

Proposition—

The complete and finished revelation of God (the Bible) is sufficient for all of man's needs. *Scripture is sufficient*

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.¹²

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:¹³ 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.¹⁴

¹² 2 Timothy 3:15-17 ...and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Galatians 1:8-9 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

2 Thessalonians 2:2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

¹³ John 6:45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

1 Corinthians 2:9-12 But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 11:13 Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him,

14:26 What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

14:40 But all things should be done decently and in order.

This paragraph states *the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture*. In other words the idea is that, if you want to know what will, 'thoroughly equip you for salvation,' you can and you will find that in the Scripture (see 2 Timothy 3 above). If you want to know what God considers essential for His own glory you will find it in the Bible. In fact the 'whole counsel of God' concerning everything necessary will be found there.

Many things are expressly or completely set down in Scripture. Things such as, '*in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*' It doesn't get much plainer than that. What could be clearer than, '*There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus Christ*' (1 Timothy 2:5)? What could comfort more than, '*neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus Christ our Lord*' (Romans 8:30)? What could be more sure than, '*the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you*' (John 14:26)? God's Word sets down surely what we must know and it does so very clearly.

Still some things God intends for us to work out and deduce ourselves. We are to conclude some of the doctrines of Scripture by thoughtfully and carefully considering, meditating, and comparing Scripture and its different passages to find that which follows logically and necessarily. And then we are to stop. There can be no adding or subtracting; we cannot modify or go beyond what is taught in Scripture. There must never be new revelations of any spirit or traditions added to what Scripture teaches.

For instance if someone says, 'I have a new revelation of the Spirit,' what are we to do?

See 2 Thessalonians above; we are not to be upset but to ignore it.

How far so? See Galatians 1:6-9, there is nothing new—No new Gospel. Scripture is complete. So much so that, even if a voice speaks from the sky, or an angel from heaven should come we are not to be shaken up. The one who seeks to add to Scripture is accursed (doomed or separated from the church).

We are to, 'deduce by good and necessary consequence' what God teaches and commands. What does that mean? As above we are to thoughtfully and carefully consider, meditate, and compare Scripture and its different passages to find that which follows logically and necessarily. When we do this, we will find that some truths inevitably flow out of Scripture.

For instance, the church is commanded to have elders (Titus 1:5), how many elders is the church required to have? *More than one is all the Scripture teaches (Acts 15:4, 6, 22, 23; 1 Peter 5:1, 5; just some of many).*

Whom is to receive baptism and the Lord's Supper? *George Gillespie (one of the assembly) said we must work out from the Scriptures who should come to the Lord's Table and to be baptized.*

Jesus as He was rebutting Sadducees, who put forth a leading question trap Him, used good and necessary consequence to prove the resurrection. Matthew 22:23-32—*And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living."* The fact that God is eternal and is god eternally proves resurrection.

There two qualifying essentials:

1. The requirement of the Holy Spirit for a necessary understanding of the Scriptures.

The fact that we are to reject all new revelations of the Spirit does not mean we are to reject the Spirit Himself. He is God and His work indispensable for the church. He takes the things of God and about God and opens our minds to understand them. In other words the Word of God is brought to bear upon us by the Spirit of God. As with Isaiah 66:1-4 (the referent Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 2:9-12) it is the result of God's presence that causes change, no one can know God unless He makes Himself known.

Is the Spirit of God necessary for the Church? How?

2. The requirement of Christian prudence and the light of nature.

Prudence is simply wisdom applied to practice. It is to use the doctrines and truths given in God's Word and wisely apply them to areas not expressly given, always according to what is expressly or plainly set down on the Word and the knowledge of some things that are plainly true. Some things are very simple, such as everyone understands why we are not to chuckle and whisper in conversation with someone during prayer. The Scripture is silent about this yet we know just by wisdom applied it's prohibited. Should the church's place of worship be afforded comfort if possible? Such as chairs and heat? This is an easy yes. We know this naturally. Should the pastor of a church restrain the length of preaching when its obvious people are fatigued?

When should a church meet for worship? The Lord's Day (Sabbath) is given but what time? How long? Where?

God's Word is clear that we should meet for worship, and His Word gives much direction to the order of church, prayer, praise and even worship. Yet there is much He leaves to our prudence and natural understanding. For instance it is better to have a warm place to worship, without distractions.

Remember that there is nothing regarding salvation, Christian doctrine, or the Christian life that the Scripture has left unclear. We must be very careful with this.