

fulfilled the law." Of which law is he speaking -- human law, natural law, Roman law, the Mosaic Law, God's moral law, or the law of Christ? We are not free to speculate as to which of these meanings (or some other) might best fit the context, for in the next verse the Spirit of God through Paul has identified this "law" as the second table of the Ten Commandments. Verse 9 states, "For this, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,' and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" This is what is meant by observing the principle of the Bible's *self-interpretation*.

2. The principle of the integrity of the authors of Scripture

A second principle which limits the right of private judgment concerns the necessity of attempting to discover the intention of the writers of the Bible. We must ask what the writer meant when he wrote a particular statement. We are not free to impress upon the author's words what we think he should have meant or what we would have meant, but are free only to attempt to understand what he meant. And the best method of discovering the author's meaning is by carefully studying the actual words which he wrote!

In connection with this principle, we do not seek to be creatively constructive, but receptively reconstructive of the author's intended meaning. This does not rule out the possibility that the Spirit of God had an even richer and fuller meaning than that which was in the mind of the human author; it simply stresses the idea that the basic meaning of the text is that which the author intended. That is what is meant by maintaining the *integrity of the author*.

3. The principle of the logical integrity of the Bible

A third principle which limits the right of private judgment is both a deduction from God's nature and an induction drawn from scriptural data. God is a unity. The Father is true and faithful. The Son is called the truth. The Spirit is the Spirit of truth. Since God is truth and God is a unity, truth is therefore a unity: coherent, self-consistent, non-contradictory. When God (who is truth) speaks, He speaks truth. When God revealed himself at various times and in diverse manners, He revealed truth concerning himself. This self-consistent, coherent truth was