

THE
SPIRIT OF GOD:

— ITS —

OFFICES AND MANIFESTIONS,

TO THE END OF

THE CHRISTIAN AGE.

BY ELD. J. H. WAGGONER.

“HAVING RECEIVED OF THE FATHER THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT, HE HATH SHED FORTH
THAT WHICH YE NOW SEE AND HEAR.” ACTS 2:33.

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PREFACE

Many good thoughts have been presented of late years on the subject of the Gifts of the Spirit, and yet the whole amount that has been written on the perpetuity of the Gifts in the church is very small indeed, considering the great importance of the doctrine.

In adding to what has already been published we have made no attempt to exhaust the evidences, for on some points our remarks are exceedingly brief; but we have endeavored to point out what we consider the clearest and weightiest arguments, and to show the relation of this doctrine to other parts of the gospel.

We call especial attention to the connection existing between obedience to the Law of God and the presence of the Gifts of his Spirit. For a long time the churches seem to have lost sight of this important relation; and consequently antinomianism, and its constant attendant, vainglorious formality, have been greatly strengthened. Fortunately the Scriptures give a clear and decided testimony on this subject. We have also tried to bring out the whole truth presented in Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, and to show that the perpetuity of the Law of God, and of the Gifts in the church, is as firmly established by this sermon as is the continuance of the ordinance of baptism.

As we are living in the time of the fulfillment of some

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important prophecies, both on this and on other subjects,—in a time when a special work of preparation is needed to meet the Lord Jesus at his coming, the question of the restoration of the Spirit's power in the church becomes of unusual interest. Were it not for this power, for the promised refreshing from the presence of the Lord, no flesh could stand in that time when Jesus ceases to plead for fallen man, when the sinner can no more find a mediator whereby to come unto the Father.

Our earnest prayer is that this feeble effort may be the means of increasing the respect of some at least for the Gifts of the Spirit, and of awakening an interest in those scriptures which teach us our dependence on the means appointed for our sanctification. We strongly desire that the waiting ones may, by the Spirit's presence and power, be strengthened to cultivate all the graces of the divine life, and soon be brought into the unity of the faith of the Present Truth, that the testimony of Jesus may be confirmed in them so that they shall come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our blessed Redeemer. 1 Cor. 1:6, 7.

J. H. W.

Battle Creek Mich., August 1877.

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CHAPTER I.

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.” John 14:16.

There is not a subject presented in all the Scriptures which is of greater interest and importance than that of the gospel gifts and manifestations of the Spirit of God. In the words of the above text, the Spirit is the *Comforter* to the pilgrim who finds his life one of warfare, and who is told that in the world he shall have tribulation. It is the *Guide* to lead us “into all truth;” to aid us to escape from the darkness of this wicked world and to find the light of life. It is the *Sanctifier*, in connection with “belief of the truth,” to impress that truth upon our hearts, and to soften our hearts that we may appreciate, and with humble reverence receive, the word of truth. And its influence extends to “the world,” to whom it is a *Reprover* of sin.

The subject is a very solemn one; it is not to be approached in a light and irreverent manner. Jesus, the holy Son of God, who claimed divine honors, who said that “all should honor the Son even as they honor the Father,” also said:—

“Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son

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of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” Matt. 12:32.

The solemn importance of these words is increased by the consideration that they were uttered as a rebuke to the Pharisees, who ascribed *the works* of Christ to the power of Satan instead of to the Spirit of God. They did not speak of the Spirit at all *directly*; they even may have felt the most becoming reverence for that Spirit *in name*. But their condemnation rested in this, that they rejected that which proceeded from the Spirit of God, without a patient, careful, submissive, and prayerful consideration of its nature and its claims. How careful, then, should we be in our investigations of this subject, and in our actions in reference to it. For, to ascribe the works of Satan to the Spirit of God, is to debase the Spirit, and to exalt the power of the adversary to divine honor. And to ascribe the gifts and works of the Spirit of God to Satan, is to blaspheme so as to have no forgiveness forever. May the Spirit itself guide us into all truth, and save us from both deception and presumption.

There is one question, which has been much controverted in the theological world upon which we have never presumed to enter. It is that of the personality of the Spirit of God. Prevailing ideas of *person* are very diverse, often crude, and the word is differently understood; so that unity of opinion on this point cannot be expected until all shall be able to define precisely what they mean by the word, or until all shall agree upon one particular sense in which the word shall be used. But as this agreement does not exist, it

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seems that a discussion of the subject cannot be profitable, especially as it is not a question of direct revelation. We have a right to be positive in our faith and our statements only when the words of Scripture are so direct as to bring the subject within the range of positive proof.

We are not only willing but anxious to leave it just where the word of God leaves it. From it we learn that the Spirit of God is that awful and mysterious power which proceeds from the throne of the universe, and which is the efficient actor of the work of creation and of redemption.

When the earth was just spoken into existence, while yet all was desolate and void,—

“The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” Gen. 1:2.

The original word for *moved* has the sense of *hovering* or *brooding*, and does not mean moving, merely. It evidently refers to a *process of formation*, by the power of the Spirit of God, which immediately followed the act of creation.

That the same power is active in the work of redemption is largely shown in that the incarnation of the Saviour, his teachings, miracles, and resurrection; the reproofing and conviction of sinners; the enlightening, comforting, and sanctifying of believers; and, finally, the resurrection of the just, are all ascribed to the Spirit of God. No tongue can tell—no heart can conceive, how greatly we are indebted for its operations in our behalf.

It is the *Representative* of the Saviour during his absence from the church. When Jesus told the disciples he was going to leave them, their hearts were sad. But he gave them a two-fold consolation; 1. He promised *to come again* and

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receive them unto himself. And from that hour to the day of their death they longed and prayed for his *second advent* to the earth. As pilgrims yet “in an enemy’s land,” we pray with them, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

2. He said he would not leave them as orphans, or comfortless, in this world of tribulation; he would pray the Father, and he would send them another Comforter. And as Christ came in the name of the Father, John 5:43, and therefore represented the Father, insomuch that they who had seen him had seen the Father, because the Father was in him and did the works which he did, John 14:9, 10, so the Spirit is come in the name of Jesus; verse 26. It is to us as truly a representative of Christ, as he was of the Father. He that received not Christ received not the Father; 1 John 2:23. Even so, he that hath not the Spirit hath rejected the Son— “he is none of his.” Rom. 8:9. And because the Father sends the Spirit in the name of the Son, and the Son purchased the gift for us, it proceeds from both to us, and is called both the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. Compare 1 Pet. 1:10, 11, and 2 Pet. 1:21.

The Spirit is to abide with the disciples of Christ till his return, for the word *forever* has this extent in the promise. The Saviour lived but a few years upon the earth; his ministry covered a period of only three and a half years. But the presence of the Spirit as a Guide and Comforter shall be during the entire dispensation—the gospel age.

A most important truth is taught in Luke 11. Though the Spirit is to “reprove the world,” it does not act as a Comforter and Sanctifier to any

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unless they voluntarily receive it. Jesus was in the world, and was “the light of the world,” but the world rejected the light. But, “as many as *received him*, to them gave he power to become the sons of God” John 1:12. And, though the Spirit is sent into the world to abide in the world to fulfill its various offices, Jesus taught us that we should pray for it. The teaching of many in this degenerate age is contrary to this; but to this refers directly the oft quoted injunction:—

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

After giving illustrations of the readiness of parents to give needed things to their children, he continued:—

“If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit *to them that ask him*.” Luke 11:9-13.

Therefore we conclude that if we do not believe the Spirit should be prayed for, or if, for any cause, we neglect to ask for it, we cannot expect to receive it.

But an objection is raised against this truth. It is said, There is danger of being deceived; there are “seducing spirits” in the world; 1 Tim. 4:1; and men are liable to be led by these, while they think they are led by the Spirit of God; and the danger is very great, as Satan transforms himself to an angel of light.

There is much truth in this objection; not only is there danger of being deceived, but thousands are deceived, and led on, by the deception, to their destruction. And therefore we should be all the more careful in our walk and in our

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prayers. But let us examine our Saviour’s illustrations.

“If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?” Luke 11:12.

Now if a son is so blinded, or his senses so benumbed, that he cannot tell the difference between bread and a stone, or a fish and a serpent, or an egg and a scorpion, then is his case, indeed, deplorable. And if he is so far from his father, and so little acquainted with him, that, when he asks for bread, a deceiver steps in, and, pretending to be his father, gives him a stone instead, and he does not know the difference, his case may be regarded as desperate.

But what would the objector think or say, should he see a son refuse to take bread from the willing hand of a kind father because stones were so numerous in the land? Should such a course be pursued by any one we could only expect that death by starvation would be the result.

The apostle James gives important instruction on this point. If we “ask amiss,” either in lack of faith or to gratify our selfishness, we shall not receive. God’s will and glory must be kept in view. Self must be denied and crucified. Our consecration to God must be complete. Our submission to his will and pleasure must be perfect, so that we are ready to bear any cross, to accept any truth, or to take any advance step in the work of faith; in short, we must abide in him and have his word abiding in us, and then we

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may ask what we will and it shall be done. John 15:7.

Many fail to receive the gracious influence of the Spirit, or receiving it, abuse it, and so shut up the way of further blessings, by receiving it as the *end* of Christian effort instead of as a *means*. When such are blessed of Heaven they consider that the object of religious effort has been accomplished; and they sit down to enjoy themselves, or to congratulate themselves over their gifts and graces. A greater mistake could not be made. So does the gormandizer take his food as the means of self-gratification, and this is the end of his efforts. But the man who realizes the responsibilities of life, and who has a true interest in the faithful discharge of life’s duties, accepts his food as the means of gathering strength for future labor and usefulness. The Spirit will be given to all who ask for it as a means of renewing their strength that they may engage more successfully in the Christian warfare, and gain new victories to the glory of the Captain of our salvation.

Paul speaks of “those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to *discern both good and evil*.” Heb. 5:14. It is unfortunate that so many lack this discernment; they have never so used their senses as to have them available to any practical benefit. In gifts of the Spirit they discern only evil. Every object is to them a stone, a serpent, or a scorpion. Humility, self-denying, cross-bearing, and earnest prayer would enable them to see unnumbered blessings, great and precious, clustering along their pathway, where all is now dark, dreary, and forbidding.

The objections which these offer against accepting

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the manifestations of the Spirit will hold equally good against uniting with any church; because, while the church of Christ is a unit (for “there is one body”), there are many and diverse churches in the world, and therefore the chances are that we shall unite with a wrong one, and so be led astray. But the objector readily replies, We must choose that one which bears the divine impress; which presents the characteristics of the true church according to the New Testament. That is right. And so also with regard to the Holy Spirit and its manifestations. We must compare all with the divine standard, and receive that which will bear all the tests of the word of God, and reject all which are condemned by that infallible rule. It is to be regretted that so little attention is paid to this important subject; that so little is known in general, concerning the promises, the operations, and the gifts of the Spirit of God.

There is one office of the Spirit which is not only ignored, but denied by many at the present time. It is that of *Reprover*. Jesus said:—

“And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” John 16:8.

They who deny the exercise of this office to the Spirit say that the promise of the direct presence of the Spirit is only to the church, as a Comforter; that they only who are members of the church can receive the influence of the Spirit in any manner; and that they who receive it do so, not *as an evidence* of that membership, but *because*

of that membership. The world is reprov'd, they say, *only by the word* which the Spirit has indited; and the threatenings of the

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word are the only method of reproof, the Spirit itself not being present at all.

But this does not accord with the words of the Saviour, that the Spirit comes into the world to reprove the world. It plainly appears that the Spirit of God was striving with man in the days of Noah. Gen. 6:3. Stephen accused the Jews of resisting it. Acts 7:51. And if it is allowable to assume that the Spirit strives with and reproves men *only* by means of the threatenings and reproofs of the word, we may with equal propriety assume that it comforts the saints *only* by the promises of the word. And then we have the Spirit banished entirely, as far as actual presence is concerned, and the promise of the Saviour is destroyed. We claim, and we think with good reason, that to deny its presence in comforting the saints is doing no greater violence to the Scriptures than to deny its presence in reprov'ing sinners. And if there be no real presence of the Spirit in these works we may in vain ask the Father to give us the Spirit, notwithstanding the Saviour's instructions in Luke 11:9-13. Nor can it then be true, as promised in our text, John 14:16, that the Spirit will *abide with us* forever, no, nor even visit us at all.

We ought to consider ourselves responsible for every conclusion which may logically be drawn from our position. Therefore men ought to fear greatly when they take such a position as that which we now call in question, because it really removes the Spirit from the work of the gospel, as a Comforter as well as a Reprover. We fear that such positions are taken because men are too easily satisfied with a nominal religion, destitute of the Spirit's power.

CHAPTER II.

THE POWER FROM ON HIGH

“And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” Luke 24:49.

The time spoken of by our Saviour in his promise in John 14:16, soon arrived. He had returned to his Father, leaving his disciples alone with their enemies. We can but faintly imagine how tedious were the hours of their tarrying at Jerusalem, and how many were the scoffs at their faith which they were compelled to hear. About ten days after his ascension came one of the Jewish solemnities—the feast of Pentecost. At this feast were gathered, according to the custom, Jews from every nation; for at their feasts they were all to “appear before the Lord.”

The disciples were in one place. Circumstances as well as choice separated them from the vast multitude then assembled. Their hearts were stricken; they were a despised people, and they could find but little to interest them outside of their own company. The chief priests and the rulers, the Scribes and Pharisees, the first officers of the nation, and all the influence of the great city, were united against them. To these great men all looked for counsel, and the hosts of Israel could but be ready to echo their sentiments. The teachings and miracles of Jesus had been heard of by all; and the crucifixion, with the accompanying convulsions of nature, followed by the report of his resurrection,

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with the well-known truth that Jesus was not found in the sepulcher, though it had been surrounded by a trusty Roman guard, all together had created an intense interest and excitement. It was only to be expected that they who had led in the persecution of Jesus would endeavor to shield themselves by casting reproach upon his followers. It was unpleasant, if not even unsafe, for them to appear in the streets of Jerusalem.

But the declaration that that which is highly esteemed among men is not regarded of God, was true in this case. God was bringing confusion upon the great and the proud, and preparing to lift up the heads of those who were stricken and bowed down. This little company, frowned upon by the world, were watched over and guarded by Heaven.

“And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2:2-4.

The report of this phenomenon soon brought together a wondering crowd, who were confounded or perplexed.

“They were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?” Verses 7, 8.

God had chosen this time to manifest this power; for it was well known that these were unlearned

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men, chosen from the humbler walks of life, and now they were speaking the various tongues spoken by the Jews who had come to Jerusalem “out of every nation under heaven.” To those who were thus gathered from the nations it was a wonder. But others, resident in Jerusalem and the country surrounding, were also gathered there, who did not understand the various tongues spoken. To them the scene presented a different appearance. They well knew that these humble Galileans had never been schooled in letters. To them it was but an unmeaning jargon of sounds, and it was but natural that, to all the follies which they had ascribed to the followers of Jesus, they should add the charge of drunkenness. But Peter repelled the charge, and thereupon opened the Scriptures to them as follows:—

“Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words; for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men

shall dream dreams; and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.” Acts 2:14-20.

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There is much of interest in these words; some of the points introduced we will notice.

The promise was that the Spirit should be poured out upon “all flesh.” This cannot be restricted to less than all the church. It certainly cannot be confined *to the apostles*. The effort made by many to find a complete fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy on the day of Pentecost is without even a show of reason. That Joel’s prophecy as here quoted by Peter covers the gospel dispensation, is evident from his reference to daughters and handmaidens, of whom there were none among the apostles, as well as to the signs and wonders, which reach down to the coming of “that great and notable day of the Lord.” If the reader will examine the following scriptures, Matt. 24:27-31; Rev. 6:12-17; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-3; Isa. 2:10-21; 13:6-13, he will plainly see that that great and notable day of the Lord comes at the close of the gospel age, ushering in the terrible judgments of God and the second advent of the blessed Saviour.

But we have chiefly to do with Peter’s application of the prophecy. He takes up the history of Jesus, in his life and miracles, his death, burial, and resurrection, proving this last by the words of David, and then refers to his exaltation as follows:—

“Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father *the promise of the Holy Ghost*, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.” Acts 2:33.

Peter here speaks of *the promise of the Holy Ghost*, which Jesus had received of the Father, and accordingly the Spirit is called the “Holy

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Spirit of promise.” Eph. 1:13. And its gift is called “the promise of the Father.” Acts 1:4.

When the people were assured that this was indeed the power of God upon the disciples, and thus became convinced that that same Jesus whom they had crucified was the Messiah, they were convicted of their sins and of their danger, and cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter’s answer was in every respect applicable to the occasion; it answered their question, and gave them definite information concerning the promise of the gift of the Spirit, to which he had referred, and which they had seen illustrated in the wonderful events of that day. He said:—

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, *and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For THE PROMISE is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*” Acts 2:38, 39.

It is not possible to mistake “the promise” to which reference is here made. It was “the promise of the Spirit,” as in verse 33; that is to say, that which was fulfilled to the apostles should also be fulfilled to them if they would accept, and follow, the crucified and risen Jesus of Nazareth. The words, “all that are afar off,” have reference to the Gentiles, as Paul shows in Eph. 2:11-18, in distinction from the Jews, who are addressed as “you and your children.” Thus *the same promise of the Spirit* is extended to the church at large, “even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

This whole instruction as regards both duty

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and promise is neutralized between two classes in the present age. The Friends (known as Quakers) reject baptism as being only an external ordinance. As this subject is quite foreign to the subject of the present argument I pass over the error of the Friends without examination. On the other hand the Disciples, and those holding with them, ignore the promise, making baptism the only point of interest in the text. When I say they ignore *the promise*, I mean they do not accept it according to the evident meaning of the text; for there is no real difference between the

utter rejection of a text and the denial of its evident meaning. The Jews did not deny the Scriptures, directly; but they denied their plain and evident fulfillment, and thus they made them “of none effect.” That *the promise* of Acts 2:39 is identical with that of verse 33 is so clear that Disciple authors have been constrained to admit it, however strenuously they deny the conclusion logically deduced therefrom. Thus Alexander Campbell says:—

“The promise is expressly said by Peter to be ‘the promise of the Holy Spirit,’ which is extended to all that are near, and ‘afar off.’ . . . The gift of the Holy Ghost is the immediate antecedent to *the promise*, as any one may see from the slightest attention to the passage.”—*Baptism*, p. 383, ed. 1853.

And McGarvey, in his Commentary on Acts, says of chap. 2:39:—

“That we are right in referring the word *promise* in this sentence to the promise of the Holy Ghost just made by Peter, is evident from the

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fact, that this is the only promise made in the immediate context.”

This is indeed evident, though it has been most strenuously denied by others of that body. Thus, Eld. Treat, associate editor of the *Record*, of Bedford, Ind., and highly recommended as an expounder and defender of their peculiar faith, persistently denied this fact in Gosport, Ind., in Nov. 1871, when the subject of “the promise” was under consideration.

But Mr. McGarvey, while he admits the truth of the statement, robs it of all its force by making a distinction between “the gift of the Holy Spirit,” and “the Holy Spirit’s gifts,” and affirming that the former, but not the latter, is the subject of the promise. If we allow that that distinction is just, the inquiry then arises, Which did the apostles receive on the day of Pentecost? Any answer which includes either to the exclusion of the other, is only partial; it does not contain the whole truth. While all will acknowledge that they received the gift of the Holy Spirit, none can deny that they received the Holy Spirit’s gifts.

And then another inquiry may properly be raised: Were not all included under *one and the same promise*? Or, were there *two distinct promises of the Spirit*? Only one. *The promise* which Peter held out to his hearers, in verse 39, is identical with that of verse 33, as both Campbell and McGarvey admit. But Peter said that that which they saw and heard, even the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon the apostles, was given by virtue of that promise. There is but one “Holy Spirit of promise,” and concerning it Jesus received but one “promise

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of the Father.” And by virtue of that, but “one Spirit” was given. The facts here presented show that the pouring out of the Spirit upon the disciples was the cause of the wondering of the assembled multitude, and that drew out Peter’s discourse, which was aimed to correct their impression, and to teach them in regard to the promise and gift of the Spirit. He said the Spirit was poured out, as they then saw and heard, according to *the promise* which Jesus received of the Father, and that they also might receive it, for *the promise* was to them and to their children, and to as many as the Lord shall call.

Now if any can distinguish between *the promise* under which the disciples received the Holy Ghost on that day, and *the promise* under which the same Spirit was offered to the multitude, it will be by an exercise of ingenuity which we cannot comprehend. Nothing appears more evident than that all the gifts and manifestations of the Spirit of God are under one and the same promise; they are different parts of that promise; and to reject the parts is to reject the whole, and thus to annul the promise.

In regard to the distinction referred to above, it is asserted that *the Spirit’s gifts* include only the *miraculous*, or power conferred specially on a few, in distinction from the general gift of the Spirit to all the churches. But this is not satisfactory. Says Webster: “Miraculous, of the nature of a miracle; performed supernaturally; effected by the direct agency of Almighty power, and not by natural causes.” It needs but little consideration to make it apparent to all that there is no such distinction as *natural and supernatural*

gifts and operations of the Spirit in the church. Each and every one who receives the Spirit, in any manner or to any extent, receives it by the direct power of God. There is no *natural* reception nor operation of the Spirit of God in any case. Hence the distinction is claimed without regard to the proper use of the words.

A more obvious distinction, apparently, is claimed between the *ordinary* and *extraordinary* manifestations of the Spirit. But again we ask, are there two distinct promises for these methods or operations? Or, does not *the promise* include both? One promise includes all. *There is no "promise of the Spirit" in the Bible which does not include the gifts or manifestations of divine power.* This we shall claim as an established truth unless a *separate and distinct promise* is produced for a peculiar or distinct manifestation.

The remark of Olshausen on 1 Thess. 5, relating to this subject, is worthy of notice. He says:—

“But the question whether *pneuma* is to be taken here as an ethico-religious principle, or as the source of the Charismata [gifts], is to be altogether declined, because the two cannot be separated, or at least did not appear separately in the apostolical times. Where the Spirit was, he showed himself in moral and religious relations, and in the extraordinary gifts.”

In confirmation of the view here taken we notice that the apostles, who received the gifts and power of the Spirit, did not all possess like power; the Spirit did not manifest itself through all alike. Therefore Paul says:—

“Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?” 1 Cor. 12:29, 30.

These questions are asked concerning the church at large, as well as the apostles, which is an evidence that the same gifts were in the church at large, as we shall hereafter show, but not in all alike. Each has his own peculiar office; or, to use the language of inspiration concerning these manifestations,” Dividing to every man severally as he will.” Yet all were received under one promise; all were parts of one whole.

What a blessing, a gracious privilege, is thus held out to us as members of the body of Christ—as called of God. When we consider that blessings and duties are ever closely allied, and that when blessings are offered to us it is our duty to labor for their reception, we may realize our responsibility to pray for the Spirit, so graciously promised by our Saviour. God never offers the blessings of his grace for our mere gratification, nor to satisfy curiosity, nor in any way to minister to our selfish feelings, but because they are necessary to our highest good and to his glory. That which concerns our good we need, and should embrace. That which concerns the glory of God it is our first duty to respect. And what a responsibility is thus placed upon us. May the Lord guide us that we never more quench the Spirit, “but covet earnestly the best gifts,” and so humble ourselves before God that we may be “endued with power from on high.”

CHAPTER III.

CIRCUMCISION OF THE HEART

“Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Rom. 2:29.

Though the promise of the Spirit is to all, its manifestations are various, and it will not be dictated to in its operations. It serves no private purpose; it gratifies no one’s curiosity. It asks faith, and chooses its own method of trying our faith. He who divided the sea before his people, who overthrew their proud masters in the same sea, who brought water from the rock, and who fed a multitude in a barren desert, would not go with Israel to battle when they murmured against him, or when a covetous man was in the camp, or when their fears overcame their faith because their enemies had chariots of iron. And it has seemed strange to many a caviler that Paul, who had so great gifts conferred on him that the sick were healed by merely touching handkerchiefs which came from him, Acts 19:11, 12, yet left a companion behind because he was sick. 2 Tim. 4:20.

To test the question of the extent of the promise of the Spirit to all believers, it was once asked a minister, who strenuously insisted that the *extraordinary* operations of the Spirit were designed only for a few, and not to be perpetuated through all time: “Do you believe that Christians now have or may have the same measure of the Spirit that the apostles instructed the

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churches of their day to pray for?” Although he denied the charge that his position was a denial of the promise of the Spirit in its scriptural sense, he would give no answer to the question, though he was strongly pressed to do so. Let this be considered in the light of Scripture facts.

In regard to the diversity of churches which now exist, no one will deny this rule, that we must accept as the true church that one which bears the characteristics of *the true church*. We must take the church in its first stage, as planted by Christ and his apostles, for our model. To them we look for genuine and “primitive Christianity.” We are often referred to the day of Pentecost as furnishing evidence that the early churches were built up with the doctrine of “baptism for the remission of sins.” But that is only part of the truth; and, separate from its relative truth, it becomes an immaterial part. The churches in the days of the apostles accepted both in theory and fulfillment the doctrine of *the gifts of the Spirit*. Not a single church was planted without this. The modern doctrine of a church repudiating the gifts of the Spirit was not known in that age. And therefore *any church which rejects these gifts is not after the primitive model*; it lacks a characteristic, an essential element of the church of Christ.

The Saviour said to those whom he sent out to preach the gospel, “These signs shall follow them that believe,” not them alone that preach. Facts in the fulfillment of the work of the gospel prove that we are correct in our interpretation of the promise. In Acts 11:27, 28, are mentioned several prophets who are not of the twelve

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apostles. That the word prophet has here its usual and obvious meaning of a foreteller of events, one endowed with a gift of the Spirit, is proved by the circumstance of one of them, Agabus, foretelling a great dearth, which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar. The same, essentially, is found in chap. 13:1. In chap. 21:8, 9, we are told that Philip the evangelist “had four daughters which did prophesy.” There is nothing in the context to indicate that *prophesy* has here any other than its primary or usual signification, while, on the other hand, verses 10, 11, speak of the prophet Agabus, and relate that he foretold what should befall Paul at Jerusalem, showing conclusively that the word, in that text, has reference to the gift of the Spirit of prophecy, and that in the case of the daughters of Philip it was a fulfillment of the promise quoted on the day of Pentecost, that the Spirit should be poured out on the daughters and handmaidens, and they should prophesy.

The acknowledgment of this fact is necessary to a reception of the truth of the word in reference to the witness of the Spirit, or the seal of the new covenant. While the “circumcision of the heart” has often been insisted on, it has not been sufficiently examined, as the seal of the covenant, to open it in its great importance to the understanding of the reader.

When circumcision was given to Abraham he was told that it was “a token of the covenant” made with him, and that every man-child of his seed who was uncircumcised should “be cut off from among his people,” because he had not the appointed token, and therefore he had no part in the covenant. Gen. 17.

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In Rom. 4:11, this token is also called a *sign* and *seal*. Hence Paul says:—

“After that ye believed, ye were *sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise*, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” Eph. 1:13, 14.

In the above cited texts we have four terms applied to circumcision; viz., token, sign, seal, earnest. That we are not mistaken in designating *the operation of the Spirit of God in the heart* as the circumcision of the new covenant is shown by the following texts:—

“He is not a Jew, who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Rom. 2:28, 29.

“Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” 2 Cor. 1:21, 22.

“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision *made without hands*, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” Col. 2:11.

All these prove that the token, earnest, or seal of the new covenant, the circumcision of this dispensation, is not an outward ordinance administered with hands, but is of the Spirit, internal, of the heart. Some, on account of their peculiar views of the relations of the covenants, have held that baptism is the circumcision of the new covenant. This is not only an error, being a direct contradiction of the Scriptures, but it is the corner-stone of other errors held by many in regard

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to the baptism of infants. Baptism is an outward ordinance, administered with hands, even as typical circumcision was. But the circumcision of the gospel is in the heart, in the Spirit, not made with hands. The distinction is so very plain that an error here is inexcusable.

Another marked difference between the seals of the two covenants is this: in the first covenant outward circumcision, the token, was confined to the male children of Abraham and of his natural descendants. In the new covenant circumcision of the Spirit is given to all the believers in Christ, who is the “one seed,” without regard to sex or nationality. In view of this truth Paul said:—

“There is neither Jew nor Greek [Gentile], there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Gal. 3:28, 29.

These scriptures cast light upon the apostle’s words in another place, concerning which there has been much vain speculation:—

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Rom. 8:9.

Two errors have obtained in regard to this text. First, that the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God are not the same. This is corrected by comparing 1 Pet. 1:10, 11, which says the Spirit of Christ was in the holy prophets testifying, with 2 Pet. 1:21, which says the prophets spake as they were moved of the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, which is the same as the

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Spirit of God. The second error is that the “Spirit of Christ” in this text does not mean the Holy Spirit, but only the temper or disposition of Christ.

It is indeed an important truth that he who has not the disposition of Christ is none of his; and it is a truth which will cut off the vain hopes of many proud, worldly, selfish professors of religion. But it is not *the truth* taught by this passage. This text is really a reiteration of the rule laid down to Abraham, that he who was not circumcised, who had not the seal or token of the covenant, had no part in the covenant. We have seen that the Spirit of God, called also the Spirit of Christ, is the seal of the new covenant. And if any man have not the Spirit he has not the token or seal of the covenant, and therefore he cannot be a partaker of the privileges of the covenant—he is none of Christ's.

And this again casts light on verse 16 of the same chapter:—

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”

The “witness of the Spirit” is an important subject, and one that has received the attention of the eminently pious of all ages. The *internal evidence* of the Spirit has been uniformly neglected, and eventually by many denied whenever coldness, worldliness, and pride creep into the church. But alas! that it must be said, that even in this doctrine the Saviour often receives the deepest wounds “in the house of his friends.” Many whose lives in no way correspond to the “great example,” are often loudest in their profession of possessing the Spirit's “power.” They seem to think that *profession or feeling* can atone for the

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lack of *graces*. These are they “by reason of whom the way of truth is evil spoken of.” By reason of these the Bible doctrine of sanctification through the truth is rejected and brought into contempt. Feeling, indeed, will not be lacking where the witness of the Spirit is given; but our Christian experience must have a stronger and deeper foundation than this. Our feelings are often controlled by circumstances, and these are so varied that our feelings cannot always be the same. But the hope of the Christian is “as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast,” and we may have

“A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without;
That when in danger knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt.”

But the question is asked, To whom does the Spirit witness? to the believer, or to the world? We answer, To both; but not to both in the same manner. When the disciples received “the Holy Spirit of promise,” or “the *earnest* of the Spirit in their hearts,” it assuredly witnessed to their own *consciousness* as it could not witness to the world, otherwise it could not have been an earnest to them. But when it moved them to speak with other tongues, and to bear the cross, and “to perfect holiness in the fear of God,” then in their lives evidence was presented to the world. These classes of evidence always go together—they will not be separated. So we conclude that *the presence of the Spirit in the heart*, inclining us to conform to the will and word of God, is the witness *to ourselves*; while *the graces*

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of the Spirit in our lives, are the witness *to the world*.

We will illustrate this by applying it to a personal experience which all may appreciate. Thus: no one but myself can be *conscious* that I love my brother; there is an *internal evidence* of that fact which belongs to me exclusively, and if I never show that love in my actions, no one will have any evidence that I possess it in my heart. If I show an utter indifference to his welfare, and where our interests seem to conflict I care only for myself, every one will readily decide that I do not possess that love; that I am deceived, or my profession is hypocritical, which is, practically, the same thing. And this decision must be correct.

So it is with the witness of the Spirit. There is liability to self-deception; the Scriptures recognize this, and warn us to “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.” We have a double guard on this point.

1. As the word of God was given by inspiration, men writing it “as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” of course there must be perfect harmony between the word of God and the Spirit of God. To suppose otherwise were to suppose that God is not in harmony with himself. Therefore any spirit which leads us not in harmony with the

word—which calms our spirits and soothes our feelings while we are walking contrary to the word—cannot be of God. The Spirit of God, according to our Saviour’s words, is given *to guide into truth*. And again, he said to his Father, “Thy word is truth.” Hence they who have the Spirit of God as their guide, will in all things accept the word of God as their rule;

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and thus they are enabled to worship God “in spirit and in truth.”

2. The Saviour gave another infallible test, namely, “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Though these two rules lead directly to the same result, they are not the same. We may perceive duties in the word of God of which our neighbors are not aware. Unknown to all others a cross may be presented to us which we are unwilling to bear; a truth be made known to which our feelings are opposed. In these things and in such cases the word is a test, to our own consciousness, of the spirit which influences us. A feeling of opposition to the truth of God; a disposition to neglect it; an unwillingness to hear or learn any truth which will bring a cross to us; all this is direct evidence to ourselves, providing we are willing to examine ourselves, that we are not led of the Spirit of God. Of these feelings or actuating motives the world cannot take cognizance; therefore the world cannot judge of them. But if these feelings are submitted to or cultivated, our lives will soon show the effect of such an insult to the authority of God; the Spirit of God will be altogether grieved away, and we be left in darkness to follow the leadings of the carnal mind. Then our lives will be evidence to the world that we are not led by the Spirit of God. Only by our fruits shall the world know that we are the children of God.

There is an error on this subject, largely prevalent, which well deserves a notice. It is generally taught by those who deny the direct power of the Spirit as a witness, or an instrument of conversion, that the only evidence we can have of our reception of the Spirit as a Comforter is

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this: the Spirit was promised on condition of baptism for the remission of sins, and if we have been baptized we have the Spirit in fulfillment, of the promise, *though we are not conscious of its presence*. This position is specious, and may become, and often is, the foundation of a very sad delusion. Baptism has its *order*, or relation to other things, and if this be disregarded, it is not valid, not being in the order of the Scriptures. It must be apparent to all that if the institution be so changed as not to meet the requirements of the Scriptures it becomes, in that changed condition, the institution of the one so changing it, and is no longer the original ordinance. This truth is very often urged in regard to the form of administering the rite; but it is equally true in regard to the order or relation of baptism.

In all cases where baptism is taken as the evidence of the gift of the Spirit, the professing penitent is lulled into carnal security, trusting solely to his baptism as the evidence of his favor with God. Baptism, not the Spirit in the heart, becomes his *earnest or witness*. The Spirit being thus rejected, the graces do not appear in the life, and there are no *fruits of the Spirit* to give evidence to the world of a genuine conversion. Such a doctrine is well calculated to multiply *carnal professors or nominal Christians*; and that these should be multiplied under its teaching is not strange, considering that it calls for no self-abasement, leads to no deep, pungent convictions of sin, and under it there is felt no necessity for the aid of the Spirit in the work of conversion. That “the Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered,” is, to those embracing such a theory, a mystery. To

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pray for the Spirit to convict and to convert sinners is, to them, only folly.

The view here called in question is unscriptural, according to the expressed faith and practice of the apostles and early believers. The doctrine of the gift of the Holy Spirit was never so understood in that age. In Acts 8:14-16 we read:—

“Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John; who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)”

This action was directly contrary to that view which *takes the reception of the Comforter for granted*, because of our being baptized. Again in Acts 19:5, 6, we read:—

“When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them.”

In this case the Spirit was given *in answer to prayer*, after baptism. In the case of Cornelius and his household, the Spirit came on them before baptism. Whether received before or after baptism it is shown that the gift of the Spirit was not then considered a matter of course because of baptism; but was a matter of personal conscious experience. And so it is proved that that view of the gift of the Spirit, now held by many, which makes baptism their evidence, is modern, unscriptural, and no part of “primitive Christianity.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE UNITY OF THE FAITH

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” 1 Cor. 1:10.

Christian union has always been considered desirable; but lately, seeing that confusion and diversity are increasing, and knowing of no means whereby to correct the evil, the churches have resigned themselves to the apparent necessities of the case, and, to solace themselves, have devised what they call “unity in diversity.” But we are sure no such unity as that was ever learned from the word of God.

The gospel inculcates union and has made provision to effect it. The apostle, concerning the benefits and privileges conferred on the church by Christ, wrote as follows:—

“When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.... And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Eph. 4:8-13.

Here we have definite information concerning the object for which these gifts were given unto

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men, and the time of their continuance. The reader will bear in mind that the absence, or the apparent absence, of the gifts of the Spirit at any time or in any age of the church, is no argument against their perpetuity. The apostle says, “Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts.” Now if charity should not be found with a certain body of professed Christians, or in a certain age of the professed church, it would not prove that it was not duty to exercise it; but it would prove that there was a serious declension from the divine standard of piety. In like manner, if the gifts of the Spirit were entirely wanting in a given time, yes, if the church had ceased to “desire” them, that fact would by no means prove that God had withdrawn the gifts. But it would prove that the church had forgotten the injunction of the apostle, and had lost sight of the standard of Christianity as it was at first erected. We do not learn what is truth or what is duty by the position or practice of professed Christians at any specified time, but by the teachings of the divine word; and the position and practice of all are to be judged by the word.

Those who plead that God has withdrawn the gifts from the church usually affirm that they were given to the apostles for the especial purpose of completing the canon of revelation, or a system of divinity, and when they had completed their writings the gifts were removed as being no longer necessary. But it is worthy of particular notice that when the apostle specifies the objects or uses for which the gifts were conferred, the above mentioned reason is not given at all. It would be very strange indeed if the apostle,

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in recounting the uses of the gifts, should mention several but entirely omit the real use, or the chief one!

It is to be noticed also that all the gifts were given with the same end in view, and for the same length of time. If they were withdrawn there are now in the church no evangelists, pastors, nor teachers, for these are among the gifts of the Spirit.

Or, if God saw fit, in his wisdom, to withdraw them from the church, it is daring presumption to try to re-instate them. It is allowable, and may be expedient, to devise methods of operation on points concerning which there has been no revelation, when such methods do not conflict with revelation. But, when God has ordained a plan and adopted a means, and afterward reversed or abolished it, to endeavor to re-instate it is an effort to impeach divine wisdom. Had it been wise and right to retain it, he would have retained it. If it be proved that he has abrogated a certain order, that is sufficient proof that he did not consider it wise or expedient to have it continued. What, then, must we think of that class of professed Christians who teach that God “set in the church” certain gifts, as

evangelists, pastors, and teachers; that he afterward withdrew them and left the church without them; and they themselves proceed to re-instate or supply them to the church, according to their own will and pleasure? Such proceedings toward any earthly government would be considered no less than treason,—an entire subversion of the authority of the government by erecting offices contrary to the known will and action of the governor.

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The gifts were at first conferred on the apostles to qualify them to preach the word, and so says Paul in Eph. 4:12, they were given “for the work of the ministry.” Jesus would not suffer the apostles to preach even a single sermon until they were “endued with power from on high,” though they had been under his personal direction and instruction more than three years; and we have no warrant to believe that he intended the work of the ministry to be carried on at any time without the direct aid of the gifts of the Spirit.

And it is expressly declared that they were given for their several offices “till we all come into the unity of the faith,” a position unto which the church has not attained. It will not do to say that the church did arrive at such a state in the days of the apostles, and that it has fallen from it, for the admonitions and reproofs given in their writings disprove that. Or if it were true that the saints at first were so united in faith, but fell from that state in the great apostasy, then is proved the necessity of a revival of the gifts to accomplish their destined work. But it is not necessary to argue that point. The church has not yet been so perfected. Nor is it true that such a state of things is found in *any one church* of the present age; for in most of them, and in all large bodies of them, there is found almost endless diversity of faith on many Bible doctrines.

There are many who, instead of confessing their shortcomings and trying to remedy their defects, frame excuses and scout every grace they themselves do not possess. Destitute of the gifts of the Spirit, they deny that they were designed to

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be perpetuated. Having among them such a diversity of faith, they deny the New Testament doctrine of unity, and urge that it is impossible for all to see and believe alike. They think such a state of things as is now found in the different churches is not only allowable but providential, and a right development of the gospel plan. We admit that men of different education, prejudices, and prepossessions, *will not* see and think alike, unless their prejudices and prepossessions are overcome. But this is the very end contemplated in the gospel. If this is not so—if each one is to gratify his prejudices and act according to his own prepossessions, then the gospel is a nullity; for then cross-bearing and self-denial are not required, and humility is not even a Christian grace.

But what then means the text already quoted, that we are designed to come into the unity of the faith? That it means all that the words can imply is proved by other texts, as the following:—

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” John 17:20, 21.

Here surely is described a more perfect unity, a more complete oneness, than is found among professed Christians of the present time. But verse 11 is equally explicit:—

“Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.”

If the Christians of this day who plead so much for “union,” even those styled evangelical, think their union truly represents the union or oneness of the Father and Son, then

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their ideas of a “trinity in unity” are not very exalted. It must be evident to every thoughtful observer that, either there is no very close union between the Father and the Son, or else this prayer is not fulfilled in the churches of the present age. That it was designed to be fulfilled is proved by the apostle’s words in 1 Cor. 1:10, as follows:—

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

And again in Phil. 2:2, as follows:—

“Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”

And that last excuse for discord and disunion among Christians, namely, that the various churches with their diversity of faiths, are recognized as so many “branches” of the body of Christ, is removed by our Saviour’s words to his disciples:—

“I am the vine, ye are the branches.” John 15:5.

This language was not addressed to different churches, but to individuals, before any contention or departure from truth had separated believers into different factions of diverse creeds. Every excuse or reason offered to justify the present state of discord, or any diversity of faith and judgment among Christians, is founded in selfishness, and is an evidence of carnality according to the words of Paul in 1 Cor. 3:3:—

“For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”

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Or, “walk according to man,” as the margin reads; according to carnal, selfish feelings, and not according to the teachings and spirit of Christ.

The scene of confusion he there pictures has its exact counterpart in the present position of the churches:—

“For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I of Apollos, are ye not carnal?” Verse 4.

It must, surely, be as allowable to bear the name of Paul or of Apollos, as of Luther, of Calvin, or of Wesley. To such he asks:—

“Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” 1 Cor. 1:13.

So we may ask now: Is Christ divided? was Calvin crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Wesley? If not, why bear his name as Christians? If ever there was a time when the gospel means for unity was required in the church, it is the present.

Some imagine that a gift of the Spirit cannot be manifested “for the work of the ministry” without interfering with the canon of revelation. But this is a very narrow view of the subject. An evangelist may “make full proof of his ministry,” and yet conform to the word already given. And so of any other gift. Paul was directed by the Spirit to go to Macedonia. Peter, by direct revelation, was sent to Cornelius. Paul and Barnabas were separated to a certain work by order of the Spirit. By the same power Elymas the sorcerer was discovered and rebuked. In these and other instances, nothing was added to the body of the Scriptures. And so, since the days of the apostles, in the time of

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the Reformers, of Wesley, and in later times as will be shown, instruction, reproof, and comfort have been given by the Spirit. Words of comfort, warnings of danger, personal reproofs, directions to duty, all come under the heads of the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the body of Christ, while none of them are additions to the Scriptures. The objection arises from prejudice, and must at once be rejected by all who recognize the truth that the ministry is not sufficient, without being “endued with power from on high,” to so instruct and lead the church as to bring them to the unity of the faith and spirit. Human strength and human wisdom cannot accomplish it.

“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” 1 Cor. 12:28.

As God set these in the church we have a right to ask, By what authority and by what power have they been removed from the church? Did God ever make known his intention to deprive the church of their aid? They should remain where God has set them, unless he has removed them; but of their removal we have no intimations in his word. The Bible foretells a falling away; the arising of false teachers in the church; the entering in of grievous wolves, not sparing the flock; and the bringing in of damnable heresies. But all these indicate, not the withdrawing of the gifts from the church, but the necessity of their retention; for surely they must be needed most for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body

of Christ, when such a sad state of things exists. There is no reason to dispute that the instruction of the apostle to “covet earnestly the best gifts,” and to “follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts,” was given to the church for the entire dispensation.

The intention of the apostle’s argument in 1 Cor. 12 is not generally appreciated because its connection is not regarded. After enumerating the manifestations of the Spirit, saying the gifts are divided to every man as the Lord will, he says, “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” This is a most important declaration, as it gives us to understand that if we are not baptized by that Spirit into that body we are not of that body.

When the Saviour left the disciples he said:—

“Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” Acts 1:5.

That baptism they received on the day of Pentecost, according to “the promise of the Father” to the Son. And this promise they held out to all to whom they preached, “even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” With this baptism of the Spirit are all the saints baptized into one body, yet “having gifts differing,” as it pleases God to bestow. This can have reference to nothing but the immediate operation of the Spirit. Then follows the argument for *their necessity in the church*. He says:—

“For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were

an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.” 1 Cor. 12:14-18.

God hath set the members in the body so that it is perfect and complete in every part. If any part is lacking, there is schism or division. The hand cannot supply the place of the foot, nor can the ear fill the place of the eye. A perfect body, complete in all respects, has every member in its place; each fulfilling its office; each aiding and strengthening the others; as it is written:—

“And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.” Verse 21.

Let it be remembered that this argument is concerning the gifts in the church, and here is a rebuke to that spiritual pride which asserts that Christians are now so wise and strong that they have no need of some of the members which God set in the church; which virtually boasts that we have outgrown the bounds of God’s original arrangement. This is actually taking common ground with that class of infidels who kindly admit that the Bible was good enough for the time when it was given, but that we have outgrown its narrow confines and find it unsuited to our present wants. Neither the revelation nor the arrangement for the church was local and temporary, unless the gospel itself is temporary or confined to a part of the age.

The apostle has affirmed that no part of the body, as God originally constituted it, can boast against any other part. And yet this is exactly what the professed “body of Christ” is doing in

this age. Some of the most important gifts which God set in the church are ignored, despised, and boasted against, as if they were hindrances instead of helps; as if they marred the body instead of being necessary to its perfection. Of this same subject the apostle further says:—

“The members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.” Verses 25, 26.

The error commonly entertained in regard to this chapter is this: it is supposed that “the members” referred to are individuals in the church without any reference to the gifts. But such, certainly, is not the idea conveyed by the language; nor can any gather that idea from the entire chapter in its connection. It relates to the gifts as divided to the several individuals composing the entire church, as God was pleased that they should exist, that no part be

lacking, or weak, or defective, but that the whole body may be perfect according to the divine plan. For they were all given

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying [building up] of the body of Christ; till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Eph. 4:12, 13.

Happy state! blessed privilege! May we all have grace to obtain it, and humility to accept the means whereby it is obtained.

CHAPTER V.

THE LAW AND THE TESTIMONY

“To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”
Isa. 8:20.

The Lord by his prophet gave the foregoing rule as an infallible test for detecting certain systems of error now prevailing. In verse 16 we find the following order:—

“Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.”

We cannot imagine that God left so important an instrument as his law without a seal, and then required man to affix one to it. The Lord sealed his own law, but man has removed the seal, and it is now to be restored. The law must be sealed *among his disciples*, for it is among them that the seal has been removed. And as with the law, so with “the testimony.” Violence has been done to both in the professed church of Christ. The work of restoration is pointed out in the prophecies of the New Testament. But this is not accomplished without opposition, for thus speaks the prophet:—

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Rev. 12:17.

An explanation of the last expression is given in Rev. 19:10, which says, “The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.” Hence in the last days there will arise those who have these

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peculiarities: they will keep the commandments of God, which have been rejected or dishonored—they will restore the seal to the law, and thus present it to the world a perfect and complete instrument; and they will have the testimony of Jesus, which is the Spirit of prophecy—they will “bind up the testimony,” which has been torn from its place in the church of Christ.

This relation of the law and the testimony is noted in the Scriptures in many places, and presents to us some interesting features of Acts 2:28, 29. Those religionists who deny the power of the Spirit and the perpetuity of its gifts through this dispensation, usually take antinomian ground, namely, that the ten commandments are abrogated and the gospel is substituted for them. Close observation of the ground causes us to remark that *antinomianism and the Spirit of God do not go together*. Therefore it is not surprising that they who oppose the law oppose also the doctrine of the gifts and the power of the Spirit. In developing this truth it is necessary to offer a few remarks upon the harmony of the law and the gospel.

The gospel cannot be substituted for the law. They are different in nature, and neither one can answer the purpose of the other. The object of the law is *to form a good character*; that of the gospel is *to reform a bad one*. The law is a rule of right action, and the gospel is a remedy for wrong action. Where no wrong exists no remedy is needed. Therefore, had the law been kept and never violated, no gospel would have existed, for it would not have been needed. This shows that Paul’s words are true without any qualification: “The doers of the law shall be justified.”

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And thus is proved that the law contains all the elements of justification. The law is right, but man is wrong. Says Paul:—

“For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin.” Rom. 7:14.

The law is a rule; the gospel is a means. As such they cannot be interchanged. Again the apostle says:—

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Rom. 3:19, 20.

As the law is not the means whereby a sinner is justified, so the gospel is not the rule by which sin is pointed out—by which men are proved guilty before God. But some treat it as if it were such a rule, and reject the law. Yet no one can read the Scriptures to suit such a belief; no one will accept the following version of Rom. 3:20: “Therefore by the deeds of the gospel there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the gospel is the knowledge of sin.” Both truth and justice require that they shall renounce their cherished premise, as they will not consent to accept the necessary conclusion.

As the gospel cannot be substituted for the law, and as it would not have existed had there been no transgression of law, so it cannot now exist without law. If the law be abrogated, the gospel becomes a nullity, as no one would ask for a pardon where there was no possibility of conviction. Speaking of the redemption through Christ, the apostle says:—

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“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Rom. 3:25, 26.

The harmony of the law and the gospel is precisely the harmony of justice and love in the divine character, and it is represented by the union of the Father and the Son. The Son saves only those who return to allegiance to the Father. Faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ is of no avail without repentance toward God. Acts 20:21. The will of the Father is a test of the doctrines of the Son. John 7:16, 17. And in vain they cry to Jesus, Lord, Lord, who do not the will of his Father. Matt. 7:21.

In Rom. 3:25, 26, it is shown that the sacrifice of Christ was necessary to vindicate the justice of God in justifying or pardoning the believer. God cannot suffer his justice to be trampled upon. His law and his government must be honored. Had it not been necessary to preserve his justice, God could have saved all sinners without a sacrifice and without condition. The violated law, which is holy, just, and good, has a claim on the transgressor which cannot be set aside—it must be satisfied. Infinite love could devise and infinite mercy could execute only such a plan of salvation as infinite justice could approve; for these are attributes of God, and they must act in perfect harmony.

When we have learned to “honor all the name” of God, and to respect alike all his attributes, we shall know what it means to “serve him with

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gladness and fear,” and to “rejoice before him with trembling.” And thus shall we unite the commandments of God with the faith of Jesus our dear Mediator. Rev. 14:12.

With these few remarks on the harmony of the law and the gospel we pass on to consider the connection between the law and the means of perfection in the gospel—the gifts of the Spirit.

The following text is often quoted in part, but the whole in connection is seldom considered:—

“Where there is *no vision*, the people perish; but he that keepeth *the law*, happy is he.” Prov. 29:18.

The method of this statement is worthy of remark. The use of the disjunctive places the keeping of the law in contrast with the absence of a vision or of the gifts of the Spirit of God. Where there is no vision, the people perish; but where the law is kept, there is happiness or blessedness—they do not perish. The evident conclusion is that where the people keep the law, visions of the Spirit are vouchsafed to them. God by his Spirit leads his people to love and obey him, and where the gifts of the Spirit are acknowledged and received, there the law will be kept, and thus the people will be blessed, and God be glorified.

And this connection of the law and the Spirit is recognized by another prophet who thus speaks of the desolation of Jerusalem:—

“Her king and her princes are among the Gentiles; *the law is no more*; her prophets also find *no vision* from the Lord.” Lam. 2:9.

By the same prophet the Lord has threatened

to destroy Jerusalem and to burn her gates if her children profane the Sabbath. Jer. 17:19-27. And accordingly when the law was no more among them, when it ceased to be respected, her prophets found no visions from the Lord. This was always received as evidence that the Lord had forsaken them, for he always gave answers to his people by his Spirit when they drew near to him. Saul knew that the Lord had departed from him when he could get no answer “by the hand of prophets.” Another prophet thus speaks of Jerusalem’s destruction:

“Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumor shall be upon rumor; then shall they seek *a vision* of the prophet; but *the law* shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients.” Ezek. 7:26.

Thus again it is shown that when the priests and the people depart from the law, they shall seek in vain for a vision from the prophets. This is a position which was always deeply deplored by holy men of God, because it was regarded as an evidence of the displeasure of God. Therefore it was written by the prophet:—

“Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded; yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God.” Micah 3:6, 7.

And again the deplorable condition of Israel was thus described:—

“Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law.” 2 Chron. 15:3.

Against all this it cannot justly be claimed that this was true in Old Testament times, but is not applicable in the gospel age; that in the darkness of past ages it was necessary that the Lord should constantly remind them of their duties, their failures, and their danger, by the hand of seers and prophets, but in the light of the gospel dispensation it is not necessary. For the declension of piety hardly ever was greater among the Jews than it has been among professed Christians. For centuries the gospel was almost hid from the face of the earth. Since the Reformation there has been less “unity of faith” with the followers of Christ than among the people of God in any other age of the world; and in no other age have the gifts of the Spirit, which were given to perfect union of faith among Christians, been so generally repudiated. So greatly does this diversity prevail that unbelievers are bewildered, and they think the gospel has no power to unite believers in faith and spirit. The world is led to conclude that the prayer of the Saviour for the union of his followers, such as exists between the Father and the Son, and the exhortation of the apostle to be perfectly united in mind and judgment, and to speak the same thing with one accord, are impossible of accomplishment. The gospel is derided as an impracticable theory, not suited to the present condition of mankind. And all because Christians reject or neglect the means whereby God designed that this “unity of the faith,” of heart and mind and judgment, should be accomplished. Spiritual pride takes the place of meekness and self-denial; worldliness is substituted for cross-bearing; “science falsely so called,” is expected to do more

for the church than the interposition of divine providence; and direct answers to prayer are neither sought for nor expected.

If it were designed that there should be more manifestations of the Spirit’s power in the former dispensation than in the present; if it were God’s plan to light up the darkness of that age by the gifts of his Spirit, and to withdraw them from his people in this, in what sense, and with what propriety, is this called “the dispensation of the Spirit” in contrast with that? Both promises and facts show that the glory of this age was to consist in the outpouring of the Spirit “on all flesh,” that is, on all the church, “even as many as the Lord our God shall call;” while this heavenly illumination was confined to a few in the ages past. Alas for the day when the Holy Spirit is grieved, restrained, and rejected; when human wisdom exalts itself in the churches above the light and power of the Spirit of God.

We say that both the promises and the facts are in favor of the idea that God intended to bestow the largest measure of his Spirit in this age. The promise was that that which was shed on the apostles on the day of Pentecost was to be poured out on all flesh, or on all the called of God. The facts on this subject are two-fold: 1. The Spirit was poured out and its gifts were distributed in all the churches where the gospel in its purity and power was accepted; 2. The evidence stands on record that *the Spirit and the law of God* stand together in this dispensation as they did in the past, and in that connection the gifts of the Spirit are recognized even unto the end of the world.

“Here is the patience of the saints; here are

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they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Rev. 14:12.

Examining the context we find that this declaration, which is located in time by the adverb, here, is made after the proclamation is made, “The hour of His Judgment is come,” and just before the Son of man appears on the white cloud to reap the harvest of the earth. This proves that the text applies near to the end of time: near the close of the dispensation.

The faith of Jesus is united with the commandments of God—not substituted for them. The faith of Jesus is a comprehensive phrase, and must include the whole gospel system in its duties and promises. For there can be no duty nor benefit in the gospel which is not embraced in “the faith of Jesus.” And therefore “the commandments of God,” in distinction from the faith of Jesus, must refer to God’s moral law, which is the basis of the gospel, and without which the gospel were a nullity. “By the law is the knowledge of sin;” but the gospel is the remedy for sin.

In point of time the following text is parallel with the one quoted, Rev. 14:12; and it is explicit in its testimony on the connection of the law of God with the gifts of the Spirit:—

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Rev. 12:17.

As “the remnant” of the seed of the woman—the church—can be no other than *the last part* or last age of the church, this text also must be fulfilled near the close of the dispensation.

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The circumstances of the people of God are the same in the two texts. In Rev. 13:11-17, they are revealed under persecutions because they will not worship the beast, nor his image, nor receive his mark. In chapter 14:9-12 they who do thus worship the beast are threatened with terrible plagues. They who do not worship the beast—who escape the plagues—are found keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Of them it is said, “Here is the patience of the saints.” Now as “tribulation worketh patience,” Rom. 5:1-3, we have in this text reference to the persecutions of chap. 13:11-17, or the war which is made against the remnant of chapter 12:17, who “keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

We give again the explanation of the position of “the remnant” as found in the following text:—

“I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.” Rev. 19:10.

According to the Scriptures the remnant of the seed of the woman—the last state or last part of the church of Christ—keep the commandments of God, and have the Spirit of prophecy; that is, the gifts of the Spirit are restored to them before the Lord Jesus comes to reap the harvest and gather his saints to himself. And this is confirmed by the words of Paul to those who are looking for this second coming of the Lord as follows:—

“Even as the *testimony* of Christ was confirmed in you; *so that ye come behind in no*

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gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 1:6, 7.

Here we may safely rest the argument that in the last days of this dispensation, when the true church is waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the testimony of Jesus—the Spirit of prophecy—will be confirmed in the believers, so that they shall possess its gifts and powers. But there is more evidence in the Scriptures to be presented on this subject, equally decisive with that which is here offered.

The evidence on the relation of the law of God and the gifts of the Spirit we have given only in part. It deserves further examination. According to Rev. 12:17, war will be made with the remnant who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus. This shows both the perfect agreement between keeping the law and having the power of the Spirit, and the opposition which will exist, and already exists to a great extent, against the law and the testimony. It is a truth well known that the indignation of the world and a worldly church is quickly aroused against those who keep *all* the commandments of God *in all things*, just as they were written and spoken by the Lord. But nothing seems so readily to arouse the prejudice, yes, the hatred and malice, of the carnal mind, as the manifestation of the Spirit of prophecy. The world bestows its incredulous smile as if it pitied the folly of those who could embrace the promise of God as a reality; that incredulous smile often proving more cutting than the severest language; while a proud and worldly church cannot restrain its feelings of scorn or abhorrence of those who humbly and reverently claim “the promise of the

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Spirit” according to the words of both Christ and his apostles. Surely the fulfillment of the prophecy, Rev. 12:17, is no mystery to those who are intently watching the signs of the times, and have noted the feelings of popular religionists toward those who dare to reprove the lukewarmness of the present age in which so many have “the form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.”

This connection between the law and the means and benefits of the gospel is logically deduced from the preaching of the apostle on the day of Pentecost. That the law was not abolished at the crucifixion is proved in this, that not a sermon was preached, not a duty made known, between the crucifixion and the day of Pentecost; and the first duties enjoined on that day were those of repentance for sin, and of baptism for the remission of sin. Now it is plain to see that if the law was previously abolished, and if men were to look to the apostles for the proclamation of a new code, then the whole transaction was a failure, inasmuch as “where no law is there is no transgression,” and of course no call for repentance. Again, “sin is not imputed when there is no law,” and therefore to preach baptism for remission of sin when no law existed would be a sheer absurdity. If the law which had existed were abolished at the cross, no one could be convicted under it, and as no law for the new dispensation had yet been given by the apostles, it would follow necessarily that no one was at that time bound by any law; sin could not be imputed to them at all. Therefore, according to this antinomian notion the preaching of repentance and baptism at that time was a nullity—

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mere sound without sense. Thus it is easily shown that the doctrine of the antinomians—the no-law theorists—more than *perverts* the gospel; it *subverts* it; it saps its very foundations, leaving it destitute of life and power. It is virtually a rejection of the gospel both in its facts and in its promises.

It has been remarked that baptism has not only its *form*, but also its *order* and *relations*. It is often urged that if its form be changed—if it be no longer *immersion* or a *burial*, as the word signifies and the illustrations of Scripture indicate—it ceases to be the baptism of the gospel; and when administered under such change it is not valid. But let us consider its necessary relations. We learn that baptism is for remission of sin; also that sin is the transgression of the law, and that sin is not imputed when there is no law. Therefore if no law existed from the cross to the day of Pentecost, as must have been the case if the law was abolished at the cross, then there could be no sin imputed at that time, of which to repent or for which to be baptized. Now as baptism stands related to sin, and sin is related to an existing law, it follows that the law did exist, for sin was imputed to them.

Thus it is shown that Peter’s preaching would have been groundless and of no force if the law had been abolished. Even so now, all who preach the abolition of the law, preach a gospel (so-called) without any basis; it is a nullity. As it is a nullity, and not *the gospel* in fact, not being a system of salvation from the transgression of the law, the baptism enjoined in such preaching is not truly gospel baptism; it is deprived of its relations and of its significance, and, therefore, of its

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efficacy. And all who administer baptism under such teachings are offenders against the gospel.

This conclusion is logical; it is unavoidable, and is not drawn from this text alone. In Rom. 6:1-6, baptism is called a burial, and, of course, should be subsequent to death, for all must admit that it is wrong to bury before death. But the death which precedes baptism is death to sin, to the transgression of the law. It is expressly said in verse 2 that we cannot be dead to sin and live in it; but we do live in it as long as we continue to transgress the law. We do not die to sin until we cease to transgress the law, and therefore baptism or burial cannot properly take place while we continue to transgress the law. We are to be buried in the order or likeness of Christ's death, which is thus stated:—

“For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.” 1 Cor. 15:3, 4.

Now if ceasing to transgress the law is dying to sin, as all must admit, then no one can be planted in the likeness of Christ's death who has not ceased to transgress the law, from the evident truth that Christ died before he was buried. There is no mistaking this point. He that transgresses the law lives in sin: if he lives in sin he has not died to it; if he has not died to it he is not prepared to be buried; and if he is so buried he is buried alive, that is, without a death to sin, and hence not buried in the likeness of the Saviour's death. Such baptism is not in the order of the gospel—it is only a perversion of gospel baptism.

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And this is still further shown in Rom. 7:1-6. This scripture says the law holds a man as long as he lives, and the woman who marries a second husband before the death of the first is guilty of adultery. In the application of this fact Paul says to his brethren:—

“Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead.” Rom. 7:4.

The wages of sin is death. There would be no death if there were no sin. Thus we see that Paul is arguing concerning man in his sinful condition. The law would not thus hold man unto death if he had not sinned—if his life was not forfeited. The death here referred to is on account of sin; the same that is spoken of in chap. 6—there called a death to sin. But without this death they cannot “be married to another,” even to Christ. Marriage to another without such death would be *spiritual adultery*. This is the force and intent of this scripture. The old man must be crucified, the body of sin destroyed—chap. 6:6; and every effort to unite this body of sin to Christ must meet with his decided disapproval. On this subject it is said in another text:—

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Gal. 3:27.

As union with Christ is represented by the figure of being married to him, so baptism is the ordinance by which that marriage is said to be consummated. The marriage ceremony does not unite the hearts of the parties; if there is no previously existing union of hearts the marriage ceremony is but mockery. So baptism does not

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in spirit unite us to Christ, but it is the legal rite by which that union is acknowledged and ratified. It is an established rule in all governments that he makes himself guilty who solemnizes the rite of marriage without legal authority, or where there are impediments and disabilities which forbid the marriage, while the parties suffer the shame of an illegal union. This is exactly the position of the parties where baptism is administered before the candidate has died to sin; while he is yet living in transgression of the law. The rite is illegally administered; the marriage is a nullity, and the administrator is liable to indictment.

The arguing of this point is not a digression from our subject. Its bearing on “the promise” of Acts 2:38, 39, is easily seen. “The gift of the Holy Ghost” is promised to those who repent of sin, and who are baptized for the remission of sin. But it is proved that antinomianism ignores genuine repentance and the burial of him who is dead to the transgression of the law, by ignoring the law itself, by which is the knowledge of sin. Therefore it has no just claim to “the promise,” not being the legal fulfillment of the condition. Thus it is shown that antinomianism, or a denial of the perpetuity of the law of God, shuts out the Spirit of God and neutralizes the promise of the gospel.” Where there is no vision, the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”

Here we will state an interesting fact and notice an objection. In a work on the relation of different church doctrines to moral obligations, we recently read the following words:—

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“The Methodist conference under Wesley in 1770, declared that the universal immorality then prevailing was because of the wide-spread opinion that Christ had annulled the moral law, and that evangelical freedom dispensed with the ten commandments.”

“Wesley’s Notes” on this conference drew forth upon him and upon the work of the Methodists severe criticisms from certain dignitaries of the established church. And these in turn brought out “Fletcher’s Checks to Antinomianism;” a work worthy of the careful reading of every searcher for Bible truth. This is an interesting item of ecclesiastical history, and it serves to prove the statement we have made, that antinomianism has been deprecated by the thoughtfully pious of all ages. But an objection has been raised upon it which well deserves notice. It has been said that while the Methodists condemned the no-law theory, and advocated the ten commandments as God’s great rule of morality, they did not themselves keep the law, for the law says: “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work,” but they called the first day the Sabbath and kept it instead of the day indicated in the law; and that they therefore really occupied a ground similar to that of those whom they reproved.

Admitting the correctness of the statement concerning the teaching of the law, to argue which is not our present purpose, the reply is thus made: There is a very wide difference of position between those who acknowledge the authority of the law, who make it the avowed and actual intention of their lives to keep the law, even though they are mistaken in some

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points of duty enjoined therein, and those who deny the authority of the law, who declare it to be the object of their lives to repudiate and to disregard its claims. The position of the former is that of loyal citizens laboring under certain mistakes in regard to duty; while the latter are disloyal, virtually denying the constitutional authority of the government. If the ideas of the latter could be carried out to their legitimate results, the government would be entirely overthrown.

On this consideration we readily vindicate the early Methodists and all others who recognize the existence and the claims of the law of God, from the reproach which must fall upon those who repudiate the law and deny its authority. And the providence of God has justified our position in regard to this, for he has often blessed with his Spirit the former, while he has as generally withheld it from the latter.

But this vindication must not be abused, and made to favor selfishness in religion. When God in his providence calls our attention to any truth of his word, and gives us light thereon, there can be no excuse for rejecting or neglecting it, however sincere our former lives may have been, or however unpopular that truth may be, or to whatever extent it may cross our feelings or clash with our worldly interests.

Among those who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof in the last days, are said to be “false accusers.” One false accusation raised against those who plead for the power of godliness and for the divinely appointed means of Christian unity is, that to claim to be led by the Spirit, or to possess gifts of the Spirit, is to

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claim infallibility. If any should make such a claim, or try to avail themselves of the benefits of such a claim, they would abuse the promises, and forfeit the favor, of God. The accusation might lie against such persons, but not against those who hold and rightly use the truth on the subject. God never inspired any one so as to make him infallible. To do this would be to take away his individuality or his freedom of will, and consequently to remove him from probation. Peter, Paul, and Barnabas were all highly gifted of the Spirit, and yet they all erred. Of the gifts of the first two there will be no question. Of Barnabas the record says: “He was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.” Yet he and Paul so differed in judgment that they had a sharp contention and as a consequence separated in their labors. This was wrong, it was contrary to what Paul wrote by inspiration. Peter seriously erred and was rebuked by Paul. And thus it is shown that they who were most highly gifted were

not always under the immediate influence of the Spirit so as to be preserved from erring. They were fallible and dependent upon Heaven for help and strength which they received only through faith and prayer.

When the apostles were first sent forth with power over unclean spirits, they could not cast a demon out of a certain child; and the Saviour said it was because of their unbelief. Paul said they prophesied “according to the proportion of faith.” Rom 12:6. God never endowed any one so that he could live at ease, or in carelessness, without constant zeal, and yet be in possession of supernatural power, which he could exercise

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according to his own will. It is God that doeth the work, and he will work to his own glory, and through such only as are humble enough to seek his glory. When “holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” their speaking was the speaking of the Holy Spirit, and it must be infallible, even as God is true. But the men themselves were not infallible.

It is far from being true that the recognition of the manifestations of the Spirit leads to a claim of infallibility. They who take opposite ground are really the egotists. For that is egotism and self-esteem which leads any to profess ability within themselves to do all that God requires, to perfect holiness and to glorify him, without his aid, or independent of the means which he has ordained and set forth in the gospel. Without Christ we can do nothing; and we are strong only when strong in the might of God. “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.” The accusation is as unreasonable as it is unjust.

If we can do nothing without the aid of the Spirit of God, shall we therefore be content to do nothing, and so neglect to glorify him in our lives? Or if he answers our prayers and gives us his Spirit according to his promise, shall we deny the grace, and affect to work in our own strength, while God by his Spirit is directly aiding us? What is this but denying God, and robbing him of his glory? We repeat, that a denial of the gifts of the Spirit “for the perfecting of the saints,” leads to egotism and self-righteousness.

CHAPTER VI.

TRY THE SPIRITS

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” 1 John 4:1.

That truth lies between extremes, is an old saying. On the subject now under consideration we find opposites of error; some accept every manifestation of power as from the Spirit of God, or from good spirits, while others discard every manifestation of spirit power as evil. One class overlook the injunction of the text; they do not “try the spirits whether they are of God,” but accept all without discrimination. The other class ignore the command given through Paul when he was speaking of the Spirit, to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” They will not take the pains to prove anything of the nature of a manifestation of the Spirit; they reject all, and without a trial.

The first class are again divided into two parties, and to these we will at present give our attention. One of these parties is easily disposed of. It embraces all the Spiritualists of this age. That the media possess power, or are possessed by spirits, no one will deny who has examined the facts of their manifestations, and studied the prophecies which relate to them.

N. P. Talmadge, an eminent and noted Spiritualist, in the preface to the book entitled, “Healing of the Nations,” claimed that 1 Cor. 12:6-10, is fulfilled in Modern Spiritualism; but in the

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enumeration of the gifts which he copied from that chapter, he carefully excluded every sentence from which we can learn that all divine manifestations are by “one and the self-same Spirit.” This is a sufficient condemnation of all the theories and phenomena of Spiritualism, for in that, instead of “a diversity of gifts, but the same Spirit,” we find a great *diversity of spirits*. Spiritualists do not occupy, either in theory or practice, the position of God’s people upon whom he is pleased to bestow the gifts of his Spirit. They deny Jesus Christ, through whom alone “the promise of the Spirit” is given. Nothing more is needed to show that their gifts are spurious. The Scriptures represent them as “seducing spirits,” and their teachings as the “doctrines of devils.” We cannot deny their power, for they are again spoken of as “the spirits of devils working miracles.”

The other party to which we have referred is composed of the “Latter-day Saints,” or Mormons. They have always claimed to have the gifts among them. The fact of their making this claim has, perhaps more than all else, created a prejudice against the truth, and brought this important doctrine into disrepute. These differ from Spiritualists in that they profess faith in Christ, and preach and claim the power of the Spirit only as a fulfillment of the promises of the gospel. And because of this claim and their profession of strong faith in Christ and the gospel, many are led to believe their gifts are genuine. But when we “try the spirits” by the gospel standard we shall find that these also are mere counterfeits of the gifts of the gospel. There are

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certain rules to determine their character, given by the Saviour, which we will now examine.

“Beware of false prophets.” A true prophet has a gift of the Spirit of God. False prophets may be of two kinds; mere pretenders, having no gifts at all, or, having spurious gifts by an evil spirit. The Saviour says, “Ye shall know them by their fruits.” We will make this our first ground of examination.

1. The Mormons are well known to be egotistical and boastful of their gifts. Anywhere and everywhere they are ready to thrust their claims upon our notice. But boasting is excluded by the law of faith. Rom. 3:27. Humility and meekness of spirit can alone secure the blessings of the Spirit of God.

2. Not only the boastfulness of their profession, but also the fruits of their lives have been inconsistent with the teachings and spirit of the gospel. They have manifested a spirit of worldly selfishness, and a disregard of the rights of others which is the reverse of that self-denying love to our neighbor which characterizes the true followers of Christ. Joseph Smith, the founder, leader, and prophet of the sect, set up a bank in Kirtland, Ohio,

which proved to be a swindling concern. At Nauvoo a city charter was obtained and he became Mayor of the city. He placed his followers on a war footing, and he was Commander-in-Chief of the "Nauvoo Legion." His conceit and ambition were so unbounded that he even announced himself a candidate for President of the United States! Outlaws were protected in the city over which he presided with despotic power. Freedom of speech was not allowed; a press was destroyed which was established with

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the avowed purpose of exposing the iniquity of the place; the mob was screened, and it was openly talked by the leading men that no opposition press would be allowed in the city. They disregarded and even denied the rights of "the Gentiles," as they called all who were not of their number. And their history at Salt Lake has shown a condition of despotism, oppression, and immorality even worse than at Nauvoo.

3. In regard to the influence of their pretended gifts we will relate the substance of a conversation held a few years since with an aged person living in North-eastern Ohio not far from Kirtland. He was a Mormon while Smith was in Kirtland, and remained a Mormon up to the time of our acquaintance with him. He admitted that there was iniquity among them in Kirtland, equal in amount to what common report had it. "But," said he, "those wicked ones were not Mormons. They came among them for selfish purposes, and whenever their wrongs were found out they professed to repent, and the church was obliged to retain them."

Our answer was that the gifts of the Spirit were given for the perfection of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. They professed to have all these gifts. Where then was their discernment, that they could not detect hypocrisy and expose wickedness, and so put it from their midst?

He replied that it was reasonable to suppose that where all the gifts existed the church should have been purified to a greater extent than it was there. He said he could not understand it.

The explanation is easily given: Their gifts were spurious; they were not of the Spirit of

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God, and did not tend to purify the body, or to perfect the saints. The spirit of error was with them from the beginning, and it showed itself in both their doctrines and practices. The Roman hierarchy never showed a greater love for worldly pre-eminence, or greater disregard for the moral and legal rights of those who opposed them. It was truly fortunate for the peace and security of the people that they were not permitted to grasp the power which they coveted, and which they strove to obtain. They emigrated to Utah only because they would not live in peace with their neighbors. Because their leaders would not submit to the laws of the land, they sought a place where they could rule without restraint. We speak only those things which are well known to be true, and we are willing to leave it with the candid that the evidence of their fruits is all against the genuineness of their gifts.

It is true that there are two parties of Mormons. Within a few years Joseph Smith, Jr., has headed a party repudiating Brigham Young, denying his authority, and opposing some of the abominations of Salt Lake. But Brigham Young succeeded Smith at Nauvoo, and was long recognized as the head of the Mormon people, and even now those who oppose him are a small minority. Young's authority was established on the ground of the succession, and the assumption that he was gifted with prophetic power. Now if this was all a mistake, if the whole body of "the Saints" were deceived in regard to the claims of Young, as the other party assert, if the gift of prophecy was not conferred on him, then it is proved that their argument respecting the gifts is no evidence that they are the people of

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God, or, in other words, that their gifts are genuine. The claims of the two parties, that of Utah and that of Illinois, are based on the same arguments respecting the gifts and the same assumption that the gifts are manifested among them. Therefore that argument, and their claim that they possess the gifts, are shown to be no evidence in their favor. Each denounces the other, while both stand on the same ground. Some have been led to believe that they have the true faith because of their gifts, but it is shown that we must determine their standing by some other rule of judgment.

The Saviour has given that rule in Matt. 7:21-23. This is a continuation of his warning against false prophets. He says:—

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.”

By this we are taught that faith in Jesus Christ will not procure an entrance into the kingdom of Heaven without obedience to his Father. Having thus introduced the time and circumstance of entering into the kingdom, he continues:—

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity.”

Again, granting all that the Mormons claim, that they prophesy in the name of Jesus, and in his name do many wonderful works, this text shows positively that that fact is no evidence that they are his followers. All this may characterize

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the self-deceived; and this profession is made by those who work iniquity, and who are, therefore, commanded to depart from him when the faithful enter into the kingdom. Compare Matt. 25:34-41.

To make more clear the application of the text above quoted we notice two points:—

1. Iniquity is lawlessness, or law-breaking. So the original means. Greenfield defines it, “violation of a law, iniquity, improbity, sin;” from “*anomos*, lawless, without law, not subject to law; violating the law, wicked, impious, a transgressor.” So it is given in the *Emphatic Diaglott*. And so we find it in Ex. 20:5, 6, the second commandment: “Visiting the *iniquity* of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that *hate me*; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that *love me* and *keep my commandments*.” Observe the contrast; hatred is placed in opposition to love, and iniquity in opposition to keeping the commandments of God. Therefore those described in the text are they who cry to Jesus, Lord, Lord, but do not the will of his Father—they do not keep the law of God. They unite the profession of faith and the claim of the gifts of the Spirit, with iniquity or disregard of the commandments of God. And it is a fact which has lately been confirmed to us by reading and by conversation, that the Mormons take antinomian ground, teaching that the commandments of God are abolished. Said the wise man, “Where there is no vision, the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” They who keep the law are happy; they do not perish. They who transgress the law, or work iniquity, have no

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vision from God; they perish, for Jesus will say to them, “Depart from me.” No matter how loud their profession; no matter how “many wonderful works” they do in the name of Jesus, they are still self-deceived; their gifts are described in Ezek. 13, as a vain vision and a lying divination. “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.” Prov. 28:9. He that rejects the law of God, his religion is vain. How, then, shall God bestow upon him the precious gifts of his Spirit? We repeat what we have said, antinomianism and the Spirit do not—they cannot—go together.

2. We admit that the gifts were lost to the church because of apostasy; and as she recovers from the darkness by true, genuine reform, the gifts shall be restored. This is according to the teaching of the Scriptures. But we insist that they are not restored among the “Latter-day Saints”, or Mormons. Their “fruits” stand as their condemnation.

The restoration is brought to view in Rev. 12:17. “The remnant” here spoken of are the last state of the church; the same that are spoken of in Rev. 14:12, just before the Lord Jesus comes to reap the harvest of the earth. This remnant “have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Now the angel said, in Rev. 19:10, “The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.” This is sufficient proof that the church in the last days will have the Spirit of prophecy. But this company are also said to “keep the commandments of God,” as it is said of them in Rev. 14:12, “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” This, surely, is not fulfilled

in those who “make void the law through faith;” see Rom. 3:31; who professedly substitute the faith of Jesus for the commandments of God, instead of keeping both together.

But that is the position of the Mormons; they reject the law of God; they make void the commandments by their traditions, and are therefore workers of iniquity. Their profession of faith in Christ will not save them in the day when he comes to give to the little flock the kingdom. Their gifts will not procure his favor, because their lives are not right in his sight. Their spirit is a spirit of error, leading to darkness and delusion. “By their fruits ye shall know them;” not by their profession; not even by their wonderful works in the name of Jesus, for these are nothing without obedience to the law of the Father.

We have seen that in the second commandment love of God is associated with keeping his commandments. In truth there is no love where obedience is lacking. Says an apostle, “This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.” 1 John 5:3. Love and obedience are inseparable. This enables us to appreciate the words of Paul in 1 Cor. 13:1, 2:—

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.”

Now we discover the harmony between the words of our Saviour in Matt. 7, and the words of Paul in the above text. Bearing in mind that

iniquity is violation of the law, and love is the keeping of the law, the Saviour shows that to prophesy and to do wonderful works in his name will not secure an entrance into the kingdom to such as work iniquity. Likewise, Paul says that the gift of prophecy and faith to remove mountains is nothing without the love of God.

It is only by examining these texts that we can appreciate the force of Rev. 12:17, that the remnant keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus, the Spirit of prophecy; and we are distinctly informed in both Testaments that they who reject the law worship in vain; they are workers of iniquity; they will be told to depart from the presence of Jesus in the great day of his wrath.

These scriptures apply to the Mormons more directly than to any other people of this age. They have never occupied the position of those who are pointed out in the word of God as preparing to meet the Lord at his appearing. They have not fulfilled the prophecy of the remnant in any particular. And we entreat all who have been tempted to regard them as the people of God because of their supposed possession of the gifts, to “try the spirits whether they are of God;” to examine more closely the words of the Saviour in Matt. 7:15-23; and to study more carefully the position of the remnant who are accepted of the Lord when he comes to give the kingdom to his little flock. And let us each individually see to it that we are of that number “who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

“Where there is no vision, the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Matt. 28:19, 20.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” Mark 16:15-18.

These texts are parallel, and they cast light upon each other. We admit that the expression, “the end of the world,” might be rendered, “the end of the age,” but it refers, of course, to that age in which the gospel was to be preached, that is, the gospel dispensation. And this is proof that the commission was not designed for the apostles alone, nor yet for their immediate successors, as is often claimed, for they could not preach the gospel to the end of the age or dispensation. This commission is as extensive as the preaching of the gospel was designed to be.

Now, as the passages quoted are parallel, the expression, “I am with you,” in one, is the equivalent of the manifestations of the power of

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the Spirit or the signs to follow, in the other. When Jesus said he is, or would be, in the midst where two or three are gathered together in his name, all understand that he meant, not personally but, by the Spirit. We learn from the Scriptures that, as the Son represented the Father, even so the Spirit represents the Son. As Jesus came in his Father’s name, John 5:43, so did the Spirit come in his name, John 14:26. And he promised to be with them to the end of the world. The *evidence* that he is with them, that the promise is fulfilled, is found in *the signs* of the Spirit’s presence and power, which were to follow them that believe. This is made very plain in Acts 2, where the promise first commenced its fulfillment.

When the commission was given they were told to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. Accordingly they remained at Jerusalem and did not preach any until the day of Pentecost, when the promised power came. It cannot be disputed that their labor under this commission commenced on that day of Pentecost.

And we can trace an exact parallel between the commission of the Saviour and the preaching of Peter on that day. By this parallel the application of this subject is made clear and certain. Jesus in the commission, said that believers should be baptized, and, these signs shall follow them that believe. Peter, acting under this commission, said, Repent and be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. We see by the reading of Acts 2 that the promise of the Holy Ghost which was offered to believers on the day of Pentecost was the same promise

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that was fulfilled to the apostles on that day. This also is made sure by the parallel which we have pointed out between the commission and the preaching of Peter on that day of Pentecost. Peter, in opening the work under that commission, commanded them to be baptized, because the Saviour, in giving the commission, said the believers should be baptized. In like manner, Peter said they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, because the Saviour said these signs shall follow them that believe. Therefore the gift of the Holy Ghost which Peter promised to them who received the gospel, is the exact equivalent of the signs which the Saviour said shall follow them that believe.

This conclusion cannot by any means be avoided, and it is decisive as showing the scope of the promise set forth by Peter on that day of Pentecost. It proves most conclusively that the signs were to follow them that believed even unto the end of the world, and were matters of promise to as many as the Lord our God shall call.

And with this agree the history of the early church, and the instruction given by the apostles. These gifts were *in the church* in the apostolic age; and they were not confined to the apostles nor to the ministers of the gospel.

Agabus was a prophet. Philip the evangelist had four daughters who had the gift of prophecy. This was according to the promise made by Joel, as quoted by Peter: “Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy”, and, “on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit.” The promise of the Saviour in the commission is the same; for “them that believe” embraces males and females, sons and

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daughters, alike. In the instruction of the apostles to the churches they make such reference to the gifts as to confirm the view that the gifts were quite general among the believers.

Paul wrote to the church of Corinth to “covet earnestly the best gifts,” but rather the gift of prophecy as being most useful to the whole body for their edification. He said:—

“I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied.” 1 Cor. 14:5.

This statement is not consistent with the idea that the gifts were to be confined to the laborers in the ministry. This whole chapter contains instruction to the church at large in regard to the operations of the Spirit among them. Of the benefits of the gift of prophecy he says:—

“But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.” Verses 24, 25.

Thus Paul has stated, first, his desire that they might have the gift of prophecy; then, the usefulness of this gift, both to the church and to the conversion of unbelievers; and, finally, he speaks of what actually existed among them, thus:—

“When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine [or instruction], hath a tongue [i. e., a gift of tongues], hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.” Verse 26.

Paul did not disapprove of these things, but gave such directions in regard to the use of their gifts as seemed necessary for their growth, and

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that the gifts of God’s Spirit might not be abused nor perverted. For he had before exhorted them to desire spiritual gifts, and to covet earnestly the best gifts. And again he said:—

“Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.” Verse 12.

In furtherance of this object he directs that he that hath a tongue, or the gift of tongues, shall keep silence in the church unless there be an interpreter, because others would not be edified by his speaking if it were not interpreted. But upon the gift of prophecy in the church no such restraint was laid. Of that he said:—

“For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.” Verse 31.

In like manner he instructed the church at Rome. We observe that his argument in 1 Cor. 12, concerning the various members of the body, has respect to the gifts of the Spirit set in the church. And so to the Romans, carrying out the same idea, he says:—

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation;” etc. Rom. 12:4-8.

The mutual dependence of the gifts, one on the other, is shown in this text as it is in 1 Cor. 12. In that he says one member may not say to another, I have no need of thee. And those

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least esteemed are often most useful and necessary. So in Rom. 12:5 it is said, Ye are members *one of another*. That is, to have a perfect and efficiently active body the members must all be perfectly united together. The hand is confessedly one of the most useful members of the body; but its connection with the head, and consequent usefulness, depends entirely on its connection with the wrist, arm, etc. Were it connected directly with the head,

without the intervention of other members, it would be of no use, and mostly an incumbrance. In all this we are taught that we should receive with humble reverence whatever God has set in the church; for he who formed the body knows best the wants of the body, and best understands the proper order of its members.

James, writing “to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad,” directs that prayer be offered for the sick, with the assurance that “the Lord will raise him up.” There is no force nor reason in the objection often urged, that answers to prayer in that manner are not now given. If that were true (but it is not), it would argue nothing against the certainty of the promise, for we might possibly find a reason for it in the following scripture, Isa. 59:1, 2:—

“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”

The duty and privilege of prayer are greatly abused. While things which God has never promised are made subjects of prayer, to pray for the things which he has promised is often to subject ourselves to ridicule and reproach. As faith

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is not without the word of God, Rom. 10:17, so there is no genuine hope unless it is fixed on the promise of God. Heb. 6:12-19. The custom now prevailing of praying all over the world, and concerning everything upon which the fancy chances to rest, and of slighting and neglecting those blessings which we immediately need and which God has promised to bestow, is practical infidelity in regard to the faithfulness of God. It is no test of faith to pray for things which we do not immediately need, or which, if granted, are so far removed from our personal experience and observation that we could not realize the answer. To pray for the heathen in a distant land, for the restoration of Israel, or for the conversion of the world, may gratify general religious feelings and satisfy the conscience in regard to the duty to pray; but that will never satisfy our consciousness that God is a present help in time of need, and that he exercises an immediate providential care over his people.

They who think lightly of praying for the Spirit of God, which Jesus assures us will be given in answer to prayer; or for the sick, whom James says the Lord will raise up in answer to prayer; or for any other blessing which is directly promised, really reproach God as if he would not fulfill his word. They are of those who are reprov'd because they “say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil;” Zeph. 1:12; or of the perverse ones who say, “The Lord hath forsaken the earth.” Ezek. 8:12; 9:9. They think the Lord has no care for our wants, and will not regard our petitions. But he who hears the cry of the young ravens, and notices the fall of the

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sparrow of the field, and numbers the hairs of the heads of his children, will not turn away from their cry when they are in affliction.

No reason can be given to show that this promise of James is not of general application and for all time. The frequent references in this chapter to the coming of the Lord, prove that it may be claimed by those who live in the last days (see Jas. 5:1-8), who have the assurance that “the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.”

Nor can it in truth be said that to claim answers to prayer in such manner begets egotism and self-confidence in religion. The reverse of this is truth. Nothing so makes a person feel his insufficiency—his entire dependence on God—as to be brought before him as a petitioner for a present—needed blessing. General blessings, or things afar off, may be prayed for with the unconcern of a formalist, or the self-complacency of a Pharisee; but to ask for a present blessing with the expectation of a present answer, is calculated to greatly humble the petitioner, to give a sense of entire dependence, and to produce exalted views of the faithfulness of God and trust in his providential care. Thus there is practical utility of great importance in the acceptance of these precious promises of direct answer to prayer, and in relying upon the gifts which God has graciously set in the church “for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

And thus it is shown that: 1. The commission embraces faith, obedience, and the signs or gifts of the Spirit. 2. The first preaching under the commission, on the day of Pentecost, embraced the same points; the same duty and

the same blessing were presented to those who believed the gospel. 3. The history of the church shows that these continued in the church. 4. The instructions of the apostles prove that they looked upon the gifts as belonging to the church for all time. 5. The promise in the commission runs “to the end of the world,” or gospel age, which proves that the commission was intended to cover the entire age; while not a sentence can be found to show that it was limited by any time but the end of the world.

No truth of the Bible can be more clearly proved than this, that the signs following the believers, spoken of by the Saviour in the great commission, are identical with the gift of the Holy Spirit which was promised by the apostles who first preached under that commission on the day of Pentecost; and these signs were designed to continue in the church as long as the commission is of force, or as long as the gospel is preached.

But some object that the commission itself was limited to the apostles, and expired with them, and, therefore, they say that promise is no longer extended to believers. Let us look at the result of this affirmation. The commission included two prominent points: a duty and a promise. The duty is baptism; the promise is the signs or gift of the Holy Spirit. When the apostles first preached under this commission these two were associated. Now, if the promise is annulled by the expiration of the commission, then the duty enjoined has also expired. It cannot be controverted that *the apostles baptized under this commission, and by no other authority*. Therefore, if the commission was for the apostles only, and expired with them, then there has existed no authority

to baptize since their day; for no other authority in the gospel can be shown by which they or any others ever baptized. And it is a noteworthy fact that they who deny the perpetuity of the gifts, and of the commission under which they were promised to believers, yet go directly to Acts, to that day of Pentecost, for authority to baptize, both for precept and example. Such inconsistency on their part is evidence that they are in error. This thought should lead to more carefulness in taking their positions; for all can see that they are in error in regard to the commission and the gifts, or else the baptism they administer is unauthorized and unscriptural.

The perpetuity of the gifts is the subject of direct remark by another apostle who acted under this same commission, in 1 Cor. 13:9, 10:—

“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”

It is a truth to be deplored that men are sometimes so blinded as to rest their cause on the very texts which testify against them, as this has often been quoted by those who deny the perpetuity of the gifts. It is easy to catch at the sound of the words, “done away,” but quite another thing to point out *the time* when this shall be fulfilled. In regard to that we read farther:—

“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” Verse 12.

This shows that Paul looked forward to a time when he should know more and see more clearly than he then did by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And when we consider that he had been caught up to the third heaven, and by “visions

and revelations” had heard unspeakable words which it was not possible for a man to utter, and which, of course, exceeded in wisdom and glory all that he could speak or write, we see at a glance that the time is not yet in which that perfect is come; for the church has not yet attained unto wisdom and knowledge greater than that which the apostles possessed by inspiration. Hence, “that which is in part” is not done away.

On this text, as on Eph. 4: 8-11, an erroneous position is taken in reference to the object of the gifts. It has often been asserted that the gifts were conferred for the sole purpose of establishing the gospel in perfecting the canon of Scripture, and when the Revelation was completed they were withdrawn. But, as before said, when the apostles speak of the reasons of their being bestowed, that is never mentioned as being one of them. Not for the perfecting of a system of divinity, but “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry.” And so in 1 Cor. 13, it

is not reaching unto the establishing of a perfect system of theology by revelation, but to a time when the inspired ones shall see more clearly and know more perfectly than they could by that inspiration. That time and position are not yet reached. We cannot know more nor see better by the aid of the revelation given than they could see and know who were inspired to give it. And especially is this true in regard to Paul, who saw and knew more than it was possible for him to write. And yet he knew only in part, and prophesied (for our instruction) only in part, and saw through a glass darkly, by the spirit of prophecy, compared to how we shall see and know when that which is perfect is come. Language could

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hardly be framed to more clearly teach the perpetuity of the gifts, to show that the time is not yet come for them to be done away, than it is taught in 1 Cor. 13.

The sum of all objections will be found to amount to this: They have ceased; therefore it was the design of the Lord that they should cease. But this is no reason at all; certainly it is no valid argument in favor of their having been abolished. In that manner a great declension of piety might be offered as proof that it was not designed that the spirit of piety was to be perpetuated in the church. But where is the evidence that they have been done away? Where is the evidence that they have not been in existence since the days of the apostles? Such evidence does not exist. But in favor of a position involving such consequences some clear and decisive evidence should be produced.

On the other hand, it is shown that the Scriptures contemplated their perpetuity. And in harmony with their teachings there is evidence clear and strong that they have existed since the days of the apostles. Moreover, there is proof that they exist even in our own generation. And why not? If they existed for a single century after the apostles, there is no reason, except the unbelief in the church, why they should not still exist. We call special attention to the following proposition: If a single well-attested instance of the manifestation of the Spirit of prophecy, or of any gift of the Spirit, can be produced this side of the apostles, then the force of every argument and of every objection against their perpetuity throughout the Christian dispensation is entirely destroyed.

CHAPTER VIII.

GIFTS IN THE REFORMATION

“*And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*” *Matt. 28:20.*

The term “Reformation” is not here used as applying exclusively to the work and times of Luther. The Reformation from the darkness and the errors of Romanism then commenced, but was not then consummated. It progressed powerfully in the days of the Wesleys, and remains yet to be perfected.

We have no sympathy with the course of those who quote history and offer the opinions of uninspired men to prove points of doctrine. But when we come to facts of existence we must appeal to history. And more especially are we warranted to do so in this case, for history attests the continued existence of that which the Scriptures inform us should continue to exist. Now we are brought to the question, Is there evidence that the gifts of the Spirit have existed and have been manifested in the church since the days of the apostles? The field is a very wide one. Testimony to almost any extent might be given; but we shall content ourselves with giving a few cases which we believe to be well authenticated.

Milner, speaking of the third century, says:—

“Though the miraculous dispensations attendant on Christianity form no part of the plan of this history, I cannot but observe on this occasion

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how strongly their continuance in the third century is here attested. Pionius affirms that devils were ejected by Christians in the name of Christ; and he does this in the face of enemies, who would have been glad of the shadow of an argument to justify their bitterness, resentment, and perfidy.”—*Milner’s Church History, p. 143.*

Cyprian speaks thus of the gifts of the Spirit:—

“Hence, an ability is given with sober chastity, uprightness of mind, and purity of language, to heal the sick, to extinguish the force of poison, to cleanse the filth of distempered minds, to speak peace to the hostile, to give tranquillity to the violent, and gentleness to the fierce, to compel, by menaces, unclean and wandering spirits to quit their hold of men, to scourge the foe, and by torments bring him to confess what he is.”

Upon which Milner remarks:—

“The testimony here given to the ejection of evil spirits, as a common thing among Christians, even in the third century, deserves to be noticed as proof that miraculous influences had not ceased in the church....Indeed, the testimony of the fathers in these times is so general and concurrent that the fact itself cannot be denied without universally impeaching their veracity. We may safely, therefore, infer that such things were frequent among Christians.”—*Church History, Am. Ed., p. 254.*

Mosheim, speaking of the progress of Christianity in the third century, says:—

“Among the causes which belong to the first of these classes we do not only reckon the intrinsic

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force of celestial truth, and the piety and fortitude of those who declared it to the world, but also that special and interposing Providence, which, by such dreams and visions as were presented to the minds of many who were inattentive to the Christian doctrine, or its professed enemies, touched their hearts with a conviction of its truth, and a sense of its importance, and engaged them without delay to confess themselves the disciples of Christ. To this may also be added the healing of diseases, and other miracles which many Christians were yet able to perform by invoking the name of the divine Saviour. The number of miracles, however, we find to have been much less in this than in the preceding century; nor must this alteration be attributed only to the divine wisdom which rendered miraculous interpositions less frequent as they became less necessary, but also to that justice which was provoked to diminish the frequency of gifts, because some did not scruple to pervert them to mercenary purposes.”—*History, vol. i. p. 78.*

This diminution of the frequency of the gifts in the third century is just what might have been expected in view of the “falling away” of which Paul prophesied, and which was then fully in progress; of the “grievous wolves” who should enter the church, the “false prophets” and the “damnable heresies,” of which Peter wrote, and whose “pernicious ways” so many followed by which the Spirit of God was grieved away. But we cannot see the reasonableness of the historian’s conclusion that the gifts were “less necessary” under such circumstances. Inasmuch as they were given “for the

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perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ,” they were really more necessary, but less frequent because of the unbelief and worldliness of the church.

Much more reasonable than the conclusion of Mosheim is the answer of Mr. Wesley to the question, “If you allow miracles before the empire became Christian, why not afterward?” He replied as follows:—

“Because after the empire became Christian, a general corruption of both faith and morals infected the Christian church; which, by that revolution, as St. Jerome says, ‘lost as much of her virtues as it had gained of wealth and power.’ And this very reason St. Chrysostom himself gave in the words you have afterward cited: ‘There are some who ask, Why are not miracles performed still? Why are there no persons who raise the dead, and cure diseases?’ To which he replies that it was owing to the want of faith, and virtue, and piety in those times.”—*Wesley’s Works*, p. 700.

Again, of the fourth century Mosheim speaks thus:—

“But I cannot, on the other hand, assent to the opinions of those who maintain that, in this century, miracles had entirely ceased; and at this period the Christian church was not favored with any extraordinary or supernatural work of a divine power engaged in its cause.”—*Church History*, vol. i. p. 105.

In the time of the Reformation it was the belief that the Spirit of God was yet in the church, in its gifts, and in special answers to prayer. D’Aubigne says:—

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“John Huss did more; prophetic words issued from the depths of his dungeon.”

Huss saw the Reformation about one hundred years before Luther came, and was, says D’Aubigne, “the John Baptist of the Reformation.”

Martin Luther not only believed in the direct interposition of God by the power of the Spirit, but he recorded the following remarkable case:—

“A woman at Isenack, lying very sick, had endured horrible paroxysms, which no physician was able to cure; for her indisposition was directly the work of the devil, and an unnatural thing, occasioned by devilish frightenings, insomuch that she fell into a faint swooning, and thereupon had four paroxysms, each enduring the space of three or four hours; her hands and feet bended in the manner of a horn. She was chill and cold, her tongue rough and dry; her body, by reason of the disease, was much swelled; she, seeing Luther, who came to visit her, was much rejoiced thereat, raised herself up and said, ‘Ah! my loving father in Christ, I have a heavy burden upon me. Pray to God for me;’ and so she fell down into her bed again—whereupon Luther fetched a deep sigh and said, ‘God rebuke and command thee, Satan, that thou suffer this his creature to be in peace!’ Then, turning himself to the standers-by, he said, ‘She is plagued of the devil in the body, but the soul is safe and shall be preserved. Therefore let us give thanks to God and pray for her.’ And so they all repeated aloud the Lord’s prayer. After which Luther concluded with these words, ‘Lord God, Heavenly Father, who hast commanded us to pray for the sick, we beseech thee, through thy

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only beloved Son, that thou wouldst deliver this thy servant, from her sickness and from the hands of the devil. Spare, O Lord, her soul, which together with her body thou hast purchased and redeemed from the power of sin, of death, and of the devil.’ Whereupon the sick woman said, Amen. The night following she took good rest and the next day was graciously delivered from her disease and sickness.”—*Table Talk*, p. 359.

Zwingle, of Switzerland, the great reformer, was seized by the plague called “great death,” which was sweeping off its thousands; and he was so near gone that he was supposed by some to be dead; but he was miraculously restored in answer to prayer. D’Aubigne says:—

“The believers cried to God night and day, earnestly entreating that he would restore their faithful pastor. The prayer was answered, and the news was soon flying everywhere that Zwingle had been snatched from the brink of the grave.”—*Hist. Ref., vol. ii. p. 331.*

Mr. Wesley records the following case of the healing of a Mrs. Jones, an eminently pious woman:—

“She had various physicians but still grew worse and worse; still perceiving herself to be no better, she left them off. She had a continual pain in her groin, with such a *prolapsus uteri* as soon confined her to her bed. There she lay two months helpless and hopeless; till a thought came one day into her mind, ‘Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me whole! Be it according to thy will!’ Immediately the pain and the distress

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ceased. Feeling herself well, she rose and dressed herself. Her husband coming in and seeing her in tears, asked, ‘Are those tears of serious joy?’ She said, ‘Of joy!’ on which they wept together. From that hour she felt no pain, but enjoyed perfect health. I think our Lord never wrought a plainer miracle, even in the days of his flesh.”—*Wesley’s Journal, vol. iv. p. 748.*

All who are not deeply prejudiced will acknowledge that there was much consecration among the early Methodists, and that the Spirit often witnessed to their work with great power. There were among them many godly persons of strong faith, and the fruits of faith were often manifested according to the gracious promises of the Saviour. The following case of curing of blindness is copied from the life of Bramwell:—

“William Greensmith, son of Thomas Greensmith, of Watnal, near Nottingham, when about nine years of age, was severely afflicted with a scrofulous humor in his eyes, so that he was unable to bear the light, even with a bandage upon them. Mr. Bramwell was then in Nottingham circuit, and went in his regular turn to preach in Mr. Greensmith’s house. On one of these occasions he remained all night; and previous to his departure the next morning, when his horse was brought to the door, he asked where the boy was who had sore eyes. Mrs. Greensmith replied that he was in a dark room behind the door. He wished him to be called out. He came and stood near Mr. Bramwell, who put his hand on the boy’s head, and looked upward as if in ejaculatory prayer. He then went out leaving the child

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standing, while the latter, as if conscious of some important change, pulled off his bandages, looked out of the window, and asked if Mr. Bramwell was gone. On perceiving that his eyes were perfectly healed, all the family were completely astonished. He is now about thirty years of age, and has never since had any complaint in his organs of sight.”—*Memoir, p. 157.*

The following is one of many cases of healing by faith, recorded in Wesley’s Journal:—

“In returning to Canterbury I called upon Mr. Kingsford, a man of substance as well as piety. He informed me, ‘Seven years ago I so entirely lost the use of my ankles and knees that I could no more stand than a new-born child..... I could not move from place to place, but on crutches. All the advice I had, profited me nothing. In this state I continued about six years. Last year I went on business to London, then to Bristol and to Bath. At Bath I sent for a physician; but before he came, as I sat reading the Bible, I thought, Asa sought to the physicians and not to God; but God can do more for me than any physician. Soon after I heard a noise in the street; and rising up found I could stand. Being much surprised I walked several times about the room, then I walked into the square, and afterward on the Bristol road; and from that time I have been perfectly well; having as full a use of all my limbs as I had seven years ago.’”—*Wesley’s Journal, vol. iv. p. 682.*

The reader must not suppose that these things transpired without awaking some opposition in the minds of the unconsecrated. Prejudice was aroused which often manifested itself in bitter

reproaches. To the charge of egotism and self-righteousness Mr. Wesley made the following reply, which we would commend to the consideration of all who think there is a lack of humility in claiming answers to the prayer of faith:—

“Now let the candid man judge, does humility require me to deny a notorious fact? If not, which is vanity? to say I by my own skill have restored this man to health, or to say that God did it by his own almighty power?”

Bishop Hall, speaking of the good offices which angels do to God’s servants, says:—

“Of this kind was that marvelous cure which was wrought upon the poor cripple at St. Marden’s, in Cornwall; whereof besides the attestation of many hundreds of the neighbors, I took a strict examination in my last visitation. This man, for sixteen years together, was obliged to walk upon his hands, the sinews of his legs being so contracted. Upon following an admonition in his dream to wash in a certain well, he was suddenly so restored to his limbs that I saw him able to walk and get his own maintenance. The name of this cripple was John Trebble.”

Wesley remarks: “And were ‘many hundreds of the neighbors,’ together with Bishop Hall, deceived in so notorious a matter of fact? or did they all join together to palm such a falsehood on the world? O incredulity! what ridiculous shifts art thou driven to! what absurdities wilt thou believe rather than own any extraordinary work of God!”—*Wesley’s Journal*, vol. vi. pp. 565, 566.

Wesley’s *Journal*, Dec. 20, 1742, says:—

“When I came home they told me the physician said he did not expect Mr. Meyrick would live till the morning. I went to him, but his pulse was gone. He had been speechless and senseless for some time. A few of us immediately joined in prayer (I relate the naked fact); before we had done, his sense and his speech returned. Now, he that will account for this by natural causes has my free leave; but I choose to say, This is the power of God.

“*Saturday*, 25. The physician told me he could do no more. Mr. Meyrick could not live over the night. I went up and found them all crying about him; his legs being cold, and (as it seemed) dead already. We all kneeled down and called upon God with strong cries and tears. He opened his eyes and called for me; and from that hour he continued to recover his strength till he was restored to perfect health. I wait to hear who will either disprove this fact, or philosophically account for it.”—*Vol. iii. p. 275.*

Mr. Bramwell’s biographer writes:—

“I was once attacked by a violent pleuritic fever, when all around me despaired of my life. Many of our kind friends visited me in my affliction; and almost unceasing supplication was offered up to God for my recovery. But all prayers appeared to be without effect till Mr. Bramwell came home out of the circuit. He immediately came to see me, and on entering the room was quite astonished at beholding such a woeful change in my appearance. He thought I had all the marks of a speedy dissolution upon me; and giving me a look of the greatest sympathy he raised my head a little higher by means

of a pillow. He then went to the foot of the bed and began to pray to God in my behalf. His faith seemed to gain ground as he proceeded. He continued his intercessions with the greatest fervency; and, in agony, asked in submission to the will of God, that I might be restored. The Lord heard and answered his servant’s prayers; for I immediately experienced such a sweet tranquillity and melting of soul, as I am unable to describe. From that moment my recovery commenced, and I was soon strong enough to resume my ordinary occupations.”—*Memoir*, pp. 163, 164.

Mr. William Carvosso, who was sixty years a class-leader in the Wesleyan Methodist connection, gives an account of the healing of a sick woman as follows:—

“The next morning, a friend asked me to visit a woman who was sick, and offered to accompany me. When we arrived at the house, we were informed she was very ill. I went up stairs and found her, to all appearance, on the borders of eternity. Finding that she had been three years a member of the society and knew nothing of salvation

by the remission of her sins, I felt no little concern for the salvation of her soul... I explained to her the plan of salvation... 'And now,' said I, 'it is a duty which God requires of you to believe in Jesus Christ and in the truth of his promises.' While I was thus speaking to her she was seized in a strange manner; and it appeared to me and those present that she was dying. But in a moment or two she lifted up her hands and eyes to heaven, and cried out, 'Glory be to God, I am healed! I am healed!' And for some considerable time she kept on repeating,

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'The Lord has healed me, body and soul.'

"The news of this was soon conveyed to her neighbors, who rushed into the chamber in such crowds that I was afraid the beams would give way. But she continued saying, 'The Lord has healed my body and my soul.' We then kneeled down to praise the Lord for what he had done; and while engaged in prayer, two of those who came in were awakened and began to pray for mercy. With these distressed souls I was occupied four hours before I could leave the place. The next day Mr. Sibley, from Truro, came there to preach, and dined with us at the friend's house where I lodged; when the friend who had been with me the preceding day related the circumstance to him. Having expressed a desire to see the woman, I went with him to the house; and to our very great astonishment, we found her down stairs, sitting by the fire. I visited her several times after this, and found her not only happy in God, but confirmed in her restoration of health. I have seen many of the mighty works of the Lord, both in convincing and converting sinners, but never before saw the body healed as well as the soul."—*Memoir of Carvosso*, pp. 73-75.

The memory of Hester Ann Rogers will ever be precious to the Christian world. In her journal of June 29, 1782, she says:—

"This day the Lord instantaneously removed a rapid mortification in my dear mother's limb, in answer to prayer. The doctor having given his opinion that in a few hours it would be fatal, I flew to my almighty Refuge, and felt I had power with God, through faith in that promise— 'The prayer of faith shall save the sick.' And

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when in half an hour I looked again at the wound, all the bad symptoms were gone; and the same doctor, standing astonished, said no danger now appeared. I could not forbear weeping aloud for joy and gratitude, praising the God of my life."

"June 10, 1794. I had a peculiar season in wrestling prayer with my God this night, on account of my dear little Mary. The great weakness of her limbs for three months past, and her seeming total inability to walk, has caused much pain to my dear husband as well as myself. It appears to me I had used every possible means in vain. But this night I had power to cry unto my God, and tell him, 'Thou art the same yesterday, to-day, and forever: thou art my God! Thou hast said, Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will hear thee. Thou hast healed cripples, made the lame to walk, yea, raised even the dead in answer to praying faith! Lord, hear me now; stoop to my request; let the child's feet and ankle bones receive strength; give power to walk, and let me soon know thou hast heard my prayer;' and I had power to believe it would be done; my soul was filled with the divine presence.

"Thursday, the 12th. I already see in the child an answer to my prayer. She is greatly strengthened in her limbs. How good, how faithful, how condescending is the Lord! We may—I may, like Abraham, like Moses, like Elijah, ask and obtain."—*Journal*, pp. 116, 119, 120.

What has been said of the early Methodists may be said in truth of the people known as Christians. I mean those who are now bearing the nick-name of New Lights. Elder William Kinkaid was a well-known writer, and minister, and missionary of that church. He said:—

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"There have been in the bounds of my acquaintance many miraculous cures performed in answer to prayer. I have been acquainted with several of the people who were healed, conversed on the subject with the persons who were present at the time, and some of these cures I have seen myself. I as firmly believe that Elder David Haggard had the gift of healing, as that the apostles had. He has fallen asleep, but there are many alive who saw him perform cures, and what I saw myself puts the matter beyond doubt with me. I state these facts in honor to

God, who, in every age of the world, has shown a willingness to bless his creatures in proportion to their faith and obedience.”—*Bible Doctrine*, p. 341.

“Discerning of spirits” was set down by the apostle as one of the “gifts of the Spirit” which was “set in the church” according to the promise. The following instance of the exercise of the gift of discernment is recorded in the Memoir of Mr. Bramwell, whose sincerity, piety, and Christian graces were questioned by none:—

“Mr. Bramwell was by no means of a censorious disposition; yet he had the gift of discerning the spirits and dispositions of men in a remarkable manner. I have frequently known him to detect impostors who have stepped forth to exercise in various meetings. On one occasion when he was desired to visit a dying man I went with him. We beheld the wretched object without a shirt to his back. The few rags which hung on him scarcely covered his body. His habitation was a damp, miserable cellar, and a woman was attending him who was represented to be his wife. For some time after our entrance

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into this dwelling, Mr. Bramwell remained silent. At length he exclaimed, ‘All is not right here! I am clear there is something amiss in this place!’ Then turning to the woman he said, ‘This man is not your husband. You never were married to him, but for several years you have been living together in sin and wickedness!’ His word went with power to their hearts. They both wept exceedingly, acknowledging the charge to be true, and began to entreat the Lord to have mercy upon them.”—*Memoir*, p. 155.

Other instances in his life might be given, but we omit them for the sake of brevity, promising to refer to facts which have occurred in the present generation as notable as any recorded in the times of the reformers, Luther and Wesley.

The following cases of deliverance from enraged enemies are recorded by John Wesley and Dr. Adam Clarke. While the facts cannot be disputed we must look upon them as direct interpositions of divine grace, and as truly miraculous as any case recorded in the New Testament:—

“The circumstances that follow I thought were particularly remarkable: 1. That many endeavored to throw me down while we were going down hill on a slippery path to the town; as well judging, that if I was once on the ground I should hardly rise any more. But I made no stumble at all, nor the least slip, till I was entirely out of their hands. 2. That although many strove to lay hold on my collar and clothes, to pull me down, they could not fasten at all: only one got fast hold of the flap of my waistcoat, which was soon left in his hand; the other flap, in the pocket of which was a bank-note, was torn but half off.

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3. That a lusty man just behind, struck at me several times with a large oaken stick; with which if he had struck me once on the back part of my head it would have saved him further trouble. But every time the blow was turned aside, I know not how; for I could not move the right hand nor the left. 4. That another came rushing through the press, and raising his arm to strike suddenly let it drop and only stroked my head, saying, ‘What soft hair he has!’ 5. That I stopped exactly at the Mayor’s door as if I had known it (which the mob doubtless thought I did) and found him standing in the shop, which gave the first check to the madness of the people. 6. That the very first men whose hearts were turned were the heroes of the town, the captains of the rabble on all occasions, one of them having been a prize-fighter at the bear garden..... By how gentle degrees does God prepare us for his will! Two years ago a piece of brick grazed my shoulder. It was a year after that the stone struck me between the eyes. Last month I received one blow, and this evening two; one before we came into the town, and one after we had gone out; but both were as nothing; for though one man struck me on the breast with all his might, and the other on the mouth with such force that the blood gushed out immediately, I felt no more pain from either of the blows than if they had touched me with a straw.”—*Wesley’s Journal*, vol. iii. pp. 297, 298.

Dr. Clarke’s account is as follows:—

“A missionary who had been sent to a strange land to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom of God, and who had passed through many hardships,

and was often in danger of losing his life through the persecutions excited against him, came to a place where he had often before, at no small risk, preached Christ crucified. About fifty people who had received impressions from the word of God, assembled. He began his discourse, and after he had preached about thirty minutes, an outrageous mob surrounded the house armed with different instruments of death, and breathing the most sanguinary purposes. Some that were within shut the door; and the missionary and his flock betook themselves to prayer. The mob assailed the house and began to throw stones against the walls, windows, and roof; and in a short time almost every tile was destroyed, and the roof nearly uncovered, and before they quitted the premises, scarcely left one square inch of glass in the five windows by which the house was enlightened. While this was going forward a person came with a pistol to the window opposite to the place where the preacher stood (who was then exhorting his flock to be steady, to resign themselves to God, and trust in him), presented it at him and snapped it, but it only flashed in the pan! As the house was a wooden building, they began with crows and spades to undermine it and take away its principal supports. The preacher then addressed his little flock to this effect: ‘These outrageous people seek not you but me; if I continue in the house they will soon tear it down, and we shall all be buried in the ruins; I will, therefore, in the name of God, go out to them, and you will be safe.’ He then went toward the door: the poor people got around him and entreated him not to venture out, as he might expect to be instantly massacred.

He went calmly forward, opened the door, at which a whole volley of stones and dirt was that instant discharged; but he received no damage. The people were in crowds in all the space before the door, and filled the road for a considerable way, so that there was no room to pass or repass. As soon as the preacher made his appearance, the savages became instantly as silent and as still as night; he walked forward, and they divided to the right and to the left, leaving a passage about four feet wide, for him and a young man who followed him to walk in. He passed on through the whole crowd, not a soul of whom either lifted a hand or spoke one word, till he and his companion had gained the uttermost skirts of the mob. The narrator, who was present on the occasion, goes on to say: ‘This was one of the most affecting spectacles I ever witnessed; an infuriated mob without any visible cause (for the preacher spoke not one word), became in a moment as calm as lambs. They seemed struck with amazement bordering on stupefaction; they stared and stood speechless; and after they had fallen back to right and left to leave him a free passage, they were as motionless as statues! They assembled with the full purpose to destroy the man who came to show them the way of salvation; *but he, passing through the midst of them, went his way.* Was not the God of missionaries in this work?’”

By reference to the “Life of Adam Clarke,” it will be seen that the “missionary” above referred to was no other than Clarke himself. From page 209 we take the following:—

“During the whole time of his (Clarke’s) passing

through the mob there was a death-like silence, nor was there any motion, but that which was necessary to give him a free passage. Either their eyes were holden that they could not know him; or they were so overawed by the power of God that they could not lift a hand, or utter a word against him. The poor people, finding all was quiet, came out a little after, and passed away, not one of them being either hurt or molested. In a few minutes the mob *seemed to awake as from a dream*, and finding that their prey had been plucked out of their teeth, they knew not how, they attacked the house afresh, broke every square of glass in the windows, and scarcely left a whole tile upon the roof. He afterward learned that the design of the mob was to put him in the sluice of an over-shot water—wheel, by which he must necessarily have been crushed to pieces.”

It would seem that no one could read this without being struck with the conviction that an angel of God accompanied this humble servant of the Lord as he passed through the midst of the enraged mob who sought his life. What but the power of God could have held them thus in quiet, peaceably making way to him whose life they came to take, until he passed beyond their reach? He who said, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” always means what he says, and always fulfills his promises. He never changes, and it is as safe to trust him now as it ever was.

CHAPTER IX.

GIFTS IN THE PRESENT CENTURY

“Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 1:6, 7.

We trust the reader will not forget our proposition, that if a single well-attested instance of the manifestation of the Spirit of prophecy, or of any gift of the Spirit, can be produced this side of the apostles, then the force of every objection or argument against their perpetuity throughout the entire Christian dispensation is destroyed. For if they can be shown to have existed at any time since the apostles, then there is no reason remaining why they may not exist through all time, as long as the gospel is preached to the world.

As the apostle Paul said, “I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.” And facts and occurrences which are presented justify this application of the apostle’s words. The trance or vision of William Tennent is well known to the churches. The writer of this first heard of it about twenty-five years ago, through the pastor of a Baptist church of which he was a member. The pastor related it as an instance of a modern manifestation of God’s Spirit, in which he had the fullest confidence. The account of it was published in the *Evangelical Intelligencer* in 1806, and placed in the Memoirs of Tennent’s life in 1815.

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Mr. Tennent was once pastor of a Presbyterian church in Freehold, New Jersey. He was respected by all as a man worthy of the fullest confidence. His biographer says of him:—

“If there ever was a person who deserved to be believed unreservedly on his own word, it was he. He possessed an integrity of soul, and a soundness of judgment, which did actually secure him an unlimited confidence from all who knew him. Every species of deception, falsehood, and exaggeration, he abhorred and scorned. He was an Israelite, indeed, in whom there was no guile.”

MR. TENNENT’S VISION

The relation of his vision is as follows:—

“After a regular course of study in theology, Mr. Tennent was preparing for his examination by the Presbytery, as a candidate for the gospel ministry. His intense application affected his health, and brought on a pain in his breast and a slight hectic. He soon became emaciated, and at length was like a living skeleton. His life was now threatened. He was attended by a physician, a young man who was attached to him by the strictest and warmest friendship. He grew worse and worse, till little hope of life was left. In this situation his spirits failed him, and he began to entertain doubts of his final happiness. He was conversing one morning with his brother, in Latin, on the state of his soul, when he fainted and died away. After the usual time he was laid out on a board, according to the common practice of the country, and the neighborhood were invited to attend his funeral the next

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day. In the evening his physician and friend returned from a ride in the country, and was afflicted beyond measure at the news of his death. He could not be persuaded that it was certain; and on being told that one of the persons who had assisted in laying out the body thought he had observed a little tremor of the flesh under the arm, although the body was cold and stiff, he endeavored to ascertain the fact. He first, put his own hand into warm water, to make it as sensible as possible, and then felt under the arm and at the heart, and affirmed that he felt an unusual warmth, though no one else could. He had the body restored to a warm bed, and insisted that the people who had been invited to the funeral, should be requested not to attend. To this the brother objected as absurd, the eyes being sunk, the lips discolored, and the whole body cold and stiff. However, the doctor finally prevailed, and all probable means were used to discover symptoms of returning life.

“But the third day arrived, and no hopes were entertained of success, but by the doctor, who never left him, night nor day. The people were again invited and assembled to attend the funeral. The doctor still objected, and

at last confined his request for delay to one hour, then to half an hour, and finally to a quarter of an hour. He had discovered that the tongue was much swollen and threatened to crack. He was endeavoring to soften it by some emollient ointment, put upon it with a feather, when the brother came in, about the expiration of the last period, and mistaking what the doctor was doing for an attempt to feed him, manifested some resentment, and in a spirited tone, said, 'It is

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shameful to be feeding a lifeless corpse;' and insisted with earnestness, that the funeral should immediately proceed. At this critical and important moment, the body, to the great alarm and astonishment of all present, opened its eyes, gave a dreadful groan, and sunk again into apparent death. This put an end to all thoughts of burying him, and every effort was again employed in hopes of bringing about a speedy resuscitation. In about an hour the eyes again opened, a heavy groan proceeded from the body, and again all appearance of animation vanished. In another hour life seemed to return with more power, and a complete revival took place, to the great joy of the family and friends, and to the no small astonishment and conviction of very many who had been ridiculing the idea of restoring to life a dead body.....

"After he was able to walk the room, and to take notice of what passed around him, on a Sunday afternoon, his sister, who had staid from church to attend him, was reading in the Bible, when he took notice of it, and asked what she had in her hand. She answered that she was reading the Bible. He replied, "What is the Bible? I know not what you mean." This affected the sister so much that she burst into tears, and informed him that he was once well acquainted with it. On her reporting this to the brother when he returned, Mr. Tennent was found upon examination to be totally ignorant of every transaction of his life, previous to his sickness; he could not read a single word, neither did he seem to have an idea of what it meant. As soon as he became capable of attention he was taught to read and write, as children are usually taught,

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and afterward began to learn the Latin language, under the tuition of his brother.

"One day as he was reciting a lesson in *Cornelius Nepos*, he suddenly started, clapped his hands to his head, as if something had hurt him, and made a pause. His brother asked him what was the matter. He said he felt a sudden shock in his head and it now seemed to him as if he had read that book before. By degrees his recollection was restored, and he could speak the Latin language as fluently as before his sickness. His memory so completely revived that he gained a perfect knowledge of the past transactions of his life, as if no difficulty had previously occurred. This event, at the time, made a considerable noise, and afforded not only matter of serious contemplation to the devout Christian, especially when connected with what follows in this narration, but furnished a subject of deep investigation and learned inquiry to the real philosopher and curious anatomist.

"The writer of these memoirs was greatly interested by these uncommon events, and on a favorable occasion earnestly pressed Mr. Tennent for a minute account of what his views and apprehensions were, while he lay in this extraordinary state of suspended animation. He discovered great reluctance to enter into any explanation of his perceptions and feelings at this time; but being importunately urged to do it he at length consented, and proceeded with a solemnity not to be described.

"While I was conversing with my brother,' said he, 'on the state of my soul, and the fears I had entertained for my future welfare, I found myself, in an instant, in another state of existence,

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under the direction of a superior being, who ordered me to follow him. I was accordingly wafted along, I know not how, till I beheld at a distance an ineffable glory, the impression of which on my mind it is impossible to communicate to mortal man. I immediately reflected on my happy change, and thought, Well, blessed be God! I am safe at last, notwithstanding all my fears. I saw an innumerable host of happy beings surrounding the inexpressible glory, in acts of adoration and joyous worship; but I did not see any bodily shape or representation in the glorious appearance. I heard things unutterable. I heard their songs and hallelujahs of thanksgiving and praise with unspeakable rapture. I felt joy unutterable and full of glory. I then applied to my conductor, and requested leave to join the happy throng; on which he tapped me on the shoulder and said; "You must return to the earth."

This seemed like a sword through my heart. In an instant I recollect to have seen my brother standing before me, disputing with the doctor. The three days during which I had appeared lifeless, seemed to me not more than ten or twenty minutes. The idea of returning to this world of sorrow and trouble gave me such a shock, that I fainted repeatedly' He added, 'Such was the effect on my mind, of what I had seen and heard, that if it be possible for a human being to live entirely above the world and the things of it, for some time afterward, I was that person. The ravishing sounds of the songs and hallelujahs that I heard, and the very words that were uttered, were not out of my ears, when awake, for at least three years. All the kingdoms of the earth were, in my sight

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as nothing and vanity; and so great were my ideas of heavenly glory, that nothing which did not in some measure relate to it, could command my serious attention.”—*Life of Tennent, pp. 12-18.*

The following cases are later, and, if possible, still more remarkable. The first is that of Elder J. B. Finley, a Methodist minister well known in Ohio, and for some time a missionary among the Indians. It is related by himself:—

VISION OF ELD. J. B. FINLEY

“It was in the summer of 1842. Worn down with fatigue, I was completing my last round of quarterly meetings, and winding up the labors of a very toilsome year. I had scarcely finished my work till I was most violently attacked with bilious fever, and it was with great difficulty that I reached home. The disease had taken so violent a hold on my system that I sank rapidly under its power. Everything that kind attention and medical skill could impart was resorted to, to arrest its ravages; but all was in vain, and my life was despaired of. On the seventh night, in a state of entire insensibility to all around me, when the last ray of hope had departed, and my weeping family and friends were standing around my couch, waiting to see me breathe my last, it seemed to me that a heavenly visitant entered my room. It came to my side, and in the softest and most silvery tones, which fell like rich music upon my ear, it said, ‘I have come to conduct you to another state and place of existence.’ In an instant I seemed to rise, and, gently borne by an angel guide, I floated out upon the ambient

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air. Soon earth was lost in the distance, and around us on every side, were worlds of light and glory. On, on, away, away from the world to luminous worlds afar, we sped with the velocity of thought. At length we reached the gates of Paradise; and oh! the transporting scenes that fell upon my vision as the emerald portals, wide and high, rolled back upon their golden hinges! Then, in its fullest extent, did I realize the invocation of the poet:—

“‘Burst, ye emerald gates, and bring
To my raptured vision,
All the ecstatic joys that spring
Round the bright Elysian.’

“Language, however, is inadequate to describe what there, with unveiled eyes, I saw. The vision is indelibly pictured on my heart. Before me, spread out in beauty, was a broad sheet of water, clear as crystal, not a single ripple on its surface, and its purity and clearness indescribable. On each side of this lake or river, rose up the most tall and beautiful trees, covered with all manner of fruit and flowers, the brilliant hues of which were reflected in the bosom of the placid river.

“While I stood gazing with joy and rapture at the scene, a convoy of angels were seen floating in. the pure ether of that world. They all had long wings, and although they went with the greatest rapidity, yet their wings were folded close by their side. While I gazed I asked my guide who they were, and what their mission. To this he responded, ‘They are angels, dispatched to the world from which you came, on an errand of mercy.’ I could hear strains of the most entrancing

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melody all around me, but no one was discovered but my guide. At length I said, Will it be possible for me to have a sight of some of the just made perfect in glory? Just then there came before us three persons; one had the

appearance of a male, the other a female, the third an infant. The appearance of the first two was somewhat similar to the angels I saw, with the exception that they had crowns upon their heads, of the purest yellow, and harps in their hands. Their robes, which were full and flowing, were of the purest white. Their countenances were lighted up with a heavenly radiance, and they smiled upon me with ineffable sweetness.

“There was nothing with which the blessed babe, or child, could be compared. It seemed to be about three feet high. Its wings, which were long and most beautiful, were tinged with all the colors of the rainbow. Its dress seemed to be of the whitest silk, covered with the softest white down. The driven snow could not excel it for whiteness and purity. Its face was all radiant with glory; its very smile now plays around my heart. I gazed, and gazed with wonder upon this heavenly child. At length I said, If I have to return to earth, from whence I came, I should love to take this child with me, and show it to the weeping mothers of earth. Methinks when they see it, they will never shed another tear over their children when they die. So anxious was I to carry out the desire of my heart, that I made a grasp at the bright and beautiful one, desiring to clasp it in my arms, but it eluded my grasp, and plunged into the river of life. Soon it rose up from the waters, and as the drops fell from its expanding wings, they seemed like

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diamonds, so bright did they sparkle. Directing its course to the other shore, it flew up to one of the topmost branches of one of life’s fair trees. With a look of most seraphic sweetness it gazed upon me, and then commenced singing in Heaven’s own strains, ‘To him that hath loved me, and washed me from my sins in his own blood, to him be glory both now and forever. Amen.’ At that moment the power of the eternal God came upon me, and I began to shout, and, clapping my hands, I sprang from my bed, and was healed as instantly as the lame man in the beautiful porch of the temple, who ‘went walking, and leaping, and praising God.’ Overwhelmed with the glory I saw and felt, I could not cease praising God.”

The name of Dr. Bond is well known throughout the country. He was an eminent minister of the Methodist denomination. His vision, as published in the *Christian Advocate*, was different from the preceding, being practical and involving duty upon him to warn others of the danger of their condition. It is as follows:—

VISION OF DR. BOND

“About this time occurred a very extraordinary incident in the life of Dr. Bond, which we narrate with great doubt as to the propriety of the publication. He very rarely mentioned it, and never ventured to designate or explain it. Its truth is, however, beyond question. The circumstances forbid the supposition of optical illusion, or temporary hallucination. There are those living who testify to such of the facts as were subject to observation, and the memorials of the transaction are yet distinctly preserved in the religious

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character of sons and daughters of some who were immediately affected by it.

“Being on a visit to his father, he was deeply grieved to find the church, which he had left in a state of prosperous activity, languishing, lukewarm, and weak. His thoughts were much occupied with the subject, and of course it was a matter of earnest and frequent prayer. In this state of mind, one morning he was walking over the fields to a neighboring house, when suddenly he seemed to be in a room where a number of people were assembled, apparently for worship. The room he recognized as an apartment in the house of a neighbor, where a prayermeeting was to be held on the evening of that day. Had he stood in the midst of it he could not have been more conscious of the scene. There was nothing of the dim, shadowy, or dreamy, about it. He recognized the people, noticed where they sat and stood, remarked his father near the table, at which a preacher was rising to give out a hymn, and near the middle of the congregation he saw a man named C., for whose salvation he felt considerable anxiety, standing with his son beside him. While gazing with astonishment upon the scene, he heard the words, ‘Go and tell C. that he has an offer of salvation for the last time.’

“Naturally supposing that too great concentration of mind upon one subject had induced some hallucination of the senses, Dr. Bond fell down on his knees, and besought God to preserve his reason. The scene, however,

continued; it would not disappear or change in any of its particulars. In vain he struggled to dispel it, the voice yet repeated with indubitable distinctness, 'Go tell

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C. that he has an offer of salvation for the last time.' Yet how would he dare to deliver so awful a message! For a great length of time he struggled for deliverance from what he still considered an illusion. At length an expedient occurred to him, which he adopted. He had never been in the room in which he was apparently present, when it was used for a public religious meeting. He, of course, did not know how it was commonly prepared for such occasions. He therefore noted with great care the particulars of the scene. He saw where the little table for the preacher, the benches and chairs for the people, were placed. He noticed his acquaintances, and where they sat and stood, and when he was satisfied that he had possessed himself of these details he said, 'I will go to this meeting, and if I find all things there to correspond with what I now see, it shall be a sign from the Lord, and I will deliver the message.' Immediately the scene vanished, and he was alone in the green fields.

"With a spirit indescribably agitated, he returned home, where he found ladies, who required him to escort them a long distance, and it was somewhat past the hour fixed for the meeting when he reached the awful place. During the day he had freely indulged the hope that on his entrance into the room his trouble would disappear. He thought he had been the subject of an illusion, the fruit of an excited brain, and that a want of correspondence immediately to be detected, between the real scene and the one presented to his disordered fancy, would at once satisfy him as to the morbid character of his morning vision, and release him from the obligation of delivering the terrible message with which he

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was conditionally charged. When he opened the door, however, he saw again, in all its minuteness of detail, the morning scene. In vain he searched the room for a variant particular. There sat his father in the designated place. The preacher at the table was rising to give out the hymn. In the midst of the room stood C., with his son beside him. Everything demanded that the message should be delivered.

"After the preliminary exercises he rose and stated the circumstances as we have related them, and then going to C. he laid his hand upon him, and repeated the words he had heard. The effect was indescribable. C. and his son fell down together and called upon God. An awful solemnity rested upon all present. Many cried for mercy, and from that time began a revival which spread far and wide—the fruits of which are yet seen after many days."

We have still other important evidence of the fulfillment, in this present generation, of the promise of the Saviour and of the prophecy of Joel. We now call attention to what the Scriptures reveal on this subject concerning the times immediately preceding the second advent of our Lord. Neander makes a very interesting statement of the faith of the Montanists of the second century. He says:—

"It appears also to have been the doctrine of the Montanists, that the season of the last and richest outpouring of the Holy Spirit would form the last age of the church, and precede the second coming of Christ, and be the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel."—*Rose's Neander*, p. 332.

A book written to reproach this faith, and designed

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to bring the Montanists into disrepute, was read by John Wesley; but it had the effect to convince him that they were a godly people, and that their faith in regard to the perpetuity of the gifts of the Spirit was correct. This, no doubt, prepared his mind to look for and seek those evidences of divine favor which he so largely received in his after experience. So God overrules the work of his enemies to his own praise. Mr. Wesley's notice of this book and of the result to his mind of reading it, is as follows:—

"By reflecting on an odd book, which I had read in this journey, 'The general delusion of Christians with regard to prophecy,' I was fully convinced of what I had long suspected: 1. That the Montanists in the second and third centuries were real Scriptural Christians; and 2. That the grand reason why the miraculous gifts were so soon withdrawn, was not only that faith and holiness were well nigh lost, but that dry, formal orthodox men began, even

then, to ridicule whatever gifts they had not themselves, and to decry them all as either madness or imposition.”—*Wesley's Journal, vol. iii. p. 496.*

The faith of the Montanists referred to by Neander is quite reasonable, as we may conclude from a consideration of the use or objects of the gifts, and of the condition of the religious world in the last days.

The object of the gifts, according to Eph. 4, is to carry out the work of the ministry, to edify or build up the church, and to perfect the saints in a complete union of faith and spirit. Now it must be borne in mind that the last generation of the church will be subject to special trials and

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dangers. The Saviour, speaking of the last days, said, “Because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold.” Evil servants will say, “My Lord delayeth his coming.” They will eat and drink with the drunken, and smite their fellow servants who give “meat in due season.” Formality in religion and destitution of the power of godliness will be almost all-prevailing. Satan will also work with great malignity and power. In such a time, if ever, will the church stand in need of the aid of the Holy Spirit.

Again, the last generation of the church of Christ must pass through the time of trouble; must stand complete in righteousness when Jesus ceases his priestly work in Heaven, as he prepares to come to this earth to take vengeance on the ungodly; they must have a special work wrought in them and for them, to fit them to be translated without tasting death; for their translation must, of course, take place after Jesus ceases his work of mediation. A single sin committed after the priestly work of Christ closes would sink any one to hopeless perdition. And it is not after, but before he comes that he says: “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still.” See Rev. 22:11, 12. This awful truth is not appreciated, because men refuse to examine the doctrine of the second advent, and therefore they do not understand the nature of the perils which are impending.

In 1 Thess. 4, the apostle gives the true ground of consolation to those who sorrow for their friends who are asleep. He says, The Lord himself shall descend; the dead in Christ shall arise, and the living saints shall be caught up

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with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Having thus introduced the subject of the coming of the Lord, he proceeds in chapter 5 to state circumstances which precede and attend his coming. Many will cry, “Peace and safety” when sudden destruction is impending, and “they shall not escape.” Their hope is delusive—they know not the hour of their visitation. As it was to the people in the days of Noah and of Lot, so it will be to them. As a thief in the night shall their destruction come upon them. “But,” says Paul to the brethren, “ye are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief.” 1 Thess. 5:4. They are watching for the return of their Lord. They have received the words of warning spoken by the prophets, and by those whom God in his providence has raised up to “sound an alarm” when “the day of the Lord is near.” See Joel 2:1. To the brethren of the time herein set forth, the apostle says:—

“Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” 1 Thess. 5:19-21.

And to further show its application, as to time, he adds:—

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” verse 23.

It is beyond question that they whose bodies are preserved unto the coming of the Lord are they who do not sleep or die, but are changed and caught up or translated, to meet the Lord in the air. Thus every part of this scripture shows

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that it is specially for, and pertaining to, those who are “alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord.”

Prophesyings here denotes the exercise of the gift of prophecy. The admonition not to despise the exercise or manifestation of this gift is sufficient proof that the gift will be manifested at the time of which he is speaking;

viz., when the day of the Lord is near; when the careless and worldly cry, “Peace and safety,” or, as translated into the language of these days, they sing the song of delusion, “There’s a good time coming.”

But some, under a profession of a knowledge of the Greek, have denied the correctness of the rendering of 1 Thess. 5:20, in the common version. They say it should read *prophecies*, not *prophesyings*. It is not difficult to show that they err in this.

There are two methods of determining the truth in regard to the meaning of words. First, by referring to the lexicons which define them. Secondly, by their use. And in this case we have both the lexicons and usage in favor of the common version.

Greenfield, in his lexicon of the Greek of the New Testament, says of the original word:—

“Prophesying, the exercise of the gift of prophecy, in this sense, 1 Thess. 5:20.”

He gives this as the meaning of the word, and refers to this text as an instance of its use in this sense. And Parkhurst’s lexicon says:—

“The gift of prophecy, *i.e.*, either of declaring or of predicting truths by divine inspiration, whether in the Old Testament, 2 Pet. 1:21, or in the New, Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10; 13:2, 8.

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“*Prophesying, i.e.*, the exercise of the gift of prophecy. 1 Thess. 5:20.” And Robinson’s lexicon says:—

“3. Meton., a prophesying, the exercise of the prophetic office.”

Liddell and Scott say:—

“The office or gift of prophecy.”

And thus, by the lexicons, this definition is fully established. And the *use* in the New Testament is in harmony with this definition. Thus in Rom. 12:6, “Whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith.” This refers to the possession and exercise of the gift of prophecy. And in 1 Cor. 12:10, the same word is used in the enumeration of the gifts.

In 1 Cor. 13: 2, it is rendered “the gift of prophecy,” and every reader can see that this is the meaning of the text. And again, in verse 8, “Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail.” This cannot refer to *the prophecies* of the Scriptures, for it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than for them to fail; but as the whole context shows, it refers to *the gifts of prophecy*. Says the apostle, “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” That is, When we see as we are seen, and know as we are known, the exercise of the prophetic office, by which things are but partially seen and known, will no longer be required.

In 1 Cor. 14: 6, 22, this word is rendered *prophesying*, as it is in 1 Thess. 5:20, and in these texts it cannot be rendered otherwise.

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And thus the usage fully sustains the lexicons in fixing the signification of this word.

The Cottage Bible says:—

“This may primarily refer to miraculous gifts.”

The commentary of Lange says:—

“The word stands without the article in the plural, denoting the individual cases.....

This gift despise not.”

And Œcumenius is also quoted as saying, on this text:—

“Hinder not the gifts of the Spirit by turning away from them that have them, and not suffering them to speak.”

Dean Alford, on 1 Thess. 5: 20, says:—

“On prophesyings see 1 Cor. 12:10, note. They were liable to be despised in comparison with the more evidently miraculous gift of tongues.”

Bloomfield, in his notes on the Greek text, says:—

“As the foregoing admonition was, not to quench the Spirit in themselves, so this, I apprehend, is, not to quench it by disallowing and discouraging the exhibition of it in *others*. The sense of *propheteia* is, I conceive, the very same as in the three chapters on the Spiritual gifts at 1 Cor. 12-14.”

Olshausen’s Commentary says:—

“This expression [verse 20] must rather have inspired the Christians in Thessalonica with the sorrowful conviction that all gifts might easily

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give occasion for abuses, and led them, to avoid these, to slight the gifts themselves.”

Different versions might be quoted in harmony with all these testimonies, but we do not think it necessary. We should rather apologize for giving proof at such length, did we not consider the evidence of this text of very great importance at this time. And we think the rendering of the common version is fully vindicated against all objections which may be raised.

Each age has its own peculiar form of unbelief. In the early ages of Christianity all Christians looked with anxiety to the second coming of Christ as the time of their deliverance and their reward. To deny that event was to deny their hope. Jesus had told his disciples not to let their hearts be troubled about his going away, for he would come again and take them unto himself; he said they should be rewarded at the resurrection of the just, which will take place when he comes; and he said he would bring his reward with him when he should come. With them the prayer was a united, fervent one, “Come, Lord Jesus.” To them the prophecy pointed out a fearful declension when it said that scoffers shall arise, saying, Where is the promise of his coming? But now we see this prophecy fulfilled. So greatly has the professed church of Christ departed from the primitive faith that they who say, “My Lord delayeth his coming,” are almost universally commended for their prudence and good judgment; while the faithful servants who give meat in due season, who sound the alarm as the prophets say shall be done, are regarded as fanatics and alarmists, if

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not despised as impostors. A “second-advent believer” is, in the estimation of a popular and worldly church, as contemptible as was “a Nazarene” in the days of our Saviour.

And a change fully as great as this has taken place in the church in respect to the gifts of the Spirit. In the early church, while all the gifts were accepted as objects of faith, and received according to that faith, there was a tendency to respect only the larger or more prominent gifts, such as apostleship, healing, and prophecy. Those less prominent were lightly esteemed, and by some considered almost worthless. This led to the apostle’s argument in 1 Cor. 12, wherein he asserts that God often bestows more abundant honor upon that which is lightly esteemed of men. The dependence of the gifts upon one another is shown in this expression, Ye are *members one of another*; that is, united to Christ *in one body* by being united to one another. The hand or the eye, apparently the most useful of all members, cannot say to another or less prominent member, “I have no need of thee.” The hand is useful to the head only as it is connected to the head by other members. Every organ must be in its proper place, or the body is imperfect, and the action of all is obstructed.

We are now prepared to realize the change which has taken place in the church concerning faith in the gifts. While in the early church the more obscure gifts were lightly esteemed, and only the more prominent ones were valued, in the last days the reverse is exactly the truth. Now the less prominent gifts are accepted, at least professedly, while the gift of prophecy is

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regarded with suspicion and even with aversion. And what seems most strange of all, many who teach that we are in the last days; who profess to believe that the coming of the Lord is near; who have had all the Scripture

evidences of the truth relative to the second advent plainly set forth to them; and who even profess to believe that a special work of sanctification is necessary to meet the Saviour at his appearing, show the most determined opposition and even hatred to the gift of prophecy. This is sad proof of the strength of self-deception, and shows how deeply man may be blinded when he quenches the Spirit of God, and leans to his own understanding. Surely the injunction is timely for these last days, "Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings."

The word rendered despise, in this text, is defined, to *despise*, neglect, or slight. Hence, there is an admonition in this text for all classes. Many who would shrink with horror from the idea of *despising* or *rejecting* prophesyings, would yet *neglect* them so as to utterly fail of meeting the requirements of this scripture. As it is possible, yes, a very common thing, to accept Christ in profession and yet dishonor him in the life, so it is possible to accept prophesyings as from the Lord and yet neglect their teachings to the dishonor of God and to our own ruin.

CHAPTER X.

SPIRIT OF PROPHECY RESTORED

“It is time for thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void thy law.” Ps. 119:126.

In tracing the connection between the law and the gifts of the Spirit we quoted several texts from the New Testament. which we must notice again, because they refer to the time of which we are now speaking, viz., of the last days, or the time immediately preceding the second coming of Christ.

In Rev. 14:9-12, just before the Son of God is seen upon the white cloud to reap the harvest of the earth, a message of warning is given, ending with these words:—

“Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” Rev. 14:12.

The apostle says, in Rom. 5:3, “Tribulation worketh patience.” Tribulation brings patience into exercise, and exercise perfects all graces. By this text, therefore, we are given to understand that tribulation will be the lot of those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, at the time to which it refers, viz., just before the earth is reaped in the great harvest.

In Rev. 12 the church is brought to view under the symbol of a woman. In prophetic symbol the church is always represented by a woman. This chapter very briefly traces the history of the church from the birth of Christ, and the effort of the dragon, or the pagan Roman power, to slay him as soon as he was born, and his

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being caught up to God and his throne, through the long persecution of “a time, times, and a half,” or “a thousand two hundred and threescore days,” down to the last persecution of “the remnant of her seed.”

The dragon was, not directly, but indirectly, the persecutor during this great tribulation of the Christians in the “time, times, and the dividing of time.” Pagan Rome had long persecuted the Christians unto death. When the empire professed to become the patron of Christianity it soon beheld a most unchristian strife progressing between the Bishops of different churches. It was another clamor for power, a revival of the question, “Who shall be greatest?” The parties entirely ignored the instructions of the Saviour, given to quell just such spirits. The Bishop of Rome, the most arrogant and overbearing, and of course the least a Christian, was favored by the empire. Favored, not because the most worthy, not because such self-exaltation was according to the spirit, the example, or the teachings of Christ, but because it was deemed most fitting that Rome should have the ascendancy!

Such were the means and such the motives by which an unchristian, persecuting hierarchy was brought into existence. By the power of the dragon this vast machinery of error and of death was set in motion. The dragon power made itself responsible for the consequences which it could easily foresee, when it elevated an ambitious and arrogant church ruler to a position which Christ forbade his followers to occupy.

The last persecution will be under “an image to the beast.” This image will cause men to worship

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the beast, the papal power, which received its authority from the dragon, the pagan power. See Rev. 13. And thus it is shown that the spirit of the dragon has descended down to our own times, and that it will be active in the last persecution. Of this last phase of dragonic power it is said:—

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Rev. 12:17.

Having noticed the manner of the rise of the papal hierarchy, it may not be amiss to speak of the formation of the “image of the beast,” for it is through this image that the spirit of the dragon will be manifested in the last persecution.

In the United States great efforts are now being made to secure a “Religious Amendment” to the Constitution, by which, its advocates say, “all Christian laws, usages, and institutions may be placed on an undeniable legal

basis in the fundamental law of the land.” “All Christian laws, usages, and institutions” are supposed to embrace all Christianity, and when all these are legalized in the Constitution then Christianity will be established as the religion of the land by the United States government. And, of course, when controversy arises it will be for the courts to decide what are Christian laws and institutions. And this will be an exact “image to the beast,” when Christianity will be enforced by law, and matters of faith must be decided by the civil courts. This will, doubtless, be the manner of the fulfillment of this prophecy; and under such a state of things, with the history of past persecutions in the name of Christianity before us, it

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is not difficult to foresee how war may be made with those “who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

This prophecy of Rev. 12:17, is easily located. “*The remnant* of the seed of the woman,” can mean no other than the last part or last state of the church. They keep the commandments of God, as do the saints of Rev. 14:12, and these behold the Son of God in his second advent. War also is made with them, which calls for patience, which is marked as a characteristic of those who live in the last days. And they “have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” An explanation of this is given in Rev. 19:10, thus: “The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.” This is an inspired and, of course, a decisive definition of the phrase.

The reader may still better appreciate this definition by a comparison of this text and Rev. 22:9. The text just quoted reads, “I am thy fellow-servant, and [the fellow-servant] of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus.” The other reads, “I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets.” The expression in one, “thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus,” is equivalent to this expression in the other, “thy brethren the prophets.” And it is made sure by the definition being immediately added, “The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.” They who have the testimony of Jesus have the inspiration of the Spirit—the gifts and powers of the Holy Spirit—which spoke through the prophets. If further proof of this truth were needed it is furnished in the following scripture:—

“Even as *the testimony of Christ* was confirmed

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in you, *so that* ye come behind in no *gift*.” 1 Cor. 1:6, 7.

By this we learn that the confirmation of “the testimony of Jesus” in a church is the establishing or manifestation of “the gifts of the Spirit” in their midst. And thus are we brought to the unavoidable conclusion that the remnant, the last part or last generation of the church of Christ, who heed the last warning given to man, who keep the commandments of God, who live to see the Son of man appear on the white cloud to reap the harvest of the earth, have the testimony of Jesus Christ—the spirit of prophecy—among them; that is, the gifts of the Spirit will be restored before the Lord comes. These heed the injunction given to those who “are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord,” that they should “Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

In drawing toward the close of our argument we will call the attention of the reader to some points which we think are established by sufficient proof:—

1. The unimpaired authority of the commission which our Saviour gave for the preaching of the gospel and the baptism of believers.
2. The perpetuity of spiritual gifts which were promised in the commission “unto the end of the world,” and also promised to the faithful in the first public sermon under that commission on the day of Pentecost.
3. The continued existence of the gifts, not only among the immediate successors of the apostles, but among the Reformers, and the early Methodists, and even to our own age.

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4. That in view of the coming time of trouble, the ending of the priesthood of Christ, and the plagues of God’s wrath soon to fall upon the world, God’s people must have a special preparation both in a higher Christian life and by the outpouring of the Spirit, to meet the Saviour in peace at his coming.

5. That in the last days Satan will work through false christs and false prophets who will resist the truth by counterfeiting the work of God, showing great signs and wonders, thereby leading to a denial of Christ and the Father. And this is now being fulfilled in “Modern Spiritualism.”

6. Many will also do wonders in the name of Christ, or claim to work miracles by the Spirit and power of Christ, who are workers of iniquity. This is literally fulfilled in the Mormon delusion; as the Mormons, while making the highest professions, have been the vilest in practice of any body of professed Christians who have arisen for many centuries.

7. That the true people of God will prepare for the Lord’s coming by keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus; and they will have the testimony of Jesus, which is the Spirit of prophecy.

We have remarked that if *one instance* of the manifestation of the direct power of the Spirit can be found this side of the apostles, then the inference that that power was withdrawn at the death of the apostles is shown to be unjust. The candid reader will hardly deny the evidence of the power of the Spirit with the Reformers, with Wesley, and in the instances of Eld. Finley, Dr. Bond, and others.

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And we might quote still more striking examples from the experience of Mrs. Ellen G. White, but we forbear, as any notice we could give of her experience in our brief limits would not do justice to the facts, and the inquiring reader can find them fully set forth in works published by herself. We have no sympathy with the course of any who, as the Mormons usually do, thrust such facts before the public in a self-sufficient manner, at all times and under all circumstances, and offer them as the evidence that they are the people of God. They are not evidence of themselves, as we have proved in our examination of Matt. 7:21-23. But when we find a people who in meekness and humility are keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ, and are striving to perfect themselves in the Christian graces, that they may be prepared to meet their coming Lord, we shall find, as the promises of the Scriptures are true, that God will manifest himself to and with them by the power of his Holy Spirit. See James, chapter five, entire.

And for the truthfulness of our conclusion we appeal with all confidence to the reader. This conclusion is based on our assurance of the faithfulness of God’s promise, and of the certainty of the fulfillment of prophecy. We have seen that three classes are plainly brought to view in the prophetic Scriptures which speak of the last days. 1. False christs; deniers of Christ, working miracles to deceive. These are found in the Spiritualists. 2. Workers of wonders in the name of Christ, who are also workers of iniquity. These are Mormons. 3. Those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony

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of Jesus, which is the Spirit of prophecy; and these constitute “the remnant,” who are looking for the coming of the Son of God to redeem his people from death and the grave. This prophecy must be fulfilled. Not one jot or tittle of the word of God can fail of its fulfillment, and such a people must arise in the last days as surely as the other classes, the Mormons and the Spiritualists, have arisen.

These cannot be a popular people. The expression of the prophecy that war will be made against them, shows that they will receive opposition from the world, which they would not if they belonged to any popular religious body.

The harmony between the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus has been considered in Chapter V. The commandments of God are not fully kept while *any one* of them is rejected or neglected. This company is pointed out because they keep them all—the fourth not excepted.” The faith of Jesus” covers the entire remedial system, the gospel, and includes all doctrines and duties peculiar to the gospel. “The testimony of Jesus” is more restricted; it is a part of the gospel system,—it “is the Spirit of prophecy;” it pertains to the gifts which were set in the church for the accomplishment of the work of the gospel. And as the commandments of God are not kept while one of them is violated, for no one is a keeper of law who breaks even one law, even so the faith of Jesus, the gospel, is not honored while one part of it is dishonored. And above all we should honor the gifts of the Spirit of God, remembering the warning of our Saviour, that a word spoken

against the Spirit may place us beyond the reach of forgiveness. And the occasion on which he gave this warning shows that they spoke against the Holy Spirit by speaking against its works.

We have the utmost confidence that these prophecies of “the remnant” will not fail. Even now there is a people in the earth in whom these prophetic declarations are receiving a fulfillment. We hope that prejudice will not prevent the reader examining their position and claims with candor. A want of patient, candid examination was what prevented the Jews accepting Christ; this also led them to take that most dangerous position of ascribing the work of the Spirit of God to Beelzebub.

The Seventh-day Adventists have, from their beginning, maintained these two unpopular ideas, of keeping *all* the commandments of God, and *all* the faith of Jesus, not rejecting the “Spirit of prophecy.” By this gift they have been preserved from many evils and errors, and to it they are indebted for that extraordinary state of union which has thus far characterized them, and been the great means of their wonderful prosperity. They fully believe in the gifts of the Spirit as the appointed means to perfect the church, and to bring to the unity of the faith, and to preserve the unity of the Spirit. Assured that they have a message for the times—present truth—they have shown a willingness to sacrifice all of earthly joy and hope to spread the knowledge of the saving truth. “Before many nations, peoples, tongues, and kings,” is the *third angel’s message* of Rev. 14:9-12 to be preached, and its light is fast spreading to the nations now. It is destined to call out a people who will stand for the truth

of God in its purity, who will be a witness against the corruptions of the last days, and who will stand secure in the favor of God when the plagues of his wrath are poured out upon a guilty world.

The view we have advocated in these pages makes Christ, not only the burden of the prophetic word, but the giver, the inspirer of all prophecy. Christ, the Son of God, has ever been with his Church. He was the Angel of the Covenant; he preached to the world in the days of Noah; he held converse with the patriarchs; he instructed and led Moses in all the journeyings of Israel; he was Captain of the Lord’s host when Joshua led the children of Israel into Canaan; he “held” with Daniel in the future destiny of his people, as “Michael your prince,” or “Michael the archangel,” the chief over all the angels. Peter says it was the Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets, which testified aforetime of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. It is a great mistake to endeavor to confine the work of Christ to the present dispensation. He is and has been our Saviour—the only Saviour—since the fall of man. Ever since man separated himself from God by sin, it has been true that no man cometh to the Father but by his Son.

And now the world, even the “Christian world,” seems determined to commit another great error, even to separate Christ from his church in the present dispensation. He who said, “I am with you alway, even to the end of the world,” has devised the means to fulfill his promise. It is the duty and privilege of the church to claim the power from on high, to receive the heavenly

anointing, to walk in the strength of an ever-present Saviour.

When Jesus left his disciples, to return to his Father, they had to be endued with power from on high before they were permitted to stand as his witnesses. And when they gave their testimony it was with power to convert the heart, for they were “strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.” On that day of Pentecost he showed to the world the triumph of his grace, in a church strong in his own strength. The “falling away,” the rising of “that man of sin,” dimmed the radiance of the light of the church and obscured her glory; but we are assured she shall come from the wilderness “leaning on the arm of her Beloved.” We believe that when Jesus comes again—when he has finished his work of intercession and mediation, having sealed his servants for immortality and withdrawn the offer of mercy from the impenitent—he will not find his people in darkness; he will not receive a worldly, careless, fallen church, but will present “to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.”

But this can never be accomplished without Heaven's own means "for the perfecting of the saints," namely, the gifts of the Spirit. Without these, the church may have the form of godliness but she will lack the power. With these, we "may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

There are degrees or stages of glory for the church to attain unto in this life; and of course the higher we rise in the divine life, the more we shall glorify God, and the more will the world feel the force of our testimony. The church justified,

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but with little experience, is "fair as the moon;" with a growth in Christian graces she becomes "clear as the sun;" but it is only when endued with power from on high by the gifts of the Holy Spirit that the world trembles at her testimony, and she is truly as "terrible as an army with banners."

May the Lord in mercy to his chosen hasten the time when his servants shall all be perfected in their obedience to the commandments of God—and the faith of Jesus, and have the testimony of Jesus confirmed in them so that they come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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