

manded, and it stood fast. But alas! when He began to operate in the world of fallen and rebellious human beings, He found His testimony ridiculed and rejected by them. He found His preacher, Noah, despised and persecuted of men. When He operated, later on, in the Jewish nation, He encountered the same recalcitrance; like the Son of God, He came unto His own and His own received Him not. As Stephen said to the mob that was bent on killing him, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51). So did the antediluvian world which sank to destruction under the waters of the Flood. So did ancient Israel, destroyed by storm and fire, and scattered to the ends of the earth. So do thousands, yea millions, of people in our day resist, reject and neglect the testimony of the Spirit. So do thousands of professing Christians, lukewarm, form-loving, ritual-following, indifferent, proud and cold, spineless and worldly, grieve the Holy Spirit of God. So do many others who make the start in the Christian life but soon drift back into the world, do despite unto the Spirit of grace and count the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing! Preoccupied as they are with the things of this present world, the things of time and sense, they are totally unmindful of the awful truth that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).

5. The Spirit and the Fathers of the Hebrew People

Traditionally, the fathers of the Hebrew People were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (cf. Matt. 8:11). To these three, however, the name of Joseph should be added, whose life-story takes up the last fourteen chapters of the book of Genesis.

On examination we find that God Himself, in a vision to Abimelech, King of Gerar, alluded to Abraham as a prophet: "Now therefore restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live" (Gen. 20:7; cf. 1 Sam. 7:5, Job 42:8). Being a prophet, Abraham was in a special sense a "man of the Spirit." This truth is further corroborated by the numerous instances in Scripture in which God is represented as having communicated with him personally (cf. Gen. 12:1-3, 13:14-17, 15:1-21, 17:1-21, 22:1ff., 22:15-18, etc.).

Again, that particular section of the Abrahamic Promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18), contained, according to the Apostle Paul, (1) the promise of the Messiah (Gal. 3:16—"Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ"; cf. Gen. 12:3, Acts 3:25, Heb. 2:14-16); and (2) the promise of the Spirit (Gal. 3:14—"that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith"). It should be noted, too, that the Abrahamic Promise was repeated later, in its various details, both to Isaac (Gen. 26:1-5) and to Jacob (Gen. 28:13-16, 35:9-15).

Again, the patriarch Jacob, on his death-bed, gave utterance to a series of predictions outlining in detail the fortunes of the various tribes that were to spring from his loins. These predictions are recorded in the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis. Verse 10 of this chapter is clearly Messianic in import: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be." Here is indicated the integrity of the tribe of Judah down to the time of the appearance in the world of Shiloh, the Prince of Peace. Jesus Himself was the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. 5:5). Cf. Isa. 9:6—"For unto us a child is born, and unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Thus we must conclude that the predictions of Jacob in his dying hours were all inspired by the Spirit of God.

The gifts of prophecy and interpretation of dreams which attached to Joseph must likewise have been special endowments of the Spirit of God. Pharaoh, recognizing the superhuman origin of these gifts, said: "Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the spirit of God is?"—thus giving expression to a truth, no doubt, of far greater import than he himself realized. Consider also in this connection Heb. 11:20-22: "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh, made mention

of the departure of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." This last sentence harks back to the closing verses of Genesis, 50:24-26: "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die; but God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from Egypt. So Joseph, died, being a hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt." Thus Joseph, by inspiration, foresaw the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, and gave commandment concerning the final disposition of his earthly remains. And so we read that when the children of Israel went up armed out of the land of Egypt, under Moses, they took the bones of Joseph along with them (Exo. 13:19). These various passages all indicate that the "founding fathers" of Israel were men of the Spirit of God.

"In the time of Abraham," writes W. S. Hutchings, "Augustine has noticed a distinct advance in the Spirit's operations; His workings began to be linked with a chosen family, which was, henceforth, to be the recipient of a series of blessings and manifestations. Hitherto, the Spirit had been striving with individuals separately, but now there was to be an order, and locality, for His communications. His work would be, so to speak, condensed and centralized. God in His great condescension entered into covenant with man. Abraham, therefore, has been called 'the founder of the city of God,' implying by that term that the good Spirit had a new hold upon our race after his time, by having a more definite seat of His operations in his family, and binding its members more closely to God and to one another in God. This . . . was 'the first historical commencement of a religious community and worship'."¹ To this well-stated resume it should be added that from the time of Abraham on, the activity of the Spirit becomes more and more prominent with every advance in the unfolding of the Plan of Redemption, until it reaches its height under the Old Covenant in the ministry of the Hebrew Prophets, in that of John the Baptizer, and finally in the incarnate ministry of the Messiah Himself.

1. W. S. Hutchings, *The Person and Work of the Holy Ghost*, 61-62.