

He wished conveyed, that *He* is the Spirit of truth and will not lie or contradict himself, and that *He* has been pleased to testify of Christ and His redemption in all the pages of sacred Scripture. Thus, as we seek to understand the Bible within the limits of these principles, we shall discover that Scripture, instead of being restricted, will be freed to the greatest extent and degree to speak the message which the Spirit would communicate to those who have ears to hear.

However, this raises another question. If these principles are applied to Scripture under the providential guidance of the Holy Spirit, does it follow that every particular matter contained in Scripture will be equally clear and plain to all believers? Or will some things require time and careful study before they open themselves to our understanding? This suggests the next step in understanding the Bible, the question of the Perspicuity or Clarity of Scripture.

Step Three: The Perspicuity of Scripture

The Reformers of the sixteenth century enumerated four major attributes of Scripture: necessity, authority, perspicuity, and sufficiency. The word "perspicuity" means "clarity, plainness to the understanding"; and Scripture claims this quality for itself. For example, Ps 119:105 says, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path." Verse 130 of the same says, "The unfolding of Thy words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple."

Why then have so many sincere Christians found some portions of Scripture difficult to understand? Why have some believers thrown up their hands at the complexity and intricacy of some sections of the Bible? Using terms which describe the light-admitting qualities of materials, why do many Christians find some portions of the Bible transparent, some translucent, and some virtually opaque?

The problem with the concept of perspicuity as we have thus far defined it is that only part of the biblical teaching has been taken into account, a practice that frequently leads to distortion of the truth. There are other Scriptures which bear on the doctrine of perspicuity. For instance, Peter in his second epistle says "our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them