

phytes, to initiate them in the esoteric doctrines of their sect. These doctrines are, in fact, the most sectarian in existence, and consist mainly in insinuating doubts, not only in regard to the teaching of the ordinary christian ministers, but as to the right of such ministers to teach at all, they being, in their opinion, still involved in spiritual blindness, and next in hinting grave objections to what is called the Christian Ministry in general, in denouncing the communion of all other churches as essentially impure, and in holding forth the necessity of supplanting all existing communities of christians by the advent of an angelic company, far above the need of sermons or sacraments, doctors or discipline, and in which all the members shall enjoy the enviable privilege of being alike saints and teachers."

W. G.

TORONTO.

THE NECESSITY OF EXEGETICAL STUDY AS A PREPARATION FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY.

A LECTURE DELIVERED BY REV. J. M. GIBSON, M.A., AT THE CLOSE OF THE SESSION IN THE PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE, MONTREAL.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians we read that, when Christ ascended, he gave not only apostles, prophets and evangelists, but pastors and teachers, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." For this work, to which you have devoted your lives, there are two things of prime importance, as in fact for any work in which any man can engage, viz.: the *power* and the *instrument*. The power is the power of God, exercised by His Holy Spirit. The instrument is the Word of God, applied by His Holy Spirit.

The subject before us calls us specially to speak of the instrument, viz.: the Word of God. In former times the Word of God was given directly. It came as a revelation direct from God to men. "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." But now the age of special inspiration is over. We say *special*, because there is and must be *general* inspiration, the inbreathing of the Divine Spirit into the spirit of man; nay the indwelling of the Divine Spirit in man, for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His;" and one of the qualifications of even the subordinate office-bearers in the church, is that they be "men full of the Holy Ghost." But the special work of the Spirit in revealing the truth is now complete. It was completed when John in Patmos wrote his last "Amen." And now the Spirit of God reveals no new truth, but only applies the old to those who are the subjects of His gracious influence. He takes of the things of Christ which are contained in the written record, and shows them unto us. The Word of God in its written form then is the instrument with which we have to do our work. We have not, like the Hebrew prophets of old, to wait for our message. We have to search for it. It is not our part to receive and transmit revelations from heaven. It is our part to make use of the revelation already given, to study the record of the revelation which God has given us of His Son, and thence to draw the weapons of our warfare. "Therefore every Scribe who is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasury things new and old."

From all this it follows that the study of the Word of God lies at the foundation of the work of the ministry. And it is perfectly plain