent contradiction is resolved when we understand that in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, the apostle Paul is addressing the foundational difference between Christians and non-Christians, and that in 3:1ff., he is addressing the Corinthian believers’ failure to rely on the Spirit who dwells in them. There are several indications that the “mature” refers to all Christians and not a special class of Christians in the church in Corinth.

First, 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 is about a radical contrast between those who have the Spirit and those who do not. Those who have received the Holy Spirit can understand the things of God (2:12b), but those who have the spirit of the world (2:12a) cannot understand the things of God. This contrast is repeated in 2:14-15. The “natural person”

(2:14) refers to one without the Holy Spirit, i.e., a non-Christian;⁴² the “spiritual person” (2:15) is a Christian who has received the Holy Spirit (2:12). Furthermore, the total contrast between Christians and non-Christians in 2:6-16 is consistent with the similar contrast assumed in the previous passage, 1:18-2:5. If a two-class Christianity is assumed in 2:6-16, it would run counter to the point Paul has been making in 1:18-2:5 about the contrast between the wisdom of God and wisdom of the world.⁴³

Second, the apostle Paul uses languages that describe the positional sanctification of believers.⁴⁴ Positional sanctification refers to the fact that believers are accorded a new status; they are treated as if they are completely sanctified by means of the fact that Jesus has become their righteousness and sanctification (1 Cor 1:30). In this light, Paul addresses the Corinthians as the “sanctified” in 1 Corinthians 1:2 and 6:11.⁴⁵

Third, the antecedent for “we” in “we have received . . . the Spirit” (1 Cor 2:12), which refers to all Christians, goes back to “the mature” in 2:6. The sentences are connected tightly through antecedents and conjunctions according to the following structure.

⁴²Fee, *First Corinthians*, 101; Richard Gaffin, “Some Epistemological Reflection on 1 Cor 2:6-16,” *WTJ* 57 (1996): 121-24; Robert W. Funk, “Word and Word in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16,” in *Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God* (New York: Harper, 1966), 275-305; J. Francis, “As Babes in Christ—Some Proposals regarding 1 Corinthians 3:1-3,” *Journal for the Study of New Testament* 7 (1980): 41-60.

⁴³Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 97.

⁴⁴Some refer to this as the “definitive sanctification,” in distinction from the “progressive sanctification.” Anthony Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 202-06.

⁴⁵Anthony Hoekema notes that in both 1:2 and 6:11, the verbs are in the aorist tense, which usually describes instantaneous action, signifying that there is a sense in which these believers have been sanctified once and for all, just as they have been justified once for all. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 203. Paul also speaks of believers as having “died to sin” (Rom 6:2), where the old self has been crucified with Christ (Rom 6:6) and how God raised up believers with Christ (Eph 2:6) and made them to be new creatures (2 Cor 5:17).

- A “the mature” (2:6a)
- B although . . . “rulers of this age” (2:6b)
- B none of the rulers of this age understood (2:8a)
but what no eye has seen (2:9)
- A God has revealed to us (2:10)
- B For who knows . . . no one comprehends (2:11)
- A Now we have received the Spirit . . . that we might understand (2:12)

The statement “The rulers of this age who are doomed to pass away” in 2:6 is further commented upon in 1 Corinthians 2:8-9. They are doomed to pass away ultimately because they cannot understand the gospel. The fact that they cannot understand is elaborated in 2:9: the nature of incomprehension is comprehensive (“no eye”).

Whatever the identity of these “rulers of this age,” the contrast is a comprehensive one between people who are part of “this age,” to which these rulers belong (B), and “the mature” (A). The people of this age are then set in contrast to “us” in 2:10, to whom God has revealed the wisdom of God. Thus, the pattern of contrasts in 2:6-10 indicates that “us” in 2:10 refers to “the mature” in 2:6. First Corinthians 2:11 is a return to those without the Spirit and a reaffirmation of the point made in 2:8: They cannot comprehend the thoughts of God. The conjunction *γὰρ* at the beginning of 2:11 indicates that verse 10 and 11 are linked so that “no one comprehends” is still referring back to the people of this age. Finally, the people of this age who cannot comprehend the thoughts of God in 2:11 is set in contrast to “we” who have received the Spirit and understand the things freely given by God” in 2:12. The tight chain of grammatical construction above shows that those who have received the Spirit in 2:12, i.e., all Christians, refer back to the “mature.”

As for Paul’s use of the word “infants” (*νηπίοι*), the term is described by two previous phrases: *οὐκ . . . λαλῆσαι ὑμῖν ὡς πνευματικοῖς, ἀλλ’ ὡς σαρκικοῖς ὡς νηπίοις*. First, it is significant that Paul is not *addressing* (*λαλῆσαι*) the Corinthians as spiritual people: He does not say that they are not spiritual people. The implication is that the

Corinthians have received the Holy Spirit, but they are not resting in the power of the Holy Spirit. He asks rhetorically in 3:16: “Do you not know . . . that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” The conjunction *καὶ γὰρ* at the beginning of 3:1 makes the connection between 2:16 and 3:1 even clearer. The apostle Paul is arguing that, “we” (all believers) have the mind of Christ, but (*καὶ γὰρ*) he could not address the Corinthians as those who have received the Spirit. He also indicates that the situation has not improved at the time of the writing of the First Corinthians (*οὐδὲ ἔτι νῦν*, 3:2). Thus, the first phrase indicates that the Corinthians are not relying on the Holy Spirit.

Second, the fact that Paul uses the word *σαρκίνοι* (3:3) is significant. It is significant that after making such a clear contrast between *ψυχικός* and *ἄνθρωπος* in 2:14-15, Paul chooses the term *σαρκίνοι* rather than *ψυχικός*. In other words, the problem of the Corinthians is that although they have the Spirit, they are controlled by fleshly impulses. The force of the argument, then, is that one cannot be guided both by the Holy Spirit and the fleshly impulses (cf. Rom 8:5). In fact, the stark contrast between those who have received the Holy Spirit and those who have the “spirit of the world” in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 serves to highlight Paul’s argument that, as Christians, it is impossible to follow both. In sum, even though the Corinthians are mature positionally in Christ, they are actually infants in that they do not rely on the Holy Spirit to guide them in their deeper understanding of the gospel (“solid food,” 1 Cor 3:2), and that they are controlled by sinful desires.

Ethical Problems Result from Not Being Guided by the Spirit to Understand the Gospel

Having seen how the Corinthians can be “mature” and yet be addressed as “infants,” it is necessary to take a closer look at the point that ethical problems (e.g., strife, jealousy, 3:3) result from not relying on the Holy Spirit to grow deeper in their

understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This relationship between the ethical problem and the gospel-understanding problem can be seen in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 as well as in the larger context.

In 3:1-3, it is significant to note that the apostle Paul addressed the Corinthians as *σαρκίνοις* at an earlier occasion (“could not”), and that he sees that they are still “of the flesh” (*σαρκικοί*). *Σαρκίνοις* means “of the flesh” in the sense of being controlled by natural fleshly impulses (2 Cor 3:3).⁴⁶ *Σαρκικοί* means “fleshly” in the sense of being worldly or sinful, with ethical overtones of living from the perspective of the present age (2 Cor 1:12).⁴⁷ When Paul argues in 3:3, “Are you not of the flesh (*σαρκικοί*) and *behaving* (*περιπατεῖτε*) only in a human way?” he is associating *σαρκικοί* with behavioral aspect of worldliness. The change in the use of the terms, from *σαρκίνοις* to *σαρκικοί*, is significant. When Paul visited the Corinthians earlier, they were infant Christians in that although they have received the Holy Spirit, they were being controlled by natural fleshly impulses. But by not relying on the Holy Spirit and continually being controlled by natural fleshly impulses, Corinthian believers have become worldly in their behavior, having jealousy and strife among them. In short, even though believers have the Holy Spirit in them, if they do not rely on the Spirit in growing in their understanding of the gospel, they cannot but be controlled by fleshly impulses that result in ethical problems.

The apostle Paul makes the same point in the larger context. He describes the ethical problems in 1:10-16. Then in 1:17, he points to the underlying problem and its solution. The underlying problem is that the Corinthians were relying on “words of eloquent wisdom.” The solution is relying on the gospel of the cross of Christ (1:17-18).

⁴⁶Whereas *σαρκικοί* refers to the unrenewed person, *σαρκίνοις* refers to a person who may be renewed, but who is driven by fallen human nature. Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 289, 292.

⁴⁷Fee, *First Corinthians*, 124.

But in order to understand the gospel which the apostle Paul proclaimed the gospel (2:1), it was necessary that the Corinthians rested not in the wisdom of men but in the power of the Spirit (2:5). And even now, at the time of the writing of the First Corinthians, the Corinthian believers need the help of the Holy Spirit to understand (2:12) the wisdom of God which the apostles are imparting (2:6). This is possible, because they have received the Spirit (2:12), and they have the mind of Christ (2:16).

However, the Corinthian church has not improved. They are still of the flesh and are full of strife (3:3). And they are still of the flesh because they are not building on the foundation of Jesus Christ (3:11). What is important in the building of God's church is not the persons involved in it (3:5-9), but the grace of Jesus Christ working through them (3:10-11). And in order to build the church by the grace of Jesus Christ, it is necessary that believers are guided by the Holy Spirit that dwells in them (3:16). It is only by relying on the Spirit that believers will not be deceived by the wisdom of the age (3:18) or become futile in their thoughts (3:20), and become wise in Jesus Christ (3:18). In conclusion, the role of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, is to guide believers to grow in their understanding of the wisdom of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ imparted by the apostles, which results in ethical transformation.

2 Corinthians 3:12-4:6

Second Corinthians 3:12-4:6 is another key passage related to the subject of the role of the Spirit in interpretation. In the larger context of 2 Corinthians 3:1-4:6, the Spirit is associated with the new covenant. The issue of the role of the Spirit in interpretation arises from the fact that the role of the Spirit is related to the unveiling of the mind in 3:14-16 and in 4:4-6. Just exactly how the Spirit is related to the unveiling of the mind depends on how one understands the role of the Spirit in the new covenant. Kennard, who holds to the reception view, believes that this passage teaches that the Holy

Spirit helps believers to apply the text to life, and not that the Holy Spirit guides believers to interpret the text. For receptionists, the role of the Spirit in the new covenant is primarily to sanctify the heart.

Recently, such interpretation of the role of the Spirit in the new covenant in 2 Corinthians 3:1-4:6 passage has received a strong support from Scott Hafemann.⁴⁹ Thus, in setting forth a proper interpretation of selective points in this passage, I interact with Hafemann's interpretation to the extent that it supports the postconservative and reception views. In doing so, I show that, according to the 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:6 passage, the Holy Spirit does not provide new revelations beyond Scripture, in contrast to the postconservative view, and the Holy Spirit guides believers in understanding the gospel as well as in transforming their hearts to receive and apply the gospel, in contrast to the reception view. To this end, I first demonstrate that in this passage, the role of the Holy Spirit is directly related to understanding the full revelation of the gospel in Jesus Christ in the Word of God. I then address more specifically the question of how the Spirit guides both the mind and the heart.

The Change in the Two Covenants and the Role of the Holy Spirit

⁴⁹Hafemann is currently the Professor of New Testament at St. Andrews Divinity School. Before that he served as the Professor of New Testament at Gordon-Conwell and Wheaton College. He has written several books on 2 Corinthians including *Suffering and the Spirit: An Exegetical Study of II Corinthians 2:14-3:3 within the Corinthian Correspondence* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990); idem, *NIV Application Commentary on 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000); and idem, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel: The Letter/Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996).

An important exegetical issue that is related to the role of the Holy Spirit in the new covenant is regarding the phrase τοῦ καταργουμένου which appears three times in a short passage (2 Cor 3:7, 11, 13). Since this phrase represents the ministry of the old covenant and it is being compared with the ministry of the Spirit in the new covenant, it sheds an important light on how the two covenants are being compared, particularly in terms of the role of the Holy Spirit.

One option is to follow Hafemann and translate the phrase as “what was being rendered inoperative” and understand the comparison as between an inoperative heart in the old covenant and the work of the Spirit which makes the heart operative, in the new covenant. Hafemann’s point is that the glory on Moses’ face has no effect on the Israelites because of the Israelite’s stiff-necked condition, and that putting on the veil is a way of protecting the Israelites from the judgment of God.⁵⁰ For Hafemann, the problem of the old covenant, which is resolved in the new covenant by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, is the heart condition of the people. The problem of this translation, however, is that it is grammatically awkward. It does not make sense for Paul to say in 3:11, “If what was being rendered inoperative came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.” Hafemann wants this to read as, “glory [of God] was inoperative on people because of their sin,”⁵¹ but that is not what the statement reads grammatically. A more contextually coherent translation is “what was being brought to an end” (ESV) because Paul makes it clear that ministry of the old covenant is temporary and not permanent (3:11). So, there is an element of discontinuity in the old covenant. Something has come to an end.

⁵⁰Hafemann, *NIV Commentary on 2 Corinthians*, 155.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 147.

But it is not the condemning function of the old covenant (“ministry of death” (3:7), “ministry of condemnation” (3:9)), which is still glorious and necessary. Rather, it is the foreshadowing function of the old covenant. Since the law of Moses foreshadowed Jesus Christ, and Christ has come, the foreshadowing function of the law of Moses is no longer necessary. It has come to an end. The reason “we have a hope” and “are very bold” (3:12) is because we can now gaze at Jesus himself, and not at Moses, who foreshadowed Jesus.⁵² The “we” here refers to the new covenant believers (“we all,” 3:18). The new covenant believers have greater hope than Moses (“we have such a hope . . . not like Moses”) because we have that which Moses only pointed to from far away.

Hafemann’s criticism against interpreting τοῦ καταργουμένου as “what was being brought to an end” is that if this expression refers to the old covenant, it means that Moses deliberately deceived the Israelites by putting on a veil so that they would not see the “outcome” (τέλος, 3:13), or the fading nature, of the old covenant.⁵³ But it is not necessary to assume that Moses is deceiving the Israelites. To begin with, “outcomes” does not refer to the “fading nature” of the old covenant. Rather, it refers to the condemning function of the old covenant. In 3:7, the Israelites “could not gaze at Moses’ face because of its glory,” where “glory” refers to the glory of the ministry of condemnation (3:9). Thus, in 3:13, by saying “that the Israelites might not gaze at the *outcome* of what was being brought to an end,” the apostle Paul is saying that Moses did not want Israelites to keep their focus on the awareness of their sinfulness or the

⁵²See John 5:39ff.

⁵³Hafemann, *NIV Commentary on 2 Corinthians*, 154.

condemnation, which are outcomes of the Mosaic Law. Putting on the veil, therefore, has a negative function of protecting the Israelites.

Yet, as mentioned above, by using the term “what was being brought to an end,” *Paul* is indicating that Moses is pointing beyond himself to Christ, whether Moses was aware of that or not, when he put on the veil.⁵⁴ Other New Testament passages (Acts 7:30-43, Heb 11:26, John 5:46) indicate that Moses was aware that he is pointing beyond himself. Therefore it is contextually more coherent to understand that Paul is using the term “what was being brought to an end” to indicate that Moses wanted to protect the Israelites from focusing on the law itself, and its outcomes—judgment and guilt, as well as pointing them beyond it to Christ.

The difference in the two translations is that “what was being rendered inoperative” indicates a subjective problem, a problem of the Israelites’ heart, whereas “what was being brought to an end” indicates an objective problem, a problem of the insufficiency of the Mosaic Law. Furthermore such a difference in interpreting τὸ καταργουμένον makes a difference in understanding the role of the Holy Spirit in the new covenant. With “what was being rendered inoperative,” the role of the Spirit is seen as that of making the hearts of believers operative, whereas with “what was being brought to an end,” the role of the Spirit is seen as that of guiding believers to the fuller revelation of Jesus Christ. This interpretation fits the immediate context of 3:12-18, where it is made clearer that the Spirit leads believers to behold the glory of the Lord (v.18). The statement in 3:14 that the veil can be taken away “only through Christ” also makes it clear that it is not simply the work of the Spirit in making the hearts of believers operative, but also the work of the Spirit in making Christ known to believers. In sum, in

⁵⁴See Peter Balla, “2 Corinthians,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 760.

contrasting the old and the new covenant, Paul is not only emphasizing the Spirit's role of ethical transformation, but also the role of the Spirit of leading believers to understand the fuller revelation of God in Jesus Christ in the gospel.

The Holy Spirit reveals Christ in the Word of God

Another problem of focusing only on the subjective role of the Spirit in the new covenant at the expense of the object of Spirit's revelation, Jesus Christ, is the tendency to think that the Spirit can reveal beyond the Word of God. As mentioned earlier, the postconservatives interpret this passage in such a way. However, there are indications in this passage that the Holy Spirit reveals Christ *in the written Word of God*.

First, the apostle Paul mentions in 3:14-15 that the problem of the Israelites is that, when Moses is *read*, a veil lies over their hearts. Reading assumes written Word of God. And the problem of the veil exists "to this day, whenever Moses is read" (3:14-15), which assumes that the problem is not the reading of Moses itself, but not reading Moses properly. And the reason given for not reading Moses properly is both that "their minds were hardened" (3:14) and that a "veil lies over their hearts" (3:15). And the solution to these problems is being "in Christ (*ἐν Χριστῷ*)" (3:14) or "turning" to him (3:16). But this still does not mean that reading Moses is bypassed. The question that remains to be answered is whether the problem is subjective, objective, or both. That is, whether the problem is in not being able to read Moses because one does not have the help of Christ in interpreting, or in not seeing Christ in reading Moses, or both. The subjective aspect is clear. When one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed (3:16), and the veil refers to both the mind (3:13-14) and heart (3:15). But with the unveiled faces, believers behold the glory of the Lord (3:18). Since the passage began with reading Moses, it is plausible that Paul is saying that believers behold the glory of the Lord in reading Moses. Having

freedom in the Spirit (3:17) does not mean that we can behold the glory of the Lord without reading Scripture.

This is made clearer in the next section, 4:1-6. Paul begins by being encouraged of having the ministry of the new covenant, and committing himself not to “practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word” (τὸν λόγου τοῦ θεοῦ) (4:2). If Paul’s confidence in the new covenant was only on the Spirit’s subjective work on people’s hearts and minds, Paul would have no reason to make such a strong commitment of “refusing” (ἀπειπάμεθα) to tamper with God’s word. He refuses because God’s word itself is objectively sufficient to reveal the gospel. It is objectively sufficient in that God’s word has power and glory in itself, and does not depend on man’s ability to make it powerful. The objective sufficiency is indicated by the fact that he does not want to tamper (δολουντες) with God’s Word, meaning that he wants to let the Word of God speak for itself. It is also indicated by the fact that he believes he can commend to everyone’s conscience by the “open statement (φανειρώσει) of the truth” (4:2b). This thought is in line with what he already said about not being a peddler (καπηλεύοντες) of God’s word (2:17), but one who “speaks in Christ” (2:17b). These statements add strength to Paul’s understanding that in the new covenant, the gospel of Jesus Christ is clearly revealed in the Word of God.

Paul then returns to the subjective problem again in 4:3, saying that “even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing.” By introducing a hypothetical case with “even if,” Paul reaffirms the point just made—that the gospel, the Word of God, itself is clear.⁵⁵ But even if it is veiled, then it is not the objective problem

⁵⁵Calvin argues that “if our gospel is hid” in 2 Cor 4:3 implies the clarity of the gospel. He also takes the expression “light of the glorious gospel” in 4:4 as the “gospel, in which Christ’s glory is shone forth.” John Calvin, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Baker: Eerdmans, 1948), 196.

of the Word, but the subjective problem of the blinded minds of the unbelievers (4:4). And the role of the Spirit is to unveil the mind of believers in such a way that they can see the glory of Christ in the light of the gospel (4:4b). It is important to note that the “light” in the phrase “light of the gospel” is the objective light of the truth of the Word of God itself, whereas the “light of the knowledge” in 4:6 is the light of understanding that occurs inside believers by the Holy Spirit. In other words, the role of the Holy Spirit is not simply to illumine believers, but more specifically to illumine believers to see and understand the light of the gospel.

The idea that the Holy Spirit does not go beyond the Word of God to reveal Christ is made more certain by the repeated pattern, first in 3:12-18, then in 4:1-6. In the first section the reading of Moses is coupled with the work of the Spirit in revealing Christ. In the second section, speaking the Word of God is coupled with the work of the Spirit in revealing Christ. The fact that the glory of Christ is seen *in* the objective gospel is made more emphatic by the development from “beholding the glory of the Lord” in 3:18 to “seeing the *light of the gospel* of the glory of Christ.”

The Identity of the Veil and the Work of the Holy Spirit in Removing the Veil

We have already dealt with the veil which Moses put on in 3:13. But regarding the identity of the veil in 3:14-15, there are three views: (1) That it represents Israelite’s intellectual failure to recognize the passing away of the old covenant,⁵⁶ (2) That it represents Israelite’s moral failure to obey the law, a problem of the heart,⁵⁷ (3)

⁵⁶Israelites’ failure, for Bultmann, is in not recognizing that the glory of Moses is extinguished (Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 86); for Barrett, in not recognizing that the old covenant is obsolescent (Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, 120); and for Bruce, in not recognizing that it has been superseded by Christ (Bruce, *I & II Corinthians*, 192), quoted in David Garland, *2 Corinthians*. New American Commentary, vol. 29 (Nashville: Holman, 1999), 191.

That it has elements of both. Here, the third position is held. The problem with the first view is its tendency not to take seriously the problem of the heart, and the problem with the second view is the tendency not to take seriously the Israelite's problem of understanding. The third view is balanced and contextually most sensitive.

The third view is based on the understanding that in addition to Moses' own use of the veil of protecting the Israelites, Paul also uses the veil to refer to: (1) lack of understanding (3:14), and (2) problem of unbelief in the heart (3:15).⁵⁸ The question opens up now as to how to understand the relationship between the heart and the mind. It is not a hendiadys since they do not appear together as "mind and heart." And they are not simply two independent parts of a believer. Rather, they are interrelated synecdoches, parts that influence each other, but at the same time, each representing the whole person.

On the one hand, there is ultimately one veil: "but when one turns to the Lord, *the veil* is removed" (3:15). This makes sense since the act of turning to the Lord is the turning of the whole person to the Lord. On the other hand, mind and heart are two distinct aspects of one veil, and because the distinction is important, it is repeated again in 4:4 and 4:6. The first significance of this distinction lies in that sin affects the mind, and not just the heart. This is made clear in 3:14 ("their minds were hardened") and 4:4: ("the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers").

But the significance of the distinction is even greater in the context of speaking about the difference of the old and the new covenants. As mentioned above, that problem in the old covenant was not merely a problem of the heart, but a problem of insufficiency

⁵⁷Hafemann, *NIV Commentary on 2 Corinthians*, 156-58; Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 191-92.

⁵⁸Phillipp Vielhauer, *Aufsätze zur Neuen Testament* (Munich: Kaiser, 1979), 211; Gerd Theissen has written in even greater detail about the threefold use of the veil. Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*, trans. J. H. Schütz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 121-22.

of the Mosaic Law to reveal the gospel. In Paul's time, the problem of the mind is particularly acute because the gospel has now been fully revealed. Paul uses the expression "to this day" twice to convey the astonishment that Jews still do not believe in spite of the fullness and the clarity of the revelation. Thus, the problem of the mind corresponds to translating τοῦ καταργουμένου as "outcome of what was being brought to an end," which is indicative of the insufficiency of the Mosaic Law.

Yet, in spite of the reference to the hardening of the mind, Hafemann suggests that this "hermeneutical problem" is not intellectual, but moral.⁵⁹ He explains that "it is not because the real meaning of the Sinai covenant is somehow hidden or veiled. . . . Rather, the problem is that she will not accept it as true for her."⁶⁰ Hafemann commits a categorical error here. He assumes that just because the real meaning of the Sinai covenant is clear, the problem of the Israelite is not intellectual. He equates clarity of the Scripture with intellectual ability to comprehend.

This false assumption also leads Hafemann to commit an exegetical error regarding the same phrase, "but their minds were hardened." He admits that this clause presents a special challenge to his interpretation: "Where we would expect a supporting statement (i.e., "Moses veiled himself...*because* their minds were hardened"), Paul introduces a strong contrast ("but," ἀλλά)."⁶¹ Hafemann argues that it is unnatural to have the contrasting conjunction, because it suggests that the minds of the Israelites were hardened in spite of the veiling of Moses. This would put the burden on Moses and not the Israelites. Hafemann proposes to overcome this difficulty by relating "but their minds

⁵⁹Hafemann, *NIV Commentary on 2 Corinthians*, 157.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 158.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 156.

were hardened” (14a) with “we are very bold” (12), so that it reads something like: “In spite of [Paul’s] bold proclamation, Israel is not responding to Paul for the same reason she did not respond to Moses.”⁶²

This interpretation has several problems. First, grammatically, “but” (*ἀλλὰ*) refers to the immediate antecedent, if not the entire verse 12, so that the clear meaning is that the minds of the Israelites were hardened in spite of the passing of the old covenant and the hope of the new covenant. Second, 14b shows more specifically that the “minds [of the Israelites] were hardened,” not in spite of Paul’s proclamation, but “when they read the old covenant.” These phrases coupled with the last clause (“because only through Christ is it taken away”) indicate that the Jews cannot understand because they are not reading the old covenant from the perspective of Christ. In other words, the problem is not simply with the unwilling heart but also with the inability to understand because it is not read in light of Christ. Third, there is no exegetical evidence for seeing the “boldness” in 3:12 as referring to Paul’s boldness in proclamation. Rather, in light of the phrase “what is permanent” in 3:11b, the boldness refers to Paul’s confidence (cf. 4:1) in the new covenant, which includes the permanent, full revelation of Christ in the gospel as well as the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Finally, there is no way to deny that “their minds were hardened” implies intellectual problem.

It is also clear that it is the Holy Spirit who removes the veil: “When one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit....For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” Ultimately, it is the Lord Jesus Christ who removes the veil (“from the Lord”), yet the identification of the Spirit with the Lord and the clause, “where

⁶²Ibid.

the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom,” (3:17) indicates that the more immediate agent of removal of the veil is the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit’s Active Role in Guiding Believers to Behold the Glory of the Gospel

We have so far seen the Spirit’s role of removing the veil. But in understanding the concept of “removing the veil,” we should not imagine that the role of the Spirit is merely a negative one, i.e., that of removing the obstacle that hinders believers from seeing the glory of the Lord. The passage likewise indicates that the role of the Spirit includes a positive aspect of enabling believers to see the glory of the Lord. This is not to suggest that the Holy Spirit performs two different acts in causing believers to see the glory of the Lord, but that the Holy Spirit enables believers to see the glory of God in such a way that they would not be able to do with their own natural ability.

This positive aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit is seen in 2 Corinthians 4:6: “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” On the one hand, since this verse follows closely behind 4:4, where the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, this verse ought to be understood as the Spirit’s act of *unblinding* the minds of unbelievers.

Yet, at the same time, the expression indicates a positive act of *giving* the light of knowledge.⁶³ To be sure, the Holy Spirit is not inserting the gospel into the minds of people without their hearing of the open statement of the truth of God’s word (2 Cor 4:2). But this verse affirms that the Holy Spirit works *actively* in their hearts to cause them to understand the “light of the knowledge of the glory of God in Jesus Christ” (4:6). The

⁶³See Luke 1:77-79; 2:32; Eph 1:17-18

significance of this latter phrase is that the result of the Spirit's supernatural work of shining is also a *light*—a supernatural knowledge.⁶⁴ Not only is the gospel itself a “light,”⁶⁵ but the knowledge of that light, which results from the help of the Holy Spirit, is also a light. Human beings as mere “flesh” cannot see and understand God's revelation without the help of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17). This is an indication that the role of the Spirit is not simply one of removing blindness but also of actively guiding people to behold the glory of the Lord and transform them according to the image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18).

Based on the above evidences in 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:6, I conclude that, as a function of his ministry in the new covenant, the Holy Spirit removes the veils of the heart and mind and actively guides believers to understand and be transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ in the written Word of God.⁶⁶

John 14:26; 16:12-15

Within Jesus' Farewell Discourse, there are four passages that contain the word “Spirit”: John 14:16-17, 26, 15:26, 16:7-13. All four of these passages are related to the issue of the role of the Spirit in interpretation, two passages directly (14:26 and 16:12-15) and two indirectly (14:16-17 and 15:26). Examining these verses in context⁶⁷

⁶⁴See Ps 119:18, 130.

⁶⁵Τοῦ εὐαγγελίου should be taken as a genitive of origin, indicating that “light” emanates from the objective gospel itself. Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 221.

⁶⁶Martin's summary on this passage is insightful: “The risen Lord is the subject who both illumines his servants and summons them to his service . . . and the object whom Paul and his associates are charged to make known and so to bring saving truth to light.” Ralph P Martin, *2 Corinthians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 40 (Dallas: Word, 1991), 80.

⁶⁷Scholars have increasingly “recognized that the understanding of the Paraclete must be centered upon the presentation in the Gospel of John itself.” Robert Alan Berg, “Pneumatology and the History of the Johannine Community: Insights from the Farewell Discourse and the First Epistle” (Ph.D. diss., Graduate School of Drew University, 1988), 72.

helps to determine that (1) the reference to “you” includes future believers, (2) the Spirit guides believers to grow in their understanding of Christ in the Word (3) the Spirit also influences the mind through the heart, and (4) the Spirit guides application of the Word to life by guiding understanding of the Word.

References to “You” in the Spirit-Passages Refer to All Believers

A common objection against citing these passages in reference to the present work of the Spirit among believers to aid the interpretation of Scripture is that the referent of the second person plural “you” is not future believers but the apostles/disciples.⁶⁸ That the immediate referent of these pronouns is the disciples is not in question. The debated question is whether some indications point beyond the disciples to all believers. An examination of the function of the Farewell Discourse and the reference to Jesus’ “coming” reveals that the second person plural in these passages refers to all believers, including the disciples.

Jesus’ continuing presence as a unifying theme of the farewell discourse.

The unity of the Farewell Discourse, which until recently has been questioned by critical scholars, lies in Jesus’ continuing presence with his people, including future believers.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Those who believe that the “you” refers only to the apostles include F. Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1900), 182; F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1963), 105; D. A. Carson, *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 149-50; Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 536-37. Those who believe that it includes all believers are George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 220; James Montgomery Boice, *Witness and Revelation in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 143-44; Stanley M. Horton, *What the Bible Says About the Holy Spirit* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1976), 120-21; Craig Keener, *Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 2:1036.

⁶⁹Critical scholars have changed their views and are recognizing the unity of the Farewell Discourse. The best example is that of Fernando Segovia, who led the case for seeing the Farewell Discourse as a compilation of several different strata of documents, but now affirms the unity and

The discourse focuses on Christ's promise to return to believers.⁷⁰ Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, in which the eschatological discourses (Matt 24, Mark 13, Luke 21) focus on the trials that believers will face after the event of the cross, the apostle John looks beyond the glorification of Jesus and anticipates the continuing presence of Christ that will help believers to overcome those trials (14:1-3; 16:5-7, 22, 33; 17:13).⁷¹

More specifically, John uses the technique of “temporal stereoscopic,” which intentionally fuses together the temporal horizons of the time of Jesus and the time of the Johannine community. Accordingly, even though the discourse is situated in the pre-Easter period, it presupposes the completion of the “hour” of Jesus (13:31; 16:11, 33; 17:4) from the standpoint of which it looks back at the earthly work of Jesus (16:4b; 17:11f), and it addresses the situation of the post-Easter community (15:18ff.; 16:2).⁷² In this way, narrative criticism has helped to move toward a scholarly consensus that the unity of the Farewell Discourse focuses on the Jesus' continuing presence with future believers.

The “Coming” of Jesus. Another point of contention regarding whether the addressees of the Farewell Discourse should include future believers is what Jesus was referring to when he said “I will come to you” (14:3, 18, 23, 28). On the basis of Jesus'

coherence of the text. See Fernando Segovia, “The Tradition History of the Fourth Gospel,” in *Exploring the Gospel of John*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 179-89.

⁷⁰Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John: Text and Context*, Biblical Interpretation, vol. 72 (Boston: Brill, 2005), 281. Marinus de Jonge finds emphasis on “the life of the community in the interim,” summarized especially in 13:31-38 and 17:20-26, which together frame the discourse. Marinus de Jonge, *Jesus: Stranger from Heaven and Son of God*, ed. and trans. John E. Steeley (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 172.

⁷¹Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 280.

⁷²Jörg Frey, *Die johanneische Eschatologie*, vol. 3 of *Die Eschatologische Verkündigung in den Johanneischen Texten* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 234.

promise to “prepare a place for you” in 14:2-3, some take it as the Parousia.⁷³ Others see it as referring to Jesus’ resurrection appearances.⁷⁴ The basis for this assertion is that the language of “you will see me” is personal and specific.⁷⁵

However, it is more likely that these promises of Christ’s return refer to the coming of the Spirit at the Pentecost.⁷⁶ In other words, Jesus will dwell with believers through the Holy Spirit. First, when Jesus affirms in 14:18 “I will come to you,” he says this immediately after promising that he will ask the Father to send the Spirit (14:16). Second, when Jesus says in 14:19, “Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me,” the first clause refers to the world’s spiritual inability to see Christ, because the statement follows 14:17: “the world cannot receive [the Spirit].”

Third, Jesus explains in 14:28 his own statement about “coming to you” in connection with his “going to the Father,” which refers back to 14:26 where he is asking the Father to send the Holy Spirit (14:16, 26). Fourth, the sending of the Spirit in 14:16-17 and 14:26 refers to the time in which the triune God, which includes Christ, will dwell among believers (14:23).

In sum, Christ’s reference to his “coming” through the outpouring of the Spirit and the thematic unity of Christ’s continuing presence provide sufficient evidence that

⁷³Peter F. Ellis, *The Genius of John: A Composition-Critical Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1984), 220; Rodney A. Whitacre, *John* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 348; Luther, *Sermon on John 14*.

⁷⁴Ridderbos, *Gospel of John*, 507; Grant Osborne, *The Gospel of John* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2007), 216; cf. W. Bartlett, “The Coming of the Holy Ghost according to the Fourth Gospel,” *Expository Times* 37 (1925-26): 73.

⁷⁵So Beasley-Murray, Carson, Borchert, contra Bruce, Köstenberger. See Osborne, *Gospel of John*, 215.

⁷⁶Osborne, *Gospel of John*, 215.

the pronoun “you” in the Spirit passages (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:12-15) refers to all believers and not just to the disciples.

The Work of the Holy Spirit in Guiding Understanding of the Word

If the Holy Spirit is going to dwell among all future believers and help them to know Christ personally, how does the Holy Spirit make this happen? Some scholars suggest that the Farewell Discourse teaches that the Holy Spirit goes beyond Scripture, either by giving new revelations⁷⁷ or by revealing to the reader intuitively.⁷⁸ Others suggest that the Farewell Discourse teaches only the role of the Spirit in inspiration⁷⁹ or application,⁸⁰ but not interpretation. However, an examination of the titles and functions of the Holy Spirit in the Farewell Discourse shows that he works internally within believers to guide them to come to know Christ as he is revealed externally in the Word of God.

Titles of the Holy Spirit. There are two titles given to the Holy Spirit in the Farewell Discourse: *παράκλητος* (“Paraclete,” John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) and *πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας* (“Spirit of Truth,” John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). Both shed some light on the

⁷⁷Stanley Grenz supports the view that based on John 14:26, the Spirit pours “further light,” which includes information beyond Scripture. See chap. 2, 37-38; Hans Christian Kammler, “Jesus Christ und der Geist-Paraklet”, in *Johannesstudien*, ed. by Otfried Hofius and Hans Christian Kammler, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 111.

⁷⁸DeYoung and Hurty, *Beyond the Obvious*, 133-34.

⁷⁹Douglas Kennard, see chap. 2, 65-70. See the commentators mentioned in Kennard: Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John* 13-21 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983), 650-54, 707-17; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 662-66, 702-04; Frederic Godet, *Commentary on John's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1978), 839-47, 871-73; Craig Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Henderickson, 2003), 977-82, 1035-43; Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 479-84, 504-06; B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 208-09, 232.

⁸⁰Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 421.

nature of the work of the Holy Spirit in his guidance of the interpretation of truth. Although the meaning of *παράκλητος* is disputed, and no one English term (including teaching, revealing, guiding believers; witnessing to, convicting, and prosecuting unbelievers) effectively conveys all the various functions of the Paraclete,⁸¹ a central significance of the term in the context of John 14-16 is that the Paraclete personally represents God the Father and Jesus to believers (John 15:26).⁸² More specifically, the term *ἄλλον παράκλητον* indicates that the Holy Spirit is the continued presence of Jesus Christ. Gary Burge offers a convincing account of the personal aspect of the Paraclete by drawing exhaustive parallels with the personal presence of Jesus.⁸³ The personal presence of Christ seems to have been particularly helpful to the Johannine community because of their experience of persecution, including expulsion from the synagogues and even martyrdom (John 16:2). In the midst of such a situation, John reminds the Johannine community that the Paraclete will be with them, doing what Christ did for them, namely, *comforting* and *defending* the disciples and *prosecuting* the world (John 16:8-11).

While *παράκλητος* is the title that points to the role of the Holy Spirit as the continued presence of Christ, the title *πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας* points to the primary means by which and the purpose for which the Spirit fulfills that function—the communication of divine truth to guide believers to Christ, who is the truth. On the one hand, in light of

⁸¹Osborne suggests that the term “advocate” in English catches all the nuances of the term the best. Osborne, *Gospel of John*, 205.

⁸²G. Patrick Johnston, “The Promise of the Paraclete,” *BSac* 127 (1970): 333-45. Keener has a good summary of scholarship on the personal aspect of “paraclete,” based on the background of Jewish wisdom literature. See Keener, *Gospel of John*, 963-64.

⁸³Gary M. Burge, *The Anointed Community: The Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 30, 49.

John 8:32, 40, 45-46; 16:13-15 and 1 John 4:6, the “truth” here refers to the word of God (“your word is truth,” 17:17).⁸⁴ The Spirit’s role is to bear witness to that truth, speaking “whatever he hears” (16:13). On the other hand, the direct reference to the Spirit’s function of bearing witness to Christ in 15:26, Jesus’ claim that he is the truth in 14:6, and the use of the definite article in 16:13 (“*the* truth”) all imply that the “Spirit of truth” also refers to the Spirit of Christ, or more specifically, the Spirit who leads believers to Christ.⁸⁵

Furthermore, by revealing Christ, the Holy Spirit reveals the Father. Since Christ does not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears from the Father (14:24), and since the Holy Spirit speaks whatever he hears from Christ, the Holy Spirit ultimately reveals the Father (14:7, 17:26) and also that Christ is in the Father (14:20, 17:8). In sum, the two titles of the Spirit point to the fact that the Holy Spirit is sent by God the Father and the Son as their representative to guide believers personally back to Christ and the Father by means of bearing witness to the truth in the Word of God.

The Spirit’s work of teaching. The way the role of the Spirit is depicted in specific terms further clarifies what the titles of the Spirit adumbrate. The first term that is associated with the work of the Spirit is that of “teaching”: ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα, (“He will teach you all things,” John 14:26). The idea that the Holy Spirit teaches the knowledge of God appears in the Scripture only a few times. In the New Testament, it appears only in John 14:26 and 1 John 2:27.⁸⁶ In the Old Testament, it appears as an implication in Jeremiah 31:33-34 and in Ezekiel 36:26-27.⁸⁷

⁸⁴D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 500.

⁸⁵Keener, *Gospel of John*, 971; Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 500.

I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. . . . And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me (Jer 31:33-34).

I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes (Ezek 36:26-27).

Broadly speaking, these two Old Testament passages and John 14:26 are connected by the fact that they are describing the role of the Spirit in the new covenant. Paul alludes to Ezekiel 36 in 2 Corinthians 3:1-6, where he compares the ministry of the new covenant to that of the old. He mentions that believers are letters written by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human heart (3:3). The apostle Paul speaks of the ministry of the Spirit in the hearts of believers as a chief mark of the new covenant. The author of Hebrews mentions Jeremiah 31:31-34 in Hebrews 8:10-11, specifically in connection with the new covenant. Although the Jeremiah passage does not specifically mention the Holy Spirit, its association with the new covenant and the work of God in believers’ hearts indicates that the work of the Holy Spirit is implied. Finally, in the Farewell Discourse, John describes Christ’s sending of the Holy Spirit as a permanent feature of the new covenant: the Holy Spirit will be with believers “forever” (John 14:16).

More specifically, the two Old Testament passages confirm and shed light upon the teaching role of the Holy Spirit in the new covenant. Six specific features can be noted. First, the Holy Spirit teaches a specific body of knowledge (“my law”) in accordance with the will of the Father and the Son, and does not write (on the heart) on

⁸⁶In the New Testament, the idea that God (and not the Holy Spirit specifically) teaches appears in 1 Thess 4:9 and in John 6:45. First Thessalonians 4:9 is about God’s teaching believers to love one another and John 6:45 is about God’s drawing believers to him.

⁸⁷In the Old Testament, the idea that God (and not the Holy Spirit specifically) teaches appears in Ps 143:10, where the teaching seems to be related to helping believers do the will of God. It also appears in Job 36:22, where God is referred to as a “teacher” in the realm of general revelation.

his own (John 16:13). Second, the Spirit's teaching is a personal action of the Holy Spirit who indwells believers ("I will put my Spirit within you," John 14:17). Third, the Spirit's teaching is a positive action of "writing it on their hearts," and not just a negative action of "removing the heart of stone" (2 Cor 4:6). This refers to the internalization of the law (2 Cor 3:3) that will allow believers to know not just the letter of the law but the life-giving spirit of the law as well (2 Cor 3:7, 17-18). Fourth, the activity of teaching is a continual action, since the continual presence of the Spirit will replace the continual teaching of one person to another (1 John 2:27, "as his anointing teaches you"). Fifth, the Spirit's teaching results in a saving, personal knowledge of God ("they shall all know me," 1 John 2:20, 5:20). Sixth, the Spirit's teaching includes helping believers to walk and abide in Christ ("walk in my statutes," 1 John 2:27; 1 Thess 4:9). In short, the Spirit's teaching role is to guide believers to a personal understanding of the fulfillment of the Word of God in Christ and its implications for living according to the Word of God.

The Spirit's work of bringing to remembrance what Christ said. Similar to the role of teaching is the Spirit's role of bringing to remembrance all that Christ has said: *ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν* (John 14:26). The work of the Holy Spirit in "bringing to remembrance" (14:26) is not simply a matter of recalling the words of Jesus. In the context of the Gospel of John, remembering is specifically connected with remembering that the Scripture is fulfilled in Jesus Christ:

When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.
(John 2:22)

His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. (John 12:16)

Remembering is also associated with understanding. In John 12:16, it is used interchangeably. John implies that the disciples understood when Jesus was glorified, and they remembered that these things had been written about him.

Then, if the disciples understood when Jesus was glorified, exactly when does the ὅτε ἐδοξάσθη Ἰησοῦς refer to? From John 2:22, it is certain that the disciples remembered *after* Jesus was resurrected. But according to John 20:9, the fact of the resurrection itself did not make the disciples understand: “for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.” Peter and John were at the site of the empty tomb, but they did not yet understand.⁸⁸

There are two other pieces of evidence that, in conjunction with the evidence above, lead to the conclusion that the disciples understood that the Scripture is fulfilled in Christ when the Holy Spirit was given to them. First, according to John 7:39, the giving of the Spirit is connected with the glorification of Jesus: “οὐπω γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα ἅγιον, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐδέπω ἐδοξάσθη.” Second, John 14:26 specifically mentions that the Holy Spirit will “bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

To summarize the argument above, if the disciples remembered and understood when Jesus was glorified, and if they did not yet understand even after Jesus was resurrected, and it is the Holy Spirit who brings to remembrance what Jesus said, and the Holy Spirit is given to believers when Jesus was glorified, then it follows that the disciples understood that the Scripture was fulfilled in Christ when the Spirit was given to them.

⁸⁸The apostle John “saw and believed,” but this kind of believing is only faith based on seeing, not faith based on Scripture and its fulfillment in Jesus. See Keener, *Gospel of John*, 1184.

There are other lines of evidence within the Gospel of John that indicate that it is impossible to understand that the Scriptures are fulfilled in Christ without the help of the Holy Spirit. First, in John 3, Jesus points out to Nicodemus that he cannot understand the things regarding the kingdom of God (3:9), because he is not born of the Holy Spirit (3:3, 5). Second, in John 5:39-47, Jesus rebukes the teachers of the law for not believing him, because they fail to understand that Moses was writing about him. Jesus follows by saying that only those who are “taught by God” (6:45) will come to him. More specifically, it is through the Spirit and the words that Christ has spoken that people will come to him (6:63-65).

The Spirit’s work of guiding believers into all truth. One final work of the Spirit in the Farewell Discourse is to *ὁδηγήσει ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάση* (“guide into all the truth,” 16:13). The term *ὁδηγήσει* appears in Scripture three times in association with the role of God in teaching his people. In one passage, it appears specifically as the teaching role of the Holy Spirit:

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God! Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground! (Ps 143:10)

δίδαξόν με τοῦ ποιεῖν τὸ θέλημά σου ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ θεός μου τὸ πνεῦμά σου τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὁδηγήσει με ἐν γῆ εὐθείᾳ (LXX)

לְמַדְנִי לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנְךָ כִּי־אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי רוּחִי טוֹבָה תִּנְחַנְּנִי בְּאַרְץ מִישׁוֹר

He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. (Ps 25:9)

ὁδηγήσει πραεῖς ἐν κρίσει διδάξει πραεῖς ὁδοὺς αὐτοῦ (LXX)

יְדַרְּשׁ עֲנָוִים בְּמִשְׁפָּט וְיִלְמַד עֲנָוִים דְּרָכֶיךָ

let your right hand teach you awesome deeds! (Ps 45:4)

καὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ ὁδηγήσει σε θαυμαστῶς ἢ δεξιὰ σου (LXX)

וְתוֹרַת נִרְאֹת יְמִינְךָ

In Acts 8:31, the word *ὁδηγήσει* is used by the Ethiopian Eunuch: “How can I [understand] unless someone guides (*ὁδηγήσει*) me?” The word is used to describe the

process of teaching Scripture that leads to understanding. Since Phillip is led by the Holy Spirit from the beginning (8:26) to the end (8:39), it is likely that the Holy Spirit is guiding Philip and the Ethiopian to teach and to understand Scripture. But whether the word *ὁδηγήσει* is specifically associated with the work of the Holy Spirit here or not, the association of the word with the idea of teaching Scripture that leads to understanding provides credible evidence to interpret *ὁδηγήσει* in John 16:13 the same way.

The idea that the word *ὁδηγήσει* points to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit is made more likely by the phrase *ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάση*, which likely refers to the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ in the Word of God,⁸⁹ since the word *τῇ ἀληθείᾳ* is used within the Farewell Discourse once to refer to Jesus Christ himself (14:6) and a second time to refer to the Word of God (17:7).⁹⁰ Then, Jesus adds that the Holy Spirit will not speak on his own authority, but speak whatever he hears (16:13b)—*ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ* (“what is mine,” 16:14), which refers to the words of the Father revealed to the Son and made known to believers (15:15).⁹¹

Whatever the *τὰ ἐρχόμενα* (“things to come,” 16:13b) refers to, it cannot be some new revelation, since they are things that belong to Christ, which the Spirit declares to believers (16:14).⁹² Furthermore, the likely reason that Jesus refrains from speaking

⁸⁹Kostenberger interprets *τῇ ἀληθείᾳ* in John 16:13 as “an identifiable body of knowledge with actual propositional content.” Andreas Kostenberger, *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters: Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 398.

⁹⁰It is used a third time in the phrase, *ἐγὼ τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγω ὑμῖν* (“I tell you the truth,” 16:7).

⁹¹Keener, *Gospel of John*, 1042.

⁹²Stuhlmacher argues that these passages describe the common *process* by which the Holy Spirit aids the disciples as well as all believers in coming to a clearer understanding of the person and the work of Christ. The issue at hand is not canonization but the same pattern of the work of the Holy Spirit that can be applied both to the disciples and to future believers. See Peter Stuhlmacher, “Spiritual Remembering: John 14:26” in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honor of James D. G. Dunn*. ed. Graham N. Stanton et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 59.

about certain future events in John 16:12-13 is that without the help of the Holy Spirit, the disciples cannot understand them. When Jesus says, “you cannot bear them *now*,” it is similar to his saying “you do not understand now” in John 13:17, implying that understanding would become clearer later. This is in line with Jesus’ promise of a fuller understanding after his resurrection (2:22; 12:16; 13:7; 14:26),⁹³ that is, when the Holy Spirit comes (14:20).

In sum, the role of the Spirit in teaching, bringing to remembrance, and guiding all point to the Spirit’s role of leading believers into a fuller understanding of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ in the Word of God.

The Spirit Influences the Understanding of the Word by Ministering to the Heart

In the Farewell Discourse, the problem of the disciples is not just a lack of understanding. It is also a troubled heart (14:1, 27). Accordingly, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit not only to guide them in understanding, but also to comfort them as the “Comforter” (*παράκλητος*, KJV, ASV, 14:16, 26). The question that may be raised is whether these two functions of the Holy Spirit are independent or related. Evidence indicates that the Holy Spirit uses one to influence the other. For the purpose of this dissertation, I will only point out how the Spirit influences the understanding of the Word by his ministry to the heart.

To begin, Philip’s request to Jesus to show them the Father occurs against the background of the troubled hearts of the disciples. Although Jesus encourages them by saying that knowing him is knowing the Father (14:7), Jesus is not saying that knowledge is the only thing that the disciples need. He knows that the more rudimentary problem is

⁹³Osborne, *Gospel of John*, 234; Ignace de la Potterie and Stanislaus Lyonnet, *The Christian Lives by the Spirit*, trans. John Morris (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1971), 65.

the eventual absence of himself. The disciples are troubled because Christ will no longer be with them. Accordingly, Jesus' response is not to send the Holy Spirit merely to guide them to the truth, but to send the Spirit to be with them and *in* them (14:17). He implies that in sending the Spirit, Jesus himself will be with them so that they will not be left as orphans (14:8). It is within this broader role of the Spirit being the indwelling substitute for Jesus that his more specific function of teaching believers all things in 14:26 ought to be understood.

The Spirit's Guidance of the Application of the Word by Means of Guiding the Understanding of the Word

In the Farewell Discourse, the Holy Spirit is not seen as merely one who guides believers' understanding of the Word, with the application of the Word left up to believers. Rather, the Holy Spirit is seen as guiding the application of the Word by means of guiding understanding of the Word. In order to validate this truth, it is necessary to connect three subpoints. First, as shown above, the role of the Spirit in the Farewell Discourse is specifically related to teaching believers to know Christ in Scripture. Second, in order to see that the Spirit guides application of the Word by guiding understanding of the Word, it is necessary to prove that understanding of the Word leads to application of the Word. This point can be deduced from statements in John 15:13-15, where the application of the Word is "keeping the commandment" to love one another.

1. "You are my friends if you do what I command you"—love one another (15:13, 14).
2. Friends are those to whom Jesus has revealed what he has heard from the Father (15:15b).
3. Therefore, those to whom Jesus has revealed what he has heard from the Father love one another.

(3) Finally, it is the Holy Spirit who reveals to believers all that the Father has revealed to the Son (16:14-15). Thus, I conclude that it is by the Holy Spirit that Jesus reveals to believers what he has heard from the Father in the Word, so that believers will keep the commandment to love one another. To put it differently, the Holy Spirit guides believers to keep the commandment to love one another by guiding them to understand the Word which the Father has revealed to the Son.

To summarize these observations on the Farewell Discourse, the Holy Spirit guides believers to a greater understanding of how Scriptures are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. This specific role of guiding understanding of the Word takes place within the more general ministry of the Spirit to the heart, so that the Spirit's ministry to the heart also contributes to understanding Christ in the Word. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit guides believers to apply the Word, for example, to keep the commandment to love one another, by means of guiding them to a greater understanding of the Word of God.

1 John 2:18-29

First John 2:18-29 is another key text on the role of the Spirit in interpretation. This passage is significant because, although the length of the passage is only eight verses, and the context is different, the conclusions regarding the role of the Spirit in interpretation are the same as those made from the Farewell Discourse.

The setting of 1 John is that of the apostle John's encouraging a community of believers from which a sect has broken away (from hereon, "secessionists").⁹⁵ With the separation of the secessionists, a problem arose for the remnant church. The secessionists

⁹⁵On the authorship of the First Epistle of John, Donald Guthrie concludes, "It must be admitted that these alternative theories do not provide as adequate an explanation of the high regard in which the epistle was held as the traditional testimony [the apostle John as the author]." See Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1990), 864.

had taught false doctrines (2:22; 4:1-2) and were trying to deceive the remnant church (2:26), and the remnant church needed to know how they could be sure of what they had learned, and how they could continue to discern the truth from error. It is within this context that the apostle John mentions the role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation.

The Meaning of *χρῖσμα* (“Anointing”)

Whether this passage addresses the role of the Spirit in interpretation depends, to a degree, on how one understands the reference to *χρῖσμα* (“anointing”).⁹⁶ This word has been interpreted variously by commentators throughout history, largely due to the fact that it appears only in this passage (three times) in the entire New Testament. The most common interpretations of this word are (1) a baptismal act, (2) the Word of God, (3) the Holy Spirit. The interpretation taken here is the third one—the Holy Spirit, with a particular focus on the Spirit’s continual teaching function of the externally revealed Word.

The first position (baptismal act) was held by ancient writers and is now largely abandoned.⁹⁷ The second position, the minority view held by R. Reitzenstein and C. H. Dodd,⁹⁸ holds that *χρῖσμα* is the Word of God accepted in baptism, based on the

⁹⁶In Acts 3:14 and Rev 3:7, Jesus is given the title “the Holy One,” and in Mark 1:24, Luke 4:34, John 6:69, Jesus is called the “Holy One of God.” However, in John’s Gospel, the adjective “holy” occurs only five times, three of which refer to the Holy Spirit (John 1:33, 14:26, 20:22), one to Jesus (6:69), and one to the Father (17:11). These references suggest that John could have a combination of all three in mind. The outcome is the same: God has given the Holy Spirit to believers. Robert W. Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 150.

⁹⁷De la Potterie and Lyonnet, *Christian Lives*, 100 n. 35. De la Potterie notes that older commentaries of Belser (1906), Camerlynck (1909), and Vrede (1924) saw in *χρῖσμα* the sacrament of confirmation, but that “fortunately, almost all recent authors do not speak of an exterior rite. For it is clear that charisma is to be understood metaphorically, just as the anointing of Christ in baptism.”

⁹⁸R. Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1927), 396-97; C. H. Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946), 62. The latter remarks that the two interpretations (by the Spirit or by the word) are perhaps less different than would appear; there would be, above all, a difference of point of view. We shall arrive at an almost identical

Greek background of *χρῖσμα*.⁹⁹ The main contextual argument in favor of this view comes from the statement in 2:24 that what was heard from the beginning, namely the Word of God, dwells within believers.¹⁰⁰ The problem of this view is that there is clearly a difference between “what you have heard from the beginning” (the external Word) and “anointing,” which is more internal (already abiding within believers, 27a)¹⁰¹ and personal because it “teaches” (27b).¹⁰² Whereas the statement “the anointing abides in you” (2:27) is a declaration of an internal reality, “let what you have heard from the beginning abide” (2:24) is a command to let the external truth abide. Finally, no other New Testament passage predicates the verb “anoint” (*χρίω*) of “word” or “teaching.”¹⁰³

A more persuasive version of this position is given by the Catholic theologian Ignace de la Potterie, who holds basically to the Reitzenstein-Dodd view but modifies it as an “internal word received by faith with the help of the Spirit.”¹⁰⁴ De la Potterie adds the role of the Spirit. The problem with this view, however, is that in the end, the focus is on the anointing as the “effect of the divine action,”¹⁰⁵ and does not include the divine

conclusion at the end of our study (De la Potterie and Lyonnet, *Christian Lives*, 100). Other modern commentators include Galtier, Houlder, Lazure, and Malatesta. See Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1982), 346.

⁹⁹Daniel L. Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, The New American Commentary, vol. 38 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 118.

¹⁰⁰Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles*, 58-68; Stephen Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 51 (Waco, TX: Word, 1984), 106.

¹⁰¹This is J. Michl’s objection to Reitzenstein, as quoted in De la Potterie and Lyonnet, *Christian Lives*, 115.

¹⁰²This is R. Schnackenburg’s objection to Reitzenstein. R. Schnackenburg, *Die Johannesbriefe*, 6th ed. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1979), 152 n. 2.

¹⁰³Brown, *The Epistles of John*, 347.

¹⁰⁴De la Potterie and Lyonnet, *Christian Lives*, 114-15.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, 117.

agent or the divine action. De la Potterie even interprets the phrase, “no need that anyone should teach you,” in 2:27b as God’s Word penetrating believers so completely that a believer “bears within himself the final source of all teaching.”¹⁰⁶ That is to say, De la Potterie wants the term “anointing” to include both the Word and the role of the Spirit, but actually denies the continual role of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁷ In the final analysis, this view is virtually identical to the view of Reitzenstein and Dodd.

The third view, that *χρῖσμα* refers to the Holy Spirit, is the most common view.¹⁰⁸ Since the anointing is “from him” (1 John 2:27), that is Christ, the anointing refers to the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁹ If *χρῖσμα* is taken to mean just an effect of the Holy Spirit, it would not make sense, for it would mean, “as the internal effect teaches.” In the Gospel of John, the disciples of Christ refer to Christ as “the Holy One of God” (John 6:69), and it is Christ who sends the Spirit (John 16:7).¹¹⁰ In the context of 1 John, *χρῖσμα* refers to the Holy Spirit with an emphasis on his role of teaching believers to understand the Word of God.

A comparison of this passage with the passage in the Gospel of John reveals that “anointing” refers to the Holy Spirit with a reference to his teaching function.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 114.

¹⁰⁷For an effective critique of De la Potterie’s six supporting arguments, see Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 109-10.

¹⁰⁸In antiquity this position was held by Augustine, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Bede. Modern commentators include Balz, Bonsiren, F.-M. Braun, Bultmann, Chaine, de Ambroggi, Hauck, Hunter, Jackayya, Marshall, Michl, Mouroux, Schnackenburg, Schneider, Stott, B. Weiss, Wengst, Westcott, and Windisch. Recent commentators include Kruse, *Letters of John*; Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*.

¹⁰⁹Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles*, trans. Reginald Fuller and Ilse Fuller (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 149.

¹¹⁰Kruse, *Letters of John*, 103.

¹¹¹Brown, *Epistles of John*, 346.

You have anointing, and you know
(1 John 2:20)
The anointing abides in you
(1 John 2:27b)
Anointing teaches you about all things
(1 John 2:27b)

You know him, for he lives in you
(John 14:17)
the Spirit abides with you and in you
(John 14:17)
the Spirit will teach you all things
(John 14:26)

The anointing is the Holy Spirit who dwells in believers. And it is because of the indwelling Holy Spirit that believers know Jesus Christ as their Savior. But in order to continue to abide in Christ, believers need to remember that the Spirit abides in them, and teaches them about all things.

The use of the word *χρῖσμα* and its cognate in other passages of Scripture also indicate that the word refers to the Holy Spirit, when it is used in relation to human beings. In the Old Testament, anointing was usually performed for the purpose of consecration or the setting aside of an individual or object for a particular sacred purpose (Exod 29:7, 30:25).¹¹² In the case of human beings, anointing signified the presence of the Holy Spirit. Also, the coming of the Spirit of the Lord was connected to the anointing of the Davidic king (1 Sam 16:13) and to the anointing of a prophet (Isa 61:1). In the New Testament, the cognate of the verb “to anoint” (*χρῖσμα*) is found in several places, where it refers mostly to Jesus being anointed by God with the Spirit (Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38), and once to Paul being anointed with the Spirit (2 Cor 1:21-22).

The Personal and Continuous Teaching of the Spirit

The 1 John passage emphasizes the fact that the Spirit’s teaching role is personal and continuous.

¹¹²Akin, *1, 2, 3, John*, 117.

The teaching role of the Spirit is personal. The meaning of the statement, “his anointing teaches you,” in 2:27b depends on how it is related to the previous clause, “you have no need that anyone should teach you,” in 2:27a, connected by the conjunction “but” (ἀλλὰ). Before considering what “no need that anyone should teach” means, it helps to clarify what it does not mean. First, the clause does not refer to the unimportance of human teachers, because John himself is teaching through this letter.¹¹³ Second, it does not indicate that believers in the Johannine community do not need to have any more knowledge for salvation.¹¹⁴ The contrast in 27a (“anointing” and “anyone”) is not about the content of teaching but about the one who teaches. Third, the phrase is not a warning about following the teachings of the secessionists,¹¹⁵ although that is a valid point that is made in 2:26. The specific contrast made in this verse is between all human beings and the Holy Spirit; the term “anyone” here is comprehensive and is not limited to the secessionists.

Rather, the clause, “his anointing teaches you,” refers to the personal¹¹⁶ work of the Holy Spirit—that is, the Spirit is personally involved in guiding proper and deeper understanding of the truth. The contrasting conjunction ἀλλὰ indicates a contrast of the agency of human beings and the agency of the Holy Spirit. The context determines how the contrast ought to be understood. The context is that of the apostle John writing to a community of believers who are tempted to be deceived by the secessionists. The key

¹¹³Ibid., 125.

¹¹⁴Kruse, *Letters of John*, 108; Akin, *1, 2, 3, John*, 125. Both Kruse and Akin are right in pointing out that John is saying that additional revelation is not necessary. But this is not the point made in this verse.

¹¹⁵Kruse, *Letters of John*, 108.

¹¹⁶The term “personal” is preferred rather than the term “immediate,” since the latter term can be confusing given the fact that the Spirit uses the *medium* of Scripture, language, and human teachers.

difference between the secessionists and true believers is not in the mere words they have heard, because “what you heard from the beginning” in 2:24 implies that they have all heard the same words. Nor is it the fact that either side lacks teachers. Rather, the difference lies in that the Spirit dwells in one and not in the other. The conjunction καὶ at the beginning of 2:20 is a contrasting conjunction (“but,” ESV, KJV, NAS, NIV),¹¹⁷ so that “you have an anointing from the Holy One” is indicative of the fact that the secessionists do not have the anointing. Putting the above evidences together, John is indicating that even though both the secessionists and the Johannine community have heard the words of the gospel and both of them have teachers, only the Johannine community has true knowledge because they are taught personally by the Holy Spirit.

Another evidence for the personal teaching role of the Spirit is the parallel language between 1 John 2:20-27 and the new covenant prophecy of Jeremiah 31:33-34, which speaks of a personal work of God in the hearts of believers: “No longer shall each one teach his neighbor” in Jeremiah 31:34a parallels “you have no need that anyone teach you” in 1 John 2:27a. “For they shall all know me” in Jeremiah 31:34b parallels “you all have knowledge” in 1 John 2:20. These two parallels show that the phrase, “anointing teaches you,” in 1 John 2:27 refers to Holy Spirit’s work on believers’ hearts (Jer 31:33). That it is the Holy Spirit who writes the law on the hearts of believers in Jeremiah 31:33 is indicated by the writer in Hebrews 10:15: “The Holy Spirit also bears witness to us, for after saying, . . . I will put my laws on their hearts.”

¹¹⁷“But” is an accepted rendering (BDAG, 495) and appropriate if the phrase following it expresses something surprising and unexpected. Abbott makes the general observation that John often uses “the Greek additive conjunction in a non-Greek adversative fashion to introduce adversative clauses with a suddenness that heightens the sense of paradox.” E. A. Abbott, *Johannine Grammar* (London: Black, 1906), 2141-45.

A result of the personal teaching of the Spirit is that believers learn something that is “true and not a lie” (ἀληθές ἐστὶν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ψεῦδος). This is in contrast to the secessionists who are trying to deceive the Johannine community (2:26). The secessionists must have heard the same thing the Johannine community did, since they were together at the beginning. But whatever these secessionists believed as truth, John implies that what they believe is a lie (2:19, 21). And John defines a liar as one who denies that Jesus is the Christ (2:22). This leads to the conclusion that whatever a person knows about Christ is not true but a lie, if it does not lead to the acknowledgement that Jesus is the Christ.

But since the Johannine community confesses Jesus as Christ, they have the truth, and not a lie (2:21, ὅτι πᾶν ψεῦδος ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἔστιν). And since they have the truth and know the truth, they have the guidance of the Holy Spirit (2:20). Thus, in sum, John claims that while we cannot avoid falling into error without the teaching of the Holy Spirit, we can be sure that we will know Christ when we depend on the personal teaching of the Spirit.

The teaching role of the Spirit is continuous. While the apostle John assures the Johannine community of having the true knowledge by the personal guidance of the Holy Spirit in 2:20, it is also his purpose to encourage them to continue to be taught by the Holy Spirit. This is indicated by 2:27b: “as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.” Since ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ χρῖσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς (“as his anointing teaches you”) states an indicative (i.e., the work of the Holy Spirit), and μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ (“abide in him”) states an imperative, and the imperative is based on the indicative,¹¹⁸ the basis for continuous abiding in Christ is

¹¹⁸Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, 164-65.

the continuous teaching of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the clause καθὼς ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς (“just as it has taught you”) suggests that the Spirit’s teaching is just as necessary now to abide in Jesus Christ, as the Spirit was necessary when the community first believed.

The Spirit Guides Believers to Understand Christ in the Word of God

First John 2:20-27 also underscores the idea that the Spirit guides believers to understand the Word of God. Before making the connection between the role of the Spirit and understanding the Word, it is necessary to examine the reference to “let what you heard from the beginning abide in you” in 2:24 to establish the importance of understanding the Word. “What you heard from the beginning” indicates the apostolic announcement of the gospel that characterized the earliest days of the church’s life.¹¹⁹ John has already commended the “young men” in the Johannine community for letting the “word of God abide” (1 John 2:14). So, when he encourages the community “to let what you heard from the beginning abide in you,” he is reminding them to let the Word of God abide in them. More specifically, in 2:25, John seems to suggest that the Johannine community let the promise of eternal life abide in them.

The language of “what you heard from the beginning” also refers back to “an old commandment that you had from the beginning, the word that you have heard” in 2:7. This old commandment is “a new commandment” (2:8), referring to the commandment to love, a commandment that sums up the law, and even the Old Testament.¹²⁰ But it is significant to note that John says that this old commandment is a new commandment,

¹¹⁹Smalley, *1, 2, 3, John*, 118. Some suggest that the “beginning” in question may be the start of the readers’ lives as Christians. See A. E. Brooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912), 60.

¹²⁰Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 118; Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 60.

“which is true in him [Christ] and in you” (1 John 2:8), meaning that the command to love is first and foremost fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and therefore can also be true in believers.¹²¹ Thus, “let what you heard from the beginning abide in you” means to remember that the command to love has been fulfilled in Christ.

Having established the importance of understanding the Word as it is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, it is necessary to see how the role of the Spirit is connected to understanding this Word. That connection is found in the flow of the argument in the text: (1) Let the word of God abide in you so that you can abide in the Son (2:24). (2) The secessionists are trying to deceive you (2:26), so that the word of God will not abide in you and you will not abide in Christ. (3) But in order for the word to abide in you, you need the Holy Spirit, who already abides in you (2:27), to teach you about everything. Because John has already mentioned that the old commandment is “at the same time” a new commandment because of the true light of Jesus Christ (2:8), what is necessary is for the Holy Spirit to teach believers to understand the Word of God in light of Jesus Christ.

The Spirit Guides Application of the Word by Guiding the Understanding of the Word

In 1 John 2:27, John makes a statement about the teaching role of the Spirit which goes beyond understanding the Word to include application of the Word: “as his anointing teaches you about everything (περὶ πάντων).” As we have seen above, the Spirit teaches believers to understand the Word of God in light of Christ (2:14, 24). But “everything” would also include how to live by the Word in specific life-situations.¹²²

¹²¹Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, 101.

¹²²Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 126. Regarding περὶ πάντων Yarbrough comment that rather than ascribing omniscience to the Johannine community, “John asserts simply that they have enough understanding to honor God in the touchy situation in which they find themselves” (Yarbrough, *1-3 John*,

The question that needs to be raised for the purpose of this dissertation is what the relationship is between the role of the Spirit in guiding understanding the Word and guiding application of the Word. I will show that the Holy Spirit guides believers' application of the Word by guiding their understanding of Christ in the Word. To do this, I will (1) demonstrate that abiding in Christ depends on the continual teaching of the Holy Spirit, and (2) point out that abiding in Christ consists of knowing and obeying Christ, where obeying depends on knowing.

First, the connection between the Spirit's "teaching about everything" and the call to "abide in him [Christ]" needs to be noted. Since the call to abide in Christ is preceded by the clause "as the anointing teaches you," believers' continual abiding in Christ is seen to depend on the continual teaching of the Spirit. In other words, being taught by the Holy Spirit from the Word is a prerequisite for abiding in Christ. We have already seen that this connection is established in 2:24: If what you heard from the beginning (the Word of God) abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son.

This relationship is also stated in 1 John 5:20, which concludes the First Epistle of John: "And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ." Understanding (*διάνοιαν*),¹²³ which is granted by Christ through the Holy Spirit,¹²⁴ leads to knowing Christ,¹²⁵ which results in being "in his Son Jesus Christ."

167).

¹²³The word *διάνοιαν* refers not so much to the actual content of knowledge, but to the process of reasoning which leads to perception. See Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 306.

¹²⁴This is also implied in Heb 8:10, 10:16, where *διάνοιαν* appears in the context of quoting from Jer 31:33. See Yarbrough, *1-3 John*, 318-19.

¹²⁵Yarbrough notes that although God gives various things to Christ's followers (love, 1 John

Second, the meaning of “abiding in him [Christ]” refers first to knowing Christ, but also to obeying Christ, which results from truly knowing him. The encouragement to “abide in him” in 2:27 is repeated in 2:28. The meaning of “abide in him” is expanded in 2:29, given that the theme of having assurance at the appearance of Jesus is repeated in verse 29. In verse 28, abiding in Christ is the way to have that assurance. In verse 29, the idea of abiding in Christ is more nuanced: “If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.” This statement has two parts: (1) The basis of assurance is knowing that Christ is righteous, (2) The content of assurance is that practicing righteousness comes from being born of Christ. Although knowing Christ is the basis of assurance, practicing righteousness, which results from being born of Christ, provides believers with assurance. In short, abiding in Christ consists of both knowing Christ and practicing righteousness, both of which result from being born of Christ. Obeying Christ should follow knowing him (1 John 2:4), and walking in the way of Christ is a part of abiding in Christ (1 John 2:4-6, cf. John 15:10).

Finally, the first and the second points can be brought together: The Spirit guides everything in believers’ lives, both understanding Christ in his Word and practicing righteousness. But the way in which the Spirit guides the practice of righteousness is by guiding believers to know that Christ is righteous.

Summing up this section, evidence in 1 John 2:18-29 shows that *χρῖσμα* refers to the teaching function of the Holy Spirit that personally guides believers to grow deeper in their knowledge of Christ in the Word of God, and through that, to know how to apply the Word of God in all life situations.

3:1; the Spirit, 1 John 3:23; eternal life, 1 John 5:11), none of these divinely granted favors is of much use without a kind and degree of awareness that would facilitate reception of them. Ibid., 318.

Conclusion

The above directed exegeses have shown that evidence from the four sets of passages corroborates the following conclusion: The Holy Spirit supernaturally, personally, and continuously guides the minds and hearts of believers to understand how all Scripture is fulfilled in Jesus Christ so that believers grow in their personal knowledge of him. Furthermore, by guiding believers to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit guides believers in their application of the Word of God in various life situations.

CHAPTER 4

THEOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROLE OF THE SPIRIT IN INTERPRETATION: THE COMPREHENSIVELY PERSONAL AUTHORITATIVE VIEW

A consistent pattern of truths that emerges from the exegetical studies of the four previous passages is that the Holy Spirit is sovereign over the entire process of interpretation. “Sovereign” here means that the Holy Spirit is comprehensively and personally in control of the process. The Holy Spirit is not sovereign in an arbitrary or mechanical sense, where the Spirit causes an understanding without any association with the Father and the Son, without the role of the external word, or without the role of believers and other secondary means. Rather, the Spirit’s sovereignty includes aspects that are Trinitarian, relational, personal, and causally efficient, and he exercises his sovereignty by employing secondary means. A brief description of each of these terms is in order here. The Spirit’s sovereignty is *Trinitarian* because the Spirit guides in coordination with the will of the Father and the Son. The Spirit is *relationally* sovereign in that the Spirit’s guidance takes into account ongoing interaction with believers.¹ This also means that the Spirit *personally*, and not mechanically, guides the interpretive process. An implication is that the scriptural interpretive process is a process of live

¹This does not mean that the Spirit’s sovereignty is “conditioned” by believers’ response. Recent developments in biblical hermeneutics have incorporated the role of believers’ response (“application”) to discovering the meaning of the text without sacrificing the authority or the inerrancy of God’s Word. Jeannine Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 47-99; Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 397-415; Vern Poythress, *God-centered Biblical Interpretation* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1999), 76-77.

communication between God and believers.² In relation to Scripture, the Spirit is *causally efficient*, meaning the Spirit is the primary agent of understanding, and Scripture is the material cause (the object of understanding).³ Finally, the Spirit's sovereignty *employs secondary means* such as prayer, diligent study, exegetical tools, the church, teachers, and tradition. In this chapter, the sovereign role of the Spirit in the interpretation of Scripture will be explored in six sections, moving from broad to specific issues, each covering a different aspect of the role of the Spirit in interpretation.

At the broadest level, the sovereignty of the Spirit in interpretation has two aspects: the sovereignty of the Spirit over the proposal of the Word to believers, and the sovereignty of the Spirit over understanding the Word.⁴

²John Frame comments that “one of the most exciting things about the Spirit’s testimony is that it is an intimate, even ‘direct,’ relation between ourselves and God. Listening to Scripture is not merely a transaction between ourselves and a book, even a very extraordinary book; rather, in Scripture we meet God *Himself* [italics original].” John Frame, “The Spirit and the Scriptures,” in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 221.

³This is helpful in explaining that the two are not the same kind of cause, and that each by itself is not sufficient. In Aristotelian categories, the “material cause” is that-out-of-which something occurs, and the “efficient cause” is “the primary source of change or rest.” Yet, it needs to be kept in mind that the significant difference between an Aristotelian account of the causes and a biblical account is that Aristotelian causes explain only natural phenomena, whereas biblical understanding takes into account the divine-human relationship. John Frame explains well how the Spirit’s role is related to the objective norm: “When a norm (the Scripture) is applied to an object, this process warrants a rational conclusion. But since the sinner resists this conclusion, believers need the help of the Holy Spirit so that we can acknowledge what is rationally warranted” (Frame, “Spirit and Scriptures,” 232).

⁴The external and internal means by which the Spirit brings knowledge are known as the “external principle” and “internal principle” since the Reformation. For an excellent analysis of the various ways in which the two terms have been used by authors such as Calvin, Luther, William Whitaker, Benjamin Warfield, and Herman Bavinck, see Henk van den Belt, *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology: Truth and Trust* (Boston: Brill, 2008). In short, Calvin’s “internal principle” referred to the work of the Spirit guiding believers to understand God’s revelation in Scripture; Bavinck’s “internal principle” referred to the faith-response of believers to the “external principle” of Scripture; Warfield’s “internal principle” referred to the work of the Holy Spirit which aids human reason to understand the “external principle” of Scripture.

The Sovereignty of the Spirit over the Proposal of the Word

Under the topic of the proposal of the Word, two aspects are discussed: (1) the Spirit's sovereign guidance of the messenger, or human teaching, of the Word, and (2) the Spirit's self-limitation to the Word. In the interpretation of the Word of God, the Holy Spirit may use human teachers, in which case he sovereignly guides the teacher in order to bring about a proper interpretation of the Word. Furthermore, when the Holy Spirit brings the Word of God to believers, he binds himself to the Word, meaning he will not reveal something beyond the Word.

The Spirit Sovereignly Guides the Human Teacher

Before we can speak about how the Holy Spirit guides believers internally, it is necessary to speak about how the Spirit guides believers externally, that is, how the Spirit brings the Word to believers. The thesis in this section is that the sovereignty of the Spirit's guidance includes guidance of all the external factors of interpretation. It is not the case that believers do all the external work of opening the Bible, choosing the passage, using the right tools of interpretation, listening to a teacher and, when all the right circumstances are set, the Holy Spirit reveals the meaning of the text. First, I look at the necessity of the Spirit for the teacher in the process of teaching and bringing the message to listeners. Then, I draw some implications.

The key passages underscore the fact that the Holy Spirit guides the teachers. In 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, the apostle Paul believes that his words and proclamation are a demonstration of the Spirit. At the same time, he comes to the Corinthians in fear and trembling, being aware that the plausible words of human wisdom (2:4) can hinder the work of the Spirit. He understands that the words he imparts and the process of interpreting (*ἀνακρίνεται*) the Word are taught (*διδασκτοῖς*), or guided by the Spirit (1 Cor

2:13).⁵ In short, Paul is aware of both the dangers of human misinterpretation and the fact that the human words are the medium through which the Spirit demonstrates his truth. Paul is motivated by both of these reasons to rely wholly on the Holy Spirit.

The same is true for the apostle John. He is wary of human misinterpretation; indeed, he knows that those who have gone out from them teach a different doctrine about Jesus (1 John 2:22, 26). The secessionists are trying to deceive the Johannine community (2:26). John is so cautious about human misinterpretation that he even tells the Johannine community, “you have no need that anyone should teach you” (1 John 2:27). Yet, at the same time, John emphasizes the certainty of knowing the truth as a result of the personal teaching of the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20). He is so certain that he repeatedly assures the Johannine community that what they learn from the Spirit is no lie, but truth (2:21, 27). Like Paul, John is not denigrating human teaching by emphasizing the work of the Spirit in interpretation. Rather, he is pointing out that clear and truthful teaching is a result of dependence on the Spirit.

The preceding observations on the text point out that even the learning process from human teachers requires the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When an interpreter of Scripture learns from teachers, whether they are commentators, professors, pastors, evangelists, or friends, both the interpreter and the teacher (in case of live communication) are guided by the Holy Spirit. For this dissertation, two implications can be drawn:⁶ (1) the importance of the common commitment of the learner and the teacher to the dual

⁵See chap. 3, 88-89.

⁶It is beyond the limits of this dissertation to discuss how various aspects of a communal life impact interpretation. An excellent introduction to this subject is included in Kevin Vanhoozer’s *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

authority of Word and Spirit, (2) and the learner's attitude toward the teacher, in light of the Spirit's teaching role.

First, the communication between the learner and the teacher in the process of interpretation should be guided both externally by the standard of God's Word and internally by the Holy Spirit. Just as the apostle Paul imparted words taught by the Spirit (2:13), the Corinthian believers understood (2:12) the gospel spoken by the apostles (2:6) only by resting in the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:4-5, 12). The apostle John shows an example of what happens when a community and its teachers are not led by the Holy Spirit. John implies that those who have left the community do not have true knowledge of Jesus Christ because they are not taught by the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:19-22).

Second, in light of the Spirit's role of guiding the teacher, there are two important complementary aspects to the learner's attitude toward the teacher. On the one hand, the learner should be wary of teachers who try to deceive (2:26), those who, without the guidance of the Spirit, deny that Jesus is the Christ (2:19, 22; 4:1-6) and use "plausible words" (*πειθοῖς*, 1 Cor 2:4) to sway their audiences through manipulation. On the other hand, the learner should be mindful that the Holy Spirit uses human teachers, like the apostle John himself, to show Christ in the Word of God. John expects those who have the help of the Spirit of truth to listen to teachers like himself, because they are from God (1 John 4:6). In other words, they are the very mouthpiece of God. When teachers lead the learner to Christ from the Word by the help of the Spirit (2:21), the learner needs to believe that it is the Holy Spirit who is teaching him (2:27).

The Spirit's Self-Limitation

In proposing the Word to believers, the Holy Spirit limits himself to the external Word that he inspired.⁷ In this respect, the Holy Spirit is bound to himself. The Holy Spirit does not give new revelations. That is to say, the Spirit does not provide new information or new meaning that he has not already revealed in the Scriptures.⁸

Rather, the Spirit guides believers to understand what God has revealed in his Word. The fact that the Spirit reveals through the Word (1 Cor 2:4, 13) is so central to his work that he is called “the Spirit of truth” (John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13, 1 John 4:6), where “truth” refers both to the Word of God (John 17:17) and to Christ (John 14:6). The characteristics of the Word to which the Spirit binds himself are verbal, external, and final.

“Verbal” means that the revelation is in human words. The Holy Spirit has other non-verbal functions such as his “inner testimony of sonship” (Rom 8:16), but they only complement the Spirit’s primary use of the verbal means to save (the word of the cross, 1 Cor 1:18) and sanctify (John 17:17). The apostle Paul depends on the power of the Spirit, but he understands that the Spirit speaks through his speech and his message (ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου, 1 Cor 2:4).

The word “external” contrasts with the “internal” and refers to the Word that God has revealed in the spoken and written words before the biblical canon, and only the

⁷I use the term “external Word” to cover both the written Word (canon), and the oral form of the Word that was used before the canon was completed.

⁸Continuationists like Wayne Grudem agree with Cessationists that the Holy Spirit does not provide new revelation in the foundational, normative sense. For a comparison of views within evangelicalism, see Wayne Grudem, ed., *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996). I do not consider the Spirit’s acts of bringing to memory certain Bible passages or giving insight into the meaning or application of Scripture “new revelation” as Grenz and DeYoung and Hurty would have it. Rather, I believe that the Holy Spirit engages in these acts in order to either guide believers to understand the meaning of Scripture or guide their lives in light of such authoritative meaning.

written word since the biblical canon. The Spirit guides believers to understand the meaning in the text, rather than revealing some new information that is beyond the text. The Spirit demonstrates (*ἀποδείξει*, 1 Cor 2:4) the meaning inherent in the text, rather than speaking through some plausible words of human wisdom (1 Cor 2:4).

The word “final” refers to the definitive character of the Word of God. The new covenant is different than the old covenant in that in the new covenant we have a full objective revelation of Jesus Christ in the Word of God, whereas in the old covenant the law of Moses was insufficient (2 Cor 3:7). The new covenant is also different in that we have the Holy Spirit who guides believers to understand the full revelation of Jesus Christ in the Word of God (2 Cor 3:15-18).

The Sovereignty of the Spirit over Understanding the Word

Under the topic of understanding the Word, there are four subtopics: (1) The relationship of the Spirit’s guidance and human reason, (2) The Christocentric goal of the Spirit’s guidance, (3) The Spirit’s personal role of guiding interpretation through sanctification, (4) The Spirit’s role of guiding application of the Word by guiding understanding of the Word. Before each of these subtopics is discussed in detail in the subsequent sections, several preliminary aspects are considered first.

The Clarity of the Word Is Not Sufficient for Understanding the Word

The internal work of the Holy Spirit is necessary because the clarity of the external Word by itself is insufficient, though necessary, for believers to understand the Word.⁹ This is not to deny the clarity or the sufficiency of the external Word in and of

⁹Gregg Allison has done a comprehensive study on the Protestant doctrine of the perspicuity of Scripture, which he, after an extensive study of all the relevant passages in the Scripture and a historical

itself. The problem is with the human being. The fact that the apostle Paul commends himself to everyone's conscience in the sight of God "by the open statement of the truth" (2 Cor 4:2), and the fact that he uses the term "*light* of the gospel of Jesus Christ" implies that Paul believes in the clarity and the power of the Word of God. However, Paul also knows that the gospel is veiled to those who are blinded by the god of this world (4:3-4), so that sinners need the Holy Spirit to shine in their hearts to remove that veil, so that they can see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (4:4).

Without the Spirit's guidance, one cannot come to a saving knowledge of Christ. A related truth is that the Holy Spirit is necessary for a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. A fundamental difference between Christians and non-Christians is that Christians have received the Holy Spirit, through whom they can understand the things of God (1 Cor 2:12), whereas non-Christians have not received the Holy Spirit. A non-Christian without the guidance of the Spirit, a "natural person" (*ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος*), neither understands nor accepts the things of God (1 Cor 2:14), the word of the cross (1 Cor 1:18). Those who have been anointed, or have the Holy Spirit, have true knowledge, leading to the confession that Jesus is the Christ (2:10, 23). In contrast, those who do not have the anointing of the Holy Spirit deny that Jesus is Christ and do not know God (1 John 2:19, 22; 3:1).

Without the Spirit's guidance, believers cannot grow in the knowledge of Christ. Christians need the Holy Spirit to grow in the knowledge of Christ, for the same

study of the development of this doctrine in the post-Reformation era, reformulated to more precisely reflect biblical teachings on this doctrine. Regarding the relationship of the Holy Spirit and the doctrine of perspicuity, Allison states, "Perspicuity [of Scripture] requires a dependence on the Holy Spirit for Scripture to be grasped." Gregg Allison, "The Protestant Doctrine of the Perspicuity of Scripture: A Reformulation on the Basis of Biblical Teaching" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1995), 517.

reason that non-Christians need the Holy Spirit to come to a saving knowledge of Christ: the guidance of the Spirit is necessary to understand the Word of God. Even though the Corinthians are “mature” (1 Cor 1:8) in the sense that the Holy Spirit dwells in them permanently,¹⁰ they are immature (“infants,” 1 Cor 3:1) in the practical sense of following the “human way” (3:3), and not following the Holy Spirit (3:16). It is for this reason that Paul encourages the Corinthians to “rest in the power of God” (2:5), the Holy Spirit. In 2 Corinthians 3:15-18, Paul specifically states that believers are transformed by the Spirit from one degree of glory to another in the image of Christ, in the context of reading Scripture. Similarly, for John, the teaching of the Holy Spirit is necessary for believers to abide in Christ (1 John 2:27).

Non-Christians’ understanding of special revelation is not genuine.¹¹ A common objection to the notion that the Spirit is necessary for understanding Scripture is that non-Christians can also understand the Bible at certain levels.¹² Some of these objectors may have general revelation and common grace in mind. It is not within the scope of this dissertation to speak about the relationship between general and special revelation. However, two things need to be made clear here. First, general revelation cannot provide a redemptive knowledge of Christ.¹³ Second, whatever knowledge non-Christians may have about Scripture at any level, insofar as it deals with special

¹⁰See chap. 3, 99-102.

¹¹“Genuine” may be defined here as “true” or “effective,” as in effectively leading believers to salvation and sanctification.

¹²Daniel Fuller and others who hold to the reception-theory usually hold to this. See “Reception View” in chap 2.

¹³The emerging consensus regarding Rom 1:18-32, which was used by Aquinas and liberal theologians to justify natural theology, is that Paul did not lay the groundwork for a natural theology. See Scott, *Paul’s Way of Knowing*, 18.

revelation, Scripture does not consider it a genuine knowledge.¹⁴ For example, a non-Christian may acknowledge that the resurrection of Jesus Christ took place. But if the person is not a believer, that knowledge is not genuine because the person rejects the intended purpose of that knowledge to save.

The secessionists in the Johannine community knew many of the same facts about Christ that true believers knew since they were together before they were separated. Yet, the knowledge of these facts, for the secessionists, is a lie (2:21, 17), because without the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it results in a denial of Jesus as the Christ. The assumption behind this is that the genuineness of knowledge, in relation to special revelation, is determined not simply by the grammatical-historical level of knowledge,¹⁵ but also by the intended effect it has on the person—salvation and sanctification.¹⁶ Yet, John implies that they do not have knowledge (1 John 2:20) and explicitly states they do not know God (3:1).¹⁷ The problem of non-Christians is not just that they do not know Jesus Christ in a personal way; they do not have genuine knowledge. John denotes the knowledge that results from the teaching of the Holy Spirit as “true” and the knowledge without the teaching of the Holy Spirit as a “lie” (ψεῦδος, 2:21, 27). It is ultimately a lie when it leads to the denial that Jesus is the Christ (2:22).

¹⁴Everyone in the world has heard of the word of God in nature (Rom 10:18), which by itself is not sufficient to save, because it is not the “word of Christ” (Rom 10:17). General revelation can lead people to seek after Christ (10:20), but not save them from their sins.

¹⁵By “grammatical-historical level of knowledge,” I am referring to the external facts and not the redemptive-historical meaning connected to it.

¹⁶In this respect, the speech-act model can be useful, when properly rooted in Scripture, in explaining the difference between true and false knowledge.

¹⁷Scripture refers to a mind that knows some things about God, but in a way that is not genuine, as a “futile (ματαιότητι) mind” (Eph 4:17; Rom 1:21). People with such a mind may have factual knowledge, but are actually considered “ignorant” (ἄγνοια, Eph 4:18).

The Relationship of the Spirit's Guidance and Human Reason

One of the greatest challenges to the topic of the role of the Spirit in interpretation is the relationship between the Spirit's guidance and human reason. In spite of much confusion in this area throughout history, it is my conviction that Scripture provides clarity.

Human reason alone cannot understand God's Word. Human reason, by itself, is not sufficient to understand God's Word for two reasons. First, human reason, in its fallen state, is insufficient because it is tainted with sin, blinded by the god of this world (2 Cor 4:4). Second, human reason is insufficient because it is also finite and natural, whereas the things of God in Scripture, the gospel of Jesus Christ, is supernatural. The "natural person" (1 Cor 2:14), a person in his natural state without the help of the Holy Spirit, cannot understand the gospel, which is supernatural in its content. The gospel is the "secret and hidden wisdom of God" (1 Cor 2:7), which none of the rulers of this age has understood (1 Cor 2:8), so that it is necessary that God reveal it through the Spirit (1 Cor 2:10). The underlying premise here is that the Spirit is necessary above and beyond a normally functioning reason. The supernatural character of the content of revelation makes it impossible for a natural mind to understand it. In sum, the problem lies with both human fallenness and finitude.

The Holy Spirit guides interpretation primarily through cognition and not intuition. Although human reason by itself is not sufficient to understand God's Word, it is also true that believers cannot understand God's Word without human reason. A common misunderstanding of the guidance of the Spirit is that the Spirit functions merely by way of providing intuition, a non-cognitive flash of understanding, i.e., an

understanding of a specific body of knowledge¹⁸ without involving the process of ordinary cognition.¹⁹ This intuitive guidance of the Spirit is seen as taking place independently from the ordinary human interpretive process that involves cognition.

To be sure, the Holy Spirit does more than guide the human interpretive process. The Spirit also guides the non-cognitive aspects of understanding. For example, the Spirit shines light into the hearts of believers (2 Cor 4:6)²⁰ and bears testimony with their spirits that they are children of God (Rom 8:16).²¹ Yet, the Holy Spirit does not do less than guide the ordinary, cognitive process.²² Negatively speaking, without the Spirit, the natural person is unable to understand (γινώσκω, 1 Cor 2:14) the things of God.²³ Positively speaking, the things of God are “spiritually discerned” (πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται, 1 Cor 2:14b). The Holy Spirit shines upon the hearts and minds of believers, so that they may see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Cor 4:4-6). Seeing

¹⁸This body of knowledge, for some, is salvific knowledge; for others, non-salvific knowledge.

¹⁹Daniel Wallace calls the role of the Spirit in interpretation an “immediate, non-discursive, supra-rational testimony of the central tenets of the faith” (Wallace, section 6). Bernard Ramm refers to the Spirit’s *testimonium* as providing “an intuitive power for recognizing God and his truth” (Ramm, *The Witness of the Spirit*, 36). Erickson follows Ramm’s position, but also says that the Spirit provides a “flash of understanding.” Millard Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 52-54.

²⁰This aspect will be treated in more detail in a later section on the Spirit’s role of guiding the mind through sanctification.

²¹The classic understanding of the *testimonium* of the Holy Spirit developed by John Calvin includes (1) the Spirit’s testimony that the Scripture is the Word of God, (2) the Spirit’s assurance that the message is for us, and (3) the Spirit’s sealing of the gospel upon our hearts. Runia, *The Hermeneutics of the Reformers*, 145-46. Although Calvin identified these functions, he did not separate the non-cognitive role of the Spirit from the cognitive role of the Spirit. Werner Krusche shows this in *Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957), 216ff.

²²See chap. 3, 91-93.

²³Craig Keener has done a comprehensive study of the words γινώσκω and οἶδα in the Johannine literature and has concluded that the two terms are interchangeable and that both include the meanings “recognition” and “realization” (i.e., cognitive components). See Keener, *Gospel of John*, 243-46.

the light of the gospel entails understanding. The Spirit's works of teaching, bringing to remembrance, and guiding all indicate the Spirit's guidance of cognition (John 14:26, 16:13).

The Spirit's guidance does not provide a self-sufficient interpretive capacity to believers. The previous statement leads to the question: Does the Holy Spirit grant believers a self-sufficient interpretive capacity, that is, a human ability that operates on its own without further guidance from the Holy Spirit? In other words, does the Holy Spirit work like a deistic God who provides the gift of thinking and leaves believers to use that gift on their own?

All believers who have received the indwelling Spirit ("the anointing") have the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ (1 John 2:20). This knowledge will never be lost. All believers also have the "mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16), the wisdom of God in Jesus Christ, by which they are able to discern all things (1 Cor 2:15). However, neither the "anointing" nor the "mind of Christ" is a self-sufficient interpretive capacity within believers. The anointing is the Holy Spirit who guides believers to understand the wisdom of God in Jesus Christ and to interpret all things in light of that wisdom.

The fact that the Spirit's guidance does not provide a self-sufficient interpretive capacity to believers is indicated by the fact that all believers require continual guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is as (*καθάπερ*) the Spirit continually guides that believers are able to continue to behold the glory of Christ and be transformed (2 Cor 3:18).²⁴ And it is as (*ὡς*) the anointing continue to teach believers that they can abide in Christ (1 John 2:27).

²⁴See chap. 3, 115-16.

This does not mean that the Holy Spirit is some impersonal force that believers draw power from at will. The Holy Spirit is a divine person whom believers need to “rest in” (1 Cor 2:5, ESV, *μὴ ᾗ ἐν*) to be guided to the truth (John 16:13). Believers are called to grow in their relationship with the Holy Spirit as *ἄλλον παράκλητον*, as the continued presence of Christ.

Nor does it mean that believers’ minds are empty of any knowledge or discernment until the Holy Spirit guides them. As believers grow in Christ, the knowledge and discernment of truths in Scripture accumulate for believers. Thus, for example, people who have a proper training in the interpretive skills of Scripture will have a certain advantage over those who do not have the training, assuming that even that training is ultimately guided by the Spirit. But whenever those who had the training in the interpretive skills engage in the act of interpretation of Scripture, they need the guidance of the Spirit just as much as those who do not have the training. The Holy Spirit will use the knowledge and the discernment already learned and is in believers to guide them further into the truth.

The Holy Spirit removes sin’s effects from the mind. The two reasons for the insufficiency of reason mentioned above, fallenness and finitude, correspond to two functions of the Holy Spirit related to reason: restoration and guidance. First, the Spirit restores the function of reason. The veils of the hardened minds (2 Cor 3:14) are removed by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:16-17). A specific obstacle to unbelievers is the “god of this world” (2 Cor 4:4). The underlying problem with lack of understanding the Word of God is not simply that the wisdom of God is supernatural, but also that believers follow the wisdom of the world (1 Cor 3:3). God promises to destroy (*ἀπολῶ*) and thwart (*ἀθετήσω*) (1 Cor 1:19) such wisdom. He seek to shame the wise and the strong through the power of the word of the cross (1 Cor 1:27), which is revealed by the Spirit (1 Cor

2:10). In short, the work of the Spirit in the minds of believers involves destroying the wisdom of the world and removing hardened hearts.

The Holy Spirit guides the mind supernaturally. The second function of the Spirit in relation to reason is providing a supernatural light by which the reason is able to grasp supernatural truth. While this function of the Spirit is inseparable from his function of removing sin's effect, it needs to be distinguished. Human reason, even when restored to its proper function, cannot know supernatural truth. The *human* mind (*καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου*, ESV) cannot know the things of God (1 Cor 2:9-10). The “Natural man” (*ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος*), that is, man in his natural state, cannot understand the things of God (1 Cor 2:14).²⁵ By contrast, the spiritual person can discern (*πνευματικὸς ἀνακρίνει*) the supernatural things of God, because that person has the supernatural help of the Holy Spirit. The contrast is between the natural and the supernatural.

Supernatural truth can be known only when the supernatural light of the Holy Spirit shines in the heart (2 Cor 4:6). This light not only removes the barrier to seeing the glory of Christ (4:4), but “gives” light (*πρὸς φωτισμὸν*, 4:6), a supernatural guidance by which the gospel is understood. This “light” in 2 Corinthians 4:6 is deliberately set against the backdrop of the light in Genesis 1:3, so that it implies that the light is supernatural. This light refers to the continual guidance of the Spirit, since it leads to a continual growth (2 Cor 3:18) in understanding the light of the gospel (4:4).

In sum, the Holy Spirit not only removes barriers to a proper understanding of the Scripture, but provides supernatural guidance by which believers can grasp the supernatural wisdom of God in Jesus Christ in the Word of God.

²⁵For more evidence from 1 Cor 2, see chap. 3, 96-97.

The Christocentric Goal of the Spirit's Guidance

In this section, I show that the specific goals of the role of the Spirit in the interpretation of Scripture are (1) to guide believers to examine the texts to see how they are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and (2) to teach them to have a personal knowledge of Jesus. The two aspects are complementary but distinct. The former is more objective, since it involves understanding how individual passages are fulfilled in Christ. The latter is more personal in the sense that the Holy Spirit shows us how we as believers benefit from such fulfillment of the Word in Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit guides believers to examine the word to understand its fulfillment in Christ. The specific way in which the Holy Spirit guides believers to interpret the Word of God is by guiding the person to examine the Word to understand how it is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. This is expected because this is the way Jesus interpreted Scripture (Luke 24:27, 44), and he sent his Spirit as his continued presence among believers. In the Gospel of John, the role of the Spirit of bringing to remembrance what Christ said (John 14:26) is closely associated with guiding believers to know how the Scripture is fulfilled in Jesus Christ (John 2:22; 12:16). It is fitting that the act of remembering is used to describe this aspect of the role of the Spirit because the process of understanding how a passage in Scripture is fulfilled in Christ requires a great deal of remembering, recalling facts from memory and arranging them in certain sequence. Furthermore, since understanding how various passages are fulfilled in Christ involves the complex task of understanding symbols and types and their fulfillment in Christ at various levels, believers have a good reason to rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit.²⁶

²⁶Augustine, in his *De Doctrina Christiana*, has famously noted that interpreting figures (types, symbols) is one of the most difficult aspects of the interpretation of Scripture. Augustine, *On Christian*

A corollary to the above truth is that the guidance of the Holy Spirit is concurrent with believers' act of searching the Scripture to find its fulfillment in Christ. By the help of the Spirit, believers are able to discern (*ἀνακρίνεται*, 1 Cor 2:14b) the wisdom of God in Jesus Christ in the Word. As believers search the Scripture in reliance on the Holy Spirit, the Spirit demonstrates (*ἀποδείξει*, 1 Cor 2:4) the wisdom of God in Jesus Christ in the details of the text. The significance of the concurrence is twofold: (1) the Holy Spirit's work is intimately involved with guiding every aspect of the study of Scripture, and (2) believers cannot expect to receive the Spirit's assistance without faithfully exercising their minds to the study of Scripture.

The Holy Spirit teaches believers to have a personal knowledge of Christ.

Even if people understand how the passage is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, it still remains for them to know how they benefit from that truth. For this reason, believers also need the help of the Holy Spirit to have a personal understanding of the fulfillment of the Word in Christ. The Scripture describes this aspect of the Holy Spirit's role with the term "teaching" (*διδάσκω*, John 14:26, 1 John 2:27). "Teaching" entails (1) the Spirit's guidance in all things, and (2) the Spirit's work of making the Word come alive in the hearts of believers. The first aspect is addressed later in the section on the Spirit's role in guiding application of the Word. This section will focus on the second aspect.

Those who are taught by the Holy Spirit confess Jesus as the Christ (1 John 2:23, cf. John 6:45) and abide in Christ (1 John 2:27), which is to grow in the personal knowledge of Jesus Christ.²⁷ But abiding in Christ also results in bearing fruit (John 15:4)

Doctrine, in *Ante and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, ed. Philip Schaff, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, Book 3, chap. 5-9 [on-line]; accessed 10 January 2012; available from <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/augustine/doctrine.toc.html>; Internet.

²⁷See chap. 3, 138-39.

and keeping his commandments (1 John 2:6). Thus, to be taught by the Holy Spirit is to grow in the personal knowledge of Christ that leads to keeping the law of God. Such a role of the Spirit is especially noted in connection with the role of the Spirit in the new covenant (2 Cor 3:3, Jer 31:33-34; Ezek 36:26-27), in contrast to the old covenant, where mere adherence to the law without the Spirit leads to condemnation (2 Cor 3:9).

Some may consider this personal knowledge of Christ a part of application. I do not. I use the term “application” to refer to the act of taking specific teachings of Scripture to bear upon specific life-situations. Abiding in Christ, personal knowledge of Christ, is a result of the Spirit’s writing of the law in the heart of believers. In sum, the Holy Spirit guides believers to search Scripture for its fulfillment in Christ and to achieve effective understanding that results in personal knowledge of Christ.

The Spirit’s Personal Role in Guiding Interpretation through Sanctification

As described in chapter 2, one of the prominent debates in recent years in evangelicalism regarding the role of the Spirit in interpretation has been whether the Spirit affects interpretation primarily by influencing the mind or the heart, where “mind” (*νοῦς, διανοία*) refers to the human reasoning faculty,²⁸ and “heart” (*καρδία*) refers to the center of the human being (Prov 4:23; Jer 31:33; 1 Sam 16:7), usually associated with affection and volition.²⁹ An analysis of these views is deferred to the next chapter. It is sufficient for now to point out that the entire debate is based on a false dichotomy. We have already seen in the section above how the Spirit guides the mind. Now, we turn to evidences from the key passages on how the Spirit influences the mind through the heart.

²⁸Νοῦς is defined as “the understanding, the mind as the faculty of thinking.” (BDAG, 544).

²⁹Καρδία is defined as “the seat of physical, spiritual, and mental life.” (BDAG, 403).

The Spirit influences the mind through the heart. Both in the Farewell Discourse and in 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:6 we find that what hinders believers from fully understanding the gospel are problems of both the heart and the mind. In the Farewell Discourse, the problem is with the fear in the heart (14:1, 27), and in the 2 Corinthians passage, the problem is with sin in the heart (2 Cor 3:15). In either case, the Holy Spirit is given to believers to overcome their heart problems, just as the Holy Spirit is given to them to guide their minds. The role of the Holy Spirit is to comfort them (John 14:18) and to shine light into the heart (2 Cor 4:6). As the Holy Spirit ministers to their hearts, believers will know that Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Jesus (John 14:20), and see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:4).³⁰

The Spirit's work on the mind through the heart is personal. An objection regarding the Spirit's influence of the mind through the heart by those who hold to the reception view is that the work of the Spirit on the mind is "indirect,"³¹ meaning that the Spirit does not personally guide the process of interpretation. The assumption of the receptionists is that the heart is the field of operation for the Spirit, whereas the mind is not. Against this position, I show that the Spirit's influence of the mind through the heart is a personal guidance.

In both the Farewell Discourse and the 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:6 passage, there is no sense that the Spirit first shines the light in the heart and the person understands the gospel on his own. There is no suggestion of believers' independence from the guidance

³⁰Another clear expression regarding the Spirit's guidance of understanding by means of the guidance of the heart is found in Eph 3:15-19. The Holy Spirit strengthens the inner being ("heart"), so that, grounded in the love of Christ, believers gain a greater comprehension of the love of Christ. The Holy Spirit helps believers to have faith in Christ's love, so that having experienced the love of Christ, they may continue to grow in their understanding of the love of Christ.

³¹See chap. 2, 67-68.

of the Spirit in understanding the gospel. In both passages, it is assumed that the effect of the Spirit's work in the mind through the heart is the Spirit's work. In that day, when the Spirit comes, believers will not be left as orphans (John 14:18), and they also will know that Jesus is in the Father and the Father in Jesus (John 14:20). In 2 Corinthians 3:15-16 and in 4:4-6, it is implied that the Spirit's removal of the veil of the heart or shining in the heart removes the hardness of the mind or the blindness of the mind. When the light is shone in the heart, it results in the light of knowledge. In other words, it is assumed that the resulting knowledge is the work of the Holy Spirit working through the heart.

The Spirit's Role of Guiding Application of the Word by Guiding the Understanding of the Word

A final aspect of the role of the Spirit in interpretation is that of guiding the application of the Word by means of guiding understanding of the Word. The significance of the topic of application of the Word for this dissertation is twofold. First, it is important to distinguish clearly between the meaning and application of the Word. The importance of keeping meaning distinct from application is to guard against the errors of those who, like Grenz and DeYoung and Hurty, tend to blur the distinction between the two.³² Second, it is important to show that the Spirit guides application by guiding the understanding of the meaning of the Word. This point guards against the errors of those who tend to attribute either understanding meaning or application to the work of the Spirit. This point also guards against the error of thinking that the work of the Spirit guides application of the Word independently from guiding understanding of the Word.

³²See chap. 2, 36-39, 41-45.

Application is distinct from meaning. It is first necessary to define the way “application” is used in this dissertation, especially in its relationship with meaning, since different writers use the term differently. The difference between meaning and application is not the difference between meaning then and meaning now.³³ Nor is it a difference between objective meaning and the belief in that meaning.³⁴ It is also inappropriate to say that “meaning is application and application is meaning.”³⁵ Meaning is the normative truth of Scripture for all times. It is the authorial intent, both human and divine. Application, in contrast, is finding how a particular meaning in Scripture applies to particular people in particular situations.³⁶ It is also believers’ total response to the word understood in a particular life context. That includes obedience to the law and bearing fruit, both inner and outer.

The passages that show that meaning is distinct from application are passages which indicate the role of the Spirit in revealing a predetermined meaning in the Word, not insights or guidance that depend on particular life contexts of believers. In 1 Corinthians 2:10, the apostle Paul speaks of the Spirit of God guiding understanding of the things of God (1 Cor 2:10), which refers to hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory (2:7). This wisdom refers back to Christ (2:24) and

³³This is the view of Walter Kaiser in *Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 32.

³⁴Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation*, 48.

³⁵This claim is made by John Frame on his Christian version of Wittgenstein’s idea where the “meaning of an expression is its God-ordained use” (John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1987], 97-98). The weakness of using such a definition of “meaning” is that it does not distinguish the God-ordained use as an objective basis of revelation and the God-ordained use of that objective meaning in specific situations. Although Frame says that the text is the objective basis of theology and that he is even willing to accept the distinction between meaning and application, Frame’s claim above can be misleading. See Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 97-98.

³⁶Here, Frame’s “existential” and “situational” aspects of the triperspectival meaning (the third being the normative aspect) would correspond to the application.

more specifically to the Word of the cross (2:18). In the Farewell Discourse, as seen above, the role of the Spirit in bringing to remembrance, teaching, and guiding are all related to the Spirit's work of showing how the Scriptures are fulfilled in Christ. In 2 Corinthians 4:4, the Spirit guides believers to see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. In sum, these passages show that the Holy Spirit guides believers in understanding predetermined meaning in the Word of God—the word of the cross, the gospel, and how the Scripture is fulfilled in Christ.

The Spirit guides application by guiding understanding of the Word.

Although meaning is distinct from application, and the Holy Spirit guides the understanding of predetermined meaning in the Word of God, the Spirit does not leave the application of the Word to believers. He guides their application specifically by guiding them to a deeper understanding of the predetermined meaning of Christ in the Word. That is not to say that the Spirit does not guide believers to apply the Word of God any other way, such as guiding believers in what to say to persecutors (Luke 12:12), or in encouraging other believers with songs that are Word-based (Eph 5:18-19). The primary method, however, by which the Holy Spirit guides believers in their application of the Word is by means of guiding believers in their understanding of Christ in the Word.

Fundamentally speaking, application is discernment of all things in light of Christ, discerning “all things” (πάντα) by the “mind of Christ” (2:15-16). Accordingly, the Holy Spirit teaches believers to know Christ so that they may practice righteousness (1 John 2:27-29). The Holy Spirit guides believers to know Jesus Christ, so that they may bear fruit (John 14:26, 15:15-16). More specifically, as application has to do with various life-situations (“all things,” 1 Cor 2:15; “everything,” 1 John 2:27), the key passages reveal various ways in which the Holy Spirit guides the application process. The Spirit guides believers to (1) discern the spiritual condition of other people (1 Cor

2:15, 3:1), (2) bear witness to the world (John 15:26-27), (3) keep the commandment to love one another (1 John 2:7-11, 19), and (4) practice righteousness (1 John 2:27-29).

Summary

The role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation is personal and comprehensive, from guiding every aspect of the proposal of the Word to believers, including guiding human teachers through whom one learns to interpret the Word of God, to every aspect of the interpretation of the Word itself. The Spirit removes the effect of sin from the mind and supernaturally guides the mind to grasp the supernatural wisdom of God in Jesus Christ in the Word of God. He does this more specifically by teaching, bringing to remembrance, and guiding believers to see how all of Scripture is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The Spirit also influences the mind by ministering to the hearts of believers. Finally, the Spirit guides believers to keep the Word of God and bear fruit in every area of life, by means of guiding them to a more personal knowledge of Jesus Christ through the Word of God.

CHAPTER 5

A CRITIQUE OF THE FOUR VIEWS AND ANTICIPATED OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

In this chapter, I provide a biblical and theological critique of each of the four representative views explained in chapter 2. Each section concludes with anticipated objections and answers to these objections, in view of demonstrating how the CPA view provides a better model of understanding the role of the Spirit in interpretation.

The Postconservative View

Biblical Critique

Not much can be said by way of critiquing Grenz' exegesis, since there is none. However, since Grenz has a specific interpretation of the illumination passages (Job 32:8, 1 John 5:7, 11, 1 Cor 2:6-16, 2 Cor 3:14-17, John 14:26), a few words are in order. Grenz claims that these passages teach that the Spirit provides "further light" or new information that arises from the interaction between the Word and the context of the community in which the Spirit works. My own exegesis of these passages (with the exception of Job) in chapter 3 has shown that the Holy Spirit guides the application of the Word to life, but that there is a clear distinction between the inspired Word and the context in which the Word is applied.¹ Grenz blurs such a distinction. I have shown, for example, that ἀποκάλυψεν in 1 Corinthians 2:10 refers to neither the Spirit's external revelation nor the Spirit's immediate revelation (internal revelation without reference to

¹See chap. 3, 98-99, 129-30, 140-41.

external revelation), but the Spirit's guidance of the mind to understand (2:12) the external revelation, which was once hidden but now revealed (2:1, 7) in the "word of the cross" (1:18) and imparted by the apostolic proclamation (2:4).² Furthermore, the "spiritual" person's ability to "judge all things" in 1 Corinthians 2:15 is seen as the Spirit-guided discernment of all things in light of the cross of Christ.³ This discernment takes place as the Spirit forms and continues to grow the "mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16, cf. 2:2).⁴ The "mind of Christ" refers both to the wisdom of God (2:7), which is the gospel itself (Col 1:26-27), and the Spirit-guided discernment. Thus, "all things" (John 14:26, 16:13, 1 John 2:27) refers to all life contexts in which the Spirit provides a gospel-centered discernment, and not new revelation that arises out of new life-contexts.⁵

Furthermore, I have shown that the Spirit guides believers to a deeper understanding of Christ only by means of demonstrating (2:4) the meaning that lies in the apostolic Word (2:4a) through a human process of interpretation (2:13), which involves the unlocking of meaning in the Word, as well as searching (2:14, cf. Acts 17:11) the Word that is imparted to believers (2:13).⁶

On 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Grenz offers an interpretation that blurs the line between inspiration and illumination. He applies a "rare" usage of *θεόπνευστος* as an allusion to God's breathing into Adam, thereby suggesting that the Scripture becomes useful not at the moment of its writing (as Adam was not alive until he was breathed), but

²See chap. 3, 91.

³See chap. 3, 98-99.

⁴See chap. 3, 98.

⁵See chap. 3, 99.

⁶See chap. 3, 88-89.

only when the Spirit breathes life into the community of believers and causes them to recognize its usefulness (ὠφέλιμος). By placing the Holy Spirit and his influence on the community above the usefulness of Scripture, Grenz minimizes the objective authority of Scripture. This goes against the near-consensus of current scholarship on this passage that the usefulness of Scripture flows out of inspiration of Scripture.⁷

DeYoung and Hurty provide more exegetical work. They are correct to interpret “revealed” in 1 Corinthians 2:10 and “taught by the Spirit” in 1 Corinthians 2:13 as referring to the immediate, direct work of the Spirit, that is, in the sense that the Spirit is personally present to guide the reader. However, they also claim that these two verses support the idea that the Spirit is providing a new revelation, that is, revelation apart from written Scripture. Their exegesis is faulty on several counts here. First, DeYoung and Hurty assume that Paul is not talking about Scripture because he did not mention “written Scripture.” But Paul does have the external, authoritative Word in mind in 1:18, (ὁ λόγος, “the Word”) and in 2:4, where ὁ λόγος καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά (“speech and message,” ESV) represent “an inclusive way of using words for apostolic activity,”⁸ which includes both the form and the content. Furthermore, an examination of several words (ἀποδείξει, 2:4; συγκρίνοντες, 2:13; ἀνακρίνεται, 2:14) that Paul used to describe the role of the Spirit in interpretation has shown that the Spirit’s guidance is associated with the unfolding of the Word.⁹ Second, contra DeYoung and Hurty, if Paul is referring to the Spirit’s guidance in interpreting in 2:12 and 2:14, it is not likely that Paul is referring to the Spirit’s role of giving new revelations in 2:10 and 2:13. The structure and the flow of argument in 1

⁷William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (Dallas: Word, 2002), 569; Walter L. Liefeld, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 280.

⁸Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (Allen, TX: Benziger, 1991), 231.

⁹See chap. 3, 89.

Corinthians 2:6-16 is too coherent to allow for such an incoherent flow of thought. Third, DeYoung and Hurty argue that Paul was not referring to a revealed Word because Paul was referring to “a secret and hidden wisdom of God” (2:7), which God supposedly revealed immediately to him. They miss the fact that Paul is here using eschatological language (“mystery.” 2:1), which refers to the definitive revelation in Christ.¹⁰

DeYoung and Hurty also argue that the teaching of the Spirit in 1 John 2:27 refers to the Spirit’s teaching beyond the Scripture since, by the time of the writing of 1 John, much of the text of Scripture would have been completed. Here, DeYoung and Hurty falsely assume that if the written Word is completed and the Spirit is said to continue to teach, it implies that the Spirit teaches new information. They have overlooked the biblical data that suggests that the Spirit’s teaching ministry includes effecting a deeper understanding of passages of Scripture, particularly as they are related to Christ.¹¹

Theological Critique

The postconservative view has the strength of pointing out some of the weaknesses of the conservative views. Although at times it is inaccurate in its understanding of the conservative views,¹² the postconservative view has properly alerted the evangelical world regarding the tendency of the conservative views to adopt the modernistic assumption that reason alone can sufficiently interpret Scripture.¹³

¹⁰See chap. 3, 87-88.

¹¹See, chap. 3, 138-40.

¹²For the ways in which Grenz has seriously misrepresented traditional evangelicalism, see D. A. Carson, “Domesticating the Gospel: A Review of Grenz’s *Renewing the Center*,” in *Reclaiming the Center*, ed. Millard Erickson et al. (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004), 33-58.

¹³As examples of this problem, Grenz cites Charles Hodge for nineteenth-century and Gordon

However, the postconservatives' effort to overcome such modernistic tendencies is marred by an overemphasis on the role of the Spirit at the expense of the objective authority of Scripture. Three specific problems stand out. First, the subjective authority of the Holy Spirit is placed above the objective authority of Scripture. Grenz recognizes the unique status of the Spirit's revelation to the apostles, but the Scripture is not an absolute, objective, self-authenticating, authoritative standard of truth. The objective authority of Scripture is effective only when the Holy Spirit causes believers to recognize it. Grenz undermines the objective character of Scripture by blurring the distinction between inspiration and illumination.¹⁴

Second, since Grenz does not fully acknowledge the objective authority of Scripture, he does not limit the source of revelation to Scripture, but he also includes tradition and culture.¹⁵ Although Grenz speaks of Scripture as the "norming norm,"¹⁶ he does not understand it in the classical sense of that phrase, which means that Scripture is the absolute standard.¹⁷ Grenz also misunderstands the Reformers' understanding of *sola scriptura*, which never meant *nuda scriptura* ("mere Scripture").¹⁸ The Reformers had a keen sense of the importance of history and tradition and liberally used them in their

Lewis and Bruce Demarest for contemporary evangelical theologians. Stanley Grenz and John Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 37.

¹⁴See chap. 2, 36-39.

¹⁵See chap. 2, 36-37.

¹⁶Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 65.

¹⁷See, chap. 2, 37.

¹⁸Keith Mathison properly points out that the doctrine of *sola Scriptura* was wrongly characterized in terms of a conflict between Scripture and tradition, and that it was actually a debate involving different concepts of tradition. For an overview of the historical context of the debate regarding *sola scriptura*, see Keith Mathison, "Sola Scriptura," in *After Darkness, Light*, ed. R. C. Sproul, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2003), 32-40.

discovery of the biblical truth. But the Reformers never blurred the distinction between the absolute authority of Scripture from the secondary authority of the church or tradition.¹⁹ The practical problem of including tradition and culture as sources of revelation is that then there is no absolute standard by which to adjudicate various interpretations or voices of the Spirit.

Third, according to Grenz, meaning is created or “constructed” on the biblical narrative.²⁰ Since ultimate meaning is not in the text but in the unrealized future, believers are called to construct the eschatological world with the help of the Holy Spirit. Grenz is suggesting that the “further light” which the Spirit pours forth corresponds to the social construction of meaning.²¹ The practical result of this view is that what started out as a claim for the sovereign role of the Spirit in interpretation ends with a claim for the creative power of the community. Grenz has essentially created another form of foundationalism—a rational power in the hands of the local community.

As for DeYoung and Hurty, although they make the distinction between “normative” (Canon of Scripture) and “authoritative” truth (new revealed truths), there are mainly two problems. First, DeYoung and Hurty use words that are at least prone to misunderstanding, if not altogether unbiblical. The most questionable phrase they use is that the Spirit reveals “apart from the written text.”²² However one reads this, it clearly breaches the “Protestant principle of authority” in the union of the Spirit and the Word.

¹⁹Ibid., 34-35.

²⁰See chap. 2, 40.

²¹Stanley Grenz, “The Spirit and the Word: The World-Creating Function of the Text,” *Theology Today* 57 (2000): 368-69.

²²James DeYoung and Sarah L. Hurty, *Beyond the Obvious: Discover the Deeper Meaning of Scripture* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 132.

Another example is the use of the words “illumination” and “new revelation.” DeYoung and Hurty assign the word “illumination” only to the Spirit’s work of guiding the interpretation of written Scripture and call the Spirit’s work of guiding application and deeper understanding of the Scripture “new revelation.” In contrast, I have shown in the exegesis of the four key passages that interpretation and application should be distinguished, although both are properly the work of the Spirit’s illumination.²³

Second, even more seriously, DeYoung and Hurty confuse the categories of external revelation and internal revelation of the Holy Spirit. DeYoung and Hurty claim that the “new revelations” are “authoritative” because “all communication from the Spirit, whether dealing with specific personal and community concerns or things we consider truth, is authoritative.”²⁴ They later add that these new revelations are “almost as authoritative as the words of Scripture itself.”²⁵ The problem with this kind of language of “almost as authoritative” is that it places the authority of “new revelations” on a sliding scale with Scripture. Furthermore, it is one thing to say that the Spirit himself, who guides interpretation, is authoritative; but it is another thing to claim that non-canonical revelations are “authoritative.”

Anticipated Objections

That there is no objective meaning in Scripture. An anticipated objection from the postconservatives toward the CPA view may be that there cannot be an objective meaning in Scripture, i.e., an absolute meaning that is fully revealed. Before answering the objection, it is necessary to summarize briefly the basis of this objection.

²³See chap. 3, 98-99, 120-30, 139-40.

²⁴DeYoung and Hurty, *Beyond the Obvious*, 144.

²⁵Ibid., 145.

Grenz denies the existence of objective meaning in Scripture both from his view of truth and his view of the role of the Spirit in understanding that truth. From the perspective of truth, Grenz rejects the correspondence theory of truth, which says that assertions correspond to some reality in the world²⁶ and the modern foundationalistic assumption that there are some rational “first principles” which serve as foundations of other beliefs.²⁷ Instead, he accepts the coherentist view of truth, which says that the justification for a belief lies in its “fit” with other held beliefs.²⁸ But Grenz’s version of coherentism is not the coherence of objective biblical truths, but a coherentism with a pragmatic twist, where what coheres is how a particular community of believers understands the truth at a particular time and place in history.²⁹ Furthermore, truth emerges not merely from understanding Scripture but also from understanding how God reveals himself in general history.³⁰ Inasmuch as truth is tied to general history, absolute truth lies not in the present, but in the future, so that no one can be certain of the truth until the end of time.³¹

And it is Grenz’s rejection of the correspondence theory of truth and his denial of the existence of absolute truth that leads him to adopt the role of the Spirit as speaking not only through Scripture but also in the community and culture in such a way that believers come to know the truth only in the conversation between Scripture and

²⁶Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 38.

²⁷Ibid., 39, 54.

²⁸Ibid., 38.

²⁹Ibid., 42.

³⁰Ibid., 44.

³¹Ibid.

culture/tradition.³² Even though Grenz says that culture/community is the “context” of the Spirit’s speaking,³³ he does not distinguish between the voice of the Spirit in Scripture and the voice of the Spirit in culture/tradition.³⁴ In Barthian fashion, what unites the two is Christ, who is the Word: “In short, we listen for the voice of the Spirit, who speaks the Word through the word within the particularity of the hearer’s context and who thereby can speak in all things, albeit always according to the Word, who is Christ.”³⁵ In sum, Grenz’s excuse for advocating the Spirit’s role of speaking in culture is his rejection of the modernist theory of correspondence and its belief in objective meaning.

The CPA view’s response to this objection is that Grenz is reacting to the modernist problem, rather than beginning with a biblical understanding of truth. If Christ has fully revealed God, and Scripture is God’s authoritative revelation, then biblical truths fully correspond to God’s revelation in Christ. Furthermore, if all revelation is fulfilled in Christ, then all revelation coheres in Christ. And because all truth in Scripture is fulfilled in Christ, all truth in Scripture also coheres with one another. In other words, by rejecting the modernist version of the correspondence theory, one does not have to abandon, as Grenz does, the correspondence of biblical truth to God’s revelation in Christ, or the coherence of objective biblical truth.

³²Stanley Grenz, “Articulating the Christian Belief-Mosaic: Theological Method after the Demise of Foundationalism,” in *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method*, ed. John G. Stackhouse, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 127-29.

³³Ibid., 127.

³⁴Grenz says that they are “one moment” (ibid., 128).

³⁵Ibid., 129.

Such a biblical version of the correspondence and coherence theories is also different from the secular version in that it does not assume that unaided reason can understand the way in which biblical truths correspond to God's revelation in Christ or the way in which all biblical data cohere in Christ. In fact, it is because of the perfect, objective correspondence of biblical truth to Christ and the coherence of all truth in Christ in Scripture that the work of the Holy Spirit is so necessary. The work of the Spirit is necessary because of the great gap between the perfect objective revelation of all things in Christ and the noetic effects of sin that hinder human understanding of it. In contrast to Grenz's view, then, the objectivity of revelation is not a hindrance to the work of the Spirit, but rather its basis.

A second response to the objection is that, in affirming the necessity of the Spirit's work of speaking in the specific context of communities, it is not necessary to deny the complete and objective revelation of Scripture. Grenz makes the false assumption that knowing the meaning of Scripture is central yet partial and must be complemented by the voice of the Spirit within the community. Grenz blurs the distinction between meaning and application. He does this, in part, to overcome the modernist mentality to be satisfied in having discovered the truth in Scripture and leaving the application to individuals. However, from the CPA's point of view, the help of the Spirit in application is needed not simply because believers are satisfied with only having a cognitive understanding of biblical truth, but also because it is only by growing in the wisdom of God in Jesus Christ in the Word of God that believers bear fruit in their lives.

Reception View

Biblical Critique

The chief problem of Daniel Fuller's view lies with an unwarranted assertion that the three verbs *δέχομαι*, *γινώσκω*, and *ἀνακρίνω* all refer to the problem of human

reception and not cognition. Wallace has correctly pointed out that *γινώσκω* and *ἀνακρίνω* refer to cognitive activities, not volitional activities. Furthermore, Fuller's claim that *μωρία* ("foolishness") does not include a cognitive problem is hardly credible given an overabundance of emphasis on the function of understanding in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 (2:8, 11, 12, 16), including the immediate context of 2:14.

Though Daniel Wallace is better at exegesis than Daniel Fuller, he arrives at a similar conclusion that the primary function of the Spirit is that of conviction rather than cognition, based on his interpretation that the teaching function of the Spirit in 1 John 2:27 is non-discursive. He arrives at this interpretation based on the verb *οἶδα* (2:20), which he believes indicates knowledge from personal experience. However, others have shown that the word *οἶδα* (as well as *γινώσκω*) may be used to refer either to experiential knowledge or veracious (cognitive) knowledge.³⁶ Furthermore, "what you have heard from the beginning" in 1 John 2:24 (and the corresponding role of the Spirit suggested in "just as it has taught you" in 2:27) makes it much more likely that in 2:27a John is referring to the Spirit's role of teaching discursively, that is, using the reader's cognition to understand a specific knowledge that they have heard or learned. Lastly, the repeated use of "no lie is of the truth" in 2:20, 27 within the context points to the fact that the Spirit's guidance consists in distinguishing true knowledge from false knowledge,³⁷ another indication that the Spirit teaches discursively.

Douglas Kennard claims that Jesus' promises to send the Spirit in John 13-17 are only directed to the disciples of Jesus. This interpretation is hard to maintain given

³⁶BDAG, "οἶδα," 555-56; "γινώσκω," 160-61; K. Grayston, *The Johannine Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 63; Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John*. Anchor Bible Series, vol. 29 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1966), 250.

³⁷See chap. 3, 137.

that the entire Farewell Discourse has its focus on Jesus' continued, permanent presence in all believers through the Holy Spirit.³⁸ Another key problem in Kennard's exegesis is his interpretation of *πνευματικὸς* (1 Cor 2:15) and *ψυχικὸς* (1 Cor 2:14) as those who receive the gospel and those who do not appreciate the gospel, respectively. Kennard interprets these terms from the perspective of the ability of the human being. However, we have seen that Paul uses these terms to refer to those who are guided by the Spirit and those who are not, respectively.³⁹ Paul's focus is on the Spirit-enablement and the necessity of believers' continual dependence on the Holy Spirit.⁴⁰

Theological Critique

The receptionists want to ensure that the reader does not become irresponsible about interpretation and thereby fall into the trap of thinking that the Holy Spirit will somehow help him or her to understand the meaning of Scripture apart from his or her work of exegesis. This is a legitimate concern, given a history of such errors of "spiritual reading."⁴¹ The receptionists are also correct to point out that interpretation is not merely about a cognitive understanding of meaning. They emphasize the need to accept the message and apply it to the reader's life. They are also correct to point out that the human heart is so corrupt that it is not able to accept or apply the message without the help of the Spirit.

³⁸See chap. 3, 117-120.

³⁹See chap. 3, 94.

⁴⁰See chap. 3, 95-96.

⁴¹For example, Fee comments that 1 Cor 2:6-16 has "endured a most unfortunate history of application in the church. Paul's own point has been almost totally lost in favor of an interpretation nearly 180 degrees the opposite of his intent. Almost every form of spiritual elitism, 'deeper life' movement, and 'second blessing' doctrine has appealed to this text" (Fee, *First Corinthians*, 120).

Notwithstanding these strengths, the key error of the receptionists is that they divide the roles of reason and of the Holy Spirit between understanding the meaning of Scripture and accepting the Scripture, respectively. According to them, the role of reason is cognition; the role of the Holy Spirit is guiding non-cognitive aspects of interpretation. The roles of the Holy Spirit and reason are seen as complementary, rather than the Holy Spirit being the efficient cause of proper human reasoning. Such a conception has six underlying problems.

First, the receptionists often confuse the clarity of Scripture with the human ability to understand that clarity. Fuller concludes that human minds can clearly understand biblical messages from the fact that the Bible itself appeals to reason.⁴² Kennard claims that the meaning of the text is “clearly indicated in the divinely accommodated biblical text itself without the need of an intuitive work of the Spirit to render this clear.”⁴³ This is a classical error made by many conservative Christians in their zeal to protect the clarity of Scripture. However, as Luther has pointed out, there is “twofold clarity,” the external clarity of Scripture and the internal clarity given by the illumination of the Spirit, and the second is necessary to benefit from the first.⁴⁴

Second, the receptionists have a simplistic view of “meaning” in Scripture. Fuller considers biblical meaning as consisting only of the grammatical-historical meaning.⁴⁵ But there are other levels of meaning that are grounded in the grammatical-

⁴²Daniel Fuller, “The Holy Spirit’s Role in Biblical Interpretation,” *IJFM* 14 (1997): 93.

⁴³Douglas Kennard, “Evangelical Views on Illumination of Scripture and Critique,” *JETS* 49, no. 4 (2006): 799.

⁴⁴See above, 17-18, 144. Yet, this does not mean that the Word is separated from the Spirit before the Spirit works on believers, a point emphasized by the later Lutherans. Robert Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism: A Study of Theological Prolegomena* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 374-77.

historical meaning, but that cannot be considered grammatical-historical. An example is the theological meanings that are derived through a redemptive-historical interpretation of the passage.⁴⁶

Third, the receptionists believe that since the meaning of Scripture is limited to the grammatical-historical level, both believers and non-believers have the same understanding of the meaning of Scripture. In support of this, Wallace and Kennard argue that some of the best commentators of Scripture are non-Christians. It may be possible that some of the insights by these non-Christian commentators are better at the grammatical-historical level. However, there are two problems with this assessment. First, if non-Christians have a simplistic view of meaning as defined above, they will also not be aware of or even look for the redemptive-historical meaning. Second, according to the CPA view, one's understanding of the meaning of Scripture and one's acceptance and response to that understanding affect one another.⁴⁷ In other words, non-Christians are limited in having a proper understanding at the grammatical-historical level because they do not believe or apply that understanding even at that level. An example of this is found in John 5:39-47, where Jesus rebukes the Jewish leaders for searching for "life," yet refusing to find Jesus in the Scriptures that bear witness about him (John 5:39). Jesus rebukes the Jewish leaders for not only not knowing the true meaning of what Moses wrote ("for he wrote of me," John 5:46), but for not believing in Moses ("if you do not

⁴⁵Fuller, "The Holy Spirit's Role," 95.

⁴⁶Vern Poythress wrote some of the earlier articles regarding theological meaning in Scripture. Vern Poythress, "The Presence of God Qualifying Our Notions of Grammatical-Historical Interpretation: Genesis 3:15 as a Test Case" *JETS* 50 (2007): 87-103; idem, "Divine Meaning of Scripture," *WTJ* 48 (1986): 241-79. A good place to start learning more about the redemptive-historical approach to interpreting Scripture is Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007).

⁴⁷See chap. 3, 140-41 and chap. 4, 164-65.

believe his writing,” John 5:47). From this perspective, it is possible to say that excellent insights at the grammatical-historical level do not constitute true understanding of the true meaning of the passages.⁴⁸

Fourth, the receptionists confuse the Spirit’s role of enabling cognition with the Spirit’s immediate illumination (illumination of Scriptural content without exegetical effort). In denying the latter, they also deny the former.⁴⁹ They deny the Spirit’s role of enabling cognition because they believe that it implies the Spirit’s immediate revelation. This confusion can be seen in the examples Kennard provided of those who believed in the Spirit’s cognitive illumination aid, thereby raising “the possibility of an internalist authority of interpretation on the level of a divine intuition.”⁵⁰ But an examination of those examples reveal that Kennard has actually misunderstood the views of at least the Lutheran theologians Quenstedt and Hollaz, both of whom do not deny the need for exegetical efforts, and are actually in fierce opposition to those who teach the Spirit’s immediate illumination.⁵¹

Fifth, the receptionists do not take the noetic effects of sin seriously enough. Fuller argues that sin distorts the way one accepts the biblical message, but not the way one understands its grammatical-historical meaning.⁵² Such a conception regarding the

⁴⁸See chap. 4, 150-51.

⁴⁹Similarly, Fuller confuses the Spirit’s role of enabling cognition with the Spirit’s giving of additional information beyond what is in Scripture. See Fuller, “The Holy Spirit’s Role,” 92.

⁵⁰Kennard, “Evangelical Views on Illumination,” 798.

⁵¹Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 377; J. A. Quenstedt, *The Nature and Character of Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1986), 141, 189-91.

⁵²Fuller, “The Holy Spirit’s Role,” 94. Erickson suggests that underlying Fuller’s view is a faculty psychology, which divides the person into intellect, emotions, and will, and where the mind is separated from the direct effect of sin. Millard Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 45.

effects of sin on the mind is simply not biblical; Scripture teaches that the mind is hostile to God (Rom 8:7; Col 1:21) and futile (Rom 1:21; Eph 4:17). Scripture also shows that there is a direct relationship between a sinful heart and a sinful mind (2 Cor 3:14-15⁵³; Eph 4:18).

Sixth, the receptionists deny the Spirit's direct role in guiding cognition. Wallace is willing to go further than Fuller to admit that sin affects cognition;⁵⁴ at the same time, Wallace wants to limit the role of the Spirit to conviction.⁵⁵ He explains that it may be said that the Holy Spirit indirectly aids our interpretation through sanctification, where the Spirit sanctifies us and the sanctification in turn has a "boomerang effect" on cognition.⁵⁶ The problem with the idea of "indirect illumination" is that Scripture never calls any work of the Holy Spirit "indirect." It is also a confusing concept. DeZago argues on the one hand that the Word and Spirit illumine believers directly to the degree that it "changes the reader."⁵⁷ On the other hand, he argues that "the Holy Spirit's influence in the interpretive process, i.e., the recognition and the articulation of the meaning of a text, is indirect."⁵⁸ But why exempt recognition and articulation as activities of the reader from all the changes that the Spirit brings? If the receptionists want to say that the Spirit changes the reader but does not do the thinking for the reader, they do not need to say that the Spirit does not guide the reader in his thinking. In trying

⁵³See chap. 3, 112-13.

⁵⁴Daniel Wallace, "The Holy Spirit and Hermeneutics" [on-line]; accessed 6 July 2007; available from <http://bible.org/article/holy-spirit-and-hermeneutics>," 2b.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid. See also Edmund Keith DeZago, "Word and Spirit in Doctrinal Formation" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006), 204, 206.

⁵⁷DeZago, "Word and Spirit," 28.

⁵⁸Ibid., 29.

to prevent the confusion of the role of the Spirit with the role of the human being, the receptionists have barred any connection between the two and made it more confusing.

Anticipated Objections

That people will equate one's interpretation with that of the Spirit. An anticipated objection from the receptionists is that if the Holy Spirit is seen as the efficient cause of proper reasoning, then people will be tempted either to identify every kind of human reasoning with the Holy Spirit or to become lazy about thinking clearly and simply claim that the Spirit revealed it. In other words, the interpretation may become too subjective, either in an eisegetical sense (injecting meaning into Scripture) or in a charismatic sense ("immediate illumination"). People will be tempted either to justify their interpretation as that which the Holy Spirit has guided them into (eisegetical) or to claim that the Holy Spirit has directly given them the interpretation (charismatic).

Underlying such an objection is the misunderstanding that the efficient cause of the CPA view is the same as the Aristotelian view of the efficient cause, where the efficient cause is the non-personal, invisible force behind the visible effect. For a non-personal efficient cause, it is impossible to know and test the efficient cause. But that is not so with the personal efficient cause of the Holy Spirit. Scripture commands believers to "test the spirits" (1 John 4:1), and "by this we know the Spirit of truth" (1 John 4:6). The CPA view holds that the Spirit is the efficient cause in the personal and relational sense. The interpreting human being understands the meaning of Scripture in the process of properly responding to the Holy Spirit who guides him, and in the process of responding to the Christ to whom the Spirit guides. Understanding is a function of the entire person. How well a person understands Scripture depends on how well the entire person responds to the Spirit's guidance to the truth (John 16:13). Furthermore, how well a person understands Scripture depends on how well a person understands God in all of

Scripture, particularly from the perspective of how God has revealed himself in Christ.⁵⁹ Thus, how well a person understands each passage depends on how the whole person responds to the Christ whom the Spirit reveals in all of Scripture. It does not mean that the reader has to be mindful of what the Scripture teaches everywhere all the time to interpret each passage. But it means that a sound interpretive practice involves allowing the Spirit-guided, ongoing, cumulative, relational knowledge of God to bear upon each interpretive passage.

That the interpreter would go beyond the text. The receptionists may ask more specifically: If the Spirit is said to guide the interpretation, would the interpreter not go beyond the meaning that is in the text? This objection is anticipated because the receptionists often assume that the Spirit's guidance in interpretation entails interpretation without the exercise of reason, or at least interpretation without the work of exegesis. This is patently not the case with the CPA view, according to which the Spirit neither contributes any new information in the interpretation, nor provides interpretation of any passage through intuition. The role of the Spirit in interpretation is to guide the interpreter's whole being⁶⁰ in understanding the meaning that is in Scripture. More particularly, the Spirit causes understanding through a renewed mind,⁶¹ the mind of Christ.⁶²

That there is no difference in the practice of interpretation. The objection that immediately follows is: What practical difference is there in the practice of

⁵⁹See chap. 4, 157-58.

⁶⁰See chap. 4, 160-61.

⁶¹See chap. 3, 156-57.

⁶²See chap. 3, 98-99.

interpretation between those who believe that the Spirit guides interpretation, and those who believe that interpretation is achievable merely by a good exercise of reason? A key practical difference is in that with the CPA view, while readers seek to employ their reason responsibly to interpret, they also humble themselves completely to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Readers acknowledge that they do not understand the true meaning of any biblical passage without the help of the Holy Spirit because: (1) sin affects every aspect of their beings, including the mind, and hinders their understanding of the text,⁶³ (2) mere grammatical-historical understanding of any passage does not constitute a genuine knowledge, (3) even a sound mind by itself cannot understand the supernatural things of God,⁶⁴ (4) even if they understand a significant part of the meaning of the passage, without the Holy Spirit, they will fail to understand how to apply the Word to their lives.⁶⁵

The apostle Paul, who perhaps knew Christ more intimately than anyone else, and who still set his unique goal as knowing Christ crucified (1 Cor 2:2) exemplified such a Spirit-dependent attitude. He came to the Corinthians in fear and trembling in order that his speech and message might be a demonstration of the Spirit (1 Cor 2:4), and called upon the Corinthians to trust in the Spirit who guides them continually to behold the glory of the Lord (2 Cor 3:17-18) in the gospel (2 Cor 4:4).

That even if the Spirit guides interpretation, it is not demonstrable.

Receptionists may still argue that even if the interpreter's attitude is changed, it does not make a difference in the actual interpretation, since the Spirit's work is not demonstrable.

⁶³See chap. 3, 112-13 and chap. 4, 156-57.

⁶⁴See chap. 3, 93-94, and chap. 4, 157.

⁶⁵See chap. 3, 140-41 and chap. 4, 162-64.

The CPA view would respond that although the Spirit's work is not directly demonstrable, it is indirectly demonstrable. Jesus himself laid down the principle that "each tree is known by its fruit" (Luke 6:44).

The resulting interpretation can be first and foremost tested by the Word of God itself. When the apostle Paul declares that his speech and message was in "demonstration" of the Spirit and power, the Spirit is demonstrating his power to Paul and believers not by some intuitive flash of insight, but by means of revealing the content of the word of the cross (1:18).⁶⁶ In other words, believers' process of discerning (*ἀνακρίνεται*, 1 Cor 2:14) the things of God that are revealed in the Word is the very process of testing the spirit. The same word *ἀνακρίνεται* is used in Acts 17:11 to describe the Bereans who searched the Scripture to test for right interpretation. In short, the work of the Spirit can be demonstrated indirectly by searching the Word of God.

The resulting interpretation can also be tested by the fruit that it bears in believers' lives. Since it is by the teaching of the Spirit that believers come to know Christ and bear fruit in their lives, bearing fruit is an evidence of abiding in Christ (John 15:5), and abiding in Christ is an evidence that the Spirit is teaching them to know Christ in the Word (1 John 2:27).

That using the Scripture to test the work of the Spirit is a circular argument. A common objection against the CPA view is its circularity: the work of the Spirit is relied upon for an interpretation, and the Scripture is used to test that interpretation. There are two responses to this objection. First, it is a circular argument of a kind, but not the kind assumed by receptionists. According to receptionists, the Word of God is objective in the sense of modern foundationalism; that is, it can be

⁶⁶See chap. 3, 86-87.

understood by unaided reason. So, the work of the Spirit is seen as being redundant. The one who ultimately causes interpretation is the human being. The human mind is unaffected by anything and is the final, objective arbiter. So, when such a rationalist human being uses two evidences to support each other, it becomes a circular argument. The argument becomes repetitively reductionistic.

In contrast, according to the CPA view, it is the Spirit who subjectively guides believers to understand objective evidences within the Scripture. Furthermore, the human being is not the ultimate cause of interpretation, nor the absolute standard of interpretation. The human mind is subject to change, either by sin or the by Spirit's influence. Thus, when a genuine understanding takes place, two supporting "evidences" that continue to validate one another in a growing spiral fashion are: (1) the conviction that the Spirit has shone in our hearts to understand the Word, and (2) the ability to recognize and embrace the Spirit in the Word.⁶⁷

Second, strictly speaking, it is not a circular argument, because the means by which the Spirit guides true understanding is by forming or developing the "mind of Christ" in believers (1 Cor 2:16).⁶⁸ As the Spirit teaches believers about Christ in the Word of God, they abide in Christ (1 John 2:27) and are transformed to be more like Christ (2 Cor 3:18). Thus, it is not the case at all that the CPA view teaches that the Spirit mysteriously provides understanding to the interpreter's mind of the meaning of a difficult passage in Scripture without any relational transformation with Christ. Rather, a

⁶⁷There is a general agreement among scholars that no one has put the effect of the relationship between the Word and the Spirit on the interpreter better than John Calvin. See Calvin's quote on p. 18.

⁶⁸See chap. 3, 97-98.

deeper understanding of Scripture grows in the process of both a closer personal knowledge of Christ as well as progressive sanctification.⁶⁹

That human tools of interpretation are insignificant. Another possible objection from the receptionists is that human tools of interpretation (e.g., teachers, interpretive skills, hermeneutical aids, etc) are insignificant for the CPA view. To the receptionists who posit that meaning of Scripture is gained by the application of human reason and hermeneutical skills, it would seem that the CPA view denigrates the use of these tools. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Rather, the CPA view provides a more solid foundation upon which to use all forms of human tools of interpretation, holding that the Spirit is sovereign over every area and every process of interpretation, including the use of these tools. Yet, it holds that neither these tools nor their usage are perfect by themselves. They are susceptible to misuse, and the Spirit's help is needed to use them properly. This is the sense in which the apostle John encouraged his community by saying that "you have no need that anyone should teach you" but to rely on the teaching of the Spirit (1 John 2:27).⁷⁰

That conflicting interpretations cannot be adjudicated. Lastly, the receptionists may object that the CPA view cannot adjudicate between two conflicting interpretations of a passage, since it denies the human mind's ability to reason properly on its own. The CPA view responds that it does not denigrate the use of reason; rather, it emphasizes the fact that the Holy Spirit cannot guide understanding without the use of

⁶⁹This does not mean the same thing as what Barth teaches, namely that the Word that is contained in Scripture ("Word" is not equated with Scripture) is understood through Christ. The Word is understood better because Christ is not only the purpose and fulfillment of all of Scripture, but also the "hermeneutic norm of Scripture." See chap. 4, 160-62.

⁷⁰See chap. 3, 135-36.

human reason.⁷¹ The difference, again, with the CPA view is that it takes the noetic effects of sin seriously. It also firmly believes that the Spirit helps to remove these noetic effects of sin to produce a clear thinking, leading to clearer interpretations.

At this point, one may object again, whether the CPA view might indirectly promote a sense of false confidence in believers' thinking ability, since it trusts in the Spirit's help to attain clarity of thought. The CPA view would respond that such a thought would run against the tenets of the CPA view, which does not pit the Spirit's guidance against human responsibility to think clearly. Believers are called to think clearly and responsibly, while being aware of their sins, and how these sins may affect their thinking. Such a calling should produce humility, rather than false confidence.

Again, one may object and ask, if the CPA view encourages such humility, would it not produce a lack of assurance regarding any interpretation? The CPA view affirms that there can be no certainty or assurance when believers are left to their own minds, the kind of certainty espoused by modern foundationalism. But a kind of certainty is possible when believers are guided by the Holy Spirit. This is the certainty that the apostle John speaks of, and it comes from a combination of three factors: (1) The teaching of the Holy Spirit: "You have been anointed by the Holy one, and you all have knowledge" (2:20). (2) The truth, taught by the Holy Spirit, that is within believers: "I write to you . . . because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth" (2:21). More specifically, it is the truth that Jesus is the Christ (2:22, cf. 4:2). To be sure, Christians cannot have a comprehensive knowledge (1 Cor 13:9,12). Yet, in spite of all their shortcomings, they have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16), the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. (3) Practicing righteousness that comes from knowing Christ: "If you know that

⁷¹See chap. 3, 91-92 and chap. 4, 153-54.

he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him” (2:29). In sum, it is through the Spirit-guided use of reason as well as the Spirit-induced humility and assurance that believers are able to evaluate the merits of one’s own interpretation as well as that of the others.

Added to these internal factors of Spirit-guided reason, humility, and assurance are external factors of Christocentricity and fruit-bearing. Jesus himself laid down the principle of interpreting all of Scripture by showing how all Scripture is fulfilled in Christ (Luke 24:27). And it is Jesus who also laid down the principle of judging a tree by its fruit (Luke 6:44). The apostle John relates this principle to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:29).

In sum, the CPA view promotes a Spirit-dependent humility and certainty in the process of interpretation, and interpretations that reveal the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and bear fruits of righteous living. Such a combination of the internal criteria of Spirit-induced reasoning, humility and assurance on the one hand, and the external criteria of Christ-centeredness and fruit-bearing on the other, will lead believers to adjudicate conflicting interpretations. By the help of the Spirit, and by constantly returning to the Scriptures, they will be humbled to learn and to be corrected by others, and emboldened to speak the truth in love.

Cognition View

Biblical Critique

The biblical basis for the cognition view is on firmer grounds than that of the reception view. It properly recognizes exegetical clues that show that interpretive problems are attributed to both the mind and the heart. For example, Erickson shows that in 1 Corinthians 2:14 the phrase *οὐ δύναται γινῶναι* (“cannot understand”) certainly refers to a cognitive problem, whereas the phrase *οὐ δέχεται* refers to a problem of the heart and

the will. He also points to the clear evidences in 2 Corinthians 3:14-18; 4:3-6, where the problem of not understanding lies with both the heart and the mind, and the light that shines in the heart also enables the mind to see the gospel. He also points to the inescapable logic in John 14:17 that one is not able to receive Christ if one does not know him.

Notwithstanding these strengths, a key problem area is Erickson's interpretation of passages that supposedly prove that the Holy Spirit discloses meaning without the interpreter having to point to any feature of the text. For example, it is difficult to understand how he thinks that Jesus' promise that the Holy Spirit will bring Christ's teaching to remembrance in John 14:26 indicates a promise to disclose meaning without reference to a particular feature of Jesus' teaching elsewhere in Scripture.⁷²

Another questionable point is Erickson's claim that certain passages (e.g., Eph 1:8; Matt 5:8; John 3:3) give support to the idea of the existence of an organ of "spiritual perception," which recognizes God's truth without the need for exegesis. The problem, however, is that these passages are not seen in context. For example, Ephesians 1:8 ("insight") needs to be read in light of Ephesians 1:13, which says that the Ephesian believers were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit "when [they] heard the word of truth." This means that without hearing the word of truth, there is no help from the Spirit. In another example, Matthew 13:11-17, which speaks about the necessity of spiritual eyes to see and spiritual ears to hear, needs to be read in light of the following section (13:18-23), which speaks about the necessity of the word to take root in one's being in order for one to understand it.

⁷²See chap. 2, 50-51.

The problem with D. A. Carson's exegesis lies in his interpretation of 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, in which he attributes the cause of human inability to understand the things of God only to the fallenness of human beings and not also to the finitude of human beings. He begins with awareness that there is a problem of finitude and fallenness. But he assumes that the problem of finitude is resolved by the "public" (objective, historical) revelation of Jesus Christ,⁷³ and that the role of the Spirit is the "private work of God," which is limited to resolving the problem of the fallenness of man.⁷⁴

To provide an example of his exegesis, Carson interprets "no eye has seen" in 1 Corinthians 2:9 as referring to the human inability to understand due to the hiddenness of the objective revelation of God, that is, due to lack of external revelation.⁷⁵ He believes that the problem of finitude has been resolved by the Spirit's revelation of the gospel in 2:10. He assumes that the problem of finitude is no longer a problem for believers in interpretation. However, while the expression in 2:9 may imply a lack of external revelation, it may also refer to the problem of the internal finitude of natural people, those without the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The problem of the rulers of this age is not only the problem of their sin, as indicated by the phrase "crucified the Lord," but also the problem of their natural limitation, seen in the context of the "noble birth" in 1 Corinthians 1:26. The "rulers of this age" represent the natural power and the highest human achievements of the present world-order.⁷⁶

⁷³See chap. 2, 56.

⁷⁴See chap. 2, 57.

⁷⁵D. A. Carson, *The Cross and the Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians*. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 51.

⁷⁶See chap. 3, 91.

Another example is Carson's interpretation of 2:14. Carson is correct to interpret "natural person" as "one without the Spirit." But he is incorrect to imply that the natural person is culpable for being natural. After discussing the meaning of "cannot understand," Carson concludes, "this human inability to understand spiritual things is a *culpable* [italics his] inability."⁷⁷ The "cannot understand" here may include the problem of sinfulness, but it also refers to the problem of natural, internal finitude, in light of the term "natural person." The word ψυχικὸς does not refer to the sinfulness of human beings (whereas the words σαρκίνοις and σαρκικοί in 3:1, 3 do). In short, Carson does not sufficiently recognize the role of the Spirit in bridging both finitude and fallenness in understanding the things of God.

Theological Critique

The strength of the cognition view is in that it takes seriously the noetic effects of sin on human reason. The cause of misinterpretation is not simply an unwillingness to accept the message, but also the sinful blindness of the mind. Erickson and Carson agree on this even though they have two differences: (1) The relationship of the roles of the mind and the heart in interpretation. Erickson believes that the heart cannot accept primarily because the mind cannot understand.⁷⁸ Carson attributes the problem equally to the mind and the heart.⁷⁹ (2) The area of biblical knowledge that the Spirit guides Christians to understand deeply. For Erickson, it is the non-salvific (not related to salvation) truths; for Carson, it is the salvific truths.⁸⁰ Besides these differences, both

⁷⁷Carson, *Cross and the Christian Ministry*, 58.

⁷⁸Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 249.

⁷⁹See chap. 2, 54.

⁸⁰Ibid.

recognize the problem of the noetic effects and the corresponding need for the Holy Spirit to counter the noetic effects, which then allows the human reason to engage in proper interpretation of Scripture. They both criticize the receptionist view for not allowing for a difference of understanding between believers and non-believers. In response, they both show that while believers and non-believers may have similar understanding at the grammatical-historical level, only believers have a genuine understanding.

On the weakness of the cognition view, the role of the Spirit is still not comprehensive enough. In response to the reception view, cognitionists have extended the area of influence of the Holy Spirit to include cognition. Yet, they still limit the influence of the Holy Spirit in his relationship to cognition. Erickson and Carson set that limit in different ways. Erickson restricts the influence of the Spirit to a certain aspect of cognition.⁸¹ The Spirit influences spiritual perception (“third-level” of thinking) but not physical perception and cognition (“first” and “second” levels of thinking). Spiritual perception involves the Spirit’s giving of insight into the deeper meaning in the text through the interpreters’ intuition, that is, without ordinary cognition that refers to the features of the text.⁸² The other two levels of cognition do not involve any assistance of the Spirit; the reader can understand the meaning by observing the features of the text.

The danger of such a way of splitting the role of the Spirit in relation to cognition is twofold. On the one hand, it promotes speculation and discourages clear thinking, since the Spirit is seen as giving insights intuitively. On the other hand, it promotes rationalistic thinking that assumes autonomy of human reason, since the first

⁸¹See chap. 2, 52.

⁸²Erickson comments that the spiritual perception functions the same way that the supernatural working of God stands in relationship to natural laws, where the supernatural working contravenes the natural laws. See Erickson, *Evangelical Interpretation*, 49-50.

two levels of meaning can be acquired by human reason alone. These two errors can take place simultaneously, especially because even the deeper, third-level meanings are embedded in the text. Readers cannot know whether they have exhausted observations of all the “obvious” features of the text, and whether they have correctly processed them in their mind. So, even while readers are fully confident about their own cognitive ability, they are constantly tempted to substitute certain aspects of the interpretive work with insights from the Holy Spirit.

Carson does not advocate Erickson’s splitting up of different levels of cognition and assigning them to the Spirit and the human mind. He splits up the role of the Spirit and the role of the human mind differently. The role of the Holy Spirit is to restore the mind to its natural reasoning capacity, and the natural mind, once restored, can understand the supernatural truth of Scripture on its own.

The problem with this view is that it does not account for how a natural mind understands supernatural things of God. It ignores the fact that the supernatural-natural gap exists both outside and inside the reader. Externally, general revelation is not sufficient to reveal saving knowledge, so God provides special revelation in Christ and in Scripture. Internally, it is also not sufficient to have a restored natural mind; a supernatural means is required to understand the supernatural things of God. Carson does not address this internal gap. He sees the supernatural-natural gap as existing only externally, with the public, supernatural revelation in Christ filling the gap. Under such a scheme, Carson assumes that natural reasoning can understand the supernatural revelation of God.

The danger of this view is that it has a tendency to confound natural human reasoning with the special, internal work of the Holy Spirit. In theory, the two are distinct. However, in practice, Carson’s cognition view encourages the blurring of the two. Practically speaking, if one believes that one can understand special revelation by a

Spirit-restored natural mind, one will have a tendency to equate one's rigorous exercise of reason with the Spirit's work of restoring that mind. This view, then, has a tendency to lead to intellectual pride that actually hinders one's interpretation.

In sum, Erickson and Carson have opposing views on the role of reason and the role of the Spirit, approaching from opposite ends of the natural-supernatural gap that exists within the human being. Erickson believes that the Spirit acts supernaturally on the human being, but in a way that bypasses human reason; Carson believes that the Spirit redeems and activates human reason to function properly, but this reason grasps the supernatural revelation on its own. Each tilts the balance of natural-supernatural cooperation, one toward the supernatural (Erickson), and the other toward the natural (Carson). In these different ways, both Erickson and Carson limit the role of the Spirit in its relationship to human reason.

Anticipated Objection

That the CPA view does not allow a place for natural reasoning in interpretation. Since Carson believes that natural reasoning plays a significant role in interpretation, he may object that the CPA view does not allow a place for natural reasoning in interpretation. However, this would be a misunderstanding of the CPA view, which places a premium on the use of natural reasoning that is continually redeemed from sin's effects by the work of the Holy Spirit. Although the CPA view affirms that restored natural reasoning functioning by itself is not enough to understand the supernatural things of God, it nevertheless places high value on the role of *redeemed* natural reason in the process of interpretation.

That the CPA view makes the interpretive process mystical by positing that the redeemed natural functioning of the mind is not sufficient to understand the supernatural things of God. The CPA view responds that the interpretation of Scripture

has a mysterious component to it, but not mystical. It does acknowledge that there is a mysterious component to how the Holy Spirit enables the natural mind to grasp the supernatural things of God, making what is naturally impossible to be possible. God reveals the gospel to little children, but hides the gospel from the wise (Matt 11:25). That is a miracle. Our understanding of God's Word rests on the power of God (1 Cor 2:5). However, the CPA view emphasizes, more than any other view, that this mysterious element does not come from separating the role of the Spirit and the human mind to different aspects or stages of interpretation, but from the human mind that is supernaturally guided by the Holy Spirit in every aspect of interpretation.

The Speech-Act View

Biblical Critique

On the interpretation of Acts 8:26-39, Vanhoozer has two good insights. One is that the Holy Spirit is the ultimate agent behind a true understanding of Scripture.⁸³ Another commendable insight is Vanhoozer's Christocentric concept of authorial discourse based on the Ethiopian's question "about whom?" in Acts 8:34. He explains that it is not so much that the reader is trying to understand the subject matter of Scripture, but that Christ, the ultimate subject matter of Scripture, is speaking to the reader through the canon of Scripture.⁸⁴

Yet, these good insights are marred by his assumption that the Spirit does not personally guide the Ethiopian to understand Scripture. Rather, the role of the Spirit is seen as twofold: First, the Spirit guides the church in its canonical reading, reading the

⁸³See chap. 2, 75-76.

⁸⁴Kevin Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 133-41.

Word in light of Christ,⁸⁵ which Philip represents.⁸⁶ Second, the Spirit causes the reception of the Word by sanctifying the reader.⁸⁷ He enables individuals and the church to hear the word in new historical contexts.⁸⁸

There are several problems with such a conception of the role of the Spirit. First, nothing in the text warrants the assumption that Philip represents the church's canonical practice. Second, as 1 Corinthians 2:10-14 shows, the Spirit is personally and directly involved in double agency (Spirit working through a human messenger).⁸⁹ When the human messenger speaks words in dependence on the Holy Spirit, the Spirit "teaches" (1 Cor 2:13) or guides the person in such a way that the messenger effectively communicates the gospel to the listener.⁹⁰ In such a way the speaker becomes a vessel for the Spirit. Furthermore, inasmuch as the apostle Paul knows that the Spirit speaks through him, he also expects the listeners to rest in the power of the Holy Spirit to understand (1 Cor 2:5) the message of the cross.

Vanhoozer's notion that the Spirit does not personally guide understanding also does not cohere with his Christocentric conception of authorial discourse. He believes that Christ actively and sovereignly guides the reader in understanding.⁹¹ At the

⁸⁵Ibid., 119, 199.

⁸⁶See chap. 2, 76; Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 117.

⁸⁷Kevin Vanhoozer, *First Theology: God, Scripture, and Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 234.

⁸⁸Ibid., 202-03.

⁸⁹See chap. 3, 89-90.

⁹⁰See chap. 4, 145-46.

⁹¹Kevin Vanhoozer, "Discourse on Matter: Hermeneutics and the 'Miracle' of Understanding," in *Hermeneutics at the Crossroads*, ed. Kevin Vanhoozer et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 28.

same time, he believes that the Spirit does not personally guide in understanding the Word. The Spirit “publishes the gospel in human words”⁹² and “cultivates interpretive virtues such as openness and humility” in the reader,⁹³ but he does not directly guide the understanding.

A more coherent interpretation of Acts 8:26-39 passage is to understand the Holy Spirit as being sent by Christ to guide personally and directly the Ethiopian to a salvific understanding. Such interpretation is derived from the following observations. First, the Holy Spirit is designated specifically as an “angel of the Lord” (2:26) and “the Spirit of the Lord” (2:39), which implies that the Spirit has been sent by Christ himself. Second, the activity of the Spirit in this passage is more specifically tied to Philip and his effort to explain the gospel, rather than to the Ethiopian and his reception of the gospel. Third, Philip’s aid is specifically aimed at helping the Ethiopian to understand (*γινώσκω*, 8:30) the gospel of Jesus Christ. Putting these clues together, it is possible to conclude that Christ personally sent the Spirit who personally guided Philip to explain the gospel so that the Ethiopian understood Christ. The emphasis is on the Spirit’s role of personally guiding the understanding of Scripture rather than the Spirit’s role of guiding the reception of Scripture.

On the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 2:14, Vanhoozer follows Fuller’s exegesis that “not accept” (*οὐ δέχομαι*) refers to the unbeliever’s failure to see the significance of the truth, and that the entire verse refers to the problem of reception and not cognition.⁹⁴ We have already seen that such an interpretation neglects the problem of cognition implied by *οὐ δύναται γινῶναι*.⁹⁵

⁹²Ibid., 28.

⁹³Ibid., 29.

John 16:13 is another verse that Vanhoozer sees as supporting his view of speech-act theory and his understanding of the role of the Spirit in interpretation. He interprets the clause “he will guide you into all the truth” as referring only to the Spirit’s perlocutionary effect.⁹⁶ However, there is no exegetical evidence for interpreting this clause as referring to the Spirit’s role of causing merely responses to the truth and not also a deeper understanding of the truth. The entire Farewell Discourse is about Christ’s promise to send the Holy Spirit to cause a deeper understanding of God’s revelation in Christ.⁹⁷ It is about knowing Christ who is the truth (John 14:6, 16:13), and knowing the triune God through Christ (John 14:7, 20). Further, the language of “guiding” is closely associated with God’s activity of teaching (Ps 25:9, 45:4, 143:10). The idea of teaching in these passages includes both learning God’s ways (Ps 25:4-5, 9) and doing God’s will (Ps 143:10). The word *ὁδηγήσει* (“guide”) is also used by the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:31 in asking, “How can I understand unless someone guides (*ὁδηγήσει*) me?” Here, it is clearly associated with bringing about a true understanding of the contents of Scripture. Further, when John 16:13 is read in light of John 14:26, where the Spirit is promised to “teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said,” it is possible to conclude that Christ’s promise in 16:13 includes the Spirit’s role of teaching that leads to a greater understanding of Christ’s teaching.⁹⁸

⁹⁴Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning?* 428.

⁹⁵For more exegetical clues within 1 Cor 2:6-16 that indicate the problem of understanding, see chap. 3, 91.

⁹⁶See chap. 2, 78.

⁹⁷See chap. 3, 120-25.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 126-27.

Theological Critique

Vanhoozer's appropriation of the speech act-view has several strengths. Overall, it has maintained biblical authority while overcoming rationalistic tendencies among evangelicals. It has achieved this by expanding the definition of biblical truth to include commands, prayers, songs, and other speech-acts besides propositions. It has also expanded the Spirit's role in reception, where the Spirit guides believers "to become 'thickly related' to Christ by believing Scripture's assertions, obeying its commands, trusting its promises."⁹⁹ Vanhoozer's speech act-view has also helpfully modeled the interpretive process as a drama that is sovereignly guided by Jesus Christ, who is the subject matter of the scriptural discourse, rather than the subject matter being controlled by the reader. The "event" of understanding is something that happens to the reader through the text, and not something that is done by the reader.¹⁰⁰

Notwithstanding these improvements over the other views, the speech act-view still has significant problems with respect to the role of the Spirit in interpretation. First, the key problem lies in the limitation of the direct role of the Spirit to that of guiding the reader's response to the speech-act. Understanding is caused indirectly by the Holy Spirit, both through the speech-act and through the sanctification of the reader. It is an improvement over the reception view in that the Spirit is still involved in causing understanding, even though he works indirectly through the illocutionary force of the speech-act. However, in the end, with regard to understanding the text, the reader is left without a direct guidance from the Holy Spirit. The reader must recognize the illocutionary intent of the text by the resources of the image of God within himself.¹⁰¹ So,

⁹⁹Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 202.

¹⁰⁰Vanhoozer, "Discourse on Matter," 24-27.

in the final analysis, the speech-act view does not differ too much from either the cognition view or the reception view in the respect that the reader depends on his own abilities to interpret.

A second problem lies in confounding the external clarity of Scripture and the human ability to understand that clarity. Vanhoozer's confusion is evidenced in his statement that the reader's understanding of the illocutionary intent is what Luther meant by the "external clarity" of the Word.¹⁰² This is not what Luther taught. According to Luther, the external clarity of the Word does not presume the understandability of that clarity. Luther spoke of the "twofold clarity" and the necessity of the "internal clarity," which is the illumination of the Holy Spirit to help the reader to grasp the external clarity.¹⁰³ Yet, Vanhoozer makes his assumption the bedrock of his theory:

The "communicative presumption"—namely, that illocutionary intent is usually recognizable—is something shared by all texts, not only the Bible. The suggestion that either the church *magisterium* or the Spirit's illumination is a prerequisite for understanding would call this presumption into question.¹⁰⁴

For Vanhoozer, the meaning of the Word, the illocutionary intent, is understood by readers without the guidance of the Spirit's guidance.

A third problem with the speech-act view is the relationship between Christ and the Spirit and their respective roles in interpretation. According to the speech-act view, Christ sovereignly guides the interpretation process by the speech-act of the Word on the one hand (illocutionary force), and by the direct work of the Spirit on the other

¹⁰¹Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 428. Here Vanhoozer depends on Augustine's understanding of illumination, which is human participation in the divine light in general revelation. Vanhoozer, "Discourse on Matter," 29.

¹⁰²Ibid., 427.

¹⁰³See chap. 1, 18.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

(perlocutionary force). This schema already assumes that the Spirit is not sovereign over the entire process of interpretation, that is, at least not in the sense of direct, personal guidance. This view of the role of the Spirit is at odds with the biblical teachings that show that the Spirit is sent by Christ sovereignly to guide the entire process of interpretation, including understanding and applying the fullness of God in Jesus as revealed in all of Scripture.

A fourth problem lies in the way divine causation is understood. According to Vanhoozer, the relationship between divine agency and human agency is explained through speech-act theory. God causes events to occur through the Word and Spirit. The Word provides the illocution (the speech) and the Spirit causes the perlocution (the effect). Vanhoozer calls this view of divine causation “divine advenience” (God comes in speech-acts), and shows that it maintains both divine sovereignty and the personal involvement of God.¹⁰⁵ On the one hand, divine sovereignty is maintained in opposition to the supervenience model, which virtually identifies human action with divine action.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, divine personal involvement is maintained in opposition to the intervention model, where God controls human beings in an impersonal way. Yet, Vanhoozer’s model of divine causation cannot be fully personal or fully sovereign in regard to the understanding of Scripture, since the work of the Holy Spirit is associated only with perlocution and not also with illocution. It is not fully personal because the Spirit does not directly guide the reader in understanding the meaning of Scripture. And it is not fully sovereign because what the reader understands by the resources of the image of God within himself is virtually indistinguishable from what the Spirit wants to

¹⁰⁵Kevin Vanhoozer, “Effectual Call or Causal Effect? Summons, Sovereignty, and Supervenient Grace,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 49, no. 2 (1998): 213-51.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 226-42.

say. In other words, since it is assumed that the reader can understand the meaning of a text on his own without the direct guidance from the Spirit, any gap between the authorial (both human and divine) intent and the reader's understanding of it can easily be collapsed, at least in the reader's mind.

Finally, speech-act theory, at least in the way Vanhoozer has used it, has significant limitations in describing the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in understanding the Word. Its strength lies in the idea that Scripture is seen not merely as a deposit of propositions, but as various kinds of God's communicative acts. Yet, by limiting the illumination of the Holy Spirit to perlocution, Vanhoozer has neglected the role of the Spirit in guiding illocution, the understanding of the meaning of the Word. Thus, what is necessary to improve on Vanhoozer's model of the speech-act is to distinguish between the speech-act for the inspired Word, and the speech-act for the understanding of that Word. The speech-act for the inspired Word consists of locution (actual inspired words) and illocution (what is meant by the human and divine authors). The speech-act for the understanding of the Word consists of the Spirit's guidance in hearing the Word (locutionary effect), understanding the Word (illocutionary effect), and responding to the Word (perlocutionary effect). In sum, by associating the Spirit only with perlocution, Vanhoozer has made it more difficult to appreciate the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit over all aspects of understanding the Word of God.

Anticipated Objections

If the Spirit is seen as sovereignly guiding all aspects of the speech-act, would there not be a tendency to over-spiritualize the process of interpretation so that the role of the Word would be neglected? In other words, in relying on the Spirit to understand Scripture, would not the reader be tempted either to be lazy at the work of interpretation or at trusting in what Scripture says? The answer is that it is actually the

speech-act view that has a tendency to distort the role of the Spirit rather than the CPA view. According to the speech-act view, the task of understanding the meaning of Scripture is done by the reader. Even though Christ is seen as the one who is sovereign over the event of understanding, Christ communicates himself indirectly through the medium of Scripture, so that it is the image of God in the reader that actually enables the reader to understand Scripture. As for the perlocutionary response to the understanding, we have already seen that it requires the work of the Spirit. By dividing understanding and response to that understanding along the line of human/divine work, Vanhoozer creates a tendency for the reader to under-spiritualize (depend very little on the Spirit) the process of understanding the meaning, and over-spiritualize (depend on the Spirit but neglect human responsibility) the process of responding to that understanding.

The CPA view is more balanced. Having drawn the distinction between inspirational speech-act (written Word) and illuminative speech-act (response to the written Word), the CPA view posits that readers respond sinfully to all three aspects of the illuminative speech-act, thereby requiring the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all three aspects. The Spirit's guidance is needed for locution because sinful readers do not even want to read or hear what is written. The Spirit's guidance is needed for illocution because sinful readers do not understand what is written. We have already seen that understanding at the mere grammatical-historical level does not constitute a genuine understanding because it is insufficient in fulfilling the illocutionary intent of the divine author.¹⁰⁷ Finally, the Spirit's guidance is needed for perlocution because sinful readers do not apply what they understand. According to the CPA view, readers have the responsibility to respond to Scripture at all three levels; yet at the same time, they need to

¹⁰⁷See chap. 4, 153-54.

depend consciously on the help of the Holy Spirit at all levels. Thus, it is by clearly distinguishing inspiration and the illuminative aspects of the speech-act and recognizing the need for the Spirit at all levels that it is possible to bring a balance between human responsibility and the role of the Spirit in interpretation.

Summary

In conclusion, I have shown how the CPA overcomes the weaknesses of each view, while maintaining its strengths. In respect to the postconservative non-authoritative view, the CPA view makes a clear distinction between inspiration and illumination. In respect to both the non-authoritative and authoritative postconservative views, the CPA view makes a clear distinction between meaning and application, while maintaining the necessity of the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit to understand and apply the Word of God. In respect to the reception view, the CPA view posits that the Holy Spirit guides both the understanding of the Word and the accepting of the Word, while maintaining the necessity of doing the hard work of exegesis and praying for the sanctification of the heart. In respect to the cognition view, the CPA view posits that the Holy Spirit guides every level of cognition and every level of the meaning of the text, while maintaining the necessity of using redeemed reason in the process of interpretation. In respect to the speech-act view, the CPA view posits that the Holy Spirit guides all three aspects of the illuminative speech-act (hearing, understanding, and applying the Word), while maintaining that the interpretive process is a process of becoming “thickly related” to speech-acts of Scripture (assertions, commands, promises).

CHAPTER 6

THE CPA VIEW AS A MORE VIABLE MODEL AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

In this final chapter, drawing on the points made in previous chapters, I argue that the CPA view is a better model in terms of its exegetical support, its internal coherence that incorporates the strengths of the other views while minimizing their weaknesses, and its ability to respond to the postmodern challenge. Then, I conclude with suggestions for further studies and a summary of the dissertation.

Exegetical Support

The CPA model has better exegetical basis in that it takes fuller account of the contexts of key passages (1 Cor 2:6-16, 2 Cor 3:12-4:6, John 14:26, 16:12-15, 1 John 2:20-29). First, I have shown that other views do not fully take into account the entire passages. The reception view tends to choose those words or verses that emphasize accepting the message of the Word. For example, Fuller bases his entire understanding of the role of the Spirit on the word *οὐ δέχεται* in 1 Corinthians 2:14, although there are many words in the passage which indicate cognition. Similarly, Wallace understands *οἴδατε* to mean “to accept the message,” when the context shows that a discernment of truth is also involved. The speech-act view follows this assumption of the receptionists. Carson properly recognizes the problem of fallenness, but does not take into consideration the problem of finitude in hindering a proper understanding of the Word of God. Against these selective readings, the CPA view takes into consideration a fuller account of the key passages, for example, by pointing out the exegetical evidences for

both the problem of cognition and reception, and for both the problem of fallenness and finitude in hindering understanding.

Second, all four evangelical views tend to interpret words out of context. Against this tendency, the CPA view interprets words in their proper context. For example, Erickson understands the Spirit's role of "bringing to remembrance" out of context when he claims that it refers to the Spirit's giving of understanding without referring to the features of the text. I have shown that within the context of the Gospel of John, it means more specifically that of showing how the Word of God is fulfilled in Christ. DeYoung and Hurty interpret "revealed" in 1 Corinthians 2:10 as the Spirit's work of guiding believers beyond Scripture. I have shown that the Spirit reveals Christ in the Word of God (1 Cor 1:18, 2:4, 2:13). Kennard interprets *πνευματικῶς* as "believers who accept the message." I have shown that the term refers contextually to "believers who receive the message and understand it because they are guided by the Holy Spirit." Vanhoozer interprets "guiding into all the truth" as the perlocutionary effect of the Spirit. I have shown that, in its context, the phrase refers first and foremost to the role of the Spirit in teaching the Word of God, and then the Spirit's work in applying that Word to life.

Internal Coherence

The CPA view also has better internal coherence, so that it is able to maintain the strengths of other views while minimizing their weaknesses. While the postconservative non-authoritative view rightly emphasizes the role of the Spirit in personally guiding believers, its main weakness lies in jeopardizing the authority, clarity, and the sufficiency of Scripture. While the postconservative authoritative view maintains the authority of Scripture, its weakness lies in allowing for new truths that are not in Scripture to have an authoritative status. The CPA view fully acknowledges the work of

the Holy Spirit in applying the Word of God to all life situations, without sacrificing the authority, clarity, and sufficiency of Scripture. Such balance can be maintained only when meaning is distinguished from, and not blurred with, application, and when application is based on the meaning of God's Word. The CPA view shows that the Holy Spirit guides believers to grow in their understanding of Christ in the Word and to apply that understanding to all life situations. The application may help believers to grow in understanding the Word, but cannot add to its content.

The reception view rightly points out the importance of the role of the Spirit in helping believers to accept the message, which in turn helps them to come to a true understanding. However, the receptionists emphasize this point at the expense of the Spirit's role of guiding understanding. The CPA view fully acknowledges that accepting the message with the heart influences believers' understanding of that same message, but without sacrificing the Spirit's role of personally guiding the mind to understand the Word. The source of wrong interpretation lies in both the sinful mind and the sinful heart. The Holy Spirit guides each to influence the other, so that as a result, believers would grow in their understanding of the Word of God.

The cognition view rightly indicates the importance of the Spirit's role of guiding understanding. Yet, for Erickson, the Spirit does so by giving understanding of significant aspects of biblical truths without having believers refer to the features of the text. For Carson, the Spirit removes the noetic effects from the mind so that the human mind, in its natural capacity, can grasp the supernatural things of God. The CPA view fully acknowledges the importance of the Spirit's role of guiding cognition, but without denying the necessity for believers to engage their minds in interpreting the Word and without claiming that believers can understand the supernatural things of God by human reason alone. It is not easy to understand how the human mind can be fully functional, yet not sufficient to understand the things of God in Scripture. Yet, it is only by

maintaining the biblical emphasis on both the Spirit's guidance of the mind and the Spirit's enablement of the mind to grasp the supernatural things of God that prevents us from falling into the pitfalls of rationalism on the one hand and mysticism on the other.

Finally, for Vanhoozer, the Spirit guides believers to experience the intended effect of the Word, and not so much to understand the content of the Word. The CPA view fully appreciates and agrees with the idea that the Spirit guides in applying the intended effect of the Word. This overcomes the problem of the postconservative view of going beyond the Word. Nevertheless, the CPA view holds that it is fully possible to have the text speak to believers, and have the Spirit show what the text says to believers, at the same time. The former is not possible without the latter. On the one hand, when readers believe that the text speaks to them, they will be careful about falling into the pitfall of interjecting meaning into the text. On the other hand, when readers believe that it is the Spirit who shows them what the text says, they will also be humble about the truths they discover in the Word. They rejoice over not only *what* they find (the truth), but *how* they find it (only by the help of the Spirit).

Responding to the Postmodern Challenge

As mentioned in the introduction, the postmodern challenge regarding the role of the Spirit in interpretation is the challenge of addressing (1) the process of interpretation, and not just the results of interpretation, and (2) what is done to the interpreter, and not just what the interpreter does. The CPA view fully incorporates all of these aspects, each in its proper place.

First, the CPA view deals with both the process and the result of interpretation. The belief that the Holy Spirit sovereignly guides interpretation leads readers to a humble dependence on the Spirit, a deeper awareness of their presuppositions and the limitations of interpretation, and a greater assurance about the truths that they discover by his

guidance. While the belief in the objective standard of God's Word checks readers from idolizing their subjective experience, their belief in the necessity of the guidance of the Spirit checks them from idolizing mere head knowledge.

Second, the CPA view emphasizes both what the interpreter does and what is done to that person by the Holy Spirit. Maintaining both will help readers to recover the function of the Word of God as a means to renew their relationship with God. The readers not only come to know God through the Word, but are also known by God through the Word (Gal 4:9). While the belief that the Spirit does not work apart from the human work of interpretation encourages readers to do the hard work of interpretation, the belief that human reason by itself is not sufficient encourages them to cry out humbly to the Spirit to reveal the things of God to them (1 Cor 2:10-11, Cf. Ps 119:18).

Suggestions for Further Studies

First, since I have focused only on four key passages, further exegetical work needs to be done on other relevant passages. Second, since I have intentionally focused mostly on laying the biblical foundation for the CPA view, more work needs to be done in theological construction. Specific work can be done on the implication of the CPA view for the relationship between revelation and reason, and the relationship between general hermeneutics and biblical hermeneutics. Third, further studies in drawing out the implications of the CPA view for biblical hermeneutics are welcomed. In other words, what are the implications of the CPA view for the way we interpret Scripture? One fruitful possibility is to modify the speech-act theory based on the CPA view. Fourth, more historical work can be done, comparing various views and documents on this subject throughout history. A comparison of the CPA view with other views is also welcome. Finally, the implications of the CPA view for ministry and sanctification need to be drawn out.

Summary of the Dissertation

In this dissertation, I have argued for the thesis that the Holy Spirit comprehensively and personally guides every aspect of the process of believers' interpretation of the authoritative Word of God. In defending the thesis, I have selected four passages that are foundational to this topic, passages that have been variously interpreted by evangelical theologians to produce different views on the role of the Spirit in interpretation of the Word of God. I categorized these views in four groups and summarized their biblical bases and theological constructions. Then, I provided my own selective exegesis of the four sets of passages and organized the results according to subtopics. Then, I critiqued the four representative views based on those results, biblically and theologically. Finally, I concluded by explaining how the CPA view is a more viable model of understanding the role of the Spirit in interpretation of the Word than the others.

Some of the key findings of this dissertation are: (1) There is a lack of unity in evangelicalism regarding the role of the Spirit in interpretation, which stems partly from a lack of in-depth studies on this topic. (2) In emphasizing the ongoing work of the Spirit, postconservatives have compromised the absolute authority of the Word of God; in emphasizing the necessity of the human role in interpretation, conservatives have compromised the comprehensively personal guidance of the Holy Spirit. (3) The exegesis of the four passages show that the Holy Spirit guides every aspect of interpretation, from the proposal of the Word of God to believers through human teachers, to believers' total response, that includes heart and mind, every aspect of cognition, and every level of meaning in the Word. (4) The role of the Spirit in interpretation is more specifically focused on guiding believers to understand how all of Scripture is fulfilled in Christ. (5) The Spirit guides believers' lives not merely by teaching them general

knowledge in Scripture, but more specifically by guiding them to grow in the knowledge of Christ in Scripture.

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ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF THE SPIRIT IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

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This dissertation examines the role of the Spirit in the interpretation of the Word of God. Chapter 1 introduces the topic and its significance. The topic is important because it has been historically neglected, because there is a lack of consensus in evangelicalism regarding this topic, and because of the claim made by the postconservative evangelicals that the Spirit reveals beyond the Word of God.

Chapter 2 begins with a historical background to the topic, and then examines the four evangelical representative views in detail. For each view, the works of two or three representatives are examined. For each theologian, a summary of his exegetical work is provided, followed by a summary of the construction of his view based on his exegesis.

Chapter 3 provides the exegetical foundation for the alternative proposal for understanding the role of the Spirit in interpretation: the Comprehensively Personal Authoritative view (CPA view), which holds that the Holy Spirit comprehensively and personally guides all aspects of the interpretation of the Word of God, in which the object of interpretation is limited to the authoritative Word of God. A directed exegesis is done on each of the four sets of passages: 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; 2 Corinthians 3:16-4:6; John 14:26, 16:13; 1 John 2:18-29.

Chapter 4 constructs the CPA view based on the exegetical work in Chapter 3.

Chapter 5 provides a critique of the four representative evangelical views, both biblically and theologically. For each view, anticipated objections from that view toward the CPA view are addressed.

Chapter 6 concludes by arguing how the CPA view is a better model in terms of its exegetical support, its internal coherence which incorporates the strengths of the other views while minimizing their weaknesses, and its ability to respond to postmodern challenges on this topic. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further exploration and a summary of the dissertation.

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