

exegetical study. The Spirit of God will not amend the translation for you. He did not do it when it was written, nor will He when it is read, either by correcting it when wrong, or supplementing it when defective, or by explaining it when dark or ambiguous. *E. g.*: the most spiritually minded man, who is ignorant of Hebrew, will probably fail to extract any meaning out of the following sentence occurring in the midst of a splendid passage in the book of Job: "the noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour." Or to take a more familiar illustration: a person ignorant of Greek, and untrained in exegesis, will vainly endeavour to comprehend or explain this verse in Heb. c. 3: "For some, when they had heard did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses." And the failure to understand this makes it impossible either to get or to give the force of the entire passage to which it belongs. Again, the Spirit will not make you acquainted with the history and antiquities which bear upon the interpretation of different passages. (This was illustrated from part of the work of the Session). Still further, the Spirit of God will not disentangle for you a net of sophistry which an opponent may have woven for you, or a cunning wresting of the scriptures for some evil purpose. Let us be understood here. We do not say that the Spirit will not guard you against such sophistries, but we say that He will not *expose* them for you. We shall illustrate what we mean. Some simple-minded believer in Jesus is laid hold of by an infidel, and plied with infidel objections. Unskilled in argumentation, and unprovided with the weapons of defence, he is unable to answer. Does his faith fail him on this account? By no means. He has the witness within. He has the testimony of his own experience. He cannot answer the infidel arguments; but they have no effect on him whatever. You may as well try to reason him out of the belief of his own existence. He is firmly intrenched in the unassailable position of the man blind from his birth whom the Saviour cured: "Whether he be a sinner or no I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." Now, it is undoubtedly the clear inward witness of the Spirit of God which renders such a man's faith unassailable; so that the Spirit of God does guard the believer against sophistical arguments; but that is quite another thing from exposing them, from showing where the fallacy lies. But as ministers of the gospel, as pastors and teachers, it will not be enough for you to be yourselves proof against personal injury from such sources: *you* must be able above all men to give a reason for the hope that is in you, "to prove all things," while you "hold fast that which is good."

In a word, you may set it down as a sound position that the Spirit of God will not in any case make plain to you, without study, what can be reached by study; and therefore the influence of the Spirit, valuable as it is, indispensable as it is, in no degree dispenses with the necessity for the most faithful, patient, and persevering exegetical study.

If it be urged that there are now so many aids to the study of Scripture, so many excellent commentaries and works of that kind, we answer, that for private Christians, or for those occupying less responsible positions in the Christian Church, they are all very well; and for the assistance of the minister of Christ in his study many of them are exceedingly valuable; but it is a pitiful thing if he have to *lean* upon them. He ought to be able to speak that he does *know*, and not simply rehearse what this or that great man has said on the subject. A minister that cannot read and interpret Scripture for himself is just like a physician who would carry