

## Preconceived Opinions

In applying the following rules of Interpretation to the Bible, it is to be remembered, that the holy word of God is to be approached with the profoundest reverence. Rash and hasty judgments are not for a moment to be tolerated in relation to those vitally important subjects, which the Bible unfolds to our view. Here, if any where, when examining this blessed book if ever, we are to proceed with deliberation, and judge with candor and caution. How much is lost by a neglect to do this, no tongue can tell, and no pen describe.

Much of the error in faith and practice, with which the world is flooded, may be traced to this prolific source; men leap to their conclusions on religious subjects, before they well understand the premises; and those conclusions are such as suit their own misguided fancy, whether they can be deduced from the word of God by fair means or foul. Many undertake the study of the Bible with their ultimate conclusions all predetermined.

They look into it, not to hear what God is pleased to say, for the purpose of deterring them from sin, and exciting them to seek holiness and heaven; but to see what they can find, to establish themselves in this and that favorite opinion.

That such persons should make much progress in sound scriptural knowledge is not to be expected. They do not labor to correct their errors and enlarge their views, a work which cannot be accomplished without labor. They only strive to confirm themselves in their preconceived opinions: in that they generally succeed, no matter how absurd those opinions may be.

(The Elements of Biblical Interpretation... by Leicester A. Sawyer, New Haven: Published by A. H. Maltby, 1836, ebook, 8-9; Text and Paragraph Structure Modified)