

as compared with the methods of apostolic times, will appear the longer and more closely the two are compared. Let the aspirant after discipleship be kept face to face with the simple story of the cross, with the facts of Christianity, and as he believes in them, so will he be brought into direct contact with God, and thus become, in his Christian life, acquainted with Father, Son and Holy Ghost; for every communication to him from God, and every act of obedience to Christ through the command of the Spirit, makes him better and better acquainted with the Godhead, thus he grows in grace and knowledge of God. But let his attention be called off from personal walk with God to the effort to gain particular acquaintanceship with Him through minute study of His or His servants' general sayings, and, to say the least of it, it is a round-about way to reach the object arrived at.

When, however, the Bible is used only as a substitute for the personal knowledge which the first disciples gathered by seeing and hearing Christ, or which their converts learned from them by word of mouth, then there need be no damage done by its use; for then, like the first teachers, we can arrest the attention of lovers of truth by our statement of the facts of Christianity, backed up by our personal testimony, and so bring others into living touch with Christ and the Holy Spirit, and have them base their faith through these facts, not on the *Word*, but on Christ Himself as a living presence, and act out that faith by their accepting the gift of the Holy Ghost and walking in Him continually.

The origin of this unapostolic way of inviting converts to base their faith on the *Word* is not difficult to discover; for when the guidance of the Spirit was rejected as the *Word*, then a substitute had to be made, and men began to seek the living amongst the dead, whilst from this charnel-house ever has ascended, and still continually ascends, the hopeless wail: O for more love! O for Holy Ghost power! O for spiritual life!!

GEORGE MULLER says the only way God can teach us faith is by sending us difficulties.

EXPOSITION.

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the desert to be tempted of the devil."—MATT. iv. 1.

It is often forgotten that the Spirit as distinctly leads His followers into adversity as into prosperity. We follow with pleasant thought His way, when it leads to spiritual blessing or temporal good; but how about those passages in life when He leads us into the barren places, and leaves us, apparently unaided, to battle with all forms of evil? Is there not a strong temptation to ignore His work in this latter case?

At first sight, it seems shocking to our sense of propriety, that the Holy Spirit Himself should guide us into misfortune, or put us in a place favorable to the attacks of our great foe; and yet it is written that He, the Holy Spirit, deliberately guided our great pattern to a place where he should not only suffer the severe pangs of hunger, but by this means be still more exposed to the assaults of the devil. Strange kind of a comforter and guide who would coolly bring about such a state of things, we are apt to think, even if we hesitate to utter the words.

It would seem, to superficial thought, a little more consistent to have the devil do the leading as well as the tempting, and so this human thought is put in creed form by some, and all Scriptures forced to do homage to it by a process well known to dogmatic theologians. However, this passage is so unequivocally plain in its teaching that we will simply assert the truth contained therein. Yes, the Spirit leads unerringly, whether it be to bring us into places of affliction and trial, or of delight and prosperity.

A man may delight to tell the story of how he was led of the Spirit into prosperity in business life; but another may have to tell, with equal confidence, how the Spirit brought about overwhelming disaster to all his financial interests, and both be alike true to facts. One may tell of connecting links in a chain of pleasant providences, all bringing about blessings of health and wealth to the different members of his family; whilst another may have to recount sickness, death, and financial loss on every hand,