

THE SPIRIT INTERPRETING THE SPIRIT.

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IF we believe that the Bible is spiritually inspired, we equally believe that it must be spiritually interpreted. It takes a great musician to write the oratorio of the Messiah, and it takes a great musician to perform the oratorio of the Messiah. So in regard to the Bible; if it took the Holy Spirit to write it, it needs the Holy Spirit to interpret it. This truth Paul distinctly recognizes in 1 Cor. 2: 11, "For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him, even so the things of God knoweth no man but by the Spirit of God." "Where can I find the best key to the Sunday School lessons for the coming year?" is the question that meets us on every hand. We do not reply: "You will find it hanging on a nail over the preacher's pulpit, or lying on the desk of the professor's chair; or shut between the leaves of the expositor's note book." It may be found in any one of these places, if the Spirit of God is found richly dwelling there. For whoever has the Holy Ghost has the key of the Word. In this book are *hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. And these treasures are yours. But how to possess them is the question. For a man's riches consist not in what he has, but in what he knows he has. And therefore God has given us the spirit of knowledge as says Paul in 1 Cor. 2: 12. "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God."

But the gifts of the Spirit are various, and given to whom the Father will. *The Spirit of Truth* is given to one, and the "Spirit of understanding" to another. "*The Spirit of Truth*," was promised to Christ's apostles to enable them to write the Scriptures. As Jesus says: "Howbeit when he the Spirit of Truth is come he shall lead you into all truth, and he shall show you things to come." By the Spirit given on the day of Pentecost, they were enabled to write the Scriptures, both the doctrinal and the prophetic Scriptures. But we are not sure that they had the spirit of understanding to discern the

Scriptures in so great a degree as Christians in our own day have it. It is a great mistake to suppose that because the prophets and apostles wrote the Bible, therefore they perfectly understood it. Hear what Peter says on this point: 1 Pet. 1: 4. He is speaking of the prophets who prophesied of the coming and ministry of Jesus Christ. He pictures them as "searching what and what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." Strange paradox! A man writing a book and then bending over its pages, and deeply studying its language to find out the meaning thereof. It is a most striking testimony to the inspiration of the Scriptures certainly. The writers of the Bible were not the authors of the Bible. If so they would have understood its meaning. They were God's scribes, writing things far too deep for their own understanding, but writing as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It is a great mistake therefore to conclude that if we could see John or Paul or Isaiah they could tell us all about the "things hard to be understood," in their writings, and make clear to us the mysteries which they penned but which we have found too deep for us. Who was Isaiah but God's amanuensis recording what the spirit dictated? Who was Paul but God's stenographer, writing down the words of the Highest as they were communicated to his mind? Who was John but the scribe of Jesus Christ, copying for us the wondrous revelation of Jesus Christ?

There is no doubt that these men wrote things far beyond their own comprehension, and yet things on that very account sublimely true. When Gen. Jackson's plan of campaign was severely criticised long afterwards in Congress, Stephen A. Douglas, in a famous speech, made a most complete and masterly defense of it before that body. The aged Gen. Jackson read the speech and wrote to Douglas, thanking him for his interest, saying: "you have explained my campaign to me, and showed why I did many thing of which I never knew the reason before." The story sounds extremely odd. And yet do you believe that a