

THE ILLUMINATING WORK OF THE SPIRIT. The period of time between the two advents of Christ is often designated as *The Age of the Holy Spirit*, and properly so, since these days are characterized by the activity and administration of the Spirit. Among the age-characterizing operations of the Spirit is that of teaching or enlightening the individual in whom He dwells.

This reception of truth is not confined to commonplace issues, but may reach out into the “deep things of God,” and the experience of the believer when thus taught by the Spirit is peculiar in this respect, that the divine Teacher is within his heart and he therefore does not hear a voice speaking from without and at stated times, as is the method of human teachers, but the mind and heart are supernaturally awakened from within to apprehend what otherwise would be unknown. (p. 109)

There is no didactic discipline in the world comparable to the teaching of Christ by the Holy Spirit, both because of the fact that infinity characterizes the themes which are taught, and because of the Teacher’s method of approach by which He, by the Spirit, enters the innermost recesses of the heart where impressions originate and there not only tells out the truth of transcendent magnitude, but causes the pupil actually to grasp the things thus revealed. “By faith we understand” (Heb. 11:3).

There is not the slightest possibility that the most educated and brilliant mind can make one step of progress in the understanding of spiritual truth apart from the direct, supernatural teaching to the individual heart by the indwelling Spirit. In like manner there can be no full or worthy apprehension of God’s revealed truth by the Christian who is unspiritual or carnal. Hence the imperative aspect of a yielded life. (p. 113)

Interpretation. It is properly required of the theologian that he both understand and expound the Scriptures. This is the distinctive field in which he serves. However, he confronts a wide latitude of interpretation which is represented when all schools of theological thought are considered. Nevertheless, whether any person or group of persons has ever attained unto it or not, there is but one system of revelation set forth in the Word of God. It is sometimes claimed that anything good or bad may be proved or defended from the Scriptures. Such an impression could be sustained only by the permission of violent misuse or disuse of the Sacred Text. It is noticeable that all theological systems and even modern cults make use of the Bible.

It is probable that, owing to human limitations, no theological system has reached that illation which is exempt from all error and which incorporates into itself all truth in its proper balance. Men of candor have long striven to reach this desideratum. (p. 114)

The uncompromising student will do well to study the Sacred Text and demand of himself that right relation to God which insures the priceless divine guidance into all truth. The conclusions of other men should be given due respect.

It is the student's task, having considered and weighed the contribution men have made to the general understanding of the Scriptures, to advance these assured results of scholarship beyond the attainments of past generations, striving to be as humble and true as the fathers have been. Among other things stated, 2 Timothy 2:15 does enjoin "study" which is the application to, and the investigation of, the text of Scripture itself and not merely a perusal of the writings of other men about the text. (pp. 114-15).

The science of interpretation—usually designated *hermeneutics*, which term denotes the art of interpreting the Sacred Scriptures—includes the recognition of the principles upon which a true analysis must proceed. (pp. 115)

When undertaking to interpret the Scriptures, due consideration should be given to: I. THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE AS A WHOLE, II. THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER AND MESSAGE OF EACH BOOK OF THE BIBLE, III. TO WHOM IS A GIVEN SCRIPTURE ADDRESSED, IV. CONSIDERATION OF THE CONTEXT, V. CONSIDERATION OF ALL SCRIPTURE BEARING ON ANY GIVEN THEME, VI. DISCOVERY OF THE EXACT MEANING OF THE DETERMINATIVE WORDS IN THE TEXT, AND VII. NECESSITY OF AVOIDING PERSONAL PREJUDICES. (pp. 115–119)