

dispensation of the Spirit were placed as lights in the dark night of persecution which followed, by which the fleeing Christians might guide their weary footsteps, and as hiding-places of shelter and defence against infuriated mobs. Who so blind as not to discern the *provisionary* element in every movement of history?

The Pentecostal effusion was a fitting inauguration of the new dispensation. Its copiousness indicated the wealth and universality of the gospel offers, while the variety of the gifts conferred upon the first preachers of the cross prepared them for their work, and compelled the assent of men to the fact of their divine commission. The gifts were extraordinary because of an extraordinary emergency; a few unlettered fishermen were not able to contend with the powers of darkness and carry salvation to a world ready to perish, but by the Spirit's power they were now equal to any task. These miraculous gifts were not confined to the Apostles, nor even to the Jews; nor were they limited to any particular sphere of Christian activity. Some were adapted to silence the gainsayer, whether Jew or Gentile; some to convince the sinner and lead him to the cross; some to build up the believer in his most holy faith; others, again, such as the power of discerning spirits were intended to arrest the presumptuous in their wicked career, and unmask all forms of hypocrisy and deceit. The Spirit of the new dispensation at its inception was not *opposed* to that of the old. An Achan in the camp of the Hebrews, and an Ananias in the camp of the Christians, both receive equally condign punishment.

The Pentecostal gifts were not intended to be permanent endowments of the Church, nor even of the first preachers of the cross, nor were the apostles even rendered infallible at all times; also how can we explain the dissembling of Peter or the disputation of Paul and Barnabas in reference to Mark, or even the necessity for the Church Council at Jerusalem to decide on matters of Church polity? The Apostles were not mere machines unconsciously propelled by some exterior power. They evidently retained the proper use of their faculties, and exercised the power of choice, and thus were responsible for the proper use of the gifts conferred upon them. This will appear more fully when we remember that gifts of a similar nature were abused by the Church at Corinth, so much so, that Paul found it necessary to administer a sharp rebuke, and to prescribe explicit rules for their proper exercise, adding the very significant words "the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets." There it is perhaps well to remark that *inspiration* was not strictly speaking a Pentecostal gift; that was the same under both dispensations. The Pentecostal event in general seems to have been the opening up of an extraordinary treasury of divine grace, and the endowment of the first preachers of the Gospel with extraordinary faith with which to draw from that treasury, to whatever extent the spiritual needs of men demanded. Christians to-day only have the ordinary means of grace, and ordinary faith, and yet they never fail in duty, except when they fail to use the means God has placed within their reach. So everywhere in the movements of those times we can discover an exquisite adaptation of means to the ends to be accomplished, so that in despite of the unbelief and bigotry of the Jews, the opposition of the civil power of Rome, and the prevail-