

can only come to the individual and for the individual, and no one can through visions, however multiplied, become a kind of oracle for others. Christ Himself has spoken to us in these last times, and the race of teachers who formerly stood between God and the people, as recipients and communicators of His will, passed away, never to be utilized again, for each may now have the unction from the Holy One, and so be possessed of all needed spiritual knowledge. Hence, we maintain that no new revelations of God's will to man can be looked for through the visions of any one individual.

If this simple scriptural truth be kept in mind, nearly all the dangers connected with the subject pass away, whilst the possible benefits are retained.

What they are.—They are amongst the many means whereby God communicates His will to individual man. For just as the Holy Spirit uses judgment, reason, the senses of the body, and the faculties of the mind, to guide us into all truth, and to confer upon us the rich blessings of the New Covenant, so visions are utilized now and again for the same beneficent object. In the make-up of a full-orbed Christian no part of our being is left out: body, spirit, soul, with all their powers, are indwelt of the Spirit, and are used to the utmost to secure the fulfilment of the promise to each one, "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

When the Christian, who has claimed his privilege of walking in the Spirit, is the subject of one of these impressive visitations, how natural for him in his perplexity as to whereunto it tends, to submit the whole matter to his Divine, ever-present Guide, to be taught of God concerning it. Then, if there is some lesson of instruction or warning in it, he with certainty secures it, and is the richer for it. If not, it is relegated to the things to be forgotten, and so ends the matter.

How different the history of one, whether professed Christian or not, who does not lean in perfect confidence on the Guide Divine, for just in proportion to the startling character of the vision experienced, so is he the prey of harassing uncertainty, and is ever liable to weary himself in his efforts at forced indifference, or to

rush off into milder or more pronounced forms of fanaticism. For we maintain that even emphasizing scriptural truth in its application to others by the relation of visions, dreams, or trances is of the essence of fanaticism.

God can use visions to the spiritual profit of the individual, and often does, but so soon as this individual, or any other, uses such incidents in Christian life to teach or even impress the teachings of Christ, the realm of danger has been entered.

The vision of Peter, just before his call to open the door of the Church to Gentile converts, was evidently needed to break down his strong Jewish prejudices. The voice of the Spirit, which was quite sufficient for his guidance after this was done, would not have accomplished the purpose. It was simply to prepare the apostle to accept the fulfilment of Christ's previously revealed will concerning pardon, purity, and the gift of the Holy Ghost for all, both Jew and Gentile.

In leading Paul in his preaching tours, the Holy Ghost evidently used just what means were necessary to accomplish the desired result. Hence he was simply forbidden of the Spirit to preach or go to certain places, but when the exact place was to be indicated a vision was vouchsafed. But whether it was a voice, an impression, or a vision, it was simply the Holy Ghost guiding him into all truth.

Just so in our Christian lives, when the circumstances demand it, God, to secure for us the fulfilment of His promises, and to enable us to do His will, "on earth as it is done in heaven," teaches us, not only through our reason, and our affections, but through visions and dreams of the night. But just as we need, moment by moment, the guidance of the Spirit in the use of the more ordinary powers of our being, so do we need His guidance in the extraordinary.

EVIDENCES OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE.—
"You ask me how I came to know that the Word was near? Would you know this? Because He is living and efficacious; and, at the moment that He entered into my soul, He moved, softened, wounded my hard, sick and stony heart.—*St. Bernard.*