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"PERILOUS TIMES."

In ordinary times it is the privilege and duty of the children of God to shine as "the light of the world." As in nature, the energies of every thing that is germinated are directed to the building up and perfecting its own organizations, and thereby fulfilling its own mission in the realms of animated creations; so in the spiritual sphere of existence, the great business of "the begotten again" is to grow, develop and mature, and in the accomplishment of these processes to shine as "the lights of the world." That which shines commands the observation and reflects its own light upon all its surroundings, and is as a consequence as "a city set upon a hill," it cannot be hid. This is the duty the christian owes to the world, the filling of the perfect development of his character as a son of God. It is not teaching, instruction. His knowledge is imperfect and only gained by the slow process of his spiritual discipline as it displaces his natural ideas and makes revealed truth comprehensible to him. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned," and discipline alone makes them comprehensible to the "begotten again." All that christians can do for the world, is to shine before it, that is illumine and illustrate by their luminous conduct, the principles their profession recognizes.

When the Father sends teachers into the world they speak to it by inspiration, as in the case of the Prophets, the Son of God and His Apostles. But the revelation being [R128 : page 6] completed for the preliminary age of the Gospel, the Father is pleased to complete the education of His sons before He sends them forth as teachers of His truth, for every one whom He sends forth gives utterance to no uncertain sound. Hence at present we are left under the guidance of the Holy Ghost to be led into all truth. We are not at liberty to rely

upon human wisdom, learning or capacity to discover the meaning of the revelation which was given to us by the power of the Holy Ghost. Nor is there any promise that the [R129 : page 6] Holy Ghost will "endow any of us with power from on high" to speak by inspiration before the blessed Lord our living head is manifested in His glory. These being the normal conditions of christian life. It may become our duty when abnormal conditions supervene, as we think they do at present, to lift up our voice of warning when those who would be recognized as the faithful teachers of the household seek to impress the household with the idea that they have been the recipients of a divine preparation to be its leader and teacher in these last days. When you read such utterances as this – "I felt and knew that it was a baptism for the work," stop and ask yourselves whether you recollect any utterances of the revealed word that leads to the expectation that the Holy Ghost's functions are to be supplemented by human agency? No, my Brethren, the agency that follows the invisible agency of the Holy Ghost is that of the manifested Lord and His Bride. It is true that prior to His manifestation He may, and undoubtedly is, personally directing the angels in their gathering work, but it is manifest that His presence and action now are kept in this, the limits of the Holy Ghost's sphere of invisibility.

As long as we are in the flesh we are liable to be led astray, and we think our brother errs egregiously in his extraordinary efforts to be recognized as a special missionary of the Lord in these last days. It seems possible "the elect" may deceive themselves as well as others.

I wish the brethren would take their Concordance and find under the head of Holy Ghost what is judicated of Him, and having studied each passage where His offices and services are spoken of, ask themselves if there be left any possible avenue through which the man agency can supplement His work?

I could say more on this subject. "A word to the wise is sufficient."

G. B. STACY.

[Remarks by the Editor: We presume that Bro. S. – would not wish us to understand him as ignoring the fact that God always has, and perhaps always will use, special agents for special work, as for instance Abraham, Moses, Samson and Paul, the "chosen vessel." These were used as long as they kept humble – "kept their body under," but if even a Moses, allowed pride to overcome him, he would cease to be the leader of the Lord's hosts.

If we rightly understand Bro. S., he wishes to guard us against the danger of receiving men's teachings or expositions of "the word" because they have had a vision or dream.

We heartily endorse this sentiment. "To the Law and to the testimony if they speak not according to these it is because there is no light in them," no matter if they had a thousand visions. We should not take an angel's word unless it could be sustained as in harmony with the Bible. If any man be used of the Spirit as a special vessel he need not tell anyone of it. It will manifest itself through his exposition of "the word."]
