



PROVIDENCE
CHURCH OF SAN DIEGO

The Sufficiency of Scripture

I. The Biblical data.

A. II Tim. 3:16-17, *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

B. Isa. 29:13-14, *Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.*

C. Mk. 7:5-9, *Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.*

D. Col. 2:20-22, *Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?*

II. The definition. "The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contains all the words of God He intended His people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains everything we need God to tell us for salvation, for trusting Him perfectly, and for obeying Him perfectly." Wayne Grudem

III. The historical principle: sola scriptura.

IV. Confessional statements.

A. "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. 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: 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." Westminster Confession of Faith, I:6, 1648

B. "We receive all these books and these only as holy and canonical, for the regulating, founding, and establishing of our faith. And we believe without a doubt all things contained in them not so much because the church receives and approves them as such but above all because the Holy Spirit testifies in our hearts that they are from God, and also because they prove themselves to be from God. (Article 5) . . . We believe that those Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein." (Article 7) Belgic Confession, 1561

C. "For the rule of our faith and religion, we wish to follow the Scripture alone, without mixing with it any other thing which might be fabricated by the interpretation of men apart from the Word of God; and we do not pretend to receive any other doctrine for our spiritual government than that which is taught us by the same Word, without addition or reduction, according to the command of our Lord." Geneva Confession, 1536

D. "The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience, although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will which is necessary unto salvation." Second London Baptist Confession of Faith, I:1, 1689

E. "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." Westminster Confession of Faith, I:4

F. "Our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority [of Holy Scripture], is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts." Westminster Confession of Faith, I:5

V. Theological considerations.

A. "Therefore the Spirit, promised to us, has not the task of inventing new and unheard-of revelations, or of forging a new kind of doctrine, to lead us away from the received doctrine of the gospel, but of sealing our minds with that very doctrine which is commended by the Scripture. . . All those, then, who, not content with the Scripture, patch it with something extraneous to it, detract from Christ's authority." John Calvin

B. "Those who have been inwardly taught by the Spirit, experience an entire acquiescence in the Scripture, and that it is self-authenticated, carrying with it its own evidence, and ought not to be made the subject of demonstration and arguments. We have the firmest conviction that we hold an invincible truth." John Calvin

C. "Do you believe the Bible is sufficient, authoritative, supernatural, and profitable? This incomprehensible God, who is of Himself and for Himself, cannot be made known to His creatures but by Himself." Thomas Hooker

D. "The doctrine of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures teaches that 'the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary' for saving faith and the Christian life is revealed in the Bible. Therefore, the preaching, teaching, and counseling ministries of God's church are the ministry of the Word of God. There is no need or warrant to base our doctrine or directives on anything else, even if enshrined in church tradition. . . The Reformation brought a renewed emphasis upon the Bible's sufficiency as special revelation. Calvin said, 'All our wisdom is contained in the Scriptures, and neither ought we to learn, nor teachers to draw their instructions, from any other source.'" Joel Beeke

E. "Let us reassess the significance of Scripture as the Word of God and let us come to a deeper appreciation of the deposit of revelation God in His grace and wisdom has given unto us as the living Word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword, and let us know and experience its power in its sufficiency for every exigency of our individual and collective need, until the day dawn in the day-star arise in our hearts." John Murray

F. "The Scriptures in their own sphere are like God in the universe—All-sufficient. In them is revealed all the light and power the mind of man can need in spiritual things. The Word of God is quite sufficient to interest and bless the souls of men throughout all time; but novelties soon fail. It is better to be silent before the Lord, than to dream of supplementing what He has spoken. The Word of the Lord is to the conceptions of men as a garden to a wilderness. Keep within the covers of the sacred book, and you are in the land which floweth with milk and honey." Charles Spurgeon