

The Theology of the Westminster Standards WCF 1.2–3 on the Content of Scripture

I. Revelation and the Biblical “Canon”

A. General Revelation and Special Revelation

1. **Heb 1:1–2** – “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son ...”
2. **Heb 3:5–6** – “Now Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, ⁶ but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son. And we are his house ...”

B. The “Canon” of Scripture – from the Greek word for “rule” or “standard.”

*“The New Testament is not a collection that ‘just happened,’ a kind of brute fact hanging there on the horizon of the past. Rather, it is the historical phenomenon by which God, the sovereign Architect and Lord of history, asserts and maintains himself as canon [i.e., our “rule” or “Ruler”!], by which his supreme authority comes to expression.” – Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., “The New Testament as Canon,” in *Thy Word is Truth*, 1168.*

II. WCF 1.2 – The Books of the Bible

Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these:

Of the Old Testament:

Genesis	Ruth	Ezra	The Song of Songs	Joel	Zephaniah
Exodus	I Samuel	Nehemiah	Isaiah	Amos	Haggai
Leviticus	II Samuel	Esther	Jeremiah	Obadiah	Zechariah
Numbers	I Kings	Job	Lamentations	Jonah	Malachi
Deuteronomy	II Kings	Psalms	Ezekiel	Micah	
Joshua	I Chronicles	Proverbs	Daniel	Nahum	
Judges	II Chronicles	Ecclesiastes	Hosea	Habakkuk	

Of the New Testament:

The Gospels acc. to.	Paul’s Epistles	Philippians	to Titus	The first, second, and
Matthew	to the Romans	Colossians	to Philemon	third Epistles of
Mark	Corinthians I	Thessalonians I	The Epistle to	John
Luke	Corinthians II	Thessalonians II	the Hebrews	The Epistle of Jude
John	Galatians	to Timothy I	The Epistle of James	The Revelation
The Acts of the Apostles	Ephesians	to Timothy I	The first and second	of John
			Epistles of Peter	

All which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.

A. Inspiration: What does it mean?

1. **2 Tim 3:16** – *“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”*

Q. How does Exodus 4:15 and Jeremiah 1:9 shed light on the nature of divine inspiration?

Q. Wasn't God inhibited by the fallible human authors at his disposal ("to err is human")? How can our "inspired" Bible be "inerrant"?

2. **2 Pet 1:21** – *"For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."*

(1) B.B. Warfield on Scripture and its human authors: "Stained Glass Window"

B. Scripture Recognizes Itself to be the Word of God Written

1. **Gal 3:8** – *"And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed.'"*
2. **Heb 4:12–13** – *"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight ..."*
3. **Heb 3:7** – *"Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, 'Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion ..."*
4. **John 10:35** – *"... Scripture cannot be broken ..."*
5. **2 Pet 3:15–16** – *"And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶ as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures."*

III. WCF 1.3 – The "Apocrypha"

The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.

"The Apocrypha are made up of two groups of writings, the OT apocryphal books, which are more well-known due to their inclusion in the Roman Catholic canon, and the NT apocryphal books. The OT apocryphal books were written in between the end of the OT and the beginning of the NT and were not considered canonical by the Jews of Jesus's own time, nor by most of the early church fathers ... [The OT Apocryphal books] include 1 & 2 Maccabees, 1 Esdras, Judith, Tobit, the Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, as well as some smaller works and even some additions to existing canonical books." – Michael J. Kruger, President and Professor of New Testament (RTS-Charlotte)¹

"And the other Books (as Hierome [i.e., Jerome, Latin Bible translator, c. 345–c. 419] saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners: but yet doth it not apply to them to establish any doctrine: such are these following ..." – 39 Articles of the Church of England (1571)

- A. Q. What do you think about the 39 Articles' declaration about life and doctrine? Is anything wrong here? What is the relationship between doctrine and life? See 2 Tim 3:16!