

In 1674, Thomas Vincent explained from Scripture the Westminster Shorter Catechism. Nearly one hundred years earlier, William Whitaker (1547-1595) in 1588 wrote *Disputations on Holy Scripture* to correct Rome's "invincible" champion, Robert Bellarmine. The following are some highlights from these works. The first is a summary of one of Vincent's answers as he delves into the depths of Question 2 of the Shorter Catechism. (Copies of this book are again on the book rack for a real bargain price. I was so impressed with this book I took the time to make a Table of Contents and Index of Scripture citations.) The last two are from Whitaker's book.

10 proofs that Scripture is the Word of God

(Thomas Vincent page 17-20)

1. Its **majesty** - Is 57:5; 1 Tim 6:15,16
2. Its **holiness & purity** - Rom 1:2; Ps 12:6
3. Its **harmony & consistency** - **it has no irreconcilable differences**
4. The **high mysteries therein revealed** - **e.g. Trinity, incarnation, union with Christ**
5. It **antiquity** - **e.g. creation**
6. Its **power & efficacy** - Heb 4:12; Ps 19:7; Is55:3; Ps 119:50
7. Its **purpose** - **give all glory to God**
8. They are confirmed by **miracles**
9. They are confirmed by the **blood of martyrs**
10. The **testimony of the Spirit of God**

9 reasons for difficult passages

- i) Draws us to pray, seek His help in interpreting
- ii) Excite our diligence in reading, meditating, searching, and comparing Scripture
- iii) Keeps us from losing interest
- iv) Increases our esteem of it
- v) They subdue our pride and expose our ignorance
- vi) So sacred mysteries are open freely to pure and holy but closed to dogs and swine.
- vii) God designed to call our minds from the pursuit of external things & daily occupations, and transfer them to Scriptures.
- viii) Since only those of pure & holy mind gain anything from reading Scripture, it gets us accustomed to internal purity and sanctity.
- ix) God wills some to be teachers.

8 means to use when interpreting Scripture

- i) prayer
- ii) knowledge of original texts & languages
- iii) understanding of the nature of language - figurative & literal literature
- iv) CONTEXT
- v) allowing plainer passages to explain the more obscure
- vi) comparing passages
- vii) "analogy of faith" - e.g. 10 commandments, Lord's prayer, Apostles' Creed
- viii) reference to those who are more skilled