

recorded in Scripture; and Scripture itself teaches that it was recorded accurately and faithfully; i.e., *truly*. As a result we have a body of divinely inspired truths, a "perfect treasure of heavenly instruction," in which no single Scripture or group of Scriptures contradicts any other Scripture. This does not rule out the concept of scriptural paradox (apparent but not genuine contradiction), nor does it rule out some doctrinal constructions which are built solidly upon scriptural data but contain aspects which (in our present state) appear incomprehensible (e.g., the doctrine of the Trinity, in which three distinct Persons are one divine Being). It should be stressed that this principle does not attempt to force God to conform to a man-made system of logic; it simply applies to Scripture the conviction that the law of contradiction is simply the expression, on a created level, of the internal coherence of God's own nature. Thus we may speak of the unity, the self-consistency, and the coherence of Scripture, which taken together comprise the principle of *logical integrity*.

4. The principle of the redemptive purpose of the Bible

This concerns itself with the need to relate all of our interpretations to the purpose of God in giving us His inspired Word. Since the Fall of the entire human race in Adam, God has been revealing His nature and His will to specially chosen persons by means of special acts of revelation. He has revealed himself as a holy and just, all-knowing and all-powerful God. He has revealed His works of creation and preservation. And He has revealed His will, directed to man's obedience. But most importantly, He has revealed himself as a God of mercy and grace; and He has revealed His plan of redemption, reaching its full accomplishment in the incarnation, atoning death, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. All of Scripture appears to be built around this wonderful plan of salvation; and Jesus Christ and His redemptive work is at its center. This being the case, it is necessary to understand any given portion of Scripture in relation to God's *redemptive purpose* as an organic whole.

These four principles, then, provide some limitations to the right of private interpretation. If these principles seem too restrictive, too confining, too narrow for the free working of the Spirit of God, it should be remembered that the Holy Spirit is the ultimate Author of Scripture, that He has revealed *His* meaning by self-interpretive explanations, that *He* guided the human authors of Scripture so that their words should convey the thought