

# BIBLIOLOGY

## *The Sufficiency of Scripture*



Institutes of  
Theology

SEMESTER 3

2025

# Carl Trueman, *Crisis of Confidence*

“What is undeniable is that Ignatius, Tertullian, and Irenaeus all indicate that the church, from the earliest postapostolic times, continued and developed the Pauline notion of providing clear doctrinal summaries as a means of summarizing the faith.”



# BIBLIOLOGY

## *The Sufficiency of Scripture*

### 1. A Classic Definition of Sufficiency

#### A. What Sufficiency Does Not Mean

- i. That all that is in God has been made known (Deut. 29:29)
- ii. That all of Christ's works have been made known (John 20:30; 21:25)
- iii. That all the apostle's works have been made known (2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 10:4)
- iv. That the Bible explicitly address all situations and activities



# Joel R. Beeke, *Reformed Systematic Theology*

“The Bible does not claim to be a comprehensive guide to astronomy, geology, nutrition, warfare, mechanics, business, history, medicine, public speaking, sports, politics, or a host of other topics.... However, since all human activity should aim at the glory of God, the Bible is a sufficient guide for pleasing him in every facet of life.”



# John Frame, *Doctrine of the Word of God*

“Sufficiency ... is not sufficiency of specific information but sufficiency of divine words.... [Scripture] has all the divine words that the plumber needs, and all the divine words that the theologian needs.”



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## *The Sufficiency of Scripture*

### 1. A Classic Definition of Sufficiency

#### A. What Sufficiency Does Not Mean

- i. That all that is in God has been made known (Deut. 29:29)
- ii. That all of Christ's works have been made known (John 20:30; 21:25)
- iii. That all the apostle's works have been made known (2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 10:4)
- iv. That the Bible explicitly address all situations and activities
- v. That all secular resources must be rejected
- vi. That all extra-biblical Christian resources must be rejected



# Robert Letham, *Systematic Theology*

“Tradition, viewed as the past teaching of the church in its confessions, creeds, and representative theologians, effectively represents the sum total of the accumulated biblical exegesis of the Christian church. It is not on a par with Scripture—some of it may even mislead us—but we neglect it at our peril and use it to our great advantage.”



## J. I. Packer, *God's Has Spoken*

“For the creeds, like the decisions of councils, popes, and individual churches, are the work of sinful men, to whom no personal infallibility was ever promised; therefore they must be verified by appeal to what homilist call God’s ‘infallible Word.’”



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## *The Sufficiency of Scripture*

### 1. A Classic Definition of Sufficiency

- A. What Sufficiency Does Not Mean
- B. What Sufficiency Means



## *Westminster Confession of Faith (1.1), 1646*

“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.”



# *Westminster Confession of Faith (1.1), 1646*

1. “The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith, and life”



# Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*

“The question [of sufficiency] relates only to things necessary to salvation—whether they belong to faith or to practice; whether all these things are so contained in the Scriptures that they can be a total and adequate rule of faith and practice.”



# *Westminster Confession of Faith (1.1), 1646*

2. "is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: "



# John Brown, *Systematic Theology*

“The Scriptures, including the necessary consequences of their express words, are a perfect and complete rule of our faith and practice, informing us of everything which we ought to believe or do, in order to our entrance into the glorified state.”



# *Westminster Confession of Faith (1.1), 1646*

3. “unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.”



# Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*

“These Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments constitute the foundation of prophets and apostles on which all Christian churches, in fellowship with each other, take their stand or claim to take their stand. In their official confessions, all churches have acknowledged the Divine authority of those Scriptures and have appropriated them as a reliable rule of faith and life. There has never been a difference or conflict about this point of dogma in the Christian churches.”



# *Westminster Confession of Faith (1.1), 1646*

4. "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."



# John Brown, *Systematic Theology*

“The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are indeed the Word of God—yet it is only the Holy Spirit’s effectual application of them to our mind, conscience, and heart, in their self-evidencing life, light, and power, which can produce a cordial and saving persuasion of it.”



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## *The Sufficiency of Scripture*

1. A Classic Definition of Sufficiency
2. The Biblical Articulation of Sufficiency
  - A. Progressive Revelation and Sufficiency
    - i. The Creation Mandate (Gen. 1–2)
    - ii. The Sacrifices of Abel and Cain (Gen. 4)
    - iii. The Secret and Revealed Things (Deut. 29:29)



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## *The Sufficiency of Scripture*

1. A Classic Definition of Sufficiency
2. The Biblical Articulation of Sufficiency
  - A. Progressive Revelation and Sufficiency
  - B. Completed Revelation and Sufficiency
    - i. The Closed Canon of Scripture



# Wilhelmus Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*

“If one book of Scripture were to be lost, part of this rule would be missing and therefore would not be perfect. One book or several together—for example, the books of Moses or the gospels—perfectly contain the complete rule for faith and practice.”



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## *The Sufficiency of Scripture*

1. A Classic Definition of Sufficiency
2. The Biblical Articulation of Sufficiency
  - A. Progressive Revelation and Sufficiency
  - B. Completed Revelation and Sufficiency
    - i. The Closed Canon of Scripture
    - ii. The Perfection of Scripture
      - a) Psalm 19:7–11



# BIBLIOLOGY

## *The Sufficiency of Scripture*

a) Psalm 19:7–11

- 1) Scripture is perfect—it is able to save your soul (7a)
- 2) Scripture is trustworthy—it is able to make you wise (7b)



# Wilhelmus Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*

“David as prophet does not merely make mention of the perfection which is inherent in the minutest detail of the Word of God, but rather how this Word functions in reference to man: it can infuse man with wisdom unto salvation, which in turn results in his conversion. Thus, the Word contains all that is essential for doctrine and practice. If such were not the case, then it would neither be capable of converting a man nor providing him with suitable wisdom.”



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## *The Sufficiency of Scripture*

### a) Psalm 19:7–11

- 1) Scripture is perfect—it is able to save your soul (7a)
- 2) Scripture is trustworthy—it is able to make you wise (7b)
- 3) Scripture is right—it is able to bring you joy (8a)
- 4) Scripture is clear—it is able to direct your path (8b)
- 5) Scripture is clean—it is able to address you anytime (9a)
- 6) Scripture is true—it is able to protect you (9b)
- 7) Scripture is desirable (10)
- 8) Scripture is rewarding (11)



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1. A Classic Definition of Sufficiency
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  - A. Progressive Revelation and Sufficiency
  - B. Completed Revelation and Sufficiency
    - i. The Closed Canon of Scripture
    - ii. The Perfection of Scripture
      - a) Psalm 19:7–11
      - b) 2 Timothy 3:15–17



# BIBLIOLOGY

## *The Sufficiency of Scripture*

### i. The Perfection of Scripture

a) Psalm 19:7–11

b) 2 Timothy 3:15–17

1) Scripture is sufficient to save (15)

2) Scripture is sufficient to sanctify (16–17)



# John MacArthur, *Biblical Doctrine*

“Between the Scriptures and the indwelling Holy Spirit, the believer needs no additional revelation to be informed on how to live the Christian life.”



# BIBLIOLOGY

## *The Sufficiency of Scripture*

### i. The Perfection of Scripture

- a) Psalm 19:7–11
- b) 2 Timothy 3:15–17
- c) 2 Peter 1:3



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## *The Sufficiency of Scripture*

1. A Classic Definition of Sufficiency
2. The Biblical Articulation of Sufficiency
3. The Historical Witness of Sufficiency
  - A. Pastors/Theologians



# Iranaeus, 2<sup>nd</sup> Century

“We knew not the provision for our salvation through others than those through whom the gospel came to us, which indeed they preached, but afterwards through the will of God delivered to us in the Scriptures, to be the pillar and foundation of our faith.”



# Tertullian, 2<sup>nd</sup> Century

“I adore the fullness of the Scriptures.”

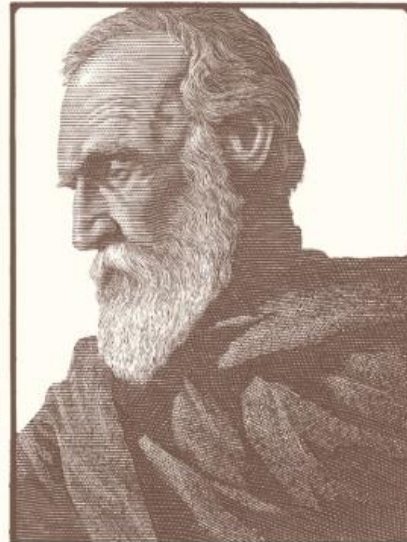


# Augustine of Hippo, 4<sup>th</sup> Century

“In the things openly declared in the Scriptures, we can find whatever is necessary for faith and practice.”



GERALD BRAY



# AUGUSTINE

*on the Christian Life*

TRANSFORMED BY THE POWER OF GOD

# Basil of Caesarea, 4<sup>th</sup> Century

“It is a proof of unbelief and a sign of pride either to weaken any of those things which are written or to introduce what is not written.”



# Athanasius, 4<sup>th</sup> Century

“The sacred and inspired Scriptures are sufficient to declare the truth.”



# John Huss, 15<sup>th</sup> Century

“From this it appears that wisdom is to be praised and, therefore, also in a formal sense, the sacred Scriptures, by which [this wisdom] perfects humanity.”



# John Calvin, 16<sup>th</sup> Century

“Scripture is the school of the Holy Spirit. Just as nothing is omitted that is both necessary and useful to know, so nothing is taught except what is expedient to know.”



# William Perkins, 16<sup>th</sup> Century

“The sufficiency is that, whereby the word of God is so complete, that nothing may be either put to it, or taken from it, which appertaineth to the proper end thereof.”



# William Ames, 16<sup>th</sup> Century

“All things necessary to salvation are contained in the Scripture and also those things necessary for the instruction and edification of the church.”



# John Owen, 17<sup>th</sup> Century

“The Holy Spirit of God has prepared and disposed of the Scripture so as it might be a most sufficient and absolutely perfect way and means of communicating unto our minds that saving knowledge of God and his will that is needful which we may live unto him, and come unto the enjoyment of him in his glory.”



# A.A. Hodge, 19<sup>th</sup> Century

“It is not meant that the Scriptures contain every revelation which God has ever made to man, but that their contents are the only supernatural revelation that God does now make to man, and that this revelation is abundantly sufficient for man’s guidance in all questions of faith, practice, and modes of worship, and excludes the necessity and right of any human inventions.”



# John Murray, 20<sup>th</sup> Century

“Scripture occupies for us an exclusive place and performs an exclusive function as the only extant mode of revelation.”



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## *The Sufficiency of Scripture*

1. A Classic Definition of Sufficiency
2. The Biblical Articulation of Sufficiency
3. The Historical Witness of Sufficiency
  - A. Pastors/Theologians
  - B. Confessions



## *The Geneva Confession, 1536*

“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.”



## *Articles of Religion (39 Articles), 1562*

“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.”



## *Second London Baptist Confession, 1689*

“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.”



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## *The Sufficiency of Scripture*

1. A Classic Definition of Sufficiency
2. The Biblical Articulation of Sufficiency
3. The Historical Witness of Sufficiency
4. The Incumbent Appropriation of Sufficiency



# Wilhelmus Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*

“As the Holy Scriptures are the only rule for doctrine and life, the devil is intent upon overthrowing or obscuring this foundation to the utmost of his ability by means of instruments at his disposal.”



# BIBLIOLOGY

## *The Sufficiency of Scripture*

### 4. The Incumbent Appropriation of Sufficiency

- A. In your own soul
- B. In your family
- C. In your church



# Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*

“Now the church has not received this Scripture from God in order simply to rest on it, and still less in order to bury this treasure in earth. On the contrary, the church is called to preserve this Word of God, to explain it, to preach it, apply it, translate it, spread it abroad, recommend it, and defend it—in a word, to cause the thoughts of God laid down in Scripture to triumph everywhere and at all times over the thoughts of man. All of the work to which the church is called is the effort at, and the ministration, of the Word of God.”



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## *The Sufficiency of Scripture*

### 4. The Incumbent Appropriation of Sufficiency

- A. In your own soul
- B. In your family
- C. In your church
- D. In your career
- E. In your community
- F. In your country



# Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*

“It is a service of this Word of God when it is preached in the assembly of believer ... that in our own hearts and lives, in our profession and business, in house and field and office, in science and art, in state and community, in works of mercy and missions, and in all spheres and ways of life, this Word be applied, worked out, and made to rule.”



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