

E. What do you mean by preaching the gospel?

C. I mean to make it known.

E. You are not, then, sent to us, in this region, for the gospel has been made known to us already by such preachers as leave us without excuse; whom, if we believe not, we would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead. I mean Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul and Peter, if you please. Have you anything new to add?

C. I do not mean to make it known as if it had never been read or heard before; but to make known what they have said about it.

E. You mean to explain it, I suppose.

C. Yes, and to enforce it upon the attention of mankind.

E. To make a fact known is to preach, and to explain the meaning of that fact is to teach. But on your own views I would humbly ask, Did ever the Father of our spirits send one class of preachers to make known his will, and afterwards send another class to explain their message and to enforce it?

C. Yes, he sent the apostles to explain the prophets.

E. And he sent you to explain the apostles; and, by and by, he will send other preachers to explain you; and so explanations will never cease, and new missions will succeed each other till time be no more. Your saying that he sent the apostles to explain the prophets, is not more ingenious than Tobiah's saying, "He sends the event to explain the accomplishment of prophecy."

C. And are there not many things in Paul's writings "hard to be understood, which the unlearned and ignorant wrest to their destruction?"

E. I hope you do not suppose the explanation of these things is preaching. But as you and many of your brethren often cite these words, will you hear a remark or two upon them. It is not the *epistles* that is the antecedent to "*hois*," but "the things" mentioned by Peter. I need not tell you that *epistolais* is feminine and *hois* neuter; consequently, it is not the language or style of Paul that is referred to in this passage, but the things themselves of which he spoke. However, I lay no stress on this distinction, as we admit the scriptures are often wrested—but by whom? Peter says the unteachable, (*amatheis*.) not the unlearned, but, as Macknight says, "the unteachable" and the double-minded; and these are always the learned or those who think themselves wise. You know that the Romanists infer from these words the necessity of an infallible interpreter. Their words are, "The scriptures are not sufficient for deciding controversies concerning the articles of faith; and the decision of these matters is to be sought from the Catholic church." But the misfortune is, that the Catholics do not tell us "whether it is the Pope alone, or the Pope in conjunction with his own clergy, or a general council of his bishops, or any particular council, or any other body of men in their church distinguished by a particular denomination." This is good policy; for all those to whom they have attributed infallibility have erred, as they are constrained to admit. And I think you will admit that none now differ more about the meaning of scripture than the learned.