

Principles of the Science of Interpretation

At the outset it must be emphasized that no rules, however wise and perfect, are sufficient of themselves for the deepest understanding of scripture.

Neither the rules nor the scholarship which they inculcate can take the place of the two essentials for a true apprehension of the deep things of God, (1) the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the study of the Bible, which is gained by prayer (Luke 11: 13; John 16: 12-15), and (2) personal acceptance of the truths contained in the Bible and obedience to its commandments (John 7: 17).

These two guides, which are indeed one, should accompany and permeate all our study of the scripture... The ideal interpreter is one who combines with all intellectual and scholarly equipment a simple faith in the guidance of the Spirit and a daily practice of Bible truth.

Such a man only can become in the fullest sense “a workman that needed not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. I: 15).

To attain this ideal should be the constant prayer and endeavor of every Christian minister not only for his own sake but that he may declare on his people all the counsel of God (Acts 20: 27).

(A Manuel of Biblical Hermeneutics by John Howard Raven, Printed for the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in America at New Brunswick, NJ, 1910, 39, Text and Paragraph Structure Modified)