

fitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Now, no one can pretend to say that *all* scripture is so plain that it needs very little study to understand it. No one can deny that large portions of it are exceedingly difficult, and require lengthened study clearly to understand, and not a little labour satisfactorily to explain them. It is very easy to frame *ad captandum* sentences of this kind: "Is it not derogatory to the Word of God to suppose that it is so obscure and vague and ambiguous that you require not only close study, but a course of training in order to fit you for telling what it means?" We are not careful to reply to presumptuous questions of this kind otherwise than after the manner of the Apostle: "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" God might have dispensed with the necessity of careful study in order to understand His Word: but He has not chosen to do so. He might have expressed His revelation in words which could not possibly have been misunderstood even by the most indolent and careless; but He has not done so. He might have supernaturally inspired all translators as well as the original authors; but He has not done so. He might have preserved from error all transcribers; but He has not done so. He might have supernaturally inspired all interpreters; but he has not done so. Were this the proper time, we could show very good reason for all this; but it is enough for our present purpose to state the fact, which no one can deny. It was evidently, then, the intention of God to present His revelation to us in such a manner, that, while first principles and duties, and all the essentials to a sinner's salvation, should lie upon the surface, yet the higher truths, the boundless stores of knowledge and wisdom which are needed "for the perfecting of the saints," should be available only for those who are content to search and study, and use all the means at their command in order to obtain the prize. He that has ordained that man must "labour for the meat that perisheth," has also ordained that he must "labour for the meat that endureth to eternal life." In the sweat of his brow he must eat the one bread. In the sweat of his brain he must eat the other.

This leads us to the consideration of the second objection: "Has not God virtually dispensed with this necessity by the promise of His Spirit, whose office it is to take of Christ's and show it unto us?"

Now, this objection is founded on an entire misapprehension of the nature of the Spirit's work, or rather upon a failure to distinguish between distinct parts of it. It fails to distinguish between the Spirit's work of *revelation* and His work of *sanctification*. The former is finished long ago; the latter is going on now in the hearts of believers. Now, we do not deny that the Spirit's work in the hearts of believers has an important bearing on the interpretation of the scriptures. We believe in fact that it is all-important, absolutely essential. But then its bearing is not direct, but indirect. In other words: The Spirit's work is subjective, in the soul; not objective, on the revelation. He removes the enmity and pride and passion which are in the heart of man by nature, and which unfit him for the reception of the truth, however clearly and simply presented. He brings us into sympathy with the truth, and thus wondrously sharpens our exegetical faculties. At His hands we "receive the love of the truth;" and receiving the love of the truth, we are subjectively prepared for understanding it. But this is a quite different thing from an objective revelation, which alone could dispense with the necessity for