

#### *√4 Understanding the Bible*

The first step toward a proper understanding of the Bible involves the clearing away of certain misunderstandings, the first of which is that anyone can understand the Bible. Only a person who has been born again by the Spirit of God can have a true, spiritual understanding of Scripture.

The second misunderstanding involves the drawing of certain implications from the Holy Spirit's indwelling ministry in the believer. This ministry must always be seen not apart from, but in close connection with, the truth revealed in Scripture. The Spirit teaches through Scripture. This being true, all believers who wish to have a proper understanding of the Bible have need of prayer for the Holy Spirit's quickening of the gift of spiritual understanding which He has already given to all believers, as well as for guidance of their thought processes as they read and study the Word of the living God.

However, having now said this much, we must ask the question, "Doesn't this place a great deal of emphasis upon the individual's own interpretation of Scripture? Is there not a danger here of getting into purely subjective understandings of the Bible?" This question happily suggests the next step in understanding the Bible, the question of the limits on the right of private interpretation.

#### **Step Two: Limits on the Right of Private Interpretation**

In step 1 of this series we discovered that the Bible teaches that only a person who has been born again by the Spirit of God can have a true, spiritual understanding of Scripture; and that no believer has need of an infallible human teacher to provide him with a final authoritative interpretation of the truth of Scripture. It was further affirmed that all believers have an infallible divine Teacher, the Holy Spirit, who has given to all believers the gift of spiritual understanding. This gift is exercised through a prayerful study of, and meditation upon, the truths of Scripture.

However, these considerations raised the question of the limits of the "right of private interpretation." To what extent may the interpretation of Scripture be seen as the right of each individual believer? How far can a born-again person be entrusted with the task of properly interpreting Scripture?