

God as thus revealed. To this end he must master the outward forms of human language, in which they are enshrined like treasures in earthen vessels. It follows further that a double set of faculties is required—intellectual faculties to master the letter, and spiritual faculties to discern the spirit.

THE SPIRIT.

It is well known to every Bible student that the Bible contains "A letter that killeth and a spirit that giveth life." 2 Cor. III: 6. In other words there is a superficial meaning attaching to the language that is patent to every reader and there is a meaning that lies beneath the surface and that is concealed under the words or that shines through them according to the eyes with which we read them. This spiritual truth is entirely foreign to the understanding of the natural man. For spiritual truth can only be discerned by spiritual faculties; I Cor. II: 14; and spiritual faculties are the gift of God. They are the first-fruits of the Holy Spirit's indwelling and they are imparted either as a new creation or as a revival of powers that lie dormant in our natural state.

And these spiritual faculties are inseparably bound up with our spiritual life. They are keen or dull according as the divine life is vigorous or sickly within us. They grow and develop like other gifts. Habits of prayer and of worship are the air they breathe. "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God." James I: 5. Study of the Word of God is the food on which they thrive. "Desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby." 1 Peter II: 2. And obedience to the will of God is the exercise by which they grow strong. "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine." John VII: 17. The Spirit of God who is the inspirer of the Scriptures can alone give us eyes to see and ears to hear in such holy mysteries. His aid must be sought in prayer and His power felt in daily life before the seals of the Book can be broken and its contents exposed to view.

Let me here express my ever deepening conviction that in the Sunday-school as well as in the pulpit the most valuable of all possessions is that of spiritual understanding and the most useful of all gifts is that vouchsafed to Apollos who was "mighty in the Scriptures." Acts XVIII: 24. For to wield aright this sword of the Spirit is to command the highest form of spiritual success; is to wield the *power of God* unto salvation and sanctification, Rom. I: 16; John XVII: 17.