

books were written, were they intended to contain all that would ever be necessary for men to know concerning God's plans and purposes, thus making all further revelation superfluous? What do the Gospels teach concerning this question?

The very first pages of the Gospel confirm the lesson we have drawn from the Old Testament, that revelation is necessary for the establishment of a new dispensation. For the Gospel dispensation is ushered in and established through revelation. Zacharias is visited by an angel (Luke i: 11-20). Gabriel appears to Mary (Luke i: 26-38). John the Baptist is commissioned by God to preach and baptize (John i: 6, 33). That Jesus was Messiah is manifest to John through revelation. The Spirit descends and a voice from heaven is heard (John i: 32, 34; Matt. iii: 16, 17). And this point is particularly noteworthy. All the ancient prophets had predicted the coming of the Messiah. Some of them had given details about where He should be born, His parentage and the precise time for His coming, and yet it was necessary, when He came, to give new revelations pointing Him out to the most devout servant of God then living. Previous revelations are here clearly seen *not* to render new revelations useless. And as the Gospels thus begin with revelations, so they close with declarations that revelation should continue. For in His farewell address to His disciples, Christ says: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come (John 16: 12, 13)." Christ here expressly states that His ministry did not complete God's revelations. There were many other things to learn than those which He had communicated, and among these were also "things to come," all of which the Spirit should communicate to the Twelve. Revelation, then, was not to be done away with at the departure of our Lord. The last verse of the fourth Gospel, the last verse ever written in our New Testament, states, moreover, that the things recorded in the Gospels are only a small fragment of all that could be written concerning the works of Christ. These works and the lessons to be conveyed were no doubt necessary, and yet we have no record of them. The Gospels, therefore, openly admit that they are not intended to be a complete record of all that is necessary for man to know. They claim to be written for the purpose of directing men's hearts to Jesus (John xx, 31), and point out His promise to continue the revelation of truth through the Spirit. This is the important testimony of the Gospels. All the works and the teachings of Christ were not enough for the guidance of the first Christians. They needed and were promised further revelation. To us has come a record not of all of Christ's teachings, but only of a very few, merely a frag-

ment. If all the teachings of Christ given during His ministry upon the earth were not sufficient for the guidance of the Apostles, how much less can the Gospels, which contain only a small part of those teachings, be sufficient for other men? The thought is as irrational as it is without foundation in the Word of God.

#### THE REMAINING BOOKS.

The only question now remains: Do the Acts of the Apostles and their Epistles supply us with all the teachings that the Spirit of Truth, according to our Savior's promise, was to reveal to the Apostles, and which were necessary for their guidance? If not, continuous revelation will be just as necessary after the New Testament dispensation as it was after the Mosaic economy.

The Book called the Acts of the Apostles is written by Luke and may be considered as a continuation of his Gospel. In this book we can trace the growth of Christian churches during the greater part of the past century—after Christ. It covers the period from the time of the crucifixion to the second year of the first imprisonment of Paul in Rome, A. D. 63, and there it breaks off even without recording the issue of the trial. The book may be divided in two parts. The first twelve chapters describe the growth of the Church of Christ among the Jews in Palestine, chiefly through the labors of Peter. The last sixteen chapters treat of the spread of the Gospel among other nations, chiefly through the labors of Paul. Of the works of the rest of the Apostles we have no account.

Tradition has it, that Matthew suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia; Philip in Phrygia; Thomas in India, and so on. But of their work for the promulgating the Gospel in the different parts of the world we have no records. What they taught, what difficulties they encountered, how they preached, suffered and endured may be conjectured. But it has not reached us in any historical record.

Nor is the Acts of the Apostles a complete record of the works of the two servants of God, whose ardent labors are noticed. It is as fragmentary as are the Gospels. Many important transactions, referred to elsewhere, are omitted. There is no account whatever of the branch in Jerusalem after the imprisonment and deliverance of Peter. Nothing is told of the introduction of the Gospel in Rome, the capital of the world at the time. Nor does it say anything of Paul's many voyages, which he incidentally mentions (2 Cor., xi: 25).

Considering all this, it seems as if the Spirit of Truth had been anxious to guard against the impression that this book was intended to conclude God's revelations to mankind.

Let us consider the facts. Christ had promised to send the Spirit of Truth to His chosen twelve. What this Spirit was to reveal was, of course, as essential and necessary to salvation as anything that our Savior had revealed Himself. But of all this that the Spirit, according to

the promise, has revealed to the twelve, only a small part has been recorded. How can this small part be sufficient to us, since it was not sufficient to the first Christians?

But, besides this, the Book of the Acts shows plainly the necessity of continuous revelation; for wherever the Gospel is being accepted, the gift of receiving revelation is being imparted through faith. Peter, in his first sermon, declares that the time has now come when the Spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh. Prophecy, visions, dreams were to attend the believers (Acts ii: 17, 18); and, accordingly, whenever the Gospel is preached and believed, these manifestations follow. The heavens are opened to Stephen, and he is permitted to see the Son of God on the right hand of the Father (Acts vi: 55, 56); an angel of the Lord appears and directs Philip (Acts viii: 26); Christ appears to Saul (Acts ix: 3-6); through the vision of an angel Cornelius is led to send for Peter, and he receives supernatural gifts (Acts x: 1-49); an angel delivers Peter from prison (Acts xii: 7, 8); the Holy Ghost reveals to the brethren in Antioch that they should send Paul and Barnabas on a mission (Acts xiii: 1-4); through the Spirit, the Apostles and elders are able to settle the dispute about the doctrine of circumcision (Acts xv, 1-31); twelve men in Ephesus receive the Holy Ghost through the administration of Paul and prophecy, and speak in tongues (Acts xix, 1-7). Wherever the Gospel message is delivered and believed in Palestine, in Greece, in Asia Minor, the results are the same. The Holy Ghost is given, and His presence is manifest through these gifts.

The Acts of the Apostles has taught us this important lesson—that the gift of receiving revelations was not confined to the Twelve nor was the gift to cease with them. The gift itself was inseparable from the Gospel. Where there is no Gospel there are no revelations, but where the true Gospel of Jesus Christ is, there is revelation also. The promise of receiving the Holy Ghost, the promised Spirit of Truth that was to lead into all truth and to reveal things to come, is a universal promise: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts ii, 39).

The epistles of the Apostles confirm most emphatically the necessity of constant revelations from God. The Apostolic churches could not do without such revelations. Hence the necessity of the churches communicating with the Apostles, and the Apostles writing their epistles, embodying the will of God.

For instance, an error arises, as was the case in Colossæ. Paul was at the time in Rome, but the Church in Colossæ sent a special messenger to Paul, viz., Epaphras, who explained the situation to the Apostle and caused the letter the Colossians to be written as a refutation of that particular error. The Scriptures were not sufficient for the guidance of the Colossians. The new emergency required a new