

Then in the second dispensation "His name was called Emmanuel, which is God with us"—and in the person of Jesus Christ, God tabernacled with men. But man knew him not. The whole philosophy of his life and the principles he enunciated were inexplicable, and the practical ethics he inculcated and urged upon the conduct of man, were to them the evident proof of his madness. They continually misunderstood him and misconstrued his simplest utterances. And amid the consistent inconsistency of self-centred, self-seeking humanity he stood alone, the phenomenon of history. He said, "It is expedient that I go away," and after the resurrection and descent of the Holy Ghost how often we read of his own disciples saying, "This is what he said, while he was yet with us." Thus we have the thrice blessed privilege of living in the third, the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. The first is pushing, the second is pulling, but the third is pressing the people of God. But it is just possible to be living historically in the age of the Spirit, but experimentally in the dispensation that is marked by pre-pentecostal weakness and unpardonable defeat.

(a) Why was the promise of Acts i., 8 made? It was spoken to those to whom the Lord had said: "Your names are written in heaven," and it is a noteworthy fact, the word explicitly states, that the mother of Jesus was in the upper room when the baptism of fire fell.

Between the death of Julius Caesar and that of Suetonius the historian, there lived a galaxy of luminaries, such as no other century of human history has ever surpassed, of historians, essayists, satirists, poets and philosophers in abundance. It was a period of great intelligence. Jesus threw all the efforts and excellencies of four thousand years upon the scales, and they were found wanting.

Demosthenes, the prince of orators, had lived and died and the world was unredeemed; Plato, the prince of thinkers, had passed away and the ideal republic was still a dream. Aristotle, the master of logicians, had failed to mix the healing cup. Homer, the king of poets, had swept the key board of rhythmic theorems, and still the world wailed out its woe.