

the means of church edification—an issue superlatively grave and practical—a question, the decision of which involves consequences of almost inconceivable magnitude. If my position be negatived, the most we have a right to do, is, to throw the Bible among the people and leave them to themselves. But if it be admitted, the erudition, the research and vigorous thought, of mental labor, in the acquirement of Bible knowledge, of men of age, experience, and talent in the ranks of faith, may have, and by divine law will have all their power thrown into the scale on the side of truth. What a host of tongues, moved by hearts purified by the knowledge and the love of God, and the hope of the gospel, and true heaven-born philanthropy will plead the Lord's cause with the persuasive eloquence of faith and love? or be silent—as this question may be decided.—And all this may be said, with more than a show of propriety, to depend upon the construction we put upon a single scrap of scripture, viz., Eph iv. 11; for it is clear that if this text confines evangelists, pastors, and teachers to the apostolic age, there is no other text that can ensure their continuance; therefore a careful examination of the objections brought against my use of that text, and of the text itself, is the design of these few pages. And now, gentle reader, I shall proceed without further preamble, and it is your business to judge and decide for yourself.

See Ephesians, iv chap. from 11th to 14th verse. It was objected, that evangelists, pastors, and teachers being mentioned in the same connexion with apostles and prophets were necessarily confined to that age, and must of course be withdrawn at the same time. But I know of no rule or usage of language to sustain this objection, or which makes it a necessary consequence in speaking of gifts or favors that every item mentioned in the same connexion must be withdrawn at the same time; but I can think of instances enough where it is not so. For instance, we speak of the Dower which a father gives a daughter and we mention a score of articles, some of them from their nature and use expected to fail in a week, while others will naturally last for many years. It is therefore entirely dependent on the nature and use of the different items, how long they are to continue. In this case, the body of Christ is the destination of the gifts, and they must be manifested somewhere from its commencement to its perfection; and whether they shall be found in every age, or in one generation only, is of course dependent upon the place they occupy and the functions they perform in the body.