

something more than that the way was left open for the gifts to appear if circumstances should chance to favor. It rather signifies that they were to be permanent parts of the true spiritual constitution of the church, and that if these were not in active operation the church would be in the condition of a human body, some of whose members had, through accident or disease, become crippled and helpless. Having once been set in the church, these gifts must remain until they are as formally removed. But there is no record that they ever have been removed.

Five years later the same apostle writes to the Ephesians relative to the same gifts, plainly stating their object, and thus showing indirectly that they must continue till that object is accomplished. He says (Eph. 4 : 8, 11-13) : " Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . 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 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."

The church did not reach the state of unity here contemplated, in the apostolic age ; and very soon after that age, the gloom of the great spiritual apostasy began to overshadow the church ; and certainly during that state of declension, this fullness of Christ, and unity of faith, was not reached. Nor will it be reached till the last message of mercy shall have gathered out of every kindred and people, every class of society, and every organization of error, a people complete in all gospel reforms, waiting for the coming of the Son of man. And truly, if ever in her experience the church would need the benefit of every agency ordained for her comfort and guidance, encouragement and protection, it would be amid the perils of the last days, when the powers of evil, well-nigh perfected by experience and training for their nefarious work, would, by their masterpieces of imposture, deceive if it were possible even the elect. Very appropriately, therefore, come in the special prophecies of the outpouring of the Spirit for the benefit of the church in the last days.

It is, however, usually taught, in the current literature of the Christian world, that the gifts of the Spirit were only for the apostolic age ; that they were given simply for the planting of the gospel ; and that the gospel being once established, the gifts were no longer needed, and consequently were suffered soon to disappear from the church. But the apostle Paul warned the Christians of his day that the " mystery of iniquity " was already at work, and that after his departure, grievous wolves would enter in among them, not sparing the flock, and that also of their own selves