

Proposition-  
 Scripture, while difficult in places, is sufficiently  
 clear enough for all to understand.

So far in this Westminster Confession of Faith we have learned of:

- The revelation of Scripture—Special revelation given by God of Himself and His will.
- The necessity of Scripture—for the knowledge of God and salvation of men.
- The Canon of Scripture—The sixty six books of God’s Word given by Him and received by His church.
- The authority of Scripture—which rests on no man, but wholly upon God; it’s Author.
- The sufficiency of Scripture—sufficient for all of man’s needs, either expressly (plainly) or through good and necessary consequence (logical truths collected from the agreement of other logical truths), with the necessity of the Holy Spirit for the saving understanding of all things.

Now we look at the perspicuity of Scripture; its clarity and plain-ness to be understood by man.

VII. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all:<sup>15</sup> 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 the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> 2 Peter 3:16 . . . 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.

<sup>16</sup> Psalm 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. 130 The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

1. All things in Scripture are not alike in clarity.  
 Bible reading is not always easy. Some parts of Scripture are harder to read than others. Some parts of Scripture require other parts of Scripture to make them easily understood. Some Bible readers, by either experience or ability, are further along than others in understanding the Scriptures.
2. The necessary things to understand, know, and believed are clearly put forth so that everyone who will look into them, and who use ordinary means, may expect to understand them.  
 We are not all teachers, nor are we all seasoned saints, but God has made it so that, wherever we fall in the bandwidth of capability, each of us who looks into the Scriptures will be given a sufficient understanding of them.
3. To say Scripture needs interpretation is the original lie that was used by Satan against God; that we need an interpreter to understand what God has commanded us *Genesis 2:16-17, 3:1-5*. “*Don’t believe that because that’s not what He means, here let me tell you what He means.*”
4. To say that Scripture needs an interpreter flies in the face of what is taught in it. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple. . . . which vail is done away in Christ (2 Corinthians 3:14).*
5. Yet to say that the church is not to meet in councils and work through the Scripture (good and necessary consequence) and use the products of these, including confessions and creeds to assist and teach the church is wrong. *Acts 15:1-29*

Sola Scriptura—the doctrine of the reformation that upholds this perspicuity of Scripture, tells us that the Scripture is *the only infallible authority* over the church (God being its Author), but not that it is *the only authority*. Scripture reigns supreme but supplementary resources that are produced by the church in its councils and confessions; such as this Westminster Confession are good. Any use of another authority as *supreme or infallible* brings certain confusion.

To say that God has spoken clearly is not, however, the same as to say that there is nothing deep and profound in Scripture. 2 Peter reminds us in 3:16, "...*some things hard to understand.*" It is not the Scriptures but "some things" in the Scriptures which are hard to understand. Even if these things are (rightly so) correctly interpreted and taught by the church, they would still be by definition "hard to understand". *The clearest expression of Einstein's theory of relativity is still hard to understand.*

Here is the key-those who will diligently, prayerfully, and with soundness and stability continue in study of the Scripture will come to know the truth of the deep things of God.

*Some help:*

*-All Christian without distinction are commanded to search the Scriptures-(2 Tim 3:15-17, Acts 17:11, John 5:39)*

*-Scriptures are affirmed to be perspicuous-(Psalm 119:105, 130, 2 Cor 3:14, 2 Pet 1:18, 19, 2 Tim 3:15-17)*

*-Scriptures present themselves as direct divine law to be personally obeyed by men-Eph 5:22, 25, 6:1,5,9, Col 4:1, Ro 16:2)*

What does "perspicuity" mean?

Can you think of a huge church that insists upon their own interpretation of Scripture?

Roman Catholic Baltimore Catechism appendix I, question XIV, How can we know the true meaning of the doctrines contained in the Bible and in Divine Tradition?

*We can know the true meaning of the doctrines contained in the Bible and in Divine Tradition from the Catholic Church, which has been authorized by Jesus Christ to explain His doctrines, and which is preserved from error in its teachings by the special assistance of the Holy Ghost.*

So what would the Roman Catholic doctrine on the same point be?

Contrast then how the Roman church and the Protestant church would view confessions and/or creeds.

Does the doctrine of perspicuity (clarity) mean then that there are no difficult to understand teachings in Scripture?

What do you think are the "ordinary means" which must be duly used? (See section VI & also section IX for a partial answer)

What must the humblest as well as the most learned Christian do to understand Scripture?

Do you think that those who complain of Scripture being hard to understand or contradictory have really done this?