

# Bullinger's expression – *praedicatio verbi Dei est verbum Dei*, within his view of Scripture



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The Reformers' debates with, among others, the Catholics and Anabaptists on the authority of Scripture offered a valuable response to modern attacks on the authority of Scripture. While the Reformers confessed *Sola Scriptura* [Scripture alone] against the Catholics, Bullinger's well-known statement, *praedicatio verbi Dei est verbum Dei*, could be seen as a confession against the Anabaptists, as well as some of today's Christian movements that prioritised the personal interpretation of Scripture. Where personal interpretation of Scripture had become the primary principle for Scriptural interpretation in some of today's Christian communities, Heinrich Bullinger relegated it to the background. For Bullinger, the inner working of the Holy Spirit during the external proclamation of the Word of God in worship within the covenant community was the starting point for Scriptural interpretation.

**Contribution:** The thesis of this article is that within the Reformers' view of Scripture, as exemplified by the insights of Heinrich Bullinger, the personal reading of the Bible by each member of the covenant community was understood within the context of communal interpretation and covenant theology. Emphasising the significance of communal worship and the guiding presence of the Holy Spirit, this perspective underscored the transformative nature of Scriptural interpretation within the covenant community, rejecting the notion of personal interpretation as the sole authority. It was within the context of Bullinger's covenant theology that the well-known expression *praedicatio verbi Dei est verbum Dei* [the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God], had to be understood.

**Keywords:** authority of scripture; covenant theology; Heinrich Bullinger; Hermeneutics; Reformation; Perspicuity of scripture; Preaching; Ulrich Zwingli.

## Problem statement

In the Protestant and Catholic conflict, the authority of Scripture played a central role. The Reformers professed that the Word of God had the highest authority and that no human interpretation or even the church can be placed above the authority of Scripture. This led the Reformers to encourage members to read the Bible themselves, in contrast to the Catholic Church, which restricted the reading of the Bible to scholars and priests. The Catholic Church's criticism of the Reformers was that the Protestant Reformation caused each member to have their own personal interpretation of Scripture and essentially interpret Scripture as they pleased. This criticism from the Catholic Church is not something to be taken lightly, as it has become a growing problem today under the influence of Postmodernism within some Christian communities. Against this background, the research question in this study is: What was the Reformers' view of Scripture, with a focus on the work of Heinrich Bullinger, and in what way is the personal reading of the Bible by each member understood in this view of Scripture?

## Methodology

To answer the research question, the introduction of the study provides more context on the problem statement. Subsequently, a brief overview of Heinrich Bullinger's biographical background is examined in the context of the Reformation. Lastly, data regarding Bullinger's view of Scripture is collected through a thematic analysis of key works by Bullinger. The results of the data analysis are discussed in conjunction with relevant academic works. The data is presented as principles derived from Bullinger's view of Scripture, including Bullinger's understanding of the authority of Scripture, the perspicuity of Scripture, and finally, Bullinger's expression *praedicatio verbi Dei est verbum Dei* [the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God] in the context of his covenant theology.

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## Introduction

Over the past century, the authority of Scripture has come under significant critical engagement. The influence of historicism has, among other things, served as an introduction to the historical-critical approach to Scripture. Within historicism, everything becomes history, resulting in the absence of values and norms. Within historicism, there is therefore no God-given order for history; history is rather a process of change (Dooyeweerd 2012:43). The historical-critical approach to Scripture, which originates from within its historical context of the 18th and 19th century historicism, seeks to explain all events in Scripture from the historical context in which the text of the Bible was written. The problem, however, is that today we no longer have the historical events themselves but only interpretations of the historical events. Consequently, the historical events must be interpreted from the highest authoritative source, for example regarding Sailhamer (1995:43) it is either the Bible itself or the exegete as the highest authoritative source. Furthermore, the West's individualism has caused a separation between the individual and their community. The individual then becomes the centre of all interpretations, interpreting all texts, including the Bible, from their own subjective perspective through deconstruction of the text. This is interpreted by some as the individual playing of 'god', and their own opinion then becomes authoritative over Scripture, using Scripture as they wish (Bouman 1987:25).

During the Reformation, everyone was encouraged by the Reformers to read the Bible themselves in their homes (eds. McNutt & Lauber 2017:52). The reason the Reformers encouraged members to read the Bible themselves was primarily because they had a different view of Scripture than the Catholic Church. The Reformers professed the Bible to be the highest authority, resulting in the church and consequently the Pope being under the authority of the Word of God. The Catholic criticism against the Reformers was that now every person, through their own reading of the Bible, would understand and interpret the Bible as they pleased.

The 16th-century Roman Catholic warning against the dangers of the Reformers' view of Scripture is not criticism to be taken lightly (Bernhardt 2010:74). Some Protestant movements, where the written Word of God and the preaching of the Word of God are replaced with inner enlightenment from the Holy Spirit, inner revelations to the individual, or other direct manifestations of the Holy Spirit, are indicative of the danger of personal interpretation of Scripture (Milbank 2006:23). It is against this background that it is important to develop a deeper understanding of Bullinger's view of Scripture.

## Biographical background: Heinrich Bullinger

The Swiss Reformer Heinrich Bullinger waged his own polemical discourse against Catholics and Anabaptists, particularly in defence of the Reformation principle of *Sola*

*Scriptura*. Bullinger, known to some academics as the forgotten Reformer, has a life story less well known than, for example that of Martin Luther or John Calvin (McGrane 2006:10). Bullinger's life can be characterised by terms such as simplicity, constancy, and hard work. He was not a person who drew much attention (Campi 2004:3). However, through simplicity and daily hard work, Bullinger had a significant impact on the Reformation in his own country, Switzerland, as well as in other countries, especially England.

Bullinger was born on 18 July 1504, in the village of Bremgarten. He was the youngest of five children, and his father was a minister. Bullinger received his education under the authority and teachings of the Catholic Church. At an early age he joined the Latin school of the Brothers of Common Life. Particularly gifted in classical languages, especially Greek and Latin, he continued his studies in 1516 at Emmerich and joined the University of Cologne in 1519. Here he received his degree in 1520 and his master's degree in 1522 (Baker 1996:227).

During this time, Bullinger immersed himself in the works of the church fathers, and with the controversy surrounding Luther, he closely followed the debates between Protestant and Catholic theologians. Out of curiosity, Bullinger began to read the works of Luther, Melancthon, and Erasmus. It was also during this time that Bullinger read the New Testament for the first time (Bromiley 2016:137).

In 1522, under the influence of Ulrich Zwingli, Bullinger found himself aligning with the Protestant cause. In 1523, he accepted the position of headmaster at the Cistercian monastery in Kappel. Here he wrote several commentaries on the Bible and in 1529, Bullinger was confirmed as the preacher in Bremgarten, succeeding his father.

In 1531, a war broke out between Protestants and Catholics in Kappel. During the conflict, Zwingli was captured and killed by Catholic soldiers. As a result, Bullinger had to flee for his life to Zurich (Myers 2022:615). Following these events, Bullinger succeeded Zwingli at the Grossmünster church in Zurich. As Schaff (1892) states:

No better man could have been selected. It was of vital importance for the Swiss churches that the place of the Reformer should be filled by a man of the same spirit but of greater moderation and self-restraint. (p. 185)

Bullinger took this position seriously and dedicatedly. He diligently studied and expounded the Scriptures, delivered between five and six sermons a week, and wrote commentaries on almost every book of the Bible. Bullinger was also responsible for the Reformation of the school system in Zurich (Walter 1961:165). His most significant theological contribution was the formulation of the *First Helvetic Confession* (1536) and *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566).

Bullinger's friendship with John Calvin was remarkable (Praamsma 1979:136). In 1549, due to the friendship of the two Reformers, Zurich and Geneva signed the Consensus

Tigurinus (*Zurich Consensus*). The agreement was mainly drafted to clarify differences between Reformed factions regarding the view of the Lord's Supper. Bullinger adhered to the intention never to publicly disagree with Calvin, but in their correspondence, they thoroughly explored their differences (McGrane 2006:6).

In 1529, Bullinger married a former nun, Anna Adlischwyler. They had 11 children, and their household was extraordinarily busy. Numerous Protestant refugees were hosted for extended periods, along with Bullinger's own parents and Zwingli's family. Bullinger's home also functioned as a kind of public news office where news from abroad was first read and approved by him, before being disseminated to the public. Bullinger reportedly used more than a 1000 sheets of paper per year and was considered to be one of 'the most networked and best-informed men of all time', with correspondents reaching from Persia in the East to Florida in the West (McGrane 2006:1). Bullinger truly served as a pillar of the Reformation.

The advancement of the Reformation under the leadership of Zwingli and Bullinger primarily focused on confessing the authority of the Word and promoting hermeneutical principles in the interpretation of Scripture (McGrane 2006:5).

Bullinger's theological contribution to the development of the Reformed confession was extensive. His significant exploration of the church fathers and the Reformers' agreements and differences with the fathers, his conviction that the Reformation was a return to God's Word and not just a new innovation, his emphasis on the authority of Scripture over any church traditions or human writings, his thorough development of Covenant Theology, teachings on sacraments, Christological focus, Reformed interpretations on topics like election, justification, church order, church-and-state relations, and many other matters, laid an important foundation for the further development of the Reformed doctrine (Payne 2021:421).

During a prolonged battle with illness, Bullinger passed away in 1575, concluding a fruitful life. His nephew, Rudolf Gwalther, who had been raised in Bullinger's household, succeeded him. Bullinger was a prolific writer, producing many unpublished works along with 119 published works (McGrane 2006:1). It is estimated that Bullinger's body of work surpasses that of both Calvin and Luther combined (Shepherd 2005:28). Among his numerous significant works are the *Second Helvetic Confession*, *The Decades*, and *the History of the Reformation*, which stand out as some of his most renowned contributions. The focus will now shift to Bullinger's understanding of the authority of Scripture, with an emphasis on the individual reading of Scripture by church members.

## Bullinger's view of scripture

One of the most influential confessions within Protestantism is the *Second Helvetic Confession*, formulated by Bullinger. In Bullinger's composition of the *Second Helvetic Confession*, he

logically begins with the authority of Scripture from a systematic theological perspective [*principia cognoscendi*]. He starts with the second order [*principia*] and not the first order, the doctrine of God [*principia essendi*]. It is, however, logical that God comes first and then his Word. Still, because humans can only come to know God through his Word, the authority of God's Word must be confessed first (Muller 2017:217).

According to Shepherd (2005:28), the most well-known statement in the *Second Helvetic Confession* is the phrase *praedicatio verbi Dei est verbum Dei* [the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God] (Bullinger 2004). To understand why this is a core part of the confession, it is important to grasp something about Bullinger's view of Scripture. In Bullinger's view of Scripture, two themes are particularly developed, namely the authority of God's Word, and the perspicuity of God's Word (Stephens 2008:38). He then ties these two themes to the following significant idea: 'The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God'. Let us now delve into these three distinct aspects.

### The authority of scripture

Within the context of the Protestants' struggle with Catholics regarding *Sola Scriptura* [Scripture alone], arguments regarding the authority of Scripture played a crucial role in the works of various Reformers. Bullinger, in particular, paid profound attention to this subject (Opitz 2011:297). As Van den Belt (2011:321) puts it: 'In a strict historical sense, Bullinger was the Reformer who introduced *autopistos* into the concept of the authority of Scripture'. The confession of the authority of Scripture is also a confession regarding the sufficient nature of Scripture. In other words, it is not God's Word plus the words of humans. God's Word is sufficient, *Sola Scriptura* [Scripture alone].

In the confession of the authority of Scripture, the acknowledgement of God's Word is crucial. Note that it is acknowledgement, not composition or confirmation. God's Word, the Canon, the 66 Books, is not a composition of human work, but the work of God. The Word of God is God's Word, given by God himself to the church. The church did not devise, compile, or confirm the Word. The Canon was God's Word before the church came to a confession about the Canon (Stephens 2008:41).

The confession of the canonicity of God's Word is a significant component of the authority of the Word. To confess that the Canon is God's Word is also to confess that other writings are not God's Word. The confession of the Canon logically creates two categories: God's Word and all other texts that are not God's Word (Stephens 2008:41). Other texts about God's Word, including the apocryphal books, writings about church traditions, traditions within the church itself, texts of the church fathers, commentaries on God's Word, Synod decisions, democratic voices about God's Word, et cetera, are all subordinate to the authority of God's Word (Bullinger 2009:26). Bullinger also made the distinction about *norma normata*, meaning that the confessional writings of the



church have relative authority, which must be in harmony with the teaching of the Holy Scripture, which has absolute authority and is therefore *norma normans* (Schaff 1892:196).

Bullinger emphasised that God's Word has the highest authority over all persons and institutions. All preachers, including the patriarchs, Moses, David, the prophets, apostles, and Word ministers, are under the authority of God's Word. These preachers could only say, just like today's preachers: 'thus says the Lord'. All forms of institutions, whether marriage, family, church, government, et cetera are under the authority of God's Word (Bullinger 2004).

Bullinger's doctrinal formulation of the authority of the Word, was developed around the fact that the authority of the Word is seated in the Word itself. Bullinger (2004) writes:

[T]he books of the Old and New Testament were canonical and authentic, just like someone calls those things *autopistos* that gain faith by themselves without arguments and have their truth and authority completely from themselves and not from elsewhere. (n.p.)

The authority of God's Word therefore is not, according to Bullinger (2009), under any human authority, such as human reason, persuasive arguments, or archaeological discoveries.

Therefore, the Word of God – a testimony of God's will – is not subject to the judgement of anyone, but itself judges over everything and has its authority out of itself. (p. 28)

## Perspicuity of scripture

In Zurich, under the leadership of Zwingli, the perspicuity of Scripture received much attention. Zwingli developed the perspicuity of Scripture around the idea of God revealing Himself to humanity, and humans being created in the image of God. Zwingli argued that sin had caused humans to be unable to interpret the Word of God. Still, through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, humans are enabled to understand the Word of God clearly (Sargent 2014:327).

An attack on the authority of Scripture from Catholic circles was that the Scripture is unclear, and everyone reading the Scripture would arrive at strange interpretations and practices. For this reason, the ordinary, unlearned church member should not read the Bible themselves, because it is dangerous and would most assuredly lead to heresy. According to this Catholic view, the Bible could only be explained by educated church clergy. Consequently, the explanation of the church is equated with the authority of Scripture. For this reason, Catholics still today maintain, on the one hand, the authority of God's Word, but also the authority of the church's interpretation of Scripture (Pope Paul 1965).

However, the Reformers of Zurich encouraged congregations to read and study the Bible at their homes. Moreover, they believed that the members would hear God's voice if they read the Bible in faith (Zwingli 1922:2.228). In debates with

Catholic priests, among others, Zwingli, based on the principles of the perspicuity and sufficiency of Scripture, encouraged his opponents to support their positions, using only the Scriptures. In contrast, Zwingli faced opposition from the Anabaptists, who read the Bible on their own, as encouraged by Zwingli, yet came to different conclusions than Zwingli on fundamental doctrinal matters (Sargent 2014:325).<sup>1</sup>

In the debate with the Anabaptists, the burden was on the Zurich Reformers to demonstrate why their understanding of Scripture was correct, and that of the Anabaptists was incorrect (Sargent 2014:331). These debates led to a structured development of hermeneutical principles regarding the interpretation of Scripture in Zurich. In 1525, Zwingli established the well-known Prophezei school, focusing on the ancient languages (Latin, Greek and Hebrew) in teaching Scripture exegesis (Sargent 2014:332). The establishment of the Prophezei school and the specialised teaching of Scripture exegesis, brought Zurich under the same criticism that the Zurich Reformers levelled against Catholics, namely that only scholars can interpret Scripture.

It is against this background that Bullinger's understanding of the perspicuity of Scripture must be understood. In Bullinger's treatment of the perspicuity of Scripture, he distinguishes between the way in which God's Word comes to humanity, and the way in which humans receive the Scripture (Sargent 2014:336). In the way God's Word comes to humans, there is no ambiguity from God's side. Because God is God, and in his essence perfectly wise, God can also communicate clearly and distinctly and reveal Himself to humans. God also perfectly created the recipients of the Word in his image, capable of receiving his Word.

The reception of the Word of God is complicated by the fall of man. Where the Word of God is clear, humans are blind. Even if the object a blind person holds is clear, the person remains blind. Blinded by sin, humanity is presented with a clear, vivid message from God, but humans are too blind and deaf to understand the message. It is from the starting point of the fall of man that Bullinger writes against the idea of a private interpretation of Scripture. In their sinful state, humans do not have the ability to interpret the Word of God (Bullinger 2017:107).

From the Zurich tradition, Bullinger placed the clarity and clear nature of Scripture within the development of a biblical hermeneutic. This biblical hermeneutic is particularly visible in the *Second Helvetic Confession*, which places more emphasis on hermeneutical principles than any other Reformed

1. When the term *Anabaptist* originated during the 16th century Reformation, it was initially a derogatory label, used by opponents to describe those advocating for adult baptism and radical theological and social changes. The term itself denotes 'rebaptisers', suggesting a rejection of the infant baptism, the norm in mainstream Christianity at the time. While some modern scholars prefer *Radical Reformation* to encompass a broader range of movements, I've chosen to retain *Anabaptist* for two main reasons: historical accuracy and recognisability. *Anabaptist* accurately portrays the movement's historical context and theological emphasis on baptism, and it's widely understood in discussions of the Reformation period. Moreover, key sources referenced in the article, such as Locher (1954) and Sargent (2014), also employ the term *Anabaptists*.

confession. Bullinger is even criticised for being a precursor to the modern historical-critical approach to Scripture exegesis (Sargent 2014:336). This is a false accusation, because Bullinger places Scripture interpretation within the order of the covenant community. Therefore, Scripture interpretation is not, for Bullinger, a matter of personal interpretation, as interpretation must take place within the covenant community (Hauerwas 1993:107).

Bullinger places the perspicuity of Scripture within the context of the covenant and gospel's redemptive history. In his sinful state, man is lost and in darkness. Only within God's covenant, where God first approaches man and reveals Himself to man, is knowledge of God possible. Only in the reconciliation of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is knowledge of God possible. Although the rebirth of humans is personal to every believer, it cannot exist outside the covenant community (Hauerwas 1993:107).

### **Bullinger's expression, *praedicatio verbi Dei est verbum Dei* [the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God] in the context of his covenant theology**

Bullinger is renowned for his elaborate development of covenant theology, where the principle of comparing Scripture with Scripture is particularly evident. For Bullinger, the New Testament is nothing other than the interpretation of the Old Testament (Baker 1996:229). The following quotation from Baker (1998) clearly illustrates this:

In fact, the covenant is the thread that ties Bullinger's Decades together. Beginning with the first sermon of the first Decade, 'On the Word of God', Bullinger illustrates the eternal covenant within the context of the oral tradition of the patriarchs before Moses. He declares that the patriarchs taught that God came together with the human race by a covenant, and he obligated himself to the faithful as the faithful obligated themselves to him. (p. 364)

Within this covenant theological perspective, the words of Bullinger, *praedicatio verbi Dei est verbum Dei*, must be understood. Only against this background can one genuinely appreciate why Bullinger placed so much emphasis on these words. This sentiment is echoed in Romans 10:14, which highlights the importance of preaching in facilitating belief:

For how can they call on Him in whom they have not believed?  
And how can they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?  
And how can they hear without one who preaches?

For Bullinger, preaching encompasses two aspects, namely the inner and the outer testimony of God's Word (Van den Belt 2011:317). The inner testimony is the work of the Holy Spirit in humans during the preaching of the Word. Bullinger simply believed that God is the cause of both the inner and the outer testimony of the Word of God (Gottfried 1981:42). The outer testimony of the Word of God, namely preaching, takes place within a covenant community, in worship, at a specified time and place, in an understandable language, and members must not neglect attending worship services

precisely because the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God (Bullinger 2004). The outer testimony is the preaching of the Word by specifically elected and appointed ministers (Bullinger 2004). Ministers cannot, as was the practice in the Catholic Church, purchase their offices. Ministers are appointed by the congregation under the supervision of a church council. Furthermore, because the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God, and the government also operates under the authority of Scripture, the government should protect preaching. Any government that does not protect the preaching of God's Word is under the judgement of God, precisely because they try to place themselves above God's Word (Locher 1954:54).

From Bullinger's perspective, every member of the congregation is accountable to the authority of God's Word. Since the preaching of the Word of God is considered the Word of God itself, individuals are not left to interpret Scripture solely according to their own understanding or preferences. Bullinger's rejection of private interpretation underscores the importance of interpreting Scripture within the context of the covenant community, where collective understanding and interpretation are guided by the preaching of the Word. While Bullinger encourages the personal reading of Scripture at home, he emphasises that personal interpretation should always occur within the covenant community. This means that individual engagement with the text should be informed and influenced by the communal interpretation and understanding of Scripture, as guided by the broader theological framework of covenant theology (Baker 1998:363).

Where the private interpretation of Scripture has become the primary principle for Scripture interpretation in some Christian congregations, Bullinger shifts private interpretation to the background. The inner working of the Holy Spirit during the external proclamation of the Word of God in worship, within the covenant community, is the starting point for Scripture interpretation (Bullinger 2004). Bullinger does not diminish the importance of personal Bible study or personal worship. On the contrary, he strengthens it, because he places it within the significant place of the covenant community (Bullinger 2004).

McGrane (2006:6) describes Bullinger's view of Scripture as that of *viva vox* [the living word] and that the written Word serves as the living word. Regarding the church fathers, Bullinger (2009:23) for example says: 'For what is Scripture to us, to them was the living voice of God [*viva domini vox*]'. Although the gospel is proclaimed by imperfect, sinful ministers, it is God, the sovereign Father, and the risen Lord Jesus Christ, who accepts the preaching, and through the working of the Holy Spirit, purifies it to the extent that it is God himself who instructs his children through the living word.

Bullinger did not make the same distinction as Luther between the written Word and the living preached Word. According to Bullinger, the Word of God is the same, whether

it is written or preached. If we turn to the New Testament, it becomes clear that the Word of God was preached for many years before it was written down (Bullinger 2017:6). Thus, we read in the Gospels (Mt 10:20; Lk 10:16; Jn 13:20):

For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Therefore, whoever listens to you, listens to me, and whoever rejects you, rejects me.

Therefore, Bullinger regarded the preaching of the Word of God as the Word of God.

However, these well-known words, 'the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God', should not be understood apart from the term *Verbum Dei* [the Word of God]. The *Verbum Dei* is contained in the Holy Scripture, and preaching is only God's Word, because it applies the Word of God in accordance with the Holy Scripture. As Locher (1954:54) points out, a clear boundary line must be drawn. A boundary line that can easily be crossed when this well-known quotation from Bullinger is cited. This boundary line is that the emphasis in the quotation should be on the *Verbum Dei*. 'Not every conceivable sermon, and not the sermon as the unfolding of subjective opinion, is divine speech, but only the transmission of the knowledge of the prophets and apostles' (Locher 1954:55).

With the emphasis on the words, *Verbum Dei*, Bullinger issues a warning that preachers should not follow their own inclinations or wisdom. The idiosyncrasy of preachers leads to the distortion of God's Word through personal interpretation. In this way, they will present their own inventions to the congregation, and not the Word of God (Bullinger 2017:6). In this context, the words *Verbum Dei* disappear, and only idiosyncratic false preaching of human words remains.

## Conclusion

In addressing the research question, this article has provided a comprehensive examination of Heinrich Bullinger's understanding of Scripture, drawing on his biographical background and an analysis of his core works. Through this analysis, several principles that derived from Bullinger's view of Scripture have been elucidated, including his perspectives on the authority and perspicuity of Scripture, as well as his emphasis on the preaching of the Word of God within the framework of his covenant theology.

The Reformers' debates with, among others, the Catholics and Anabaptists on the authority of Scripture, offer a valuable response to modern attacks on the authority of Scripture. While the Reformers confessed *Sola Scriptura* [Scripture alone] against the Catholics, Bullinger's well-known statement, *praedicatio verbi Dei est verbum Dei*, can be seen as a confession against the Anabaptists, as well as against some of today's Christian movements that prioritise a personal interpretation of Scripture.

Where a personal interpretation of Scripture has become the primary principle for Scripture interpretation in some Christian congregations, Bullinger shifts a personal interpretation to the background. The inner working of the Holy Spirit during the external proclamation of the Word of God in worship, within the covenant community, is for Bullinger the starting point for Scripture interpretation. It is within this context of Bullinger's covenant theology that the well-known expression, *praedicatio verbi Dei est verbum Dei*, must be understood.

Bullinger's insights into the authority of Scripture, particularly his affirmation of *Sola Scriptura*, offer valuable insights for contemporary debates surrounding the authority of Scripture. His emphasis on the centrality of the Word of God in the life of the church provides a robust foundation for defending the authority of Scripture against modern challenges.

However, while Bullinger's emphasis on the preaching of the Word within the covenant community offers valuable guidance, some aspects of his teachings may be subject to debate in contemporary contexts. As an example, his relegation of personal interpretation to the background raises questions about the role of individual engagement with Scripture, and what this specifically entails. Additionally, Bullinger's views on the relationship between Scripture interpretation and the covenant community may require more nuanced consideration. However, overall Bullinger's understanding of Scripture offers valuable insights and contributions to contemporary discussions.

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