

Note from the publisher:

Because of all of the issues/belief's that have arisen from the many perversions of the of the belief of 'who' or 'what' the **“Holy Spirit”** is, we bring to you this publication.

This document is a facsimile reprint of one chapter from the Appendix of an 1888 edition of Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White. We encourage you to **read with special care the first page and a half of this document**, even if you choose not to read any more.

This appendix is not found in all editions of “Life Sketches.”

“No human reasoning of the most learned man can define the operations of the Holy Spirit upon human minds and characters; yet they can see the effects upon the life and actions. The Holy Spirit is a free, working, independent agency.”

RH, May 5, 1896 par. 2



LIFE SKETCHES.

ANCESTRY, EARLY LIFE,
CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE,
AND
EXTENSIVE LABORS,
OF
ELDER JAMES WHITE,
AND HIS WIFE,
MRS. ELLEN G. WHITE.

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CHAPTER XV.

THE DISPENSATION OF THE SPIRIT.

THERE is no subject which should be approached with more solemn reverence and awe, than that of the being and operations of the Spirit of God. On this subject we are instructed to speak with great circumspection. Said the Saviour:—

“All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son 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.”

It will not do to be careless in speaking on this subject, for, as will be seen by the connection of the above text, carelessness amounts to presumption.

When the heavens and the earth were created, and all was yet dark and void, it is written that “the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” The record implies much more than is indicated by our word “moved.” It means brooding or hovering, as a bird over her eggs to quicken them into life. It indicates the formative process by which order and beauty were brought out from confusion and chaos. And thus, from the very beginning of God’s revelation of himself to man, to his Holy Spirit is ascribed the office of quickening and vivifying all things.

We have no sympathy with the speculations in which many indulge in regard to the nature or or-

der of the Holy Spirit. Whether a person, or an emanation from the Father and Son, as some teach, or a manifestation of the power of God, as others argue, we have no opinion to offer. They who affirm that the Spirit is a person, differ materially among themselves as to the exact definition of the term person, and therefore the mere affirmation settles nothing even in their own minds. The being of God is incomprehensible. We accept the fact, and there we stand; reverence forbids that we should advance any further.

The Spirit strove with the rebellious generation in the days of Noah. Gen. 6:3. The Saviour said it should convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. John 16:8. And it is the comforter of all those who yield obedience to the truth.

By the Spirit the holy prophets were inspired to reveal the counsel of God. According to the Saviour's teaching, not a word can be spoken against the Spirit without endangering the welfare of our souls for time and eternity; hence, to slight the words of the Holy Spirit is no small offense. And here many, who profess to accept the Scriptures, tread on very dangerous ground. Some affect to decide upon the degree of inspiration by which different parts of the sacred word were given, which, in truth, is to decide upon the degrees of reverence with which we shall regard different parts of the Bible. Others, but a step in advance of these, bring all to the test of the uncertain light of false science and vain philosophy, and thus satisfy themselves in regard to the relative reliability of the several books, or parts of the books, which holy men of God wrote by the Spirit's direction. But in such speculations we dare not indulge. We believe that he who is competent to

judge the work of the Spirit, must have a mind to comprehend the infinite. When evidence is found of the presence and power of the Spirit, we may not stop to question how or to what extent that power was manifested, but reverently bow to its decisions. This is the only safe position which can be occupied, though the weakness of human nature may prevent our always fully realizing it.

To the prophets God revealed his word through dreams and visions. Angels frequently visited them and conversed with them directly; and all such visitations were classed as visions, in which are included all supernatural views. How the effect is produced on the mind when scenes are presented by the influence of the Spirit, we know not. The prophets themselves did not know, as we may learn from the words of Paul, in 2 Cor. 12:1-4.

When God was with his people, and when he instructed them and led them in the way they should go, it was by means of those who were enlightened by the Spirit. And when they had inspired leaders, they knew that God was tenderly caring for them. And even when they were guilty of some great wrong, or had departed from the way that he had chosen for them, in his mercy he sent his messengers to warn them of the consequences of their rebellion, and to turn them back to himself. Or, if they were deeply set in idolatry, he sent his prophets to denounce his wrath upon them if they did not repent and turn from their evil way.

On the other hand, it sometimes occurred that God withdrew his Spirit from them, when their sins were especially grievous. In the time of Eli, his sons, the priests, made themselves vile, until men abhorred the offering of the Lord made by

the hands of such priests. It is said of that time, "And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision." 1 Sam. 2:12-17; 3:1. Indeed, the Lord afterward plainly informed the people of Israel that, if they turned from him, the prophets should fail and there should be no vision. Mic. 3:6; Eze. 7:26. No greater calamity than this could befall them. No earthly prosperity could make amends for the loss of the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord.

And these words were not spoken to them when yet they had no revelation of the divine will; the later of the two warnings cited above was given by Ezekiel when almost the entire Scriptures of the Old Testament had been written, Ezekiel being one of the later prophets. But men grow careless with the written truth in their hands. Their worship too often becomes formal, destitute of power, while yet they have that form of godliness which is pointed out in the word. 2 Tim. 3:1-5. And thus they go on to further blindness, with the lamp of life in their hands. It is then that they need a divinely-commissioned teacher to point out their errors, and to lead them back to the way that their Father has revealed to them. And it is then that his loving kindness has been always manifested in sending the witness of his Spirit to their aid. Though they provoke him to anger by their selfish pride and folly, and assume that they can save themselves by their own wisdom, he does not utterly forsake them, but comes to their rescue in their time of greatest need.

From the time when the Lord called Abraham to separate himself from the idolatry of his kindred, his posterity was chosen to be the people of the Lord. From the days of Moses to Christ, the religion of that people was a national religion.

Notwithstanding, faith—the faith of Abraham—was the only passport to all spiritual blessings; but all of Jacob's children were known as Israel, though not all, as Jacob, prevailed with God in faithful prayer.

But that was not intended to be a permanent arrangement. The time was yet to come when the righteous alone should be called the people of God; when, not as in former times, a few, and at intervals, should be led by the Spirit, but, all his people should feel the divine impulse, and serve God with one heart and one soul. For thus it was written by the prophet, as will be further noticed.

In due time the Son of God appeared upon the earth—he to whom all the prophets gave witness. Acts. 10:43. Of his life, his teachings, his miracles, his labors of love, and his sufferings for rebellious creatures, know all men. He was the true light that giveth light to all the world. And, while his people are all to be lights in his absence, are all to receive divine rays and to reflect them upon their fellow-men, he chose twelve to be with him, who should hear his heavenly doctrine from his own lips, and who should be special witnesses of all that he had said, and done, and suffered. They were under his personal direction. They preached his gospel, healed the sick, and cast out demons in his name. That which was difficult to them, that which baffled their faith, they referred to him, and they always found in him a loving counsellor, a patient and compassionate instructor. Thus for three years and a half were they trained as never before were men trained, as never since have men been schooled, for the service of the heavenly Master. And after his death and triumphant resurrection, he yet remained forty days with them, uninterrupted by

any public labors, "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Acts. 1:3.

If ever men were qualified by instruction of the most thoroughly practical nature, surely these men were qualified as successful preachers of the gospel. No graduates of theological schools ever had such teaching, such opportunities, such experience. What could hinder their going forth to proclaim him as the Messiah? Circumstances had wonderfully combined to deeply impress their hearts. They were made sad when he told them he was going to his Father; their grief was inexpressible when he was cruelly put to death; but the revulsion in their feelings was great indeed when they became assured of his resurrection. And before he left them to return to Heaven, he gave them a commission wide as the world, to last as long as the ages. He said:—

"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.

And yet their zeal must be restrained. With all their opportunities, all the instruction they had received, all their experience under his immediate care and direction, they were not qualified to be successful ministers of the gospel. And so he spoke to them:—

"But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke 24:49.

Again he said unto them: "Wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me." According to his word they waited in the city, daily worshiping in the temple.

The day of pentecost was the auspicious occasion

for the fulfillment of the promise. This was one of the three great feasts of the Jews, at which all the males were to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem. See Deut. 16:16. As Jesus himself had several times attended these feasts, he and his doctrines were known to the Jews in all the world. And as he was crucified but seven weeks before, at the national festival of the passover, and the report of his resurrection had spread everywhere, the feast of pentecost was of all times the most favorable to reach the minds of the multitudes with the gracious words of life. While the chief priests and Pharisees were rejoicing that at this feast his voice could not be heard denouncing selfishness and hypocrisy in high places, they little dreamed that this was the time when his power and the triumph of his doctrine would be manifested as never before.

When the disciples were all together in one place, the promised blessing came upon them, and they spake with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. The report of this scene rapidly spread through the city, and the multitude came together and were filled with amazement at what they saw and heard. They all knew that the disciples of Jesus were unlearned Galileans, and they said:—

“How hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?” Acts 2:8-12.

But there were others, dwellers in the city, who understood not the tongues in which they spoke. To them it all appeared like a senseless jargon, and they mockingly accused the disciples of being drunken. To this Peter made reply that they were not drunken, as it was yet early day, and he explained the scene by quoting the words of the prophet:—

“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: 16-20.

He then proceeded to unfold the Scriptures, by referring to the prophecy of David, in Psalm 16, of a resurrection without corruption, proving that it did not refer to David himself by the fact that David was both dead and buried, and his sepulcher was with them. He quoted the promise of God that he would raise up Christ to sit on David's throne. The report of his resurrection is thus confirmed by the Scriptures, and the assurance is given them that this same Jesus had been exalted at the right hand of God, according to the prediction of Ps. 110:1: “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool.” “And, having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed

forth this which ye now see and hear." See Acts 2:22-35.

It was in every way an effective sermon: (1) by reason of the wonderful miracle in the gift of so many tongues, which had just been confessed; (2) by the clear exposition of the prophecies which applied to the occasion; (3) and, most of all, by the power of the Spirit with which he spake, by which his words reached the hearts of his hearers, as no mere human reasoning and eloquence could do. On thus hearing that this Jesus, whom they had crucified, was made both Lord and Christ—the Anointed One, the Messiah—they were deeply moved, and anxiously inquired, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

The answer to this question is full of meaning and of great importance. And its importance was not exhausted by its application to that assemblage, or to that generation. For our sins also he died; every sin we have committed has been an indorsement of the action of his murderers; we have done despite to the Spirit of his grace as well as they: we, too, need repentance and the remission of sins. Let us, then, take up the inquiry, What shall we do? The answer to the question was pointed and unmistakable in its import; we need no expositor to make it known to us:—

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."

Here is the duty of every sinner. And to this duty was appended a most gracious promise:—

"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."

By this we learn that the promise which had then been fulfilled to them, was held out to their

hearers, and to their children, which carried it forward to the future generations of that nation, and to all that are afar off (referring to the Gentiles, the strangers to the covenants of promise), even as many as the Lord our God shall call, which includes all to whom the gospel is sent, of all nations and to all time.

Before proceeding to examine the gifts contained in the promise, let us more particularly notice the extent of the commission. Some insist that the commission was given to the apostles only, and expired by limitation when they had finished their work of planting the gospel. But that is unreasonable, and they who urge it will never accept the consequences involved in it. The terms of the commission prove that it was not merely for the planting of the gospel, but for the continued proclamation of the gospel. It is claimed that the expression, "end of the world," is properly the "end of the age." Admit it, and what then? With what age is the preaching of the gospel co-extensive? Surely, with the age in which it is preached. They who offer these objections (for they are only objections), mostly assert that the gospel age commenced on that day of pentecost. But all know that the apostles began their work under this commission on that day; the Saviour prohibited any work under it until they had received power from on high. Therefore it was not merely for the opening of the gospel. And if it was confined to the apostles alone, then their co-laborers could not act under it. But if they did act under it, then their successors could also act under it. It is evident, that it existed through the first century, and if through that, then it exists until the end of the age of which that first century was a part.

But all will admit that that was the only com-

mission that the Saviour ever gave for the preaching of the gospel. If that expired, then there has been no authority for preaching the gospel since the days of the apostles. And the command to baptize was given in that commission, and it was never renewed. If that has expired, then all baptisms administered since the days of the apostles have been without any divine warrant. And it is indeed singular that they who limit the commission to the apostles, point to their action on that day of pentecost as the example for all future preaching and baptisms. If that commission has expired, who gave them authority to act according to its terms, or to imitate those who acted under it? They can claim no right to act under a commission that was issued to others, but never issued to them. That is a usurpation of authority, such as no earthly Government would tolerate for a moment.

We rest with confidence upon the evidence that this commission, with its attendant blessings, runs through the gospel age; that it was given to the apostles and to their successors in the gospel work; and that it was and is the intention of the Saviour that all his ministers shall be partakers of that same power from on high. If ever men were qualified to successfully preach the gospel without that power, the apostles were. But in this example Jesus has taught us that no one must attempt to do his work in his own strength.

Jesus told his disciples that if he went away he would pray the Father, and he would send them another comforter, even the Spirit of truth. He ascended to the right hand of the Father, a high priest, to obtain gifts and blessings for his church. This was his Father's promise. Therefore the gift of the Spirit is called the promise of the Father,

and the Spirit itself is called the Holy Spirit of promise. Acts 1:4; 2:33; Eph. 1:13. According to this promise, that if he ascended to his Father he would send the Spirit, Paul says: "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." Eph. 4:8. And he informs us what gifts he gave, and for what purpose they were given, as follows:—

"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. 4:11–13.

Their object is: (1) The perfecting of the saints. The promise is to every one—every one may be a partaker of the divine gift, and without it no one is Christ's. Rom. 8:9. (2) For the work of the ministry; not merely for the ministry of the apostles, but for that work even unto the end of the age. It is in this sense that he is with his people, by the Spirit which the Father sends in his name. John 14:26. (3) For the edifying of the body of Christ. To edify is to build up; the body of Christ is his church; the Spirit is not given for any chosen few, but for the edification of the whole body. But the promise to the apostles, as far as it concerned them personally, related primarily to the work of the ministry; that was the prominent idea of the gifts, though the other objects should never be lost from sight.

In 1 Cor. 12, the apostle says God has set them in the church, "dividing to every man severally as he will." It is by the will of God; not of human will or choice. We ought to pray for the

Spirit, for God is willing to give it to them who ask him—more willing than parents are to give good gifts to their children. Luke 11:10-13. But we cannot dictate or choose what gift we shall receive, or whether any special gift shall be conferred upon us. They are truly gifts—conferred according to the mind of God alone.

At the building up of the church in Jerusalem, thousands being added to it in one day, the gifts were there for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of all. This has well been called "the model church," for all were established on the same basis—on the same truths and promises. When the gospel was sent to the Gentiles, beginning with Cornelius, the gift of the Spirit witnessed that it was the work of God. And when Peter was questioned concerning his going to the uncircumcised, he justified his action by this sign: "Forasmuch as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I that I could withstand God?" Acts 11:17. In this notable transaction we have a striking illustration of the gift of the Spirit for the work of the ministry. *First*, a vision was given to Cornelius; an angel directing him to send to Joppa for Simon Peter, who would tell him what he ought to do. *Secondly*, a vision was given to Peter, to prepare his mind to go at the call of this Gentile. *Thirdly*, the Spirit fell upon those who heard, for they believed the visions related by Peter and Cornelius, and of course they believed the word of the gospel spoken. Acts 10. Thus does God direct in his own work, to give us a full assurance of faith that he is indeed a God who watches over us unto our salvation.

A like incident is related in Acts 16. A vision appeared to Paul in the night: "There stood a man

of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." By this Paul felt assured that the Lord had called him to preach the gospel in Macedonia.

The vision of Cornelius, and the pouring out of the Spirit upon those who heard the gospel of Christ in his house, are positive proofs that the promise and the prophecy which were fulfilled to the apostles on the day of pentecost, were not confined to them, but were truly for the perfecting of the saints at large—for the edifying of the body of Christ. And this is further proved in that the special gifts were conferred upon many others besides the apostles. Prophets from Jerusalem went to Antioch, and one of them named Agabus foretold the great dearth that came upon the earth in the days of Claudius Cæsar. Acts 11:27, 28. The same prophet, nearly a score of years after this, prophesied that Paul should be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, by the Jews at Jerusalem, which was fulfilled not long afterwards.

The prophecy of Joel, quoted by Peter on the day of pentecost, said that the Lord would also pour out his Spirit upon his handmaidens. The gifts of the Spirit were not first given in the new dispensation; but they were to be more generally distributed than in the old. And in the old dispensation God had sometimes conferred the highest gifts upon his handmaidens. Huldah was a prophetess unto whom the king himself sent the high priest and others to inquire of the Lord concerning what he had spoken against Jerusalem. 2 Kings 22: 12-14, 18. Luke records of Philip the evangelist, that he had four daughters, virgins, who did prophesy. Acts 21: 9. It is not for a moment to be supposed that the brief record of the Acts of the Apostles, largely a history of the labors of Paul,

gives us the names of all the prophets and prophetesses in the first century. Agabus was not the only prophet that went from Jerusalem to Antioch, but he was the only one whose name is recorded.

Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, as before quoted, said that God had set these gifts in the church. By this he did not mean any particular church, but in the church at large. In the divine intention they are evidently a part of the church. But it is supposed that the same apostle, in the next chapter, 1 Cor. 13, taught that all these gifts should cease. He did indeed; and so also faith shall cease, and hope shall cease. But when? He said:—

“For now 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. . . . 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.”

Prophecy, and all the other gifts of the Spirit, will be done away when that which is perfect is come. But when that which is perfect should come, then he said he should know better than he knew by the Spirit of prophecy; then he would see as he was seen, and would know as he was known. That time has not yet come. The gifts of the Spirit gave him but a partial view and understanding of things; but he anticipated a perfect view at some time. When that time shall be, he informs us in chapters 6:2, 3, and 4:5. In the first passage he says the saints shall judge the world; yea, we shall judge angels. But the saints are not yet qualified for such a work. The apostles with all their gifts, were not qualified, for they only knew in part. He who can judge angels must indeed know as he is known. And thus he says in the text last cited:—

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts."

When the hidden things of darkness are brought to light, and the counsels of the hearts are made manifest, and the saints know as they are now known, then can they judge in righteousness. Then shall the gifts no more be needed; then shall faith end in sight, and hope shall end in ceaseless possession. But until that time, until perfect knowledge is given, the church will need the gifts of the Spirit for the perfecting of the saints and for the work of the ministry.

The church has never yet arrived at that state to which the gifts were intended to bring it. "Till we all come in 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." It only approximated that position in the days of the apostles, as we may readily learn from the instructions, exhortations, and reproofs which were given in their various letters.

Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians about A. D. 60, and his letter to the Ephesians some five years later—more than thirty years after the ascension of the Lord, and after the gifts were conferred on the day of Pentecost. At the time of his writing, "that which is perfect" had not yet come; the gifts were still required to perfect the saints, and to direct in the work of the ministry. In both letters Paul showed that their necessity existed at that time, and would yet in the future. And the church in the later days of the apostles did not increase in godliness; did not come more and more into the unity of the faith; they did not grow up into Christ their head. To the contrary,

the leaven of heresy was affecting the church, and the mystery of iniquity was working, which led to a fearful apostasy; and the light of the gospel was nearly extinguished from the earth. And when, in the providence of God, men broke away from the thrall of spiritual slavery that had bound them for centuries, only a partial reformation was effected, the Reformed Church retaining many of the customs and errors of the corrupt church which was ruled by the "man of sin."

We have sufficient historical evidence that the special gifts of the Spirit continued in the church during the first centuries, while the faithful were passing through bitter persecutions. It was only when she allied herself to the civil power, and was led away from God by the favor of emperors, and grew proud, selfish, and ambitious of wordly honor and riches, that the Spirit of God was grieved away, and the church became weak before the wiles of the enemy. Then the faithful witnesses for God were few, and they were driven out from society as disturbers of the peace of the church. Their records were burned as things accursed, and their history is little known except in the books of Heaven. Their virtues were hateful to those who had departed from the simplicity of Christian faith and love, and they were hunted as wild beasts in the mountains to which they fled for refuge.

The Reformation of the 16th century was a powerful work of God. The kings of the earth had yielded subjection to the church, then become the church of antichrist, and had done her bidding in the attempted work of exterminating those who clung to the truth of God. Then the humble followers of Christ had no resting place in the earth, no secure retreat, safe from the persecutions of the

church and State combined. They who dared to raise their voices against the prevailing corruption were put to death with frightful tortures, many being burned alive.

The prophecy of the Revelation, speaking of this cruel power, says: "He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword." Rev. 13:10. This beast had used the sword of civil power to root out the truth from the earth, and its sway was so entire that nothing but a revolt of kings could effect its overthrow. Mighty men of God, and faithful rulers in Germany and Switzerland, crippled the power of the apostate body so that the servants of God could again breathe the air of liberty and peace.

Amongst these reformers were men of strong faith, whose prayers reached to Heaven, and the Spirit witnessed to their faith. They believed in the direct interposition of God in behalf of his truth, and God was with them. But there were few who stood fully abreast with Luther, having more confidence in the direct power of God than in the power and favor of kings. That which was a mercy of Heaven, the aid of faithful rulers, became a snare to the enfranchised church, and she also allied herself to the civil power. On the continent, and in England, State Protestant Churches took the place of a State Catholic Church, and though the spirit of persecution was greatly restrained, the power of godliness was gradually lost.

The movement under the Wesleys and their associates in England, was an effort to break away from the carnal security of antinomianism which prevailed to a most alarming extent. And again God owned the work by the presence and power of his Spirit. The lives of the early Methodists are replete with evidences that the purpose of God

in bestowing the gifts of his Spirit is always remembered when the church has sufficient faith and humility to use them to the glory of the gracious Giver. Our space will not permit us to give numerous instances that might be presented, but one of the most recent is so full of interest that we copy it entire. It is known as "The vision of Dr. Bond." It was published in the *Christian Advocate*, in the memoirs of Dr. Bond. The doctor himself seldom spoke of it, but its genuineness is beyond question.

"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 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 prayer meeting 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, or 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 concentra-

tion 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 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 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."

"By their fruits ye shall know them." The results proved the heavenly origin of this vision; and others might be related.

The prophecy which Peter quoted on the day of Pentecost reaches down to the great and notable day of the Lord, and includes the signs of the coming of that day. That day we have not yet reached; but the fulfillment of the prophecies, these signs included, shows that it is fast approaching. And yet the Reformation is not completed. The church is not what God intended it to be; it

has not fully recovered from the effects of the great apostasy; nor is the Protestant church at large trying to draw the line more sharply between itself and the apostate church against which it once protested,—it is rather leaning in the wrong direction. It is not what a church must be to stand in the coming time of trouble, and to meet the Lord with joy. This would be realized as it is not now, if the truths revealed in the Scriptures concerning the coming of Christ, and the preparation required to be ready to meet him, were appreciated. And, if the divinely-appointed means of enlightening and perfecting the church were accepted, there would not be so much darkness on these vitally important subjects.

Though references to the second coming of Christ abound in all the Scriptures, there is but one place in all the Bible where the circumstances preceding and attending his coming are given complete and in order. That is Rev. 14. Three messages are there recorded to be proclaimed to the world, the last of which describes the saints as those who “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” After this message, the Son of man appears upon a white cloud, with a sharp sickle in his hand; he comes to reap the harvest of the earth. Com. Matt. 13:38-42. The saints are then gathered unto the Lord (2 Thess. 2:1), while the wicked are cast into the winepress of the wrath of God. Com. Joel 3:9-16.

Again, in Rev. 12, there is a brief view of the travail of the church from the time of the birth of the Saviour until the consummation, and the remnant in verse 17—the very last part of the church—suffer persecution for keeping the commandments of God and having the testimony of Jesus Christ. This is the same company of command-

ment-keepers that are brought to view in chap. 14:12, as both texts refer to the closing scenes of this dispensation. This expression, the testimony of Jesus Christ, is used in other places in the New Testament; it is explained in Rev. 19:10, where the angel said to John: "The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy."

By this we learn that the remnant, who are preparing to meet their coming Lord, keep the commandments of God, and have also the Spirit of prophecy. This indicates that the gifts of the Spirit, so little prized, and so long denied, will be restored before the Lord comes, and that the remnant will accept them, as the means whereby they may be perfected, and for directing the work of the ministry.

The necessity of some special means to prepare the saints for such an extraordinary event as the second advent of Christ in his glory, is shown in Rev. 22:11, 12. The close of probation is marked in these words:—

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

This proves that probation will close, that every case will be decided and fixed, before the Lord comes to give rewards. And so it surely must be, for as his priesthood is entirely on the throne of his Father, it must close before his coming in his kingdom. But no one could be saved if the advocacy of Christ were closed before the Judgment were decided in favor of the saints. And what a thought! Probation closed; the priestly work of Christ forever ended; and the time of trouble to

be passed through! The mass of the people think that if a person is prepared to die, he is prepared for the coming of the Lord. But they do not consider the difference between dying, and standing alive to meet the Lord at his appearing. It is one thing to die in Christ, to yield our spirits to him while he is pleading for us before his Father's throne, and quite a different thing to stand in the time of trouble, after Jesus has ceased to plead in man's behalf; after his priesthood is closed, and he is preparing to come to redeem his own, and to take vengeance on his foes. They who now realize these things will bless Heaven that means has been devised in the mercy of God for the perfecting of the saints, and that we are not left without direct help from on high to carry on such a work as that which lies before us.

The letters of the apostles are full of prophetic utterances on this subject. In 1 Cor. 15, Paul speaks at length of the resurrection, the coming of Christ, and the triumph and glorification of the saints. That he is speaking by prophecy, to the last generation, and not to the dwellers in Corinth at that time, may be learned from verses 51, 52. "Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." This was not the case with the church at Corinth, for they are all asleep. But it will be the case with the remnant, the last generation of the saints who will be translated when Jesus comes, and not see death.

It is not to be supposed that the letters of the apostles applied only to the people living at the time when they were written; they are for the

whole church, in all the dispensation. In 1 Cor. 1 he introduced the same time and people that he did in chap. 15, as the following language shows:—

“I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; 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; who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 1:4-8.

Here again, they who are “waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” who will be found blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus, have the testimony of Christ, the Spirit of prophecy, confirmed in them, so that they come behind in no gift. May God hasten the day when a people may be gathered into the fold of commandment-keepers, who shall be so faithful and so humble that this scripture may be fulfilled in them.

And we find the same truth taught in the first letter to the Thessalonians. From chapter 4:13 to the end of the letter he speaks especially to the same company who are waiting for the coming of the Lord.

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 1 Thess. 4:15-17.

The subject is continued in chapter 5. The day of the Lord—the period succeeding the day of salvation—will come as a thief in the night, and men will be crying, Peace and safety, when sudden destruction is impending. But to the waiting ones he says: “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” And to this people he speaks again: “Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings,”—not the prophecies, but the act of prophesying. And he continues: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” Verses 1–4, 19–21.

To despise prophesyings is to quench the Spirit. We are not to despise them because they are prophesyings, as too many are inclined to do, but prove them: judge between the genuine and the counterfeit, and hold fast that which is good. We are directed to believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God. We must try them by “the law and the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isa. 8:19, 20. The holy Scriptures were written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit of God cannot contradict itself; cannot deny the law and the testimony. And it has always borne witness also to the Son of God. The true gifts will lead to reverence and love for Christ and the sacred Scriptures. Many false gifts, the spirits of demons, are in the world; they lead away from the Bible, from Christ, and from trusting in his blood for the remission of sins. But if, in the days when the Son of man is near to come, there were nothing but false gifts, nothing manifested but the power of Satan, there could be no necessity for trying or proving them; there would be nothing which we should hold fast. We should then reject them all indiscrimi-

nately, and despise prophesyings, knowing that they were all of evil origin; and if possible we should quench every spirit, without inquiring whence it came.

To further prove that this instruction to despise not prophesyings, is given to those who shall be alive when the Lord returns, we read verse 23 of this same chapter:—

“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.”

The bodies of those who are alive when the Lord comes will be preserved, for they will be translated and never see corruption.

Rev. 12:17, to which we have before referred, says:—

“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.”

No one truly keeps the commandments of God who keeps only a part of them. The peculiarity of the remnant is that they keep them all. And the reason why the powers of earth are angry at the remnant is, those powers have a substitute for one of God's commandments, the Sabbath, and we cannot keep the fourth commandment and the substitute also. The powers of earth combine to persecute those who do not bow in reverence to the counterfeit Sabbath—the day not sanctified by Jehovah, a day that he never commanded anybody to keep.

But this is not all. God owns those who are obedient to his commandments, and grants them the gifts of his Spirit—the testimony of Jesus, —and this increases the wrath of the dragon,

and of all the wicked powers of earth, because there are many false prophets in the world, and these have been accepted as manifesting the true power of God. By the power of Satan they show signs and lying wonders. 2 Thess. 2:1-9. Of these works the prophet says: "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." And at this time Jesus says: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth." Rev. 16:14, 15. The world and worldly-minded professors accept these spirit-workings as of God, and are pleased with their teachings because they confirm them in keeping their own institutions instead of the commandments of God. But the testimony of Jesus condemns both the false worship and the spurious gifts, and of course condemns those who put their trust in them. It is this that arouses the anger of the world against the remnant who both keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus.

To connect the commandments of God with the gifts of the Spirit is not an idea new with the book of Revelation. These are the most precious benefits that Christ has purchased for his people, their safeguard while traveling through the darkness of this evil world. But they are conferred only on the humble and the obedient, not on the selfish and the rebellious. Their necessity and their relations are shown in Prov. 29:18: "Where there is no vision, the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."

The use of the disjunctive in this text is very striking. The people perish where there is no vision, *but* he that keepeth the law is blessed—he does not perish. The necessary conclusion is that

the Spirit is given to direct the keepers of the law, that they shall not perish. The German translation of this text is strong. "When there is no vision, the people become wild and dissolute," or disorderly. This is not a forced construction, as it is from a Hebrew word signifying to despise counsel, or apostatize. To neglect the grace of God is to reject him; and "if we deny him, he also will deny us." 2 Tim. 2:12. The evidence of our being rejected of God is shown in his withdrawing his favors from us. But this sad condition never attends those who regard all his commandments. As they acknowledge just restraint and esteem the counsel of the Lord, his Spirit guides them and saves them from disorder and apostasy.

In Jeremiah's Lamentations over the sins of Jerusalem, and the calamities which followed, are these words:—

"The Lord hath purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion. . . . Her king and her princes are among the Gentiles; the law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the Lord." Lam. 2:8, 9.

Where the law is not found among the people, the prophets seek in vain for light from Heaven. The words of the Lord are: "Return unto me, and I will return unto you." The effectual way for sinners to return unto God is to repent and break off their sins. Then he will pour out his Spirit upon them.

The same is shown in the prophecy of Ezekiel, where he pronounces the judgments of Heaven against the awful sins of Israel: "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." Eze. 7:26.

Again, the prophet Micah, recounting "the transgressions of Jacob, and the sins of the house of Israel," declares the evil that shall befall them, as follows:—

"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." Mic. 3:6.

Thus has it ever been. It was counted as the greatest evil that could overtake the professed people of God, to be deprived of the direct counsel of his Spirit. And the prophets described the glory of this closing dispensation as the time when God would pour out his Spirit to a greater extent than he had ever done before. And all classes unite in congratulating themselves that the worship of this age is more spiritual than that of any other, and yet, almost unanimously, they scorn the idea that God will pour out his Spirit in this age, and will lead them directly by his counsel. What is the result? They follow their own spirit and see vanity. That which they boastfully term "the higher Christian thought," is but the expression of human wisdom and human pride, whereby they lightly esteem the words of Inspiration, and make void the commandment of God by tradition and vain reasoning.

We think it cannot be disputed that the power and gifts of the Spirit were an essential part of the commission to preach the gospel—a commission that extends to the end of the age. The power was given according to the promise. The gifts were set in the church, and God never removed them. As far as they departed, it was because the Spirit was quenched; its gifts were not prized. God bestows his Spirit to his own glory; if the

church does not honor him in the use of his gifts, they must and will be withheld. The apostasy of the church grieved them away, and the people have become willing to trust their own wisdom and strength, and darkness must be the result.

But there will be a little flock who will not be in darkness when the great and notable day of the Lord shall come. The remnant will cling to the testimony of Jesus as the means of the unity of faith and of salvation. Blessed be God that, while the church has largely lost the power of godliness, and anarchy is everywhere lifting its foul hands for the destruction of social order, and the nations are preparing for a war, the issues of which they will not understand, and men's hearts are failing them for fear of the things that are coming on the earth, —blessed be God that in this time he has not left himself without a witness, in bestowing his Spirit upon those who are endeavoring to restore true worship in keeping all the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

The prophecies clearly prove that we are in the last days, and the Lord is fulfilling his word to his remnant, in the gift of his Spirit. The incidents related in preceding chapters are known to thousands who have been helped and guided in the way of right, by means of instruction and reproof thus afforded. And still their prayer is that of David, in the time of his self-humiliation: "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit." Ps. 51:11, 12.

While we invite the reader to prayerfully examine this subject, and the evidences herein presented, to learn if God is not coming very near to his people in these times of peril, we would, in

tender regard for his soul, renew the caution we expressed in noticing Matt. 12:31, 32. The enemies of Jesus said that he cast out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. But he said he cast them out by the Spirit of God. Then he uttered those words of such fearful import: "Who-soever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Perhaps it was not in their minds to speak a word against the Holy Ghost. They might, indeed, have felt a deep reverence for the name of the Spirit of God. But their prejudices against Jesus of Nazareth were so strong, their determination to persist in their denial of him was so fixed, that they would risk the awful consequences rather than yield to the evidences presented before their eyes, or to the convictions that pressed upon their minds. We, too, may profess to reverence the name of the Holy Spirit, and yet quench the Spirit, grieving it away by lightly regarding its work in our midst. Some may say that they are not sure that this work is by the Spirit of God. But it is their privilege to know. Yes, it is our duty to prove these things, and if their fruit is good, then it is our duty to hold fast to them, for God's honor and our salvation is concerned in all his gifts. It is by the Spirit alone that we may know the joy of salvation. If we slight the gifts of grace, our eyes will be blinded, and our hearts will become hardened, and that will come upon us that is written in Acts 13: 40, 41. But God's grace yet lingers, and it is our privilege to enjoy his salvation here, and inherit the glories of his kingdom, through faith in, and obedience to, his sacred word.

John 17:3

*And this is life eternal, that they
might know thee the only true
God, and Jesus Christ, whom
thou hast sent.*