



Let's Read *The Institutes* of the Christian Religion, Class 3

Book 1: Of the Knowledge of God the Creator
Chapters 6-13



“God ... holds forth to all ... another and better help ... to guide us properly to God as a Creator.”

6. THE NEED OF SCRIPTURE, AS A GUIDE AND TEACHER, IN COMING TO GOD AS A CREATOR
7. THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT NECESSARY TO GIVE FULL AUTHORITY TO SCRIPTURE. THE IMPIETY OF PRETENDING THAT THE CREDIBILITY OF SCRIPTURE DEPENDS ON THE JUDGMENT OF THE CHURCH.
8. THE CREDIBILITY OF SCRIPTURE SUFFICIENTLY PROVED IN SO FAR AS NATURAL REASON ADMITS.
9. ALL THE PRINCIPLES OF PIETY SUBVERTED BY FANATICS, WHO SUBSTITUTE REVELATIONS FOR SCRIPTURE.
10. IN SCRIPTURE, THE TRUE GOD OPPOSED, EXCLUSIVELY, TO ALL THE GODS OF THE HEATHEN.
11. IMPIETY OF ATTRIBUTING A VISIBLE FORM TO GOD.—THE SETTING UP OF IDOLS A DEFECTION FROM THE TRUE GOD.
12. GOD DISTINGUISHED FROM IDOLS, THAT HE MAY BE THE EXCLUSIVE OBJECT OF WORSHIP.
13. THE UNITY OF THE DIVINE ESSENCE IN THREE PERSONS TAUGHT, IN SCRIPTURE, FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

“God ... holds forth to all ... another and better help ... to guide us properly to God as a Creator.”

- Adam’s natural knowledge lost by the fall.
- Scripture
 - is a gift restoring the knowledge of God originally given to us.



“God ... holds forth to all ... another and better help ... to guide us properly to God as a Creator.”

- Adam’s natural knowledge lost by the fall.
- Scripture
 - is a gift restoring the knowledge of God originally given to us.
 - is internally confirmed to the believer by the Holy Spirit.
 (The unbeliever remains ignorant of God and his revelation.)

“... the testimony of the Spirit is more excellent than all reason. For as God alone is a fit witness of himself in his Word, so also the Word will not find acceptance in men’s hearts before it is sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit. The same Spirit, therefore, who has spoken through the mouths of the prophets must penetrate into our hearts to persuade us that they faithfully proclaimed what had been divinely commanded.” (1.7.4)

“God ... holds forth to all ... another and better help ... to guide us properly to God as a Creator.”

- Adam’s natural knowledge lost by the fall.
 - Scripture
 - is a gift restoring the knowledge of God originally given to us.
 - is internally confirmed to the believer by the Holy Spirit.
- (The unbeliever remains ignorant of God and his revelation.)

circular reasoning works because

the Bible is true because the Bible says it's true and the Bible is true

The Holy Spirit testifies and the Bible's own character

Validates the truth of the message.

“God ... holds forth to all ... another and better help ... to guide us properly to God as a Creator.”

- Adam’s natural knowledge lost by the fall.
- Scripture
 - is a gift restoring the knowledge of God originally given to us.
 - is internally confirmed to the believer by the Holy Spirit.
- comes through “the mouth of God” and is self-authenticating and self-validating (1.7.5), not needing the RC Church;
- and is communicated through biblical writers with differences in style and abilities. (“Inerrancy” is not a term yet used; and Calvin admits his inability to solve all discrepancies.)

“God ... holds forth to all ... another and better help ... to guide us properly to God as a Creator.”

- Adam’s natural knowledge lost by the fall.
- Scripture
 - is given to man accommodating man’s finiteness (1.13.1)

... God, in so speaking, lisps with us as nurses are wont to do with little children. Such modes of expression, therefore, ... accommodate the knowledge of him to our feebleness. In doing so, he must, of course, stoop far below his proper height.



“God ... holds forth to all ... another and better help ... to guide us properly to God as a Creator.”

- Adam’s natural knowledge lost by the fall.
- Scripture
 - is a gift restoring the knowledge of God originally given to us –
 - and exceeding it: the doctrine of the Trinity (not in natural theology).
 - Enormous historical controversies raged in Calvin’s time
 - Radical Anabaptists & others rejected the tri-unity of God (rf. Servetus)
 - Early Calvin even avoided “traditional” vs. Scriptural language (rf. Nicene Creed); later become much more amenable to vocabulary (but not to analogy).
 - “Fanatics” – Anabaptists, rationalists, and spiritualists who separate the Holy Spirit from Scripture and emphasize the former only.

“God ... holds forth to all ... another and better help ... to guide us properly to God as a Creator.”

Book 1: Of the Knowledge of God the Creator

Calvin incorporates all three persons.

Calvin argues for the full deity of Son and Holy Spirit.

Calvin unites God's sovereignty with fatherhood.

“God ... holds forth to all ... another and better help ... to guide us properly to God as a Creator.”

- Adam's natural knowledge lost by the fall.
- Scripture
 - is a gift restoring the knowledge of God originally given to us
 - Calvin demonstrates how the knowledge of God leads into the worship of God.
 - Acceptable worship is according to knowledge of God (Regulative Principle)
 - Rejection of unacceptable worship by way of idols/images (cf. Moral Law)
 - as not being worthy of God
 - as diminishing the fear of God & increasing error
 - The unlearned do not need pictures, they need teaching.
 - The unlearned do not need idols, they have the sacraments.