

Ignorance of the Principles of Interpretation

IGNORANCE of the principles and rules of Interpretation, is one of the greatest obstacles in the way of obtaining a correct knowledge of the Bible. Language is a medium of communication between man and his fellow man. Through this medium the thoughts, desires and determinations of one mind are made known to another.

God has made communications of truth to the world, both by the natural objects of perception, and by the instrumentality of human language. He did not form a new language to be the medium of communication between himself and his creatures, but made use of that already formed and in use by them. Neither did he construct this language anew to make it answer his purpose; he took it just as it was, and used it just as he found it, for the benevolent purpose of instructing his creatures in the way of life and salvation.

In the earlier ages of the world he found the Hebrew in use, and he then made his communications in that. In later times, the Hebrew being less generally understood, and the Greek more generally known, he made his communications in Greek. Having made his communications once, he leaves them to be studied and interpreted by his subjects; to be studied in the same manner in which we study other writings, and to be interpreted by the same rules.

(The Elements of Biblical Interpretation... by Leicester A. Sawyer, New Haven: A. H. Maltby, 1836, 5-6, Paragraph Structure Modified)