

IV. The authority of the holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the Author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God. (a)

a. 1 Thes 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:19, 21; 1 John 5:9.

—Why should we believe what Scripture teaches and obey what it commands?

Letham: “Here the origin of Scripture, its being inspired by God, is the basis of the authority it exists over the church. In this, it does not depend on human testimony, including that of the church...Scripture’s authority depends whole on God, its author...It carries the authority of God himself, who gave it in order to commit to writing his revelation of himself and his will for the church, thus preserving it and propagating it.”

V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the holy Scripture; (a) and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man’s salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth *abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God*; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the *inward work of the Holy Spirit*, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts. (b)

a. 1 Tim 3:15. • b. Isa 59:21; John 16:13-14; 1 Cor 2:10-12; 1 John 2:20, 27.

—What does it mean that scripture is “self-authenticating”?

—Why do we need the Spirit ultimately to persuade and assure us of the truth and authority of Scripture? Why is this the most fitting source for our persuasion and assurance to come from?

Letham: “The Holy Spirit is the primary author of Scripture. The Bible is ‘immediately inspired by God [WCF 1.8],’ and it is the Spirit who carried its human authors along as they spoke from God (2 Pet. 1:20-21). It follows that the Spirit is best able to convince us of the truth of what he has originated. This is exactly what Jesus said would be one of the principal features of the Spirit’s ministry (John 16:12-15).”

Van Dixhoorn: “We were created to recognize truth, a gift that was misused, and then left tattered after the fall of humanity. However, God in his mercy has given us his Spirit who testifies to us as we read his Word that this is his revelation, his gift to us. The same Spirit who helps us to see Jesus as our Savior and Lord is the one who helps us to grasp the Word of life, recognizing its authority and trusting its promises.”

**VI.** The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. (a) Nevertheless we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word; (b) and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed. (c)

a. Gal 1:8-9; 2 Thes 2:2; 2 Tim 3:15-17. • b. John 6:45; 1 Cor 2:9-12. • c. 1 Cor 11:13-14; 14:26, 40.

**VII.** All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; (a) yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them. (b)

a. 2 Pet 3:16. • b. Psa 119:105, 130.