

Chapter III The Problem of Interpreting God's Revelation

The Bible is an extremely simple book, and yet it is an infinitely complex book. The reason for this paradox is easy to explain. It was God's desire to bring certain clear, simple truths to men's minds. Consequently these truths are presented in the Bible many times and are sometimes expressed in such simple language that there is no excuse for any reader of the Bible to fail to grasp them.

On the other hand the Bible is a very complex book. The reason for this is that it presents the mind of the infinite Creator of the universe. For every fact that man can know, God knows a million facts. He is familiar with many matters of which we have never dreamed. From these He has selected those that are most important for us to know, and has presented them in clear language. He has also given us the material to understand a great many of the important facts about the universe, and in particular about His own character, about the purpose of our lives, and about our relation to Himself. Many complex elements enter into these various areas. The Bible is so rich that the simplest person can gain from it food for his soul and can make progress in understanding and growth in grace. It is also so written that the most profound intellect can go deeper and deeper into it, and can always find new truths and gain deeper understanding of the meaning of the universe and of the nature of God.

If a man who is highly trained in engineering begins to read a textbook in some area of medicine he may find himself unable to understand much of its language. He does not know the elementary concepts of the subject. Words are used in a technical way and often an ordinary dictionary will give no clue as to what they mean in the medical context. The same is true of a physician who might try to read a book of law. In every field of thought there are background concepts and fundamental ideas that have to be grasped before one can understand advanced books on the subject. It was a tremendous undertaking of the Almighty God to write a book that would present the simple concepts in such a way that in all periods the ordinary person could learn what is most vital for his life, but which at the same time would include a presentation of profound teachings that would in all times enable those who study it carefully to gain ever deeper and newer knowledge of God's truth.