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INTO ALL TRUTH

“Howbeit when he, the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.”—John 16:13

To whom was that promise made by the Saviour, to the Apostles, or to the church? And if to the church, does it belong to each *individual* of the church? We believe there is a sense in which it was designed for the Apostles, and was fulfilled in them. Revelation has two phases, one of which is fulfilled in the word being *spoken* or *written*, the other in its being *understood*. This is especially true of prophecy, which though spoken or written by men inspired by the spirit, was not understood, nor intended to be understood by them, (1 Pet. 1:11,12.) but was for the church. Prophecy can only be fully understood when fulfilled, and a truth is not fully revealed until it is understood. To reveal is to make known, and in a very important sense the promise of the Spirit was fulfilled when the inspired writings were complete and given to the church. We do not believe that new truths, not contained in the Bible, have been given to men, and when men come to us claiming to have new revelations, we beware. But we have no doubt that in the application and understanding of the word, the Spirit's help is as necessary as in writing it. The prophets and apostles had inspiration to write and the church have the same Spirit's help to understand.

The Apostles are as the twelve foundation stones of the church, (when complete and glorified the New Jerusalem.—Rev. 21:14,) and as such, *represent* the whole church, and for this reason, the terms “ye” and “you” addressed to them, refer to the whole church. In this way we believe the promise of the Spirit

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belongs to the whole church. “Go ye into all the world,” is our commission, to preach the gospel, as well as their's, though addressed to them. “Lo I am with *you* always even unto the end of the world,” is a precious promise to us and could refer to them only in the sense that they were a *part* of the one family addressed, and in their time, received by the Spirit all needed help. The church is one body, Christ being its head, and the Apostles important members of it, but the body would be incomplete without the toes, and the same Spirit animates the toes that animates the Head. “There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye

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are called in one hope of your calling.” Eph. 4:4.

The living generation of believers in Christ *represents* the church now as at any time in the past, but it requires the whole number, dead and living, to constitute the church, that body which when complete and filled with glory, will shine as the sun in the Father’s kingdom. Now, we do not and cannot believe that Christ, in any sense, intended the promise of which we are speaking, for any *one individual*, now, or at any time in the past; hence we do not believe that any one person ever had, or ever will have the truth concerning Christ and his plans this side of the kingdom or immortal state. “Now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face. Now I know *in part*, but then shall I know even as also I am known.” 1 Cor. 13:12. Whoever expects all the truth while in a mortal state will, doubtless, be disappointed, but this need not stand in the way of any ones applying himself faithfully, with the assurance that his work shall be richly rewarded. He who searches will find. There can be no doubt, that, in consequence of the promise of the leading of the Spirit, the living generation of Christians has, at all times, had all the truth due at that time, and therefore that the church now living has all the truth due in our day; and because of the progress of truth in the “path that shines *more and more* even unto the perfect day,” we may reasonably claim that the present generation of christians know more of prophecy and God’s plan than any generation preceding. We have the advantage of the aggregate progress of the past, besides the fulfillment of the prophecies which clearly indicate our position on the verge of the glory of the kingdom. But it is just as true now as it ever was, that there is variety of power and intellect in the church. There are babes, young men and fathers, now as at all times in the past, and yet, it is as much a fact that the babe with its undeveloped capacity for knowledge or work, belongs to the family as that the father belongs to the family. The existence of life by the Divine Spirit is what constitutes any individual a member of the body, and the degree of strength or knowledge the members possess depends upon circumstances. The growth in grace and knowledge is of members in the family and does not constitute them members, and however young, ignorant or feeble a member is, he is certain of a place in the kingdom, unless for some reason he is disinherited and cut off. If the branch bear *no* fruit it is cut off and withers, but every branch that beareth fruit, be it ever so little, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit. John 15:2. If each individual now, on the strength of the promise, may claim perfect knowledge, so might each individual at any other time, and we know that even in the apostle’s day, no *one* had *all* the help the Spirit gave, but God *divided* to each man severally according to his own will.—1 Cor. 12:11. If a knowledge of all the truth is necessary in order to fit a man for the kingdom, then admitting that the last generation *could* get it all, only *these* could be the heirs and all the dead are shut out. True, they were not expected to know as much as christians now, neither was each one expected to know all that they *all* knew, but they were expected to bring forth fruit unto holiness, and that they each could do. It is no more reasonable to expect each one to know now, all that *all* know than it would have been at any time in the past. The bride is evidently chosen

with reference to her union with Christ by his spirit and her loyalty to him rather than her degree of knowledge. She is called out under circumstances peculiarly dark in some respects, and it is not until after the bride is complete and Zion is brought back that even the “Watchman shall see eye to eye.”—Isa. 52:8. Though we cannot know *all* until the perfect is come, we can *grow* in grace and in knowledge, and the Spirit will help our infirmities.

J. H. P.

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