

in one of these. There were men of God, men eminent for piety, on both sides, but who disputed sharply with each other concerning the meaning of Scripture.

Why do we refer to these things? Simply to show that none should flippantly decide concerning the teachings of the Bible, and hastily conclude that all who differ from them are necessarily wrong. The suspicion should be allowed to creep into the mind that it is possible for one to go to the Bible for ultimate truth on certain subjects, and not find it there; that it is quite possible to overtax the ability of Scripture, and believe it undertakes to teach what it really does not. Moreover, it is just possible that there may be a right way and a wrong way of interpreting the inspired Word. Let us look at this last thought a little more closely. Here is a passage which reads, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." Now, what does that mean? Many will tell us, in an off-hand manner, "Why it means that we should attend all the means of grace, when we have the ability so to do." But what, we ask, about the word *ability*? Does it mean that nothing but absolute impossibility should prevent? For example, one is sick, and yet not so sick but that, with the aid of crutches, he may get there, that is if he starts an hour before others; one doctor says he will run serious risk of his life if he goes, another doctor says there will be no risk, for doctors will differ sometimes. Does it mean that he must, at all hazards, crutch it under such circumstances, and "forsake not the assembling together?" "Oh no," they say, "we only mean what is reasonable." But what is *reasonable*? One says, "It seems reasonable to me that, as I have been working very hard all the week, I should stay at home and rest on Sabbath." To this they reply, unhesitatingly, "That is not a reasonable excuse." Hence it comes down to this, that such persons really mean that every other person should obey that command according to their notions of what is reasonable. So, then, if this style of interpreting the Scriptures obtains, every one becomes a self-constituted pope, and it generally ends in his dealing out the anathemas of the Bible on all who differ from him.

From this line of thought it is not difficult to explain the origin of the wranglings of theologians, or the censorious fault-findings of religionists, and these must continue so long as this method of Scripture interpretation is presumed to have the sanction of Heaven. Calvinists, Arminians, Baptists, apostles of the dress question, anti-narcoticists, *et hoc genus omne*, must go on, will go on, playing Sir Oracle,