

2. If we are searching for light on any particular subject, we should search those parts of the Word of God that treat of it. We should not go to the Books of Moses to learn the order of the Christian Church, nor to the Book of Revelations for precepts respecting our worldly business; but take those portions of the Word of God which were written expressly for our guidance in each matter.

3. Nearly connected with this is the rule for the interpretation of the Old Testament before adverted to. The Old Testament is to be held as subordinate to the New. The New supplies a key to it. Christ teaches us himself how to regard the Old Testament; it testifies of Him. The law and the prophets and the psalms were all alike in this. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The old covenant with the Jews, as the natural children of Abraham, foreshadows the covenant with the true Israel—that is, his spiritual children—those who, being partakers of His faith, partake of His blessing. With this key we read the prophecies; not as do the Jews, who look only for a material kingdom, with a Messiah reigning literally, but as disciples of Him whose kingdom is spiritual. We are taught, too, how to regard the *narratives* of the Old Testament. All these things, we are told, were written for our learning, and many of the events happened for examples to us upon whom the ends of the world are come.

4. A sound mind will judge fairly. It will not *wrest* the Scriptures. It will not hang important doctrines upon shadowy allusions, and it will attend to what the Apostle Paul calls the "proportion" of faith. It will not turn things that happened for *warning* into examples to be followed. It will not say,—Because David committed murder and adultery, being yet a man after God's own heart, a man may lawfully do the same thing now. Neither will it say,—David being called a man after God's own heart, committed murder and adultery; the God of the Scriptures is therefore one who approves of licentiousness and murder. In applying Scripture examples it will discriminate between circumstances. It will not blindly say, because Christ is our example, we must therefore go into the woods and fast forty days; neither, because he sent his disciples forth two and two to preach *through the country*, will it object to a tract distributor or a Christian visitor going alone *from house to house*.

This Spirit will preserve us from every fundamental, and we might almost say, from every minor mistake. It is seldom that men get wrong from mere defect of understanding. Error is generally the fruit of prejudice, or caprice, or pride or rashness, or obstinacy; in short, of a moral defect, rather than an intellectual. There are, however, confessedly, difficulties in the Word of God, and we must say a word or two about them, and about the best method of dealing with them.

1. Some of them, but only a few, arise from defective translation.

2. Some obscurities arise from the division into chapters and verses. The meaning sometimes depends upon what goes before or comes after; but by our present division (convenient as it is for many uses) the connection is occasionally lost, and hence there arises obscurity.

3. Some obscurities arise from slight errors of the press, or of the original text. These will creep in, let ever so much care be taken. Some of the difficult places of the Old Testament, especially those where *numbers* are concerned, are referable to this cause. There are slight differences between different copies of the original, as might be expected when copies had to be taken by hand; but of these it has been well said that "all the omissions in the ancient manuscripts put together,