

In speaking of the "Scriptures" as a rule of Faith, I include, under the name, the thirty-nine books of the Old, and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, generally recognized as Canonical, to the exclusion of what are called the Apocryphal Books. Moreover, as our controversy respecting the sufficiency of Scripture is not with infidels, but with parties who admit the Divine origin and authority of the sacred volume, so we assume the genuineness, authenticity and inspiration of the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

In maintaining the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, we are chiefly confronted with Romanists, (under which name we may conveniently include certain Anglican allies) who affirm that as a rule of Faith the Scriptures are defective; *first*, as to substance or contents; and, *secondly*, as to manner or style. As to *substance*, Romanists affirm that the Scriptures do not contain all truths necessary to salvation, and, therefore, need to be supplemented by certain traditions, written or unwritten, in possession of the Church. As to *manner or style*, they affirm that the statements of Scripture are not sufficiently clear or perspicuous, and that recourse must therefore be had to the infallible interpretation of the Church, speaking by its so-called visible head, the Bishop of Rome, or the subordinate clergy.

There is thus a twofold ground of objection made by Romanists to the sufficiency of Scripture; viz., *first*, its imperfection as to substance, and *secondly*, its obscurity as to style. It becomes, therefore, necessary on our part, that we should establish the two following points: viz, first the *perfection* of Scripture, that is, its sufficiency as to the *extent* of its teaching; and *secondly*, its *perspicuity*, that is, its sufficiency as to the *clearness* of its teaching. The general question, therefore, of the sufficiency of Scripture, includes the two particular topics of its *perfection* and *perspicuity*, the separate discussion of which must now be attempted.

#### I.—THE PERFECTION OF SCRIPTURE.

Proceeding, in the first place, to discuss the perfection of Scripture as a rule of faith, it will be proper, at the outset, to state particularly the precise views we entertain on this subject.

1. Let it be observed, then, in the first place, that we do not affirm that the Holy Scriptures contain an account of all the words spoken by our Lord and His inspired servants, respecting faith and life. We admit that many lessons of religious instruction were taught by our Lord and his servants, which have not been recorded in the sacred volume. What we maintain is that the Holy Scriptures contain the *substance* of all these doctrines, *necessary to salvation*, which were taught by our Lord and His inspired Apostles and Prophets.

2. *Secondly*, we do not affirm that the Scriptures contain definite information on every circumstance relating to the worship of God, or the government of His church. We admit that there are many things of this kind in which we are to be guided by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, in accordance with the general principle stated by Paul (I. Cor. xiv, 40), "Let all things be done decently and in order."

3. Further, in the third place, we do not maintain that all important doctrines respecting faith and life, are *expressly* and in so many words, contained in Scripture. We admit that there are some important doctrines which are not expressly stated, and which can only be deduced as inferences from other statements. What we maintain is, that all things necessary are either expressly set down in the Scriptures, or may, by good and necessary inference, be deduced from them.