



## 1689 LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH Systematic Theology Course 2

### Study 4: Of the Holy Scriptures 1:6,7

6. The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation 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. 2 Tim 3:15-17; Gal 1:8,9.
- b. John 6:45; 1 Cor 2:9-12.
- c. 1 Cor 11:13,14; 14:26,40.

#### 4.1 The Sufficiency of Scripture

The whole of Holy Scripture as already defined by the confession is sufficient to achieve the purpose for which it has been given. It is wrong to assert the sufficiency of Scripture for every field of endeavor and knowledge, although for the purpose for which it was given it is fully sufficient. Special Revelation is sufficient therefore in *'all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life'* (Deut 4:2; Ps 19:7; 119:6,9,104,128; Mic 6:8; Acts 20:20,27; 1 Tim 5:10; 2 Tim 2:21; 3:15-17; Tit 1:16; 2:14; 3:1).

#### QUESTION:

If the Scriptures are not sufficient for every area of knowledge, does the Bible have any impact on man's study of astronomy? Explain.

The sufficiency of Scripture is to be seen in two ways. Firstly, in what is *'expressly set down'*, such as in God's commandments; and secondly, as that which is *'necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture,'* that is in the implications deduced from Scripture.

**QUESTION:**

Give examples of both the above, and explain how these are examples?

Because the Holy Scriptures are sufficient for the purposes of Special Revelation, it stands to reason that nothing else is needed, and indeed, that nothing else is to be added to them (Is 8:20; Gal 1:8,9; Rev 22:18,19).

#### **4.2 The Illumination of the Holy Spirit**

As we have seen in our previous study it is absolutely essential for a person to be regenerated before he can understand the Bible, and this through the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:12-16).

#### **4.3 The Light of Nature**

Because the Bible does not make explicit statements about everything to do with '*His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life,*' it is necessary for us to make up our own minds in many areas. This we are able to do '*according to the general rules of the Word which are always to be observed.*'

**QUESTION:**

How would this be done in seeking to bring the Gospel to your home town?

7. 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 ordinary means, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them (b).

a. 2 Pet 3:16.

b. Ps 19:7; 119:130.

#### **4.4 The Simplicity of Scripture**

If the Scriptures are sufficient in the areas of '*His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life,*' then it stands to reason that they are simple and clear enough to be understood sufficiently in order for them to achieve their purpose (Deut 6:4-7; 30:11-14; Ps 19:7,8; 119:105; Prov 6:22,23; Acts 17:111; 2 Pet 1:19). There is therefore no need for other

works, or for the church to add further to the Scriptures in order for people to be sufficiently equipped in these areas (2 Tim 3:15-17).

Yet it must be noted that all things in the Bible are not equally clear (2 Pet 3:15,16) in themselves, or equally clear to all (Eph 4:11-14), and it is necessary therefore that a person also *'in a due use of ordinary means, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them.'*

**QUESTION:**

What is meant by the Confession when it says, *'in a due use of ordinary means, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them?'*

The Scriptures are sufficient for *'all things necessary for His glory, man's salvation, faith and life.'* Yet God has provided means whereby individuals can be assisted in being taught what the Bible teaches concerning these things. These do not add to the Scriptures, but these means simply explain **from** the Bible, what the Bible itself actually says. The means used are those which are set down as part of the sufficiency of Scripture, being set down by it.

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