

TONGUE OF FIRE

by William Arthur

Arthur's classic work on the power of the Holy Spirit in preaching and Christian witness, drawing from the Pentecost narrative to show how Spirit-empowered speech transforms individuals and communities. An influential text in Methodist and holiness circles.

7 Chapters

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1. The Promise of a Baptism of Fire

THE TONGUE OF FIRE by Rev. William Arthur

1858

CHAPTER I. THE PROMISE OF A BAPTISM OF FIRE WHEN John the Baptist was going round Judea, shaking the hearts of the people with a call to repent, they said: "Surely this must be the Messiah for whom we have waited so long." "No," said the strong-spoken man, "I am not the Christ (John 1:20); but One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Luke 3:16) This last expression might have conveyed some idea of material burning to any people but Jews; but in their minds it would awaken other thoughts. It would recall the scenes when their father Abraham asked Him who promised that he should inherit the land wherein he was a stranger: "Lord, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" The answer came thus: He was standing under the open sky at night, watching by cloven sacrifices, when "behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces" of the victims. (Genesis 15:17) It would recall the fire which Moses saw in the bush, which shone and awed and hallowed even the wilderness, but did not consume; the fire which came in the day of Israel's deliverance, as a light on their way, and continued with them throughout the desert journey; the fire which descended on the tabernacle in the day in which it was reared up, and abode upon it continually, which shone in the Shekinah, which touched the lips of Isaiah, which flamed in the visions of Ezekiel, and which was yet again promised to Zion, not only in her public but in her family shrines, when "the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon all her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night." In the promise of a baptism of fire they would at once recognize the approach of new manifestations of the power and presence of God; for that was ever the purport of this appearance in "the days of the right hand of the Most High."

Among the multitude who flocked to John came one strange Man, whom he did not altogether know; yet he knew that he was full of grace and wisdom, and in favor with God and man. He felt that himself rather needed to be baptized of one so pure than to baptize him; but he waived his feeling, and fulfilled his ministry. As they returned from the water side, the heavens opened; a bodily shape, as of a dove, came down and rested on the stranger. At the same time a voice from the excellent glory said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him."

John said: "I knew him not; but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Therefore, when he saw him walking, he pointed his own disciples to him, and said that this was He. They heard the word and pondered. The next day again John, seeing him at a distance, said: "Behold the Lamb of God!" Now, two of his followers went after the stranger, to seek at his hand the baptism which John could not give--the baptism of fire. They were joined by others. For months, for years, they companied with him. They saw his life--a life as of the Only Begotten Son of God. They heard his words--such words as "never man spake." They saw

his works--signs and wonders and great miracles, before all the people. Yet they received not the baptism of fire!

He began to speak frequently of his departure from them, but his mode of describing it was strange. He was to leave them, and yet not to forsake them; to go away, and yet to be with them; to go, and yet to come to them. They were to be deprived of him, their Head, yet orphans they should not be. Another was to come, yet not another--a Comforter from the Father, from himself, whom, not as in his case, the world could neither know nor see, but whom they should know, though they could not see. (John 14:17) His own presence with them was a privilege which no tongue could worthily tell. Blessed were their eyes for what they saw and their ears for what they heard. Better still than even this was to be the presence of the Holy Ghost, who would follow him as he had followed John.

"I tell you the truth," he said when about to utter what was hard to believe; "I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away." How could it be expedient? Would they not be losers to an extent which no man could reckon? The light of his countenance, the blessing of his words, the purity of his presence, the influence of his example--all to be removed. And this expedient for them! "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." Well, but would they not be better with himself than with the Comforter? No; just the contrary. They would be better with the Comforter. He would lead them into all truth; whereas now they are constantly misapplying the plain words of Christ. He would bring all things to their remembrance; whereas now they often forget in a day or two the most remarkable teaching, or the most amazing miracles. He would take the things of Christ, the things of the Father, and reveal them unto them; whereas now they constantly misapprehended his relation to the Father, and that of the Father to him--misapprehended his person, his mission, and his kingdom. Again, he would convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come; and this is not as one teacher limited by a local personality, but as a Spirit diffused abroad throughout the earth. And he would abide with them forever, not for "a little while." Whatever, therefore, Christ's personal presence and teaching had been to them, the presence of the Spirit would be more.

Having thus strongly preoccupied their minds with the hope of a greater joy than even his own countenance, the Master laid down his life. Stunned, dispersed, and desolate, they felt themselves orphans indeed. Their Master ignominiously executed, and neither the word of John nor his own word fulfilled--no Comforter, no baptism, no fire! Soon he reappeared, and, as they were met together for the first time since his death, once more stood in the midst of them. He breathed upon them, and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." With that word, doubtless, both peace and power were given; yet it was not the baptism of fire. During forty days he conversed with them on the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, assigning to them the work of proclaiming and establishing that kingdom to the ends of the earth. One injunction, however, he laid upon them which seemed to defer the effect of others: they were to go into all the world, yet not at once, or unconditionally. "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem till ye be indued with power from on high." Apparently more ready to interpret "power" as referring to the hopes of their nation than to the kingdom of grace, they asked: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6)

He had said nothing of a kingdom for Israel, or in Israel. His speech had been on a higher theme, and of a wider field--namely, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And we are witnesses of these things." Such, in various forms, are the words we find him uttering concerning his kingdom during these forty days. When, therefore, they asked if he would at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel, he shortly turned aside their curiosity. What the Father's designs were as to Israel nationally, what the times when they might again be a kingdom, were points not for them. They had better work, and nearer at hand. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." (Acts 1:7) "But," he continued, passing at once from curious questions about the future of Israel, and unfulfilled prophecy, to his own grand kingdom, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." What power? of princes or magistrates? Nay, quite another power, for an unearthly work: "And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." In these words he traces the circles in which Christian sympathy and activity should ever run: First, Jerusalem, their chief city; next, Judea, their native land; then Samaria, a neighboring country, inhabited by a race nationally detested by their countrymen; and finally, "the uttermost part of the earth." They were neither to seek distant spheres first nor to confine themselves always at home, but to carry the gospel into all the world as each country could be reached. This was what he had before placed in their view--the filling all the earth with the news of grace, news that repentance and pardon were opened to men by the power of his atonement. We have no hint that he ever spake, during the forty days, of other kingdom, royalty, or reign. Not to rule over cities, not to speculate on the designs of the Father and the destinies of the Jew, but to go into the whole world, tell every creature the story of Christ, was to be their princely work. To found a kingdom not over men's persons, but "within" their souls; a kingdom not of provinces, but of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"; a kingdom to be spread not by the arms of a second Joshua, but by the "witness" of the human voice; a kingdom the power of which would not lie in force or policy, or signs observed in heaven, but in a spiritual power imparted by the Holy Ghost and operating in superhuman utterance of heavenly truth--this was their embassy. For this were they to be indued with power from on high. But when was this power, so long spoken of, to come? Would John's word ever be fulfilled? The Master has not forgotten it. "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." At length the promise is brought to a point, and its fulfillment near.

Already he had proclaimed himself King, and marked out the ministers and army, the weapon, the extent, the badge of citizenship, the statute law, the royal glory, and the duration of his kingdom. With his disciples around him, standing on a mountain top, heaven above and earth below, he thus proclaimed his kingdom: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth": here was the King. "Go": here were the ministers and army, an embassy of peace. "Teach": here the weapon, the word of God. "All nations": here the extent. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost": here the badge of citizenship. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you": here the statute law. "And, lo, I am with you": here the royal presence and glory of the kingdom. "Alway, unto the end of the world": here its duration. (Matthew 28:19-20) Now again he is rising a hill, conversing with those who had heard this proclamation as to their part in the establishment of the kingdom. He has clearly promised that, before many days, the long-looked-for baptism of fire will come. That implies that before many days he will depart; for he ever said that he must first ascend. He has answered, or rather rebuked, their curious inquiry

as to Israel; has turned their thoughts again to the descent of the Spirit; and is just telling them that, indued with this new power, they shall bear witness to his glory not only at home but abroad. "To the uttermost part of the earth" is the last word on his lips (Acts 1:8)--a startling word for his peasant auditors, accustomed to limit their range of thought within the Holy Land. But he had already said that all power was given to him "in heaven and in earth." Did not the faith of some disciple reel under the weight of these words?

"In Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth!" This word is on his lips; they are steadily watching him; he lifts his hands, he pronounces his blessing; and in the act (Luke 24:50), lo, his body, which they know "has flesh and bones" like their own, begins to rise! No wing, no hand, no chariot of fire! Upward it moves by its own power; and that single action commands the homage of earth; for our globe has no law so universal and irreversible as that whereby it binds down all ponderous bodies to its surface. Here this law gives way, and thereby the whole mass of the globe yields to the power of Christ. This placid movement of that body, up from the surface of earth into the heights of the sky, is an open act of sovereignty over the highest physical law; whereby Christ "manifested forth his glory," as Lord and Maker of all physical laws. His proclamation of kingship is thus acknowledged by earth with its highest homage. Now the heaven adds its homage, stoops in luminous cloud, and robes him for his enthronement. The everlasting doors lift up their heads. The King of Glory enters in! The First Begotten from the dead, the Prince of the kings of the earth, sits down with the Father on his throne; and from him receives the word: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom!" And again: "Let all the angels of God worship him." Within the veil they worship the Lamb; and down they speed to his followers, and tell them that they need not gaze. As they have seen him go, so shall they see him come, even in the clouds, to judge that world, of which and of its princes he is King. Thus triply is his kingship owned. Earth permits him to rise, heaven bows, the angels add their testimony. All things own him. Unbelief is now impossible. Doubt vanishes away. His word shall not pass unfulfilled. The baptism of fire is at hand.

2. The Waiting for the Fulfillment

CHAPTER II. THE WAITING FOR THE FULFILLMENT.

IT is on Thursday, probably in the evening, that the disciples return to Jerusalem. Their Master is no more at their head--indeed, no more on earth; and as yet his great promise is unfulfilled. But the scene of the ascension is in their eye; the voice of the angels in their ear. Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords. The Comforter is coming "not many days hence." Not with doubting or weeping do they enter the city, but with "great joy"--the joy of a triumph already sealed, and of hope foreseeing triumphs to come. Most probably that joy carries their first steps to the temple. (Luke 24:53) Oft had they entered it with him, but never so triumphantly as now. There they are, not mourning the absence of their Master, but "praising and blessing God." Thence they go to "an upper room." We know not in what street, or on what site; but there "abode" a few men whose names were not then great, but whose names will nevermore pass from the memory of mankind. With them abode also a few women, who had loved their Lord; and for the last time "Mary the mother of Jesus" is named as one of the little company. Men and women, they now began to pray, and they "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" for the baptism of fire. Did they expect to receive it that very night? This we know not; but we do know that then opened a new era in the intercourse of man with heaven. As they began to pray, how would they find all their conceptions of the Majesty on high changed! It no longer spread before and beyond the soul's eyesight, as an unvaried infinity of glory incomprehensible. The glory was brighter, the incomprehensibility remained; but the infinity had now received a center. Every beam of the glory converged toward the person of "God manifest in the flesh," now "received up into heaven": the glory not dissolving the person in its own tide, the person not dimming the glory by any shade, though appearing through it as the sun's body through the light. Perhaps, indeed, the change was such, to their view, as would have struck the eye of an observer of nature, had one lived on our planet at the time when the sun was first set in the firmament. The light which before had been a wide and level mystery now had to his eye a law, a center, and a spring. The indistinct view of a material form amid the seemingly spiritual glory gave the feeling that somebody akin to our own globe lay at the center of illumination. This body was not the cause of the light, not even of the same nature; but around the body the "exceeding weight of glory" seemed to hang.

Oh, to feel as felt that heart which first discerned human nature in the person of Him who had been "so marred," set down "on the right hand of the Majesty on high. The glory of the Father encompassing a human form, and beaming from a human brow! "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I," was the word of Jesus. Now that they had seen him pass within the veil--seen the ushering angels attend his entrance, and heard the music of their voices--they would not feel as if he had forsaken them, but as they had often felt when the high priest passed from their view into the holiest, bearing the blood of atonement, to stand before the Presence--"he is out of sight, but there before the Lord." The first thought would be one of joy for him. Peter, how did thy breast heave when first thou didst behold, by faith clear as sight, that countenance which had looked round upon thee from the bar, now

looking down upon thee from the high and lofty throne! Mary Magdalene, who was bent under the sevenfold power of the devil when first that face beamed on thee; who didst fall at his feet when, just arisen from the dead, he first appeared to thee, what was the flow of thy tears, what the odor of thy joy, when the full truth burst on thy view, that he had "overcome, and was set down with the Father on his throne"! And thou, John, what felt thy bosom when he, on whose bosom thine own head had leaned, appeared to thy mind no more with such as thee, but, as "in the beginning, with God"? And thou, too, Mary the blessed, through whose soul the sword had gone, how did thy "soul magnify the Lord"; how did thy "spirit rejoice in God thy Saviour," when thy meek eye saw the infinite accomplishment of Gabriel's word, He shall be great!

Mingling with this first joy for the Master's exaltation, and presently rising to the surface and overspreading all their emotions, would be the feeling: "He has entered for us within the veil! He bears our names upon his heart for a memorial before the Lord! He maketh intercession for us!" Tush! which of the Twelve is it that starts up as if a spirit had entered him, and, pointing upward, says to the brethren: "Let us ask the Father in his name! He said to us, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.'" (John 16:23-24) The angels had often sung together when the prayer of repenting sinners was heard on high. Now, for the first time, they hear prayers from human lips rising to the throne authorized and accredited by the name of the Only Begotten of the Father. That name has just been set "above every name"; and as it echoes through the host above, with the solemn joy of a hundred believing voices, "things in heaven" bow. Be man ever so unworthy, "worthy is the Lamb"; and his name covers with justice every request to which it is set by his authority. What must have been that moment for the saints in paradise, who had seen the Saviour afar off, but never known the joy of praying directly in his name! Father Abraham had "rejoiced to see his day; and he saw it and was glad." What would be his gladness now, that earth and heaven were rejoicing in his name! David, to whom he was at once Lord and Son, what would be "the things" which in that wonderful moment his tongue would speak "touching the King"? From the hour that sin entered into the world, the Just One had never given man audience on terms fit only for the innocent. An upright inferior may approach Majesty, not without reverence, but without shame or atonement. The admission of a criminal on the same footing would be wrong. Right in our governments is the imperfect reflection of a perfect right. Had the favor of the Almighty crossed the line which divides innocence from guilt and smiled upon the latter, that smile would have been a scathing flash, wherein all morals would have blackened. Sinful man had not been hopelessly banished from the presence of God; but he had ever been taught to come displaying a sign of wrath, of death, which is the wages of sin; thus declaring to the universe that he appealed not to a justice which had never been offended, but to a justice which had been satisfied. The altar had been the patriarch's place of prayer. The temple, where was the perpetual offering, had been the center to which every praying Israelite turned. To approach the Eternal Godhead as if no evil had been done, and no stroke merited, was never yet the privilege of a creature who had done wrong. It was wonderful, yea, mysterious, that such could be allowed to approach at all; but the Lord would ever justify his permission by demanding clear and express reference to that propitiation which he has set forth to declare his own righteousness, in that marvelous act of lifting the guilty into the mansions of the good.

How great the transition from these symbols of the atonement to the full view of its reality! During the forty days, Jesus had opened their understanding, pointed out to them the scriptures which bore upon his death, and showed its connection with remission of sins for mankind. They now looked no more to temple or to altar. They had before them the true sacrifice completed. He had "purged their sins," and, in the same body wherein he had done so, was standing before the Father.

He had given them authority to use his name. With that name their petitions carried the assent of all the rational and moral creation. The Eternal Father, in holding communion with beings who had done wrong, exposed no sinless being to doubts as to whether right and wrong were equal. He had "made peace through" Christ's "blood"; had thus "reconciled all things to himself"--to himself in the new and mysterious proceeding of government, whereby the doers of wrong were spared the effects of wrongdoing. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." (Colossians 1:19-20) So that creatures "in heaven," all whose joy depended on their never doing wrong, had no murmur to raise, and no temptation to undergo, when they saw creatures "on earth," who had followed ways which would make any world sorrowful, received into the arms of eternal mercy. The guilty he reconciled by forgiving their sin and recovering their hearts; and the innocent he reconciled to see offenders exalted, by "setting forth," so conspicuously that all angels desired to look into it, "a propitiation," which fully "declared his righteousness," his strict care of right--which magnified law, magnified holiness, magnified obedience, and, in the act of saving the guilty, magnified beyond all previous conception the heinousness of guilt. What sense of the distinction between right and wrong could have been maintained among innocent creatures, had they seen transgressors raised to favor and honor without atonement?

Oh, the joy of that first hour of praying in the name of Christ! Was not Martha there? As she met the Master on that mournful day, when Lazarus lay in the tomb, though despairing, she said: "But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." If such was her confidence then, what would be her confidence now--he asking for her, and she asking in his name! How the souls of the disciples, following him above the sky, would soar, with a new wing, a new eye, and a new song! What simple and glowing collects would they be which were uttered then! What words of joy and supplication would he pour forth who first bethought him of putting the Lord in remembrance of his own promises! What short and burning petitions would go up from the lips which first quoted, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he shall give it you!" How would he plead who first remembered, "Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you!" How would tones of desire and triumph mingle in the first repetition of, "All things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive"! None of their prayers are recorded. We have ancient collects, and beautiful they are; but none of these most ancient are preserved. The Spirit has not seen it good to hand down the strong and tender collects of these ten, or of the following days. Then surely it is unlawful to impose good forms of prayer upon all men because ancient saints wrote them.

He who will never use a form in public prayer, casts away the wisdom of the past. He who will use only forms, casts away the hope of utterance to be given by the Spirit at present, and even shuts up the future in the stiff hand of the past. Whatever Church forbids a Christian congregation, no

matter what may be their fears, troubles, joys, or special and pressing need, ever to send up prayer to God, except in words framed by other men in other ages, uses an authority which was never delegated. To object to all forms is narrowness. To doom a Christian temple to be a place wherein a simple and impromptu cry may never arise to heaven, is superstition. Does any one of the hundred and twenty, even in paradise, up to this moment forget the hour of prayer that Thursday night, after they had returned from Olivet? The Friday morning dawns. It was on Friday the Lord had died. Would he not send his promised substitute to-day? Oh, how his cross would all day long stand before the eye of every disciple! Now came back all his words about the death "which he should accomplish"; from the night when he told Nicodemus that, as the serpent had been lifted up, so must he be, up to the night in which he said, "The hour is come"--words dark at that time, but pointed to-day as the steel of arrows. What has been mystery was mystery no longer. Now the only mystery was, "What manner of love!" Was it on that day that John's fiery heart, the heart which had rebuked the man who followed not them, which wished to burn the inhospitable villagers, and to be, with his brother, head of all--was it then this heart fully embraced the meaning of the agony witnessed by him so close at hand, as compared with others, and written upon it forever? Was it then it first saw all the import of the words, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"? and that the "son of thunder" was transformed into the child of charity?

Never before had the thought of man alternated between two such scenes as those which divided the eye of every soul in that praying company: a cross, a drooping head, hands bleeding, feet bleeding, heaven black, thieves on either side, gibes below; and a preternatural sorrow on the soul of the sufferer, which cast over the whole an infinite dreadfulness. On this the eye looks one moment, and weeps. Then a throne, high and lifted up: the glory of the Lord; angels bowing, angels singing, saints with palm and harp and voice acclaiming; and in the center of all might, majesty, and dominion, the crucified body, living, but with its wounds "as slain." On this the same eye looks, and weeps again. Oh, for the feeling of that day!

Yet the Friday wears away, and no "baptism of fire!" The Saturday sets in: its hours are filled up as before with prayer; but no answer. And now dawns the first day of the week, the day whereon he rose, the first Lord's day he had passed on his throne of glory. How did they spend that day? Surely they would fully expect that the blessing they sought would be delayed no longer. He said: "Not many days." This was the fourth day; it must come to-day! But the evening steals on, and all their prayers might have risen into a heaven that could not hear. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday pass. Their faith does not fail; still in the temple "praising and blessing God," or in the upper room in "prayer and supplication," they continue of one accord. Though he tarry, yet will they wait for him. This is waiting. Some speak of waiting for salvation as if it meant making ourselves at ease, and dismissing both effort and anxiety. Who so waits for any person or any event? When waiting, your mind is set on a certain point; you can give yourself to nothing else. You are looking forward, and preparing: every moment of delay increases the sensitiveness of our mind as to that one thing. A servant waiting for his master, a wife waiting for the footstep of her husband, a mother waiting for her expected boy, a merchant waiting for his richly laden ship, a sailor waiting for the sight of land, a monarch waiting for tidings of the battle all these are cases wherein the mind is set on one object, and cannot easily give attention to another.

"To-morrow will be Thursday, a full week from the ascension: that will be the day; the term of the promise will not extend farther. To-morrow the Comforter will come; to-morrow we shall be baptized with fire, and fitted to do the works our Master did, 'yea, greater works than these.'" So they would probably settle it in their mind. The Thursday finds them, as before, "of one accord in one place"; no Thomas absent through unbelief. How the scene of that day week would return to their view! How they would over and over again in mind repeat the walk from Jerusalem to Olivet; each recalling what he said to the Master, and what the Master said to him; each thinking he had got such a look as he never got before, and as he should not forget so long as he lived! How they would repeat the last words, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you"! In the repetition new faith would kindle. "Yes, we shall: let us wait on; we shall 'be indued with power from on high.'" Then another would repeat: "And ye shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth." This was vast language for them, whose thoughts were wont to move only in the sphere of Palestine. Probably they did not so much weigh the import of the terms as look at the main promise. They should be indued with the power of the Holy Ghost--that power which had made psalmists and prophets; had rendered the words of Elijah stronger than the decrees of Ahab, the words of Elisha stronger than the armies of Syria, the words of Isaiah as coals from the altar, and the words of Daniel mightier than the spirit of a king and "a thousand of his captains." Baptized with the same Spirit, they were to proclaim what these foretold, but never saw: the Child born, the Son given; the Prince cut off for sin, but not his own; the Lamb on whom were laid the iniquities of all. All this they had seen fulfilled in the person of their glorious Lord. All this they had heard explained by his own lips before and after his death. They were to go and prove to others, as he had proved to them, that "thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise again the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Here again they encountered the intimation that their message was for all, and their testimony to be borne to the uttermost parts of the earth. Yet still it seems that not the sphere, but the purport, of their commission now occupied their mind. They were to go, and, as he had preached, so would they, far and wide, in cities and villages. In what tones would they tell the people that as he used to say to those who came to him, "Be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee," so would he now say from heaven to all who lifted an eye to him! But the day wears on, and no blessing. Is not the delay long? "Not many days!" Does the promise hold good? They must have felt disappointed as the evening fell, and no sign of an answer to their oft-repeated prayer. Now is the hour of trial. Will their faith fail? Will some begin to forsake the meetings which bring not the baptism they seek? Will some stay at home, or "go a-fishing," saying that they will wait the Lord's time, and not be unwarrantably anxious about what, after all, does not depend on them, but on the Lord? Will no one say: "We have done our duty, and must leave results; we cannot command the fulfillment of the promise; we have asked for it, asked sincerely, fervently, repeatedly; we can do no more"?

Or, what is equally probable, will they begin to find out that the cause why they remain unblessed, and yet "orphans," lies in the unfaithfulness of their companions? Happily, the spirit of faith and love abides upon them. John does not turn upon Peter and say: "It is your fault; for you denied the Master." Philip does not turn to John and say: "It is your fault; for you and James wanted to lord it over us all." Andrew does not turn to John and say: "It is your fault; for you would not believe, even when we had declared it to you." The Seventy do not say: "It is the fault of the Twelve; for, after the

Lord had lifted them above us all, one of them sold him, another denied him, and a third disbelieved him." The Marys do not say: "It is the fault of the whole company, a cold and unfaithful company, professing to love the Master to his face; but the moment he fell into the hands of his enemies, ye all forsook him and fled!"

Well did they know that they had been slow of heart; been unworthy of such a Teacher; often grieved him, and made him ask: "How long shall I be with you?" John would never forget the rebuke, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Peter would never forget, the third time, "Lovest thou me?" Philip would never forget, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" And surely Thomas would never forget, "Be not faithless, but believing."

Yet they all knew he had not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. His own lips had said: "He that is whole hath no need of a physician, but he that is sick." Had he not taken to his bosom the very head whose heats of ambition and of vindictiveness he had rebuked? Had he not said to Peter, "Feed my lambs"? Had he not said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy hand"? His promise was not made because they were a Church without spot or wrinkle; but because they were feeble, and, deprived of his own presence, would be orphans indeed, did no other power cover them. He knew every fault with which either of them could charge the others; yet the promise had passed his lips, and the fire would fall even on them, unworthy as they were. Happy for them that none fancied he could fix upon others the cause of their unanswered prayers! The Thursday is gone--eight days. The Friday and the Saturday follow it, marked by the same persistency in union, in praise, in prayer, and by the same absence of encouragement. Ten day's gone! The promise, "Not many days," is all but broken.

Peter was always warm and earnest. A thought of his had hardly time to become a thought before it turned into either word or action. When once his mind had embraced the glorious idea of standing up before the world a witness for his ascended Master, it would seem as if the whole plan was to be carried out in a day. One cannot help imagining how he bore the restraint; of the ten days--the days of prayer, of belief, of waiting --in which they were not permitted to begin their work.

"Strange," we almost hear him say, "Strange! The Lord has died that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations. He has finished the work, risen from the dead, and led captivity captive. The heavens have received him. The angels proclaim him. Us he took from our homes. How he taught and trained and practiced us--all, as we now see, for this work of proclaiming his love and the pardon it brings to all mankind! Here we are, unfitted for every other calling. His commission is to us as a prophet's call, as a king's anointing. He said: 'Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' We want to go. Men stand in need; they are dying daily, dying in unbelief. Why does he not permit us to go? Why is the first command so long suspended by the other--'Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be indued with power from on high'? We have tarried ten days. Why does our Master delay? The world needs the sound of his gospel; we are waiting to bear it forth. He is exalted at God's right hand, and all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth; yet does he look down upon the world sleeping a sleep unto death, and upon us waiting to blow the trumpet! Is not his instruction, his commission, enough? We are ordained, after much teaching: may we not go? No; we must abide by his word: 'Tarry until ye be indued with power from on high.'" The final proof given by Peter that he was waiting indeed, making all preparations for the event, was in calling upon his brethren to fill up the number of the

apostles. One had fallen. His place was vacant; and another was to take his "bishopric." Peter concluded that they were to fill up this vacancy, and called upon the company to select two men. No one objected that it remained to be seen whether they should be indued with power or not. All acted as feeling the certainty that the Holy Spirit was about to come, and the apostolic commission to be fulfilled to the ends of the earth.

3. The Fulfillment of the Promise

CHAPTER III. THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE.

There was a day when death had struck a woeful stroke, and raised a nation's wail. "There was a great cry in the land of Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead." That same day the Lord, by the sprinkling of a pure lamb's blood, averted death from the doors of Israel, and then led them away from yoke and taskmaster toward the goodly land. Fifty days afterwards they reached the Mount of God, where he manifested himself in the thunder of his power with flame and trumpet and a voice, whereat all the tribes did tremble. Then was the new dispensation formally inaugurated with the voice and the flame; its covenant sealed by sprinkling of blood, and its privileges opened to the sprinkled by the vision of glory, when the elders "saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness." (Exodus 24:10) This time of note was come; the fifty days were elapsed from the time when the Lamb was slain, and captivity broken. Forty days he had been with them after his resurrection; the rest he had passed within the veil. And was it not possible that in saying, "Not many days," he pointed them forward to the day which commemorated the opening of the new dispensation of God to Israel by the hand of his servant Moses? Was it not probable that the glorious dispensation of his Son would be opened at this time? Unbelief would have long ago ceased to expect; but faith would probably renew its anticipations, and look to this day. On the morning of the resurrection, some--the women--were early at the tomb; but the others were sauntering into the country, or here and there, with nothing to wait for, as they thought; yet partly expecting something to come to their ears. Even late in the day, when they did meet to hear what some had seen and heard, Thomas was away. Now, however, after ten days have elapsed, their patience is not exhausted. They do expect, and therefore will not cease to wait. They have no attention for anything else. The kingdom of God is at hand. Did he not say, "Not many days"? Ten are gone; and the conclusion is not that of servants too idle to wait: "Our Lord delayeth his coming; we may as well sit still. He will come in his own good time." That is not waiting; it is idling. They said in their believing hearts: "Ten days are gone; therefore the day of our Lord draweth nigh. This is the day of Pentecost; and as the fire appeared on Sinai, in the presence of our fathers, when God made his covenant by Moses, it may be that to-day he will seal his covenant by the hand of the Prophet whom Moses foresaw, baptizing us with fire, according to the word wherein he hath made his servants to hope." No Thomas is absent now! Not one heart has failed! "They are all in one place." No discord or doubt have they permitted to arise. "They are all with one accord in one place." Nor are they slow or late. We are not told at what hour they met, but it must have been very early; for after they had received the baptism, and filled all Jerusalem with the noise of their new powers, Peter reminded the multitude, who came together, that it was only the third hour of the day--nine o'clock in the morning.

Early, then, on the second Lord's day after the ascension, is the entire company met, with one heart, to renew their oft-repeated prayer. We cannot go to the house where was that upper room, nor to the site where it stood. These points are left unnoticed, after the mode of Christianity, which

is in nothing a religion of circumstances, in everything a religion of principles. We know not how long they had that morning urged their prayer, nor whose voice was then crying to Him who had promised, nor what word of the Master he was pleading, nor what feelings of closer expectation and more vivid faith were warming the breasts of the disciples. But "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind." Not, mark you, a wind; no gale sweeping over the city struck the sides of the house, and rustled round it. But "from heaven" directly downward fell "a sound," without shape or step or movement to account for it--a sound as if a mighty wind were rushing, not along the ground, but straight from on high, like showers in a dead calm. Yet no wind stirred. As to motion, the air of the room was still as death; as to sound, it was awful as a hurricane.

Mysterious sound, whence comest thou? Is it the Lord again breathing upon them, but this time from his throne? Is it the wind of Ezekiel preparing to blow? Shaken by this supernatural sign, we may see each head bow low. Then, timidly turning upward, John sees Peter's head crowned with fire; Peter sees James crowned with fire; James sees Nathanael crowned with fire; Nathanael sees Mary crowned with fire; and round and round the fire sits "on each of them." The Lord has been mindful of his promise. The word of the Lord is tried. John was a faithful witness. Jesus was a faithful Redeemer. He is now glorified; for the Holy Ghost is given. Jesus "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this." The instant effect of the descent of the Spirit on the first Gentile converts in the house of Cornelius was that they began to "magnify God." The effect would be the same in this first case. That bosom has yet to learn what is the feeling of moral sublimity, which never has been suddenly heaved with an emotion of uncontrollable adoration to God and the Lamb--an emotion which, though no voice told whence it came, by its movement in the depths of the soul, farther down than ordinary feelings reach, did indicate somehow that the touch of the Creator was traceable in it. They only who have felt such unearthly joy need attempt to conceive the outburst of that burning moment. Body, soul, and spirit, glowing with one celestial fire, would blend and pour out their powers in a rapturous "Glory be to God!" or "Blessed be the Lord God!" Modern believers--not those who never unite in simple and fervent supplications to the throne of grace, but those who meet and urge with long-repeated entreaty their requests to God--can recall times which help them to imagine what must have been the peal of praise that burst from the hearts of the hundred and twenty, when the baptism fell upon their souls; times when they and their friends have felt as if the place where they met was filled with the glory of the Lord.

One word as to the mode of this baptism. In this case we have the one perfectly clear account contained in Scripture of the mode wherein the baptizing element was applied to the person of the baptized. The element here is fire, the mode is shedding down--"hath shed forth this." "It sat upon each of them." Did baptism mean immersion, they would have been plunged into the fire, not the fire shed upon them. The only other case in which the mode of contact between the baptizing element and the baptized persons is indicated is this: "And were all baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea." They were not dipped in the cloud, but the cloud descended upon them; they were not plunged into the sea, but the sea sprinkled them as they passed. The Spirit signified by the water is never once promised under the idea of dipping. Such an expression as "I will immerse you in my Spirit," "I will plunge you in my Spirit," or "I will dip you in clean water," is unknown to the Scripture. But "I will pour out my Spirit upon you," "I will sprinkle clean water upon you," is

language and thought familiar to all readers of the Bible. The word "dip," or "dipped," does not often occur in the New Testament; but when it does, the original is never "baptize," or "baptized." The fire is not a shapeless flame. It is not Abram's lamp, nor the pillar of the desert, nor the coal of Isaiah, nor the infolding flame of Ezekiel. It is a tongue; yea, cloven tongues. On each brow glows a sheet of flame, parted into many tongues. Here was the symbol of the new dispensation. Christianity was to be a Tongue of Fire. It was a symbol of their "power"; the power whereby the new kingdom was to be built up; the power for which they had so long to tarry, and so eagerly to pray, when all other things were prepared; for which the whole arrangement for the world's conversion was commanded to stand still. The appearance of this one symbol was the signal that former ones had waxed old, and were ready to vanish away. Altar and cherubim, sacrifice and incense, ephod and breastplate, Urim and Thummim--their work was done. Even of the most sacred emblem of all, that which was the "pattern of things in the heavens," the ark itself, it had been foretold: "They shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord; neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall it be magnified any more." Of the temple itself the Master had said that not one stone should be left upon another.

All the emblems of the old dispensation were now forever suspended. In their room the Lord had appointed only two; and they chosen with a singular aptness at once to suggest ideas and to avoid image representation: the water, wherein the mind could see a symbol of the cleansing Spirit, but the eye no attempted likeness; the bread and wine, wherein the body and the blood are forcibly brought to mind, but no personal similitude set before the eye. These two only were the unartistic emblems which Christ had ordained for his Church. His was to be a religion of the understanding and the heart, wholly resting on the convictions and the principles, building nothing on sense, and permitting nothing to fancy. In strict keeping with this spiritual stamp of Christianity was the symbol which, once for all, announced to the Church the advent of her conquering power; the power by which she was to stand before kings, to confound synagogues, to silence councils, to still mobs, to confront the learned, to illuminate the senseless, and to inflame the cold; the power by which, beginning at Jerusalem, where the name of Jesus was a byword, she was to proclaim his glory through all Judea, throughout Samaria, and throughout the uttermost parts of the earth. The symbol is a tongue, the only instrument of the grandest war ever waged: a tongue--man's speech to his fellow-man; a message in human words to human faculties, from the understanding to the understanding, from the heart to the heart. A tongue of fire--man's voice, God's truth; man's speech, the Holy Spirit's inspiration; a human organ, a superhuman power. Not one tongue, but cloven tongues. As the speech of men is various, here we see the Creator taking to himself the language of every man's mother; so that in the very words wherein he heard her say, "I love thee," he might also hear the Father of all say, "I love thee."

How does that fire-symbol, shining on the brow of the primitive Church, rebuke that system which would force all men to worship God in one tongue, and that not a tongue of fire, but a dead tongue, wherein no man now on earth can hear his mother's tones! Cloven tongues sat on each of them; so that each had not only the fire-impulse to go and tell aloud the message of reconciliation, but also the fire-token that all mankind, of whatever nation, kindred, people, or tongue, were heirs alike of the gospel salvation, and of the word whereby that salvation is proclaimed.

Blessed be the hour when that tongue of fire descended from the Giver of speech into a cold world! Had it never come, my mother might have led me, when a child, to see slaughter for

worship, and I should have taught my little ones that stones were gods. "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things! And blessed be his glorious name forever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen!"

4. Effects immediately Followed Baptism of Fire.

CHAPTER IV.

EFFECTS WHICH IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED THE BAPTISM OF FIRE.

SECTION I.--SPIRITUAL EFFECTS. THE first effect which followed this baptism of fire is thus described: "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." This expression is so clearly joined with the record of the miracle that we easily suppose that it is itself intended to express miraculous inspiration; but this is not its constant, nor even its most frequent, use in the Old Testament. It is sometimes employed to describe an inspiration antecedent to a miraculous manifestation, and sometimes one antecedent to a purely moral manifestation. Examples of the latter occur in several cases of "speaking the word of God with boldness," when the circumstances were such that human nature unassisted would have shrunk from the danger.

John the Baptist wrought no miracle; yet of him it was said that he should be "filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb." Here the expression denotes some inward and spiritual operation, which may take place in the silence of an infant's heart, and show its fruit in the quiet ways of childhood. Had he been filled with the Holy Ghost immediately before commencing to preach, we should have connected the former with the latter as an official, rather than as an inward and moral, qualification. When men were required to fill the office of deacons--not to work miracles, not to speak with tongues, but to promote the brotherhood and good feeling of the Church, by a better regulation of its daily relief to the poor--the qualification demanded was, that they should be "men full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." Again, Barnabas "was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." This is said of him not as accounting for any miracles or tongues, but in relation to the fact that, when he had seen the converts at Antioch, "he was glad, and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." Again, when the apostles were first called to bear witness for Christ before the rulers, "Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them," etc. Here we have no working of miracles, no speaking with foreign tongues; but we find the man who, when left to his own strength, denied his Master, now filled with a moral power which makes him bold to confess that Master's name before the rulers of his people, and with a wisdom to speak according at once to the oracles of God and the exigency of the moment.

After this first persecution was reported to the disciples generally, they, moved and distressed, appealed to the Lord in prayer, crying: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word." The answer to this prayer is recorded in terms more striking than in any other case, except that of Pentecost: "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." Here, being "filled with the Holy Ghost" was not followed by any miraculous effects whatever, but was an inspiration, the result of which is special moral strength--strength to confront danger and shame; strength to declare all the gospel, though, in so doing, they periled every interest dear to them. Our Lord had promised to his disciples miraculous light and power by the Spirit; but it was not as a

miracle-working power that he had chiefly foretold his coming. It was as a spiritual power, a comforter, a guide unto all truth, a revealer of the things of God, a remembrancer of the words of Christ; one who would convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; one who would embolden the Lord's servants to bear witness before the most terrible adversaries, and would guide their lips to wise and convincing speech. Had it been his design that they should expect the Holy Spirit chiefly as a miraculous power, the leading promises would have had this aspect. When he first clearly proclaims that the Comforter should come as a substitute for his own presence, he marks the classes who shall know him, and those who shall not. The distinction between them lies not in apostleship or ministry, not in gifts or powers, but in being of the world, and "not of the world." "Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John 14:17) Not, "For he will work miracles by you." That was not promised to all. Not, "He will prophesy by you." That he did not promise to all. But he did promise to all who are "not of the world" that he should dwell with them and be in them. Nor is this promise confined to the apostolic age, or to the times immediately succeeding. "That he may abide with you forever" gives an interest in the personal influences of the Comforter to the disciples of all ages, as well as to those of the first days. This promised substitute for the personal presence of Christ was one whom the world should not see who was to be invisible to the natural eye, undiscernible by the natural mind, yet known and discerned by believers, though not seen; known not by outward sign, but by inward consciousness. Our Lord's expression is to be strictly noted: "The world seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him"; not, "Ye see and know him." in one respect the disciples and the world were to be alike: neither should see him. Yet the disciples should "know" him; for "he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Their knowledge of him was to come not by sense, but by consciousness. Was this "being in them" to be an ordinary grace of believers or to be coupled only with office or supernatural endowments? The want of it is made by St. Paul conclusive against the claim of any man to be considered even a member of Christ: "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelt in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." This passage, however, like many others, expresses only a participation of the Spirit in some degree, without indicating what that degree might be; leaving it open to doubt, were there no other passages bearing upon the point, whether some might not be blessed with the indwelling of the Spirit, who yet were to be debarred from the fuller privilege expressed in the strong words, "filled with the Holy Ghost."

Eyesight is the necessary basis of what is called a painter's or a poet's eye; the sense of hearing, the necessary basis of what is called a musical ear; yet eyesight may exist where there is no poet's or painter's eye, and hearing where there is no musical ear. So may the human soul be "filled with the Holy Ghost," having every faculty illuminated, and every affection purified, without any miraculous gift. On the other hand, the miraculous power does not necessarily imply the spiritual fullness; for Paul puts the supposition of speaking with tongues, prophesying, removing mountains, and yet lacking charity, that love which must be shed abroad in every heart that is full of the Holy Ghost.

"Filled with the Holy Ghost!" Thrice blessed word! Thanks be to God that ever the tongues of men were taught it! It declares not only that the Lord has returned to his temple in the human soul, but that he has filled the house with his glory; pervaded every chamber, every court, by his manifested

presence.

"That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" is a prayer at which we falter. Is it not too much to ask? Is it not a sublime flight after the impossible? Let us remember it is not, "That ye might contain all the fullness of God." That would be more impossible than that your chamber should contain all the light of the sun. But it can be filled with the light of the sun --so filled that not a particle of unilluminated air shall remain within it. When, therefore, the hand of the apostle leads you up toward the countenance of your Father; when you approach to see the light which outshines all lights, "the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus," put away all thought of containing what the heavens cannot contain; but, humbly opening your heart, say, "Infinite Light, fill this little chamber!"

Reason says, "It may be"; Scripture says, "It may be"; but a shrinking of the heart says, "It cannot be--we can never 'be filled with all the fullness of God.'" When Paul had uttered that prayer, perhaps this same shrinking of heart had almost come over him. How does he meet it? Glancing down at his wonderful petition, and up at his almighty King, he breaks out: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,--unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Yea, Amen, ten thousand thousand times. The words of this doxology had been holy and blessed in any connection; but they are doubly blessed, closely following, as they do, the prayer, "That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." Nor should we forget that the power which Paul here adores is not some abstract and unmoved power of Deity, but "the power which worketh in us." What is this power? The Holy Ghost--"might by his Spirit in the inner man."

What a labor of expression do we find in 2 Corinthians 9:8, when Paul wants to convey his own idea of the power of grace as practically enabling men to do the will of God! "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." Here we have "abound" twice, and "all" four times, in one short sentence. "Abound" means not only to fill, but to overflow. The double overflow, first of grace from God to us, then of the same grace from us to "every good work," is a glorious comment on our Lord's word: "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The believer's heart, is placed, like the cistern, in communication with an invisible source; the source constantly overflows into the cistern, and it again overflows. Happy the heart thus filled, thus overflowing with the Holy Spirit! Where is the fountain of those living waters, that we may bring our hearts thither? "He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Revelation 22:1) There is the fount, there is the stream--the Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son. To the throne of grace! to the mercy seat! and you are at the fountain of all life. Nor seek a scant supply at that source. "Be filled with the Spirit" sounds in your ears; and, if you believe, not only will a well "spring up within" you, but rivers shall flow out from you. The Spirit, as replenishing the believer with actual virtues and practical holiness, is ever kept before our eye in the apostolic writings. "That we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God: strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness."

Putting these various expressions together, what a view do they give of the riches of grace! "All sufficiency," "in all things," "always," "abound to every good work," "fruitful in every good work," "strengthened with all might," "according to his glorious power," "according to the power which worketh in us," "filled with all the fullness of God." Eternal Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, answer and disperse all our unbelief by filling our hearts with Thyself! The expression, "filled with the Holy Ghost," places before us the human spirit restored to its original and highest fellowship. In many respects that spirit is alone in this world. It finds here nothing that is its own equal. Everything upon which it can look is its inferior in both nature and powers. Earth and sky, beasts and birds, are the instruments of its comfort, or the subjects of its thoughts, but never can share in its cares or affections. The fields never say, "We enjoy thy presence," nor the stars, "We return thine admiration." The lower animals can take no part in its deep movements of hope and fear; can shed no light on its problems of justice, pardon, and the world to come. In the spirit of its fellow-man alone can it find an equal; and in communion with it, though it often solaces, often both wounds and defiles. Yet it is the nature of man to seek an object kindred to himself, but superior. Probably this is necessary to all natures which are at the same time rational and finite. But where can man find a being kindred to himself, and yet superior to him? Below the sky he is head, yet upward his instincts turn--upward toward some one brighter or greater than himself.

What can answer to those upward aspirations of the soul? Its Creator. After years spent in search of happiness, the human spirit penitently returns toward its God, and, trusting in the atonement of his Son, finds forgiveness for the past. Then does the great Comforter, the Witness of the Father's love, the Spirit of adoption, give the manifestation of the Divine favor which David delighted to call "the light of thy countenance." This manifestation may be gentle, or it may be rapturous; but in any case it is comforting. When gentlest, it touches chords of satisfaction more delicate than were ever reached by the most subtle joy of intellect; when most rapturous, it carries with it an assent of the whole judgment such as no previous enjoyment, however tranquil, commanded. The thirst of the soul has no deeper seat than is now reached. Wisdom has no remonstrance, expectation no disappointment, fear no warning. It may be in a profound calm, it may be in an unspeakable joy; but it is with core-deep consciousness that the soul feels it has now touched, yea, tasted, its supreme good, and that, for time or for eternity, it needs no more than to abide in this blessedness, and improve this fellowship.

How can that be special which is universal? God is not far from every one of us. Every man who moves upon the earth moves in him. How, then, can he be specially present with one man more than with another? Strictly speaking, perhaps it is more a question of manifestation than of presence. Electric agency may be present everywhere, but it rarely makes itself visible in a flash. Heat may be present everywhere, but is not everywhere manifested by fire. Jude said: "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" God is with all, but is unseen by any eye, and, alas! undiscerned by many a spirit. He does not withdraw his presence from any part of his universe, or his care from any of his creatures; but, as a human frame may be moving amid the light of the sun, and see no light, so may a soul be moving in that universe which is fuller of God than the atmosphere at noontide is of sunbeams, and yet discern no God.

All objects require a suitable faculty, or they are unperceived. Sound exists not to the eye; light exists not to the ear; flavor exists not to the touch. It is of no avail that an object is, unless our nature has the special faculty whereby we can descry its presence. A strong magnetic power may

be acting on the compass, whereon the steersman concentrates his attention; but eye, ear, hand, smell, taste, give no report of its presence to the mind; and he first learns that it was there by the crash of the ship on a coast which he thought was far away. Our Lord said, in reply to Jude: "If any man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." This is more than mere presence. Presence may be unfelt, and therefore forgotten; may be with displeasure, and therefore joyless. But this is presence manifested--"We will come to him"; gracious --the coming is from "love"; habitual and involving fellowship--both of these ideas lie in, "Make our abode with him."

Two men are walking upon the same plain, and each turns his face toward the sky. The light of the sun is shining upon both; but one sees no sun, while the other sees not only light, but the face of the sun, and his eye is overpowered with its glory. What makes the difference between the two? Not that one is in darkness, and the other in light; not that one is near the sun, and the other far away; not that one has an eye differently constituted from the other; but simply that there is a thin cloud between heaven and the one, and no cloud between it and the other. The latter cannot only trace evidence that there is a sun, and that he is up, but has the presence of that sun before his face, and his glory filling his eye. So two men stand in relation to the universal and all-present God. One believes, infers, intellectually knows, that he is--aye, that he is present--yet he discerns him not; it is a matter of inference, not of consciousness; and though believing that God is, and that he is present, he sins. Another spiritually discerns, feels his presence; and he learns to "stand in awe, and sin not."

Suppose the case of a cripple who had spent his life in a room where the sun was never seen. He has heard of its existence, he believes in it, and, indeed, has seen enough of its light to give him high ideas of its glory. Wishing to see the sun, he is taken out at night into the streets of an illuminated city. At first he is delighted, dazzled; but after he has had time to reflect, he finds darkness spread amid the lights, and he asks: "Is this the sun?" He is taken out under the starry sky, and is enraptured; but on reflection finds that night covers the earth, and again asks: "Is this the sun?" He is carried out some bright day at noontide, and no sooner does his eye open on the sky than all question is at an end. There is but one sun. His eye is content; it has seen its highest object, and feels that there is nothing brighter. So with the soul: it enjoys all lights, yet, amid those of art and nature, is still inquiring for something greater. But when it is led by the reconciling Christ into the presence of the Father, and he lifts up upon it the light of his countenance, all thought of anything greater disappears. As there is but one sun, so there is but one God. The soul which once discerns and knows him feels that greater or brighter there is none, and that the only possibility of ever beholding more glory is by drawing nearer. The operation of the Holy Spirit implies a quickening of the nature of man by an impartation of the Divine nature, and every increase of it implies a fuller communion of the Eternal Father with his adopted child. When the soul of man is "filled with the Holy Ghost," then has God that wherein he does rejoice--"a temple not made with hands," not reared by human art, of unconscious and insensible material; a temple created by his own word, and living by his own breath. In that living temple he displays somewhat of his glory. In the Shekinah of the sanctuary he could manifest majesty only. In this living temple he can manifest truth, purity, tenderness, forgiveness, justice--the whole round of such attributes as his children below the sky are capable of comprehending.

Thus inhabited, not only is the soul of man unutterably blessed, but his body reaches dignity, the thought of which might make even flesh sing: "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God; and ye are not your own." Not your own, for purchase has been made--"Ye are bought with a price"; not your own, for possession has been taken--"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (1 Corinthians 3:16, etc.) A holy man, whose presence breathes an unworldly air around him, whose name is identified with a constancy of godly actions, is a visible monument and remembrancer of God. Each member of his body is as a temple vessel. By it holy works are done, and the will of the parent Spirit on moral points expressed by material instruments. His spirit is led by the Spirit of God. His "mortal body" is quickened by the Spirit "that dwelleth in him." He not only "lives in the Spirit," but "walks in the Spirit"--his visible acts, as well as his hidden emotions, being "after the Spirit." The natural man has disappeared from his life and actions. Another creature lives. Thoughts, purposes, works, which his nature never prompted, which, when prompted by revelation, his nature could not attain to, now abound, as sweet grapes on a good vine. This precept is embodied in his life: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (Romans 6:13) In this the power of the Holy Ghost is practically manifested by a reversal of the relations of the human spirit and the flesh, To persons yet in the body, the apostle says: "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you." Not in the flesh, yet in the body! The unconverted man has a spirit, but it is carnalized; the play of its powers, the studies of the intellect, the flights of the imagination, the impulses of the heart, are dictated by motives which all range below the sky and halt on this side of the tomb. The spirit is the servant of the flesh; and man differs from perishing animals chiefly in this, that for carnal purposes and delights he commands the service of a spiritual agent--his own soul. The Holy Spirit as man's regenerator reverses this state of things. He quickens the spirit, and through it quickens the frame; so that, instead of spiritual powers being carnalized, a mortal body is spiritualized; instead of soul and spirit being subjected by the flesh, flesh and blood become instruments of the Spirit. Limbs move on works of heavenly origin and intent. Thus a direct connection is established between the will of the Supreme Spirit and the material organs of man. A purpose originates in the mind of God; by his Spirit it is silently and swiftly transmitted to the spirit of his child, and by this to the "mortal body." Then, as an iron wire on the shore of the Crimea expresses the will of the British Queen in London, so do the earthly members of a mortal express, in the outward and physical world, the purpose of the Holy One. This is redemption achieved; this is adoption in its issues; this is the new life; this is human nature restored, man walking in the light--"God dwelling in him, and he in God." Then his life is a light, and a light so pure that it gives those on whom it shines, not the idea of "good nature," but of something heavenly. They see his good works, and "glorify his Father which is in heaven"; not extol his character, but feel that he is raised above his own character, and is "God's workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works." A piece of iron is dark and cold: imbued with a certain degree of heat, it becomes almost burning without any change of appearance; imbued with a still greater degree, its very appearance changes to that of solid fire, and it sets fire to whatever it touches. A piece of water without heat is solid and brittle: gently warmed, it flows; further heated, it mounts to the sky. An organ filled with the ordinary degree of air which exists everywhere is dumb; the touch of the player can elicit but a clicking of the keys. Throw in not another air, but an unsteady current of the same air, and sweet but imperfect and

uncertain notes immediately respond to the player's touch; increase the current to a full supply, and every pipe swells with music. Such is the soul without the Holy Ghost; and such are the changes which pass upon it when it receives the Holy Ghost, and when it is "filled with the Holy Ghost." In the latter state only is it fully imbued with the Divine nature; bearing in all its manifestations some plain resemblance to its God; conveying to all on whom it acts some impression of him; mounting heavenward in all its movements, and harmoniously pouring forth, from all its faculties, the praises of the Lord. The moral change wrought in the disciples, by the new baptism of the Spirit, is strikingly displayed in the case of one man. A difficult service was to be performed in Jerusalem that day. Had it been desired to find a man in London who would have gone down to Whitehall a few weeks after Charles was beheaded, and, addressing Cromwell's soldiers, have endeavored to persuade them that he whom they had executed was not only a king, and a good one, but a prophet of God, and that, therefore, they had been guilty of more than regicide--of sacrilege; although England had brave men then, it may be questioned whether any one could have been found to bear such a message to that audience. The service which had then to be performed in Jerusalem was similar to this. It was needful that some one should stand up under the shadow of the temple and, braving chief priests and mobs alike, assert that He whom they had shamefully executed seven weeks ago was Israel's long-looked-for Messiah; that they had been guilty of a sin which had no name; had raised their hands against "God manifest in the flesh"; had, in words strange to human ears, "killed the Prince of life." Who was thus to confront the rage of the mob and the malice of the priests? We see a man rising, filled with a holy fire, so that he actually forgets his danger, and seems not even conscious that he is doing an heroic act. He casts back upon the mockery their charge, and proceeds to open and to press home his tremendous accusation, as if he were a king upon a throne, and each man before him a lonely and defenseless culprit. Who is this man? Have we not seen him before? Is it possible that it can be Peter? We know him of old: he has a good deal of zeal, but little steadiness; he means well, and, when matters are smooth, can serve well; but when difficulties and adversaries rise before him, his moral courage fails. How short a time is it ago since we saw him tried! He had been resolving that, come what might, he would stand by his Master to the last. Others might flinch; he would stand. Soon the Master was in the hands of enemies. Yet his case was by no means lost. The governor was on his side; many of the people were secretly for him; nothing could be proved against him; and, above all, he who had saved others could save himself. Yet, as Peter saw scowling faces, his courage failed. A servant-maid looked into his eye, and his eye fell. She said she thought he belonged to Jesus of Nazareth. His heart sank, and he said: "No." Then another looked in his face, and repeated the same suspicion. Now, of course, he was more cowardly, and repeated his "No." A third looked upon him, and insisted that he belonged to the accused Prophet. How his poor heart was all fluttering! And, to make it plain that he had nothing to do with Jesus of Nazareth, he began to curse and swear. Is it within the same breast, where this pale and tremulous heart quaked, that we see glowing a brave heart which dreads neither the power of the authorities nor the violence of the populace; which faces every prejudice and every vice of Jerusalem, every bitter Pharisee and every street brawler, as if they were no more than straying and troublesome sheep? Is the Peter of Pilate's hall the Peter of Pentecost, with the same natural powers, the same force of character, the same training, and the same resolutions? If so, what a difference is made in a man by the one circumstance of being filled with the Holy Ghost!

Oh, for high examples of God's moral "workmanship"! Oh, for men instinct with the Spirit: the countenance glowing as a transparency with a lamp behind it; the eye shining with a purer, truer light than any that genius or good-nature ever shed; limbs agile for any act of prayer, of praise, of zeal, for any errand of compassion; and a tongue of fire! Oh, for men on whom the silent verdict of the observer would be, "He is a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost"! Never, perhaps, did earthly eyes see more frequently than we see, in our day, men with ordinary Christian excellences; men in private life whose walk is blameless; men in the ministry who are admirable, worthy, and useful. But are not men "full of the Holy Ghost" a rare and diminished race? Are those whose entire spirit bespeaks a walk of prayer, such as we would ascribe to Enoch or to John; whose words fall with a demonstration of the Spirit, and a power such as we conceive attended Paul or Apollos; who make on believers the impression of being immediate and mighty instruments of God, and on unbelievers the impression of being dangerous to come near, lest they should convert them --are such men often met with? Do not even the good frequently speak as if we were not to look for such burning and shining lights--as if we must be content, in our educated and intelligent age, with a style of holiness more level and less startling? Do not many make up their minds nevermore to see men such as their fathers saw--men at whose prayer a wondrous power of God was ever ready to fall, whether upon two or three kneeling in a cabin, and wondering how the unlearned could find such wisdom, or on the great multitude, wondering how the learned could find such simplicity? Nevermore see such men! The Lord forbid! Return, O Power of Pentecost, return to thy people! Shed down thy flame on many heads! To us, as to our fathers, and to those of the old time before them, give fullness of grace! Without thee, we can do nothing; but, filled with the Holy Ghost, the excellency of the power will be of thee, O God. and not of us!

CHAPTER IV.

CONTINUED SECTION II.--MIRACULOUS EFFECTS

"THEY began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." It is not said, "with unknown tongues." In fact, the expression, "unknown tongues," was never used by an inspired writer. In the Epistle to the Corinthians, it is found in the English version; but the word "unknown" is in italics, showing that it is not taken from the original. Speaking unknown tongues was never heard of in the apostolic days. That miracle first occurred in London some years ago. On the day of Pentecost no man pretended to speak unknown tongues; but just as if we in London suddenly began to speak German, French, Spanish, Russian, Turkish, and other foreign languages, so it was with them. Not one tongue was spoken that day but a man was found in the streets of Jerusalem to turn around and cry: "This is my tongue, wherein I was born!" The miracle lay in the power of speaking the tongues of adjacent nations, from which individuals were in Jerusalem at that very time. This is not only miraculous, but a miracle in a very amazing form; perhaps, as to its form, the most amazing of all miracles.

Matter is a great and pregnant thing. To us its properties are not only wonderful, but exceedingly mysterious. When we see it flourishing while we fade, towering in hills, or careering in waves, or spread out in the firmament, we almost feel as if it were greater than we. Yet we are ever proving that, in spite of appearances, matter is less than mind. Mind searches out matter, wields it, molds it, makes it the servant of its will. Mind, then, being the superior, it follows that a work wrought in mind is greater than one wrought in matter. Miracles in seas, mountains, the firmament, or the

human body, display a power which rules the frame of nature and the frame of man. Yet, as the sphere of these is matter, the whole order may be called the physical miracle--works above nature, wrought upon physical agents in attestation of the revelation of God. But beyond this lies a higher miracle, of which the sphere is mind; and which, therefore, we may call the mental miracle--works above nature, wrought in attestation of the revelation of God. Of this order, two forms had been witnessed previously--inspiration, and prophecy; but now a new miracle in mind was to challenge the belief of all Jerusalem. This miracle, as to its moral impression, differed totally from all physical miracles--even from that complex and most peculiar miracle, the raising of the dead, wherein we see a power which matter and spirit, animal life and mental illumination, equally obey. That miracle stands alone; yet the chief impression which it makes, and certainly the impression which all purely physical miracles make, is that of power. They suggest also, indeed, the idea of wisdom, else the power would not go so unerringly to its end; and of goodness, else power so irresistible would move, not to bless, but to destroy. Yet the leading impression produced is undoubtedly that of power. In such miracles we recognize chiefly "the high hand and the stretched-out arm." In inspiration, we see the mind of man enabled to sit down among the morning mists of things, and to write a book which will stand while the world stands. In prophecy, we see the mind enabled to look through a thousand years, and describe what lies beyond so plainly that, when it is unfolded to ordinary sight, it shall at once be recognized. Both these miracles bring us, not so much into the presence of a Ruler as into the presence of a Spirit. In beholding a sea dried, or a wilderness strewn with food, we feel ourselves near the Lord of nature and the Stay of life. So here we feel ourselves near the Fount of all mind, whose own knowledge depends neither on material phenomena nor on the lapse of time; whose mode of acting on the human mind is not by laws analogous to those whereby the latter acts on material organs, or on its kindred minds through them. As, however, we watch the miracle of tongues, a strange solemnity falls upon us: we feel as if we had left the region where mind slowly and dimly learns through sense, had crossed some invisible line into the land of spirits, and were standing before the Original Mind. What knowledge of mind so minute as that which scans every sign whereby every mind expresses its ideas? What power over mind so unsearchable as that which can fill it in an instant with new signs for all its ideas--signs never before present to it, yet answering exactly to those which others had been trained from childhood to use? A number of Galilean peasants issue from an upper room into the streets of Jerusalem. A strange fire is in every eye, a strange light on every countenance. Each one looks joyful and benignant, as if he felt that he was carrying the balm for the world's sores in his breast. Each has plainly a word to say, and wants listeners. Probably their steps turn toward the temple, which, during the ten days, had divided their presence with the upper room. One meets with an Arab, and addresses him; another goes up to a Roman, and in a moment they are deeply engaged; a third sees a Persian, a fourth an African from Cyrene; and, as they go along, each one attaches himself to some foreigner. He tells a strange tale strange in its substance, equally strange in its eloquence; a new and unaccountable eloquence, wonderful not for grace, expression, or sweet sound, but for power.

One hearer in Latin, another in Coptic, another in Persian, another in Greek, exclaims first at the wonder of the story, and then at the wonder of the narrator: "Art not thou a Galilean? Whence, then, hast thou this fluency of Latin?" He answers that he has received it to-day by gift from God. A smile curls on the lip of the Roman, and he turns around to a neighboring group. There an Egyptian has just been putting the same question, and received the same answer. Yonder is an

excited little knot, where a Parthian declares that the tongue in which a man has told him of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, is his mother tongue. People from Jerusalem are mocking, and saying, "The men are full of new wine"; but the strangers, on speaking one to another, find that they have all been hearing precisely the same things in their "own tongues."

Those faces of different complexions, on comparing their opinions, darkle with awe. They find that in all this diversity of tongues the same tidings are repeated, and thus see the unity of matter in the variety of language: they find that the men who speak are unschooled peasants, yet are all gifted with the same unheard-of power; and thus see in the variety of speakers the unity of inspiration. The tongues are the tongues of all mankind; but the impulse is one, and the message one! From what center do all these languages issue? The same instinct which leads back the thought from speech to a mind, leads it back from this universal speech till it stands awe-struck in the presence of the Central Intellect of the Spirit which "formeth the spirit of man within him"---of the Supreme Mind, to which all mind is common ground; of the Father of thought!

It would be impossible to conceive any form of credential so well framed to certify that a doctrine was the immediate issue of the mind of God. The bare thought of such a miracle as that of tongues, had it only been a thought, would have made in itself an era in the history of man's intellect; and it may be fairly questioned whether such a thought could have originated in anything else than in the fact. The leading feature of the new religion was to be a Divine teaching upon things invisible and spiritual--on points of which the unaided powers of man could give no conclusive solution. For such a teaching, no attestation could be so apposite as one that accredited it as a message from the Spirit, which "searcheth all things." The universal call to man was worthily issued into the world by a sign which showed that it came directly from the only wise God, who gives understanding, and holds the keys of thought. The command of all languages, by one consentaneous impulse, proclaimed the new message to be the Word of God. The great question for humanity is, Hath God spoken? Are we poor wanderers each left here to his own light, and Heaven looking down in eternal silence on all our straying and perplexity? Hath the Parent Spirit, whence these spirits of ours come, surrounded them with his infinite presence at every step of their stumbling and perilous journey, and never once, from the day of Adam to our day, signified that he saw, and heard, and felt? Has he dealt with the soul of man as with "the spirit of a beast," that could never bless him and never break his law? Are all words the words of erring man, and all lights those doubtful and deceptive lights, following which so many have miserably perished? Is all doctrine the guesses of thinkers, or the juggling of priests? Has God never, never spoken?

"God spake all these words, and said!" On the Pentecost of Israel, from out of the fire on Sinai, came "a mighty voice," which, sweeping down from the distant peak as if from a throne at hand, filled the ears of three millions of people, or more, as if they had been a little group. Ten times the Voice sounded mysteriously over all that awed and quivering host, till human nature, smitten to the core, cried out, "We die, we die!" The Voice had uttered only gentle and wholesome laws, laws binding man to God, and man to man, laying sure paths to peace and blessedness, and the Voice awoke only the response: "Let not God speak with us, lest we die." (Exodus 20:19)

Thus, in the old time, a whole nation could be appealed to, that all words were not uncertain, nor all questions open: "Ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. And the Lord spake unto

you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone." As in the Pentecost of Israel, so in the Pentecost of Christianity, the Lord once more speaks "out of the midst of the fire." Now, however, the accompanying tokens are not physical, but mental: employing many human minds and human tongues as his instruments, yet manifesting the unity of that impulse whereby they are all moved, he makes not merely the people of one nation, but the representatives of all nations, feel that God hath spoken. Yes, tell it wherever there are ears to hear, tell it to the ends of the earth: God hath spoken; man has not been forgotten; guesses are not all our light; there is a gospel, a "speech of God"; questions affecting salvation are settled, and our way to holy living and happy dying traced by the Hand which rules both worlds. With regard to the gift of tongues, some serious questions have been raised, especially by the learned. One is as to whether the miracle was really in the speaker, and not in the hearer; so that although all that was spoken was in one language, the ordinary language of the disciples, yet the hearers of different nations each heard in his own tongue. For this opinion, as for all opinions, it is possible to cite some considerable names. But had it been as here supposed, the symbol of the miracle would not have been cloven tongues, but manifold ears. The double declaration of the narrative perfectly corresponds with the symbol. As regards the speakers, it says that they "spake with other tongues"; as regards the hearers, that they "heard every man in his own tongue." When St. Paul finds fault with the use of the gift of tongues in Corinth, he does not blame the hearers for lacking an ear that would interpret their own tongues into foreign ones, but blames the speakers for speaking "with the tongue words not easy to be understood" by the unlearned; and the only reason he ever assigns why the auditors could not understand is, that they were unlearned; clearly showing that a foreign language was employed, which education might have enabled them to understand, but for the understanding of which miraculous power does not seem ever to have been given. If the supposition of the miracle in hearing, instead of in speech, has been resorted to with a view to simplify the miracle, it defeats its own object; for, to sustain that supposition, the miraculous influence must have been exerted on a number of persons as much greater than in the other case, as the hearers were more numerous than the speakers. At the same time, the nature of the miraculous operation would be in every respect equally extraordinary.

Another question is as to whether the speakers understood what they said in the foreign languages. The doubt as to this is not raised upon the narrative of the Pentecost, but on certain expressions used by St. Paul in writing to the Corinthians. There he says, "Let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret"; and again, "If one speak in an unknown tongue, let one interpret." Hence it would appear that some could speak with tongues, who could not render into their language that which they had spoken. This, however, is not clear; for he also says: "Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the Church may receive edification." Here he supposes that the person who possesses the gift of tongues does also possess the power of interpreting into the common language that which he has uttered in a miraculous way. But even granting that some were unable to interpret, so as to edify the Church, that which they had themselves spoken, it would appear that this did not at all arise from their not understanding what they had said, but from their being destitute of the gift of prophecy, whereby only they could edify believers. As to any doubt whether the person speaking really understood his own utterances, it is completely removed by the text, 1 Corinthians 14:14-19

: "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all; yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." Here, publicly praising "with the understanding" is taken to be, so praising that a common man may understand; and publicly preaching "with the understanding" is taken to be, so to speak as "to teach others also." To praise and to preach in public without these, is to act without understanding. The words, "he understandeth not what thou sayest," though "thou verily givest thanks well," settle the whole matter. They take it for granted--as, indeed, the apostle does all through --that the speaker clearly understands himself; but the fault is, that he uses speech which was never given for the sake of intercourse with God, but for that of intercourse with man, in a way that defeats its own object. Speech is man's revelation of his own spirit to his fellow-man; and when nothing is revealed, it becomes a mockery. Feelings and thoughts are the language which God listens to: man hearkens in the air, God in the soul within. To speak to him, we need no sounds: sounds are for human ears, and useful only when the ear can recognize the meaning. The fact that some who could not prophesy, could yet speak with tongues, is apparent in several parts of Scripture, and is a singular proof at once of the generality and the diversity of gifts. The lower gift, that of tongues, was more generally diffused than the higher, that of prophecy. The miracle indicated not only the origin of the new doctrine, but also its sphere. It was a message from the Father of men to all men. National diversities, instead of being a barrier before which it stood still, were opportunities to display its universal adaptation. Each various tongue was made an additional witness that it had come for "every people under heaven." Our Lord's last words, "the uttermost part of the earth," had here a strange and multiplying echo. A force was set in motion, which claimed all humanity as its field; a voice was lifted up, which called upon every nation to join its audience.

Again, this manifestation met and answered all doubts which might have arisen as to the power of our Lord to gift his servants with language and utterance needful for their coming contest with the whole world. He had told them that, when brought before rulers and kings for his name's sake, it would be given to them what they should say: "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." (Matthew 10:20) He had evidently referred to such Divine aid in speech when he told them that they should receive power after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them, and that they should be his witnesses, even "to the uttermost part of the earth." Moses had feared to plead before Pharaoh, from a dread that utterance equal to the gravity of the mission could not be given to him. Jeremiah had feared on a similar ground.

Nothing is more natural than that one who feels himself charged with a sublime truth, on the proper delivery of which infinite interests depend, should distrust his ability to frame suitable language. It is very probable that such thoughts had troubled the disciples in the contemplation of the great work which lay before them. If so, what an answer did they receive in the miracle of tongues! He who enabled their lips to pour forth the testimony in words they had never spoken, and never heard, could surely give them every measure of propriety, of clearness, of copiousness,

of power, whereof human speech was capable. All questions as to how copious diction could be imparted to the unready, and force to the feeble; how the slow could be made impressive, and the tame eloquent, were here answered. The old promise, "I will be with thy mouth," received an unlooked-for commentary. The effects which the Spirit of the Lord could produce upon the human tongue were shown to be illimitable by any natural impediment. The ground of confidence as to their success in preaching was conspicuously changed from talent, learning, office, or credentials, to the working of the Holy Ghost. Their power ceased to be a question of natural ability, and became one of Divine gift. The measure of the former might be greater or less, without materially affecting the fruit of their work; but this would exactly correspond with the degree of the latter.

Andrew had heard the Baptist preach, had seen how his words had plowed up the rude feelings of the soldier, and at the same time commanded the subtle conscience of the scribe. He had heard the Lord himself, when every word struck the ear as a wonder. Probably he had always thought it impossible that such swordedged sentences should ever come from his lips, or from those of "his own brother Simon." He might conceive that he should be able to repeat the substance of the lessons which the Lord had taught them, and that, when he stood before counselors and magistrates, he should be enabled to assign a reason for his hope. Perhaps he would think it possible that, when filled with that new Comforter, who had been so often promised to them, he could address a multitude with feeling. But as to words like fire, melting and burning the spirits of men; words like hammers, breaking in pieces the hearts of stone; words that should rush on the congregation with a force too overwhelming to be called eloquence, should win a conquest too rapid and too complete to be called persuasion, should make the speaker not only a prodigy, but a power, his hearers not only an orator's audience, but a Master's disciples, --as to such words as these, how was it possible that they should ever proceed from him, or Simon? So might he naturally reason; but when he finds himself fluently telling a man from the shores of Cyrene the whole story of the birth, and death, and resurrection, and ascension, in a tongue which he had never heard before; when the African assures him that it was the tongue of his native town--then, had you asked him, "Is it now impossible that you or Simon should speak with a voice mightier than the voice of a prophet, or that the least of your company should be greater than the thunder-tongued Baptist?" he had answered, "With God nothing is impossible."

"And it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The tongue of fire rested upon each disciple, and all spoke with a superhuman utterance. Not the Twelve only, the Lord's chosen apostles; not the Seventy only, his commissioned evangelists; but also the ordinary believers, and even the women. The baptism of the Spirit fell upon all, and spiritual gifts were imparted to all--not equally; for the expression, "as the Spirit gave them utterance," seems to indicate a diversity of gifts, which accords with other passages in the New Testament. It is not probable that each one could speak every language; for St. Paul says of himself, that he "spake with tongues more than they all," clearly implying a limit in that gift, and a different limit in different persons. And it is certain that all had not the gift of "prophesying" suited to address such congregations as that soon about to meet, or even publicly to teach in ordinary assemblies. As in his later operations, so now, the blessed Spirit would doubtless show "diversities of operations," giving to "one the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another prophecy," etc. But the cloven tongues sat upon each of them, and, by the joint effect of spiritual life imparted and of spiritual gifts bestowed, all

were instantly set upon spiritual services; all led to become active witnesses for Christ and for his cross. The fire did not fall on the Twelve to be by them communicated to the Seventy, and by them again to the ordinary flock. It came as directly on the head of the disciple whose name we never heard, as on that of the beloved and honored John. It did not confound John the Apostle in the promiscuous mass, or place his office at the disposal of the multitude; but confirmed it, and fitted him by new gifts to adorn and make full proof of his ministry. But it did not, on the other hand, leave the ordinary believers as mere spectators to see the spiritual work of the Lord committed wholly to the selected ministry; their part being passively to receive spiritual influences and illumination from those who had direct access to Him with whom is the supply of the Spirit. This original blessing meets beforehand the error, which was likely to spring up, from looking on the true religion in the light in which all false ones are ever regarded--as a mystery to be confined to an initiated few, on whose offices the multitude must depend for acceptance with the invisible Power. Here was a religion that did single out and lift up some above their fellows, investing them with a high and solemn ministry; but from their ministry it swept away all seeming priesthood. The usual idea of priesthood is that of a power standing between man and God, through which alone we may draw near and find mercy at his hands. But so far from any such characteristic belonging to the ministry of the gospel, it is distinguished as being an office, the special labor of which is to point each man direct to God, and to assure him that between him and the throne of grace there is no power, visible or invisible, and no mediator but One to whom alike apostle, evangelist, and the humblest penitent must look. True, all were not apostles, all were not evangelists, all were not prophets; but, in the only sense in which any were priests, all were priests. The one altar of the Cross, the one sacrifice of the Lamb, the one High Priest within the veil, were alone to be named in any light of peacemaking with God. To all, the privilege of offering up the sacrifices of praise and of prayer, of living bodies and of worldly goods, was equally open. No man was made a depository or storehouse wherein spiritual favors should be laid up for the use of those who might purchase or implore them at his hands. He was most honored who could most successfully turn the trust of men away from all other advocates, and fix it upon the Son of God alone.

"They all began to speak." This shows that the testimony of Christ was not borne by the ministry alone; that this chief work of the Church was not confined to official hands. The multitude of believers were not mere adherents, but living, speaking, burning agents in the great movements for the universal diffusion of God's message. Many feel as if religion, on the part of the ministry, was to be a matter of bold and public testimony; but on that of ordinary Christians, a heart secret between themselves and God. Let such sit down in sight of that first Christian scene; let them behold every countenance lighted up with the common joy, and hear every tongue speak under the common impulse, and then ask Bartimeus, or Mary, if the private disciple has not just as much cause to be a witness that Jesus lives, and that Jesus saves, as either James or John. Let them ask if it is like their religion that one lonely minister shall, on the Lord's day, bear witness before a thousand Christians, who decorously hear his testimony as worthy of acceptance by all, and then go away, and never repeat the strain in any human ear.

Looking at the universal movement of that pentecostal day, who could think that the new religion was ever to come down to this? that speaking of its joys, its hopes, its pardon, its mercy for the wide world, was to be considered a professional work, for set solemnities alone, and not to be a daily joy and heart's-ease to evergrowing multitudes of happy, simple men? Cheerless is the work

of that Christian minister who, at set times, raises his testimony in the ears of a people, all of whom make a practice of hiding it in their hearts! Blessed in his office is he who knows that, while he in his own sphere proclaims the glad tidings, hundreds around him are ready, each one in his sphere, to make them their boast and their song! Spiritual office and spiritual gifts vary greatly in degree, honor, and authority, and he who has the less ought to reverence him who has the greater, remembering who it is that dispenses them; but the greater should never attempt to extinguish the less, and to reduce the exercise of spiritual gifts within the limits of the public and ordained ministry. To do so, is to depart from primitive Christianity.

SECTION III.--MINISTERIAL EFFECTS. Our immediate connection with the gift of tongues, was a gift less startling as a phenomenon, but more influential as an instrument for the recovery of mankind. Peter was soon called upon publicly to deliver the Lord's message. Then, undoubtedly, he spoke not in any foreign tongue, but in his native dialect. He had often spoken before, yet nothing remarkable is recorded of his preaching, or its effects. He is now the same man, with the same natural intellect, and the same natural powers of speech; and yet a new utterance is given to him, the effects of which are instantly apparent.

Never was such an audience assembled as that before which this poor fisherman appeared: Jews, with all the prejudices of their race--inhabitants of Jerusalem, with the recollection of the part they had recently taken in the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth--met in the city of their solemnities, jealous for the honor of their temple and law; men of different nations, rapidly and earnestly speaking in their different tongues: one in Hebrew, mocking and saying, "These men are full of new wine"; another inquiring in Latin; another disputing in Greek; another wondering in Arabic; and an endless Babel besides, expressing every variety of surprise, doubt, and curiosity. Amid such a scene the fisherman stands up; his voice strikes across the hum which prevails all down the street. He has no tongue of silver, for they say, "He is an unlearned and ignorant man." The rudeness of his Galilean speech still remains with him; yet, though "unlearned and ignorant" in their sense as to polite learning--in a higher sense he was a scribe well instructed. As respected the word of God, he had been for three years under the constant tuition of the prophet of Nazareth, hearing from his lips instruction in the law, in the prophets, and in all the "deep things of God." On whatever other points, therefore, the learned of Jerusalem might have found Peter at fault, in the sacred writings he was more thoroughly furnished than they; for though Christ took his apostles from among the poor, he left us no example for those who have not well learned the Bible, to attempt to teach it.

Yet Peter had no tongue of silver, no tongue of honey, no soothing, flattering speech, to allay the prejudices and to captivate the passions of the multitude. Nor had he a tongue of thunder; no outbursts of native eloquence distinguished his discourse. Indeed, some, if they had heard that discourse from ordinary lips, would not have hesitated to pronounce it dry--some of a class, too numerous, who do not like preachers who put them to the trouble of thinking, but enjoy only those who regale their fancy, or move their feelings, without requiring any labor of thought. Peter's sermon is no more than quoting passages from the word of God, and reasoning upon them; yet, as in this strain he proceeds, the tongue of fire by degrees burns its way to the feelings of the multitude. The murmur gradually subsides; the mob becomes a congregation; the voice of the fisherman sweeps from end to end of that multitude, unbroken by a single sound; and as the words rush on, they act like a stream of fire. Now, one coating of prejudice which covered the feelings is burned, and starts aside; now, another and another; now, the fire touches the inmost

covering of prejudice, which lay close upon the heart, and it, too, starts aside. Now, it touches the quick, and burns the very soul of the man! Presently, you might think that in that throng there was but one mind, that of the preacher, which had multiplied itself, had possessed itself of thousands of hearts and thousands of frames, and was pouring its own thoughts through them all. At length, shame, and tears, and sobs overspread that whole assembly. Here, a head bows; there, starts a groan; yonder, rises a deep sigh; here, tears are falling; and some stern old Jew, who will neither bow nor weep, trembles with the effort to keep himself still. At length, from the depth of the crowd, the voice of the preacher is crossed by a cry, as if one was "mourning for his only son"; and it is answered by a cry, as if one was in "bitterness for his firstborn." At this cry the whole multitude is carried away; and, forgetful of everything but the overwhelming feeling of the moment, they exclaim: "Men and brethren, what must we do?" No part of the proceedings of the day strikes us with a deeper or more lasting impression than the amazing change in Peter which is here manifest. We are continually prone to consider the power of a minister as a natural power, simply intellectual. Here was a man who, in all probability, had passed the period of life when eloquence is most forcible, without having distinguished himself by any such power. He comes forward with a most unwelcome message, to address an unfavorable audience, himself unskilled in the arts of oratory; and yet, such is the power of utterance given to him that he produces an effect the like of which had never been known before in the history of mankind. Never has it been recorded in any other instance, that three thousand men were in an hour persuaded by one of their own nation, of obscure origin and uninfluential position, to forego the prejudices of their youth, the favor of their people, and the religion of their fathers. "I will be with thy mouth," is more strikingly fulfilled here, in those extraordinary effects of the speaking of an ordinary man, than in any other form in which the power of God could be displayed, through the instrumentality of a human tongue. There is no part of the whole series of events which has a more direct bearing upon the permanent work of the Christian Church. This is the first example of prophesying in the New Testament sense; not the limited sense of foretelling, but the more comprehensive sense of delivering a message from God, under the impulse of the Spirit of God, and by his aid. In this the speaker has the double advantage of ascertained truth to declare--truth which his own understanding has received, which he can enforce by citing the word of God--and of aid direct from the Spirit in uttering it. This gift is conspicuously placed by St. Paul above that of tongues: "Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues." The gift of tongues was "for a sign to them that believe not"; and even to them only under certain circumstances, when they were addressed in a tongue which they understood, and that by one of whom they had proof, or what amounted to strong probability, that he had not learned it in a natural mode. For the union of these two requisites nothing was so favorable as the meeting of a number of foreigners in one city, and hearing natives of the country speak all their different languages. A foreigner appearing in a city, and professing to speak its language by miracle, would lie under the suspicion of having learned it before he came; and persons speaking foreign tongues in the presence of their own unlearned countrymen would seem to utter gibberish. This Paul puts strongly to the Corinthians: "If the whole Church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?"

If a number of persons in Corinth had a gift in Hebrew, or in Latin, and their fellow-townsmen, who knew only Greek, came and heard a rush of unmeaning sounds, and were told that it was a miracle, it might be, but it was not a miracle to them. If they saw an African peasant speaking

fluently in Greek, then, indeed, they would be startled; and if once assured by any means that he had not learned it, they would recognize a miracle. But the effect of persons resident in a place using the gift of tongues could only be to satisfy the learned of a miracle. For the unlearned it would be simply bewildering. Suppose that, in the city of Oxford, the stonemasons, joiners, and shoemakers heard a few of their own number uttering something in Latin: they would only be impressed with a belief that they had gone mad, or were amusing themselves with gibberish. But did the learned men of the university find these groups discoursing on the doctrines of the gospel in the

5. Permanent Benefits resulting to the Church

CHAPTER V.

PERMANENT BENEFITS RESULTING TO THE CHURCH.

AMONG the permanent benefits resulting from Pentecost, we cannot include the visible flame. Of it we never again find any mention in the course of the apostolical history: it appears to stand related to the Christian dispensation as the fires of Sinai did to the Mosaic--the solemn token of supernatural power upon its inaugural day.

Neither are we warranted in looking upon the "gift of tongues" as one of the permanent privileges of the Church. Only twice, throughout the Acts of the Apostles, do we find any record that it accompanied the first introduction of Christianity to a place; and both these instances are very peculiar. The first was in the house of Cornelius, when Peter, preaching to his Italian auditory, felt some misgiving whether he might not by possibility be doing wrong, should he include them within the fold of the Church; but he saw a great change pass upon the men before him, and heard them begin to speak with other tongues, and thus saw that, as to themselves at the first, the Lord had now given a Pentecost to the Gentiles. The other case is that wherein the disciples at Ephesus, who had been instructed in the baptism of John, but had not so much as "heard whether there was any Holy Ghost," received the word at the hands of Paul, and began to speak with other tongues. These two cases excepted, we never read of this miraculous gift immediately attending conversions effected under the preaching of the apostles. It would not be just, from this circumstance, to infer that these were the only cases in which the gift was bestowed; but we may at least infer that it was not an invariable accompaniment of the first appearance of Christianity, even in the apostolic days.

Considerable question, as to whether it was designed to be a permanent gift of the Church, is raised by St. Paul's discourse on this particular gift, in his letter to the Corinthians. It has been already remarked that he there shows it to be destitute of any power of edification for the Church, and therefore not to be a gift likely to continue, where all were convinced of the truth of Christianity. "Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." The only specific use assigned to the miracle is that it is a sign to them who believe not. In any community, then, in which the whole population had become believers, this sign ceased to be called for.

It seems to be frequently taken for granted that the chief value of the gift of tongues was to enable the possessors of it to preach the gospel to the natives of countries whose language they did not otherwise understand; but this is never set forward, in the Acts of the Apostles, as a reason for the gift. A solitary stranger, possessing the gift of tongues, and passing into a country the language of which was to him otherwise unknown, would have a great advantage in that gift; but, as has been already noted, not the advantage of thereby impressing the people of the country with a sense of the miracle for they would probably believe that he had been taught their tongue--but of ability at

once to proceed with his work and mission. It is, however, to be remarked that we never find this advantage quoted as one of the results of the gift. Except in the case wherein the gift of tongues was used as a sign to the disciples that the Gentiles were admitted into the dispensation and community of the Spirit, the gift was no sign "to those who believe." Its one use was "a sign" to unbelievers, and even to them not in ordinary circumstances; for them prophecy, and not tongues, was the profitable gift. Not adapted to edify the Church, or to bring ignorant unbelievers to repentance, and fitted only to be a sign under exceptionable circumstances, this gift does not seem clearly designed to be either universal or perpetual. We are not called upon to say that it will never be restored to the Church; for that is never said in the word of God; nor should we ridicule or talk disrespectfully of the faith of any Christian who devoutly expects its restoration. All we say is that we have not scriptural ground to claim it as one of the permanent gifts of the Spirit; and we may add that, if it ever return to the Church, it will be, not a mystification, but a miracle; a real speaking with "other tongues," not a speaking in some unheard-of, unknown tongue.

Having premised thus far, we come to the serious question, whether the Christian Church derives any advantage whatever from the dispensation of the Spirit, beyond that of looking back to a glorious period of miracle and power at her origin--a period which she may not regard as the dawn of a long and brightening day, but as a wonderful time of mysteries and portents, which were to have no permanent place in the Church. It may seem strange thus plainly to put the question, whether Christianity really has any benefits permanently resulting from Pentecost; but it is necessary to do so, in order honestly to meet, not so much well-digested and formally expressed opinions, as a habit of feeling often prevailing among professed branches and members of the Christian Church.

Nothing is more common than to find the whole system of Christianity, as an organization for recovering mankind from their sinful condition, spoken of, treated, and trusted in, as if it had been clearly ascertained that it was neither more nor less than a deposit of Divine doctrine cast upon the earth, forsaken by the Divine Power, and left to make such way among men as it might by the inherent force of truth, and the permission of auspicious circumstances. Cases are stated in which it is taken for granted that Christianity can make no way, simply because natural difficulties exist, such as natural agency cannot in reason be expected to overcome. Anything like a consistent counting upon a superior power acting with the truth, and making it triumph over difficulties, such as on natural grounds are unconquerable, jauntily dealt with, as pertaining to those whose religion is not entitled to the veneration which Christianity has, by the lapse of ages, gained from mankind. In everything practice is in danger, if theory be falsified; and after the right theory has been abandoned, the maintenance of right practice is always precarious, and never long-continued. If it be the true theory of Christianity that the living power of the Holy Ghost, additional to pastoral agency, additional to scriptural truth, additional to every doctrine and every ordinance--a power by which the truth is applied and the agent quickened for his work--is not to be expected as continually resident and active in the Church, that theory ought to be clearly stated and formally recognized on the part of all Christians. If it be not the true theory, we should take care that it do not color any of our habits of thought. A religion without the Holy Ghost, though it had all the ordinances and all the doctrines of the New Testament, would certainly not be Christianity. In it the presence and power of the Spirit are ever taken to be the vital element. Our world without its atmosphere--though the same globe, with the same physical characteristics, would be another

world; and, if inhabited at all, must be inhabited by a race governed by laws altogether dissimilar to those under which human life is sustained. The change from the Church of the New Testament to a Church without the Holy Ghost would certainly not be less in its kind than this.

All who seriously handle Christianity must recognize the presence of the Spirit as an integral part of its system and power; but if this presence is to be in some occult and inconceivable manner resident in an abstract Church--not in the hearts of individual believers, not in the living temple of animated bodies and sanctified souls, but in a holy Church made up of unholy members, in a sacred ministry made up of secular persons, in holy houses where worldly multitudes gather, and in holy books which ungodly ecclesiastics handle--if this is to be the presence of the Spirit, then the debate as to whether it is to be expected in perpetuity or not need excite little interest. If his presence is to entitle men to promulgate new doctrines contradictory to those already revealed in his own word, and even to withhold that word from the mass of their fellow-men, on the plea of denying them a deceptive guide and substituting an infallible one, then would his presence become a self-contradiction and a danger. In none of these lights have we the slightest reason given in the word of God to expect the presence of the Spirit. We hear not of him there as dwelling elsewhere than in the bodies of believers, or ever yielding to future ages the right to depart from the ancient ways and the clear revelation of the Son of God. Neither do we find the promise of his presence so given that all action and effort on the part of Christians is to be made at every moment dependent on each person's own impression of the Spirit's movement within him. But while, on the one hand, we do not expect the permanent presence of the Spirit with the Church in the Romish sense, or in the sense maintained by estimable Christians of the Society of Friends, we must, on the other hand, maintain, as we have said, that without his presence and operation in the hearts of believers, and in Christian agents, we cannot have the Christian religion. We do not expect visible signs or miraculous gifts; for these were not the substantial blessing and grace imparted at Pentecost, but were to them only as heralds and ushers. The real grace and blessing lay in what we have called the spiritual influence of the Holy Ghost, acting on the believer's heart; his ministerial influence, acting on the Church; his converting influence, acting on the world. These, we contend, are necessary to the identity of the Christian religion, and were bestowed for all ages, and will to the end of the world be shed on those who perseveringly "wait" for the baptism of fire.

Whence arises a persuasion which we seldom find formally stated, but constantly trace in the words of thoughtful men--that our mind is cut off from communion with the Father Mind, and, though able to draw knowledge from physical objects and from the minds of men, is without any access to the Source of spirit, or any recognizable lights from him? On what inch of ground in all the realm can we rest the notion that the Spirit of God does not communicate actively and directly with the spirit of men? Is it that we are so completely outcasts that, though without doubt capable of being acted upon by the Divine Being for Divine intents, he will not touch subjects so mean? This would be the death knell of intellect and morals; for, if thus cut off from the Source of light, our souls must be lost in the dark at last. The sense of sin gives to the conscience a feeling of banishment, the only answer to which lies in redemption. It is vain to answer it by mere reason; for reason offers no footing for the feeling, except on ground which revelation first discovers, and then bridges over by the cross. Is it that our mental perceptions are all derived through physical organs, and that none such existing as channels between God and the soul, no communication can take place? Few would be so bold as to say this; many are bold enough to assume it. What! no

communication but through physical organs? They never explain communication, but only increase the mystery. Physical organs, it is true, are only acted upon from without, by physical objects; and all our sensations come through such organs. But they never have sensations. The organ receives an impulse from the light, the air, or other outward object, and transmits that impulse to the brain, producing a vibration there; but what a gulf between a vibration in a brain and a sensation of a soul, or an idea of heaven, or an emotion of joy!

It seems no mystery that two men should be able to communicate, but a great one that they should be able to do so through an iron wire, when they are a thousand miles apart. One makes a secret fire carry a thought from his mind through a wire toward the mind of the other--a sensation is given, and both an idea and an emotion follow; but the wire feels none of them. The impulse passes along it, and the mind interprets that impulse, and turns it into the image of a dying father, a newborn babe, a ruined fortune, or a sovereign saying, "Well done!" All the sensation, perception, emotion, lie within the mind, none of them in the wire. It is just so with organs: they transmit impulses, but they know nothing, feel nothing, and explain nothing. The power of communication is a mental power. Spirit knows, and gives knowledge. The wonder is not that a mind can impart its ideas to a mind such as itself, but that, being shut up in a silent chamber whence branch out wires incapable of one thought or feeling, it can pour along these a vivid and changeful fire which conveys its feeling to another.

"No man," says Paul, touching on these things, "knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him." To you all minds are invisible. True, the mind of your neighbor is in all respects the fellow of your own; yet you cannot tell what is within it. It may be forming plans for your ruin or for your good; but this is beyond your eye, or ear, or heart's divining. Every man dwells in the invisible, and often rejoices to look out upon a race, no one of which can look in upon him; yet oftener does he rejoice to pour himself into others, and multiply his own feelings in the spirits around him. When the invisible "spirit of man" wills to make known "the things of the man," it has easy, though mysterious, means at command. A man is seated in his chamber, and deep things are passing in his mind. His mother sees that he is thinking; but ask her to tell his thoughts, and she is at a loss. His wife looks into his eye, and knows that he is feeling; but ask her what is the spring and course of his emotion, and she is in the dark. His little daughter sees something lofty on her father's brow; but what it is, she knows not. Presently a thousand people are before him, and "the spirit of the man" is opening itself: a stream of thought is pouring from it--thought which ranges from the most familiar objects at hand to those which are hidden in the bosom of eternity. Yet all these thoughts, mingled with suitable emotion, pass straight from his unseen soul into the souls of the thousand people. How is this accomplished? Between him and them is floating a something which we call "sound." The keenest eye cannot see it; the most delicate touch, or smell, or taste, can find no trace of it. As it is rushing upon the ear, both eye and hand search in vain for it; yet is it carrying invisible thought, from a soul invisible, by channels invisible, into the silent places of many souls, where the thoughts it raises are invisible to the nearest neighbor, till expressed in looks or words. The mind of the speaker pours a succession of impulses through hidden chords to his tongue and lips: these strike the air, in which the stroke makes a wave; that strikes on the drum of the ear, which causes a quivering of a nerve behind, that a quivering of the brain; and then the soul inside sees an image of Stephen dying, or Paul falling on the high road, or Elijah ascending, or Jesus at the right hand of the Father! What connection is there between a

wave of air, a quiver of the brain, and an idea of heaven or hell, of sin or holiness? That the connection exists, is plain; but how? Make it plain how "the spirit of man," which "knoweth the things of a man," can reveal them within other spirits. All we can say is, God has appointed a channel of communication, given to the spirit means of expression, and to its fellows means of perception. With this fact before us, illustrated not only in the one form just cited, but in a thousand forms every day, upon what pretext do we set up a cry of mystery as to the communication of the Spirit of God with man? Absurdity can reach no limit greater than that of supposing that the central intellect knows no avenue to all intellect; that is, is defective in means of expression. Despair can hurl humanity no lower than to say that God, able to commune with it, enlighten, renew, and impel it, yet distantly stands away; for, if no communication exists, the reason lies in him. To say that the defect is not in his power of expression, but in our power of perception, changes nothing. If he cannot "reveal the things of God" to man, with such powers of perception as man has, he cannot adapt the expression of his own will to our state.

Many who shun the extreme of denying that God does hold communion with human souls, yet cover the truth with a soft but cold cloak--a cloak of snow--by always speaking loudly of the mystery. What is the way of the Spirit? How can man recognize the voice, the eye, the countenance of God? How is it possible to feel his anger or his favor, his presence or his withdrawal? Is it not a mystery? Yes, it is a mystery; but it is nothing more. A mystery is a thing we are most accustomed to. I know no one thing which I perfectly know; I know ten thousand which are full of mysteries. The nail of my finger is a mystery; the fact is manifest, the mode undiscoverable. About my hand I can ask more questions than all mankind can answer; wrist, arm, shoulder, all have mysteries. As I approach the heart, the brain, what crowds of questions rise and are checked by the known impossibility of an answer! If "the way of the Spirit" were capable of perfect explanation, the whole universe would be a riddle; for why should that which was so high be fully known, and every common thing under our eye contain mysteries? The mystery involved in the Lord's communicating with any of his creatures is far less than that of our communicating one with another. He is of infinite intelligence: he planted the ear, he gave man speech; for him, therefore, to communicate with any spirit existing must be easier than for the sun to shine.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." The apostle does not say this of heaven; he is not even alluding to it, for it is "the glory that is to be revealed": whereas he says of the "good things" here in view, "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." These good things, then, are not teachings, for of them eye, ear, and mind take cognizance; nor heaven, for it is not yet revealed; but those blessings which "are prepared" for those who come at the Lord's call--pardon, adoption, and the favor of God. Anticipating the inquiry, "How can those things be--how can acts of mercy, which pass in the invisible world, be revealed to us?" the apostle gives this simple illustration: "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 the Spirit of God." If the things of God are beyond our eye, ear, or discernment, so are those of a man; and if man can make his mind known, how much more the All-wise! "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 to us of God." Adoption is an act seen by no man; and were no communication of it made to him in whose favor it hath passed, he could never by his senses or reason discover it. Though adopted, he would lie in the spirit of bondage. But that we

may not be ignorant of this essential change in our relation to our heavenly Father, not ignorant of the things which his grace has bestowed, he has provided a Comforter, whose benign work it is to solace our hearts by letting us "know" what the Lord hath done for us. The belief that God does not commune with man is no result of reason. Reason has no footing for it. It is, indeed, hardly a belief; it is a feeling, followed by a sort of half-seen mental conclusion. A boy, conscious of deserving his father's anger, somehow thinks he will not be received at home. Men, conscious that they are aliens from God, recoil from the thought that the very breast wherein they have caged things unclean may be a shrine of his presence. A feeling of moral improbability, of unfitness, leads the mind to shrink from such a hope. Hope, indeed, it does not seem at first: the boy forgets the hopefulness of standing by his father's side in the dread of coming under his eye; forgets the joy of regaining his favor in the heat of enmity to his rule and restraints. A natural difficulty to the Creator's communion with his rational creatures never existed. A moral one did; and never was problem so deep as, How could the Holy One take the impure to his arms, and yet continue the Holy One? That problem has been solved. The Holy meets the unholy over the blood of atonement. There is death for evildoing, wrath against iniquity, yet mercy for the repenting. Sin is not encouraged, innocence is not confounded with guilt; and yet the fallen are lifted up. This moral difficulty being met, and no natural one ever having existed, did the Lord not commune with the soul of man as with his own "offspring," the only reason must be that he pleased to cut off from such fellowship. To affirm this would be to run into downright opposition to the whole scope of revelation. Not a few of those who, if formally expressing their belief, would maintain that the Spirit is to abide with the Church in all ages; that the idea of impossibility in his communing with man is absurd, and the cry of mystery unmeaning; nevertheless, in practice, effectually shut out his agency from their own view, and that of those who may be under their influence, by continually speaking of the truth, the truth only, as the power to renew this sinful world. Far be it from us to undervalue holy truth, and, above all, that truth which flows untainted from the fount of inspiration; but a truth, even when Divine, is never more than a declaration of what is. It is not the power which renews the human soul, but the instrument of that power; not the electric current, but the conductor along which the current flows. It is necessary, as necessary as the metal wire to the telegraph; but, alone, it is as inefficient as the wire when the hidden power does not pervade it.

You may teach a man the holiest truths, and yet leave him a wretched man. Many who learn in childhood that "God is love," live disregarding, and die blaspheming, God. Thousands who are carefully taught, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved," neglect so great salvation all their days. Some of the most wicked and miserable beings that walk the earth are men into whose conscience, when yet youthful and unsophisticated, the truth was carefully instilled. Did the mere truth suffice to renew, there are towns, districts, aye, countries, where all would be saints.

Unmindful of this, and not considering the danger of diverting faith from the power to the instrument, however beautiful and perfect the instrument may be, many good men, by a culpable inadvertence, constantly speak as if the truth had an inherent ascendancy over man, and would certainly prevail when justly presented. We have heard this done till we have been ready to ask, "Do they take men for angels, that mere truth is to captivate them so certainly?"--aye, and even to ask, "Have they ever heard whether there be any Holy Ghost?" On one occasion it was our lot to hear a preacher of name, preaching before a great Missionary Society from the text, "I am come to

send fire upon earth." Choosing to interpret the fire referred to in this passage as the power which would purify and renew the earth, he at once declared the truth to be that power, and most consistently pursued his theme, without ever glancing at anything but the instrument. Afterwards hearing the merits of the sermon discussed by some of the most eminent ministers of his own denomination, and finding no allusion to its theology, we asked, "Did you not remark any theological defect?" No one remarked any, till the minister of some obscure country congregation broke silence, for the first time, by saying, "Yes; there was not one word in it about the Holy Spirit." The belief that truth is mighty, and by reason of its might must prevail, is equally fallacious in the abstract, as it is opposed to the facts of human history and to the word of God. We should take the maxim, that truth must prevail, as perfectly sound, did you only give us a community of angels on whom to try the truth. With every intellect clear, and every heart upright, doubtless truth would soon be discerned, and, when discerned, cordially embraced. But truth, in descending among us, does not come among friends. The human heart offers ground whereon it meets error at an immeasurable disadvantage. Passions, habits, interests--aye, nature itself--lean to the side of error; and though the judgment may assent to the truth, which, however is not always the case, still error may gain a conquest only the more notable because of this impediment.

Those who compliment Truth upon her might have need of much self-possession. What world do they dwell in, that they can utter such flattery under the gaze of her clear and sober eye? What are these nations yet neglecting commercial and political truth, though all their interests invite them to embrace it? What these "enlightened" populations that have had religious truth again and again held up in their view, but have angrily rejected it, though to the entailing upon themselves innumerable social disadvantages? Where is the town where truth always prevails, or the village where error wins no victories? Do they who know human nature best, when they have a political object to carry, trust most of all to the power of truth over a constituency? or would they not have far more confidence in corruption and revelry? The whole history of man is a melancholy reproof to those who mouth about the mightiness of truth. "But," they say, "truth will prevail in the long run." Yes, blessed be God, it will; but not because of its own power over human nature, but because the Spirit will be poured out from on high, opening the blind eyes, and unstopping the deaf ears. The sacred writings, while ever leading us to regard the truth as the one instrument of the sinner's conversion and the believer's sanctification, are very far from proclaiming its power over human nature, merely because it is truth. On the contrary, they often show us that this very fact will enlist the passions of mankind against it, and awaken enmity instead of approbation. We are ever pointed beyond the truth, to Him who is the Source and Giver of truth; and, though we had apostles to deliver the gospel, are ever told not to deem it enough that it should be "in word only, but in demonstration of the Spirit and in power."

We well know that many who speak of the truth as accomplishing all, do not mean the truth without the Spirit to apply it; but what is meant ought to be said. Hold fast the truth as an instrument divinely adapted and altogether necessary; but in magnifying the instrument, never forget or pass by the agent. The Spirit in the truth, in the preacher, in the hearer; the Spirit first, the Spirit last, ought to be remembered, trusted in, exalted, and not set aside for any more captivating name. There should never be even the distant appearance of wishing to avoid avowing a belief in the supernatural, or to reduce Christianity to a system capable at all points of metaphysical analysis. If no supernatural power is expected to attend the gospel, its promulgation is both insincere and

futile. In their reluctance to acknowledge any supernatural element in religion, many take refuge in the idea that, after all, we are not to expect what the primitive Christians enjoyed. If this means that we are not to expect miracles, to it we have no possible objection. If it means that we are to expect less grace, we can give it no kind of credit. Nothing can be more contrary to the whole spirit and genius of revealed religion than that the progress of years and events should be coupled with a diminishing amount of Divine life and grace among men. All things promise us progress, not retrogression. No principle of Christianity, and no passage of the Christian Scriptures, warrant the expectation that the system is to decline with age, and to grow dim before its day ends. The mode of thinking to which we now refer, seems to be closely connected with the favorite idea of unbelief in the world--that of the Almighty "leaving," as men express it, one and another province of his territories to the care of secondary principles and powers.

Limited as the human mind is, the idea of combining attention to the general and to the particular always presents to it an extreme difficulty. In its own experience, when taking a general view, it necessarily overlooks particulars; when minutely attending to particulars, it necessarily overlooks generals. Unconsciously transferring the idea of its own limitation to the Supreme Power, it would ease him of the incomprehensible task of at once minutely caring for every atom, and gloriously ruling the universe. But in the presence of the universal, the distinction between the particular and the general fades away. Artificial lights either shine in one particular apartment, leaving the street dim, or shine upon the street generally, leaving each particular apartment of the houses dim; but when the universal light arises, he knows no distinction between general illumination and particular. Every little casement in the world is equally lighted as the broad valley of the Ganges, and every solitary daisy as well shone upon as if there were no other thing upon earth to lighten.

"He leaves, he leaves; he creates and leaves--leaves to the course of nature; leaves no general laws." Such is the crude language we continually hear from men who would transfer the small ideas of human sense to the infinite sphere of the Godhead. The idea of the Omnipresent leaving, forsaking any part of his own dominions; putting a limit to himself; creating, in fact, the most incomprehensible of all incomprehensible things, a place where there was not a Creator--the idea of his presence being an effort, or his embrace and superintendence of nature being a task, is unworthy even of the dignity of physical science, much more of the sweep of human thoughts. On the wings of the wind; on the universal flow of electric power; on the swift sunbeams, filling up with a finite infinity the whole expanse of the solar system at once; on the light of a fixed star present with our eye, and at the same moment present through space inconceivably immense at every point from our eye to the star, and then away as far beyond, and round and round again at all conceivable points of the circumference on every side--on these confessedly finite objects our thought may rest, and rise step by step till it easily springs to the idea of a complete and consistent Infinite, a presence literally everywhere, a power constant as eternity, an activity to which inaction would be effort, an eye to which attention is but nature, and slumber would be an interruption of repose.

Those who would exclude the Divine Being from his own universe have been often exclaimed against, and justly; but how much more may they be exclaimed against who would exclude him from his own Church, and from communion with his children? Had his power been exhausted by the act of creating and establishing the Church, and then had he committed its future course to the development of natural laws and the inherent power of the truth, himself retiring from all action in

the great battle whereupon he had set his servants, we might reasonably look upon Christianity as a religion which, perhaps, was better than others, more serviceable to the social interests of those who embrace it, and more genial in its influence upon the destiny of mankind; but higher motives than these for its propagation, or greater strength for the men who undertake the task, could not be calculated on. So far, however, from this being the case, the express promise with regard to the Spirit was, "He shall abide with you forever"; and when about to leave the disciples as to his bodily presence, the Saviour said, "And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." A presence, this, better than a bodily presence--a presence by his Spirit and his power, whereby the souls of his children are made glad, and their hearts made strong, not in some solitary village of Galilee for the evening, but at the same hour all over the earth, wherever two or three are gathered together in his name. That presence will never be withdrawn while there is a believer whose heart embraces the promise; and such believers will not fail while the world stands. So far from anything in Scripture countenancing the idea that Christians of all subsequent ages were to be deprived of that Divine help which constituted the strength and holiness of the primitive disciples, we have no intimation that they were to be even inferior in spiritual attainments. On the contrary, everything countenances the expectation that, as generation succeeds generation, the influence of holy faith and holy example will steadily tend to the elevation of the standard. As Christianity makes progress among a population, every new household which becomes imbued with it is an additional power toward elevating the standard of character in that neighborhood. It is impossible to calculate the influence exerted, even in a country like our own, where religion has yet so much to do, upon those who are still ungodly. In many points their consciences have been trained, by force of example and precept, to a tenderness and activity which Christian doctrine alone could give; and, as age after age rolls on, and the proportion between the saints and sinners becomes altered, the latter diminishing, the former growing, the image of God in man will be yet more and more brightly seen, if not more conspicuously, in some rare and blessed individuals, yet much more generally, as a common ornament and glory of human nature. For a Christian now to expect to be made as holy by the grace of God as the saints of the New Testament, so far from being presumption, is scarcely a worthy measure of faith. It may be fairly said that, if we are not better than those who went before us, we are not so good; for the very light of their example sheds upon us an influence to which nothing corresponding was shed upon them, and thereby gives us a dear advantage, by which, with a similar measure of grace, we ought to present a character more complete. Were it once proved that our moral strength in the present day was natural, then, indeed, might we reasonably limit our expectations, but not to partial attainments and incomplete holiness; for on that ground the reasonable limitation would be, not, "We shall attain to much, though not as much as the early Christians," but, "We shall attain to nothing." Our Lord's word is not, "Without me ye can do little," but, "Without me ye can do nothing." If it then be settled that in this age, as in the first, our strength is not of nature, but of the Lord, the reasonable range of our expectation, now as then, is to be measured by his glorious power. The question no longer is, Of what are we capable in ourselves, or by ourselves? but, What can he perform? and to what extent can he manifest forth his glory by making us monuments of his power, and mirrors to display his image? That grace of his which was shed so plentifully on the believers of the first days, is not an intermittent radiance, like the flash of a human eye, but is steady as the glory which streams from the face of the sun. Waning or exhaustion it does not know; and from age to age, from generation to generation, his saints will grow more and more mature, human life will increasingly reflect the glory of the Lord,

and display his power to make weak mortals, beset with temptations, meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Some who gladly admit that the Church, generally, may advance in Christian virtues, yet hesitate to believe that individual Christians in our day are to enjoy the same comforts of the Spirit as were so conspicuous in the primitive Christians. Among these latter nothing is more noticeable than filial confidence and joy: their reconciliation to the Lord, their interest in the death and intercession of Christ, their consciousness of regeneration, of deliverance from sins once reigning over them, their clear foretaste of heaven, and their peace in the prospect of death, shine throughout the New Testament and all the early records of the Church. This was the natural "fruit of the Spirit," the natural effect of such a Comforter as the Redeemer had promised dwelling in the heart. Take this characteristic away, and they would at once fall from the level of "children of light," of "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ," down to that of the votaries of other religions, among whom personal "joy in God" and prospects of immortal bliss are things unknown. As we said before, that a religion without the Holy Spirit would not be Christianity, so we may say that religionists without the Spirit in their hearts would not be Christians. "Ye are in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." It requires much of that cold daring which men may acquire as to things spiritual, for any one who even respects, though he should not study, the record of Christianity at its source, to teach that it is not a common privilege of believers to enjoy a sense of their salvation, and to walk in the light of God's forgiving countenance. No scrap of Holy Writ even seems to favor this attempt to sink modern Christians to a point almost infinitely below that of ancient ones: for who can measure the distance between a soul which is singing, "We know that we have passed from death unto life," and one that is saying, "I cannot hope to know, till death strikes me, whether or not I shall escape dying forever"? A change more serious can hardly be imagined in the relations of the Lord to his people than would take place under the Christian dispensation, if, beginning by enabling believers to say, "We have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," he ended by leaving them in utter doubt as to their future destiny; if, beginning by giving them a sense of his favor, clear as day, unspeakably joyful, he ended by leaving them to serve him throughout life, without ever feeling conscious that he smiled upon them; if, beginning by holding communion with them, he ended by leaving them to doubt whether he was even reconciled. It is trifling at once with a man's common sense and with his most sacred hopes and fears, to tell him that he is called with the same calling as the early believers, by the voice of the same Redeemer, under the same covenant of grace, and with the same promise of adoption; but that, while his brother, ages ago, had "peace with God," and "joy unspeakable and full of glory"--knew himself to be a child and then an heir of God, and daily felt that heaven was his home--he is to proceed on his pilgrimage without any of these comforts, and learn at the end whether or not his soul is to perish. Who has given any man the right to assert that such a change has taken place in the relation of the adopting Father to his adopted children, affirming him to have grown, in our age, too indifferent to soothe their hearts, and make them partakers of the joy which he spreads among the angels when he declares that the 'lost is found'? The change which the supposition we are combating would require in the office, or, at least, in the operation, of the Spirit himself, under the very dispensation of the Spirit, is sufficiently grave, one might imagine, to make the least careful pause, ere he assumed that it had taken place. The act wherein the Everlasting Father absolves a guilty being from his offenses, and recognizes him before the angels as an heir of his glory, must ever be of deep importance in the

government of God. Of old time, when that great act took place, heaven rejoiced; but the deed did not remain without effect upon earth. The King had proclaimed a pardon, and that proclamation must have effect. The Comforter sped to the mourner's heart. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." With the presence of the Comforter, the captive found "deliverance," and he that was bound, an "opening of the prison"; and, tasting the liberty of the children of God, he sang, "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me." Are we, then, on the word of some men, without one intimation of Scripture to support them, to believe that the Spirit has so essentially changed his mode of dealing with a forgiven sinner, that now the decree of pardon promulgated above, and hailed by angels, receives no effect in the soul of him whom it absolves? that the Comforter abstains from comforting, leaving the ransomed captive still to mourn his captivity, without relieving him of his load or of his chain? O Dove of Peace, ancient Comforter of the pilgrims who traveled this heavenward road before us, they say that thy wing has grown weary with the lapse of time!

How great a change would take place also in the privilege of believers! "We are of God," "born of God," "heirs of God," "followers of God, as dear children," "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God"--"once darkness, now light in the Lord." Such was the sense of adoption enjoyed in apostolic times. Of all the privileges wherewith the soul of man ever has been blessed, or ever can be blessed in this life, by far the most consoling and elevating is the sense of adoption into the family of God. No man can read the New Testament, and deny that this was an ordinary characteristic of the believers then living, or that it was a main element of their strength, kindling in them a joy which made them ready to face reproach and emulate high service. Where is the intimation that this privilege was to be denied to Christians in succeeding ages? When Paul says, "But I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting," does he give any intimation that the believers of following ages, though they should be believers just as he, and should obtain "life everlasting" just as he, and should have his case and his mercies before their eyes, as "a pattern" whereby to measure their expectations from Jesus Christ's "longsuffering," were yet to lose an essential portion of the believer's joy--namely, the power of saying, "But I obtained mercy"? Even the Psalmist, under a dispensation lower than our own, could say, "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Does he hint that this is a privilege to which only a few can attain, and from which the children of God, in the better days to come, shall be ordinarily debarred? "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found"--conveying a clear intimation that just as he, on confession of his sins, found forgiveness--such forgiveness as healed the grief of soul which he describes a moment before, and enabled him to sing, as he here does, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven" (Psalms 32:1-11)--so would every godly-disposed person find an acceptable time, if he prayed to the same merciful Lord for like forgiveness. No godly man, no one whose heart was seeking after God, in the day of David, could read this without feeling that the 'blessedness' of absolution was held out to him as his privilege. Indeed, all through the Psalms it is taken for granted that the righteous man rejoices in his forgiving God. And does the grace of our blessed Redeemer grow narrower as time advances? Does he gradually withdraw the light of his countenance till upon us of the latter days complete darkness settles, and we are doomed to grope our way through life's temptations without the encouragement of one smile from him, and at the end to set a doubtful foot on the threshold of eternity? The idea of any such deterioration in the

privilege of believers is totally groundless, without one prop in Scripture or in reason. In a structure of ice, formed in cold seasons, and melts away when brought either into the sunlight of Scripture or the warmth of living Christian society. We could not easily believe in any accession to our privileges, beyond those of our brethren in early times, unless it were clearly taught in the word of God; but if, without Scripture proof, we must believe either in an increase or in a diminution of them, we should choose the former, as far more supported by the analogy of the Lord's dealings with men.

"Peace" was the Saviour's legacy to his followers; peace to be imparted by the Comforter; peace which the world cannot give, and which passeth understanding. He leaves no hint that this legacy was to be recalled before "the end of the world." Indeed, in both the Old Testament and the New, happiness is an essential part of religion; that kind of happiness which is called "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The reigning of such joy in any human bosom clearly presupposes that the individual is satisfied of the reconciliation of God to him, notwithstanding his sins. Wherever this is doubtful, distrust, fear, and gloom must ever accompany the contemplation of the Most High; and this gloom would settle most densely on the most contrite spirit. Happiness is to be a feature of religion to the last. That odious caricature of Christianity, which offers to the view of the world a man with all the doctrines of the gospel on his lips, but gloom on his brow, disquiet in his eye, and sourness in his bearing, has done infinite injustice to our benign religion, and infinite harm to those who never knew its worth. Now, as in the days of Solomon, "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace"; now, as in the days of David, she "puts gladness into the heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased"; now, as in the days of Paul, she gives "joy and peace in believing." Happiness is not a separable appendage of true piety; it is part of it, and an essential part: "The joy of the Lord is your strength." Some would regard happiness as if it were to religion what a fine complexion is to the human countenance--a great addition to its beauties, if present; but if not, no feature is wanting. In the sacred writings, from first to last, it is regarded as a feature which cannot remove without both wounding and defacing. The kingdom of God is not only "righteousness," but "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

While that kingdom stands, this "joy in the Holy Ghost" will be the privilege of the children of God; and let no man stand between the humblest believer of this our day and the full light of his Redeemer's countenance. Let none take it for granted that the work of God in the soul of man has degenerated; that the merciful Father no more gladdens the prodigal he accepts, by letting him know he loves him; that Jesus no longer says, "Be of good cheer: thy sins be forgiven thee"; or that when a penitent is accepted as a son, the gracious Comforter does not now, as in the old time, hasten on his dovelike message to diffuse heavenly peace in another troubled bosom. The assertion sometimes confidently made, that the witness of the Spirit to our adoption is given to some believers, years after their conversion, as the reward of special holiness, has not even a pretext of scriptural footing. The witness of the Spirit, so far from being the reward of sanctification, is one of its chief springs; for without love there is no holiness, and we only love because we feel that God first loved us. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Not because you are old and eminent among the sons of God, but because you are sons: it is not a good-service reward, but a birthright; not a crown of distinction, but a joy of adoption. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

Here the order is, "Ye heard, believed, were sealed": no long period of doubt and labor intervenes between the believing and the sealing. The father of the prodigal does not keep him for years, working "as one of his hired servants," before he prints the fatherly kiss of reconciliation on his cheek and on his heart. The hackneyed objection, that it is presumption for any one to say that he is a child of God, takes too much for granted. It never is presumption to acknowledge what you are. Had David never been taken from the sheepcote and made king, it would have been presumption in him to say that he had; but when it was the case, he was in gratitude bound to own and to commemorate the mercy shown to him. So, if a man has not been delivered from the dominion of sin and adopted into the family of God, for him to say that such is the case is presumption; but if he has, then not to praise his Redeemer for it would be ingratitude. Saying that it is presumption for any one to call himself the child of God, takes it for granted that no one is; or else it is absurd. Presumption has many forms; and it is worth considering, whether a great and good Being would most disapprove the presumption which expected too much from his goodness, or the presumption which dared positively to disbelieve his promise.

Many who readily admit that, to some extent at least, the Church in all ages will enjoy the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, and who would not deny that the first believers were favored with direct manifestations of the favor of God, yet make a difficulty of believing that, when sinners are forgiven in the present age, they are comforted by the Spirit manifesting himself in their hearts, and crying, "Abba, Father"? They do not deny that, even in our day, forgiven sinners are solaced with a confidence that they are forgiven; but they see prudential reasons against admitting that this is imparted by the direct witness of the Spirit, and would arrive at it by a process which, however unwittingly on their part, removes the office of sealing the adopted children of God from the Spirit, and gives it to the reason of man. They teach the seeker of salvation that, instead of looking to the cross for mercy, till the Spirit, as the Comforter, "reveals the Son of God in his heart," he is certainly to look to the cross, but not to expect that to bring any such manifestation; on the contrary, he is only to learn what are the marks of a child of God, to compare his life with them, and, if it and they agree, his mind will arrive at the comfortable persuasion that he is a child of God. This is one instance of the common error of taking part of a process for the whole. On the part of the Christian, the comparison of the scriptural marks of the regenerated with his own character is not only good, but absolutely necessary: for, no matter what may be his supposed comforts, joys, or revelations. if, in his life. he is not led by the Spirit of God, he is not a son of God. But because certain evidence is essential as a corroboration, it does not follow that it is the chief evidence of the fact, the first ground of conviction. As a guard against delusion, a strengthening of our confidence, and a constant stimulus to press forward to the things which are before, a sober judgment passed upon our own progress in grace is scriptural, rational, and indispensable. As the mode of binding up the broken heart of a penitent, of imparting to him the first feeling of filial confidence in the Lord, it is neither scriptural nor rational. It never can be the original ground of consciousness in any soul, that, through the abundance of grace, I, even I, am an adopted child of God.

Yet this is the consciousness to be given, and that not to the heart of one who is "whole," but of one who is "sick"; not of a man who thinks that he is good, who is ready to interpret everything in his own favor, and has no feeling that he is vile, or that the Lord is angry with him; but of one who now feels what probably he believed all his life--that he is a sinner, covered with dark and filthy

spots, the displeasure of the Lord hanging over him for many unholy deeds, and his poor soul both fitted for destruction and exposed to it. Until painfully sensible of his need of Christ, no man flees to him for refuge; and one in this state of feeling is soberly told that his burden is to be removed, and the sense of his salvation to be originated, by his being satisfied of the agreement of his own life with the fruits of the Spirit, as stated in the word of God.

What are those fruits? "Love, joy, peace," etc., or "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." No enumeration of the fruits of the Spirit will be found which excludes peace and joy, much less love; and from these graces--if, indeed, not from the last-named alone --spring the various fruits which unitedly constitute "righteousness." The poor penitent, then, is not to be first relieved of his load, and given to feel that God loves him; but, previous to obtaining such Divine comfort, he is to become satisfied that his love, joy, peace, and other graces, are such as mark the children of God--that is, while yet feeling that the Lord is angry with him, he is to love the Lord; while yet feeling that his soul is unsaved, he is to feel joy in the Holy Ghost. If it be said that the feeling of the Lord's wrath and his own danger is removed before the filial affections appear, then a direct action of the Comforter, antecedent to his satisfaction with his own graces, is admitted; and if that be denied, there is no alternative but to conclude that, at the same time and in the same heart, one can both feel that he is under God's anger, and love God as a forgiving Father; can feel that he is in danger of hell, and enjoy spiritual peace. If the sense of wrath and danger is removed before the fruits of the Spirit appear, there is a direct witness of the Spirit himself; if not till after, the totally incompatible states of mind just mentioned must coexist. The relation of the fruit of the Spirit to the witness of the Spirit is clearly indicated to us. John says, "We love him because he first loved us." Here the fruit, "We love," is made consequent on our sense of the fact, "He first loved us." To say that we first know that God loves us, because we feel that we love him, is to make the fruit of the Spirit the foundation of the witness of the Spirit: a relation totally repugnant to the principle announced in this text, and pervading the New Testament, as, indeed, also the Old. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities." The fact of forgiveness ascertained is the ground of filial gratitude; not filial gratitude the ground from which the fact of forgiveness is inferred.

Mental conclusions, as to spiritual truths, do not govern the feelings. The marks of "a child of wrath" are plainly laid down. Thousands know that they bear them; and yet this produces no contrition or distress, till the coming Spirit pierces their hearts. As it is with convincing, so would it be with comforting. A mental conclusion as to my own spiritual attainments would never dispel a sense of guilt from my conscience, nor make my trembling heart "rejoice in the Lord." Did an awakened sinner conclude a hundred times that the marks in the Bible and the traits in his character agreed, his wounded spirit having no other balm, all this concluding would never heal his sore. The same voice which spoke condemnation into his conscience must speak justification; the same hand which broke his hard heart must bind it up. The deeper the penitence of any one, the slower would he be to take comfort from any good in himself; therefore, on a theory which makes this the foundation of comfort, the farther would he be from finding rest; while, on the more evangelical view, the very depth of his penitence would drive him the more speedily to bring his burden to the cross, when it would fall off. This allusion brings Bunyan and his Pilgrim once more to our view. He does not set Christian to undo his own burden by arguing, "I have fled from the City of Destruction; I have forsaken house and friends, wife and children; have resisted

temptations to return; have knocked at the gate and entered in, and am in the narrow path"; but, with all this done, he brings him to "a place somewhat ascending," where stands a cross, and, "just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back." He did not cast off the burden by a process which could easily be explained; but, when he set his eye on the cross, it fell off itself; and "it was very surprising to him that the sight of the cross should thus ease him of his burden." And so it is to others; but, however surprising, do thou, my penitent brother, heed no other direction than that which points thine eye straight to the cross; for pardon, for escape from hell, for rest and hope and purity, look thither, thither, only thither! If thy burden fall not at once, yet still look, look to the cross; and fall it will, far sooner and far more surely than if thou attempt to untie it by thy arguments! As Christian thus stood before the cross, wondering, the "Three Shining Ones came to him. The first said, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee'; the second stripped him of his rags, and clothed him with change of raiment; the third, also, set a mark on his forehead, and gave him a roll with a seal upon it, which he bade him look on as he ran, and that he should give it in at the celestial gate." This is unsophisticated Christianity. A burdened sinner, after discouragements and wanderings, comes, at last, to the foot of the cross. He looks, and is healed; his pardon, freely given, is tenderly manifested to him. The Father, Son, and Spirit unite to assure his heart, and give him present and abiding peace. He receives an evidence of acceptance, where he may always Read his title clear To mansions in the skies.

After this, the more he "searches" his own self, "and proves" his own self, "whether he be in the faith," the better for his vigilance and progress. But no such examining before would have unloosed his burden, or given him the roll. The theory of an inferential comforting of believers, as a substitute for the scriptural mode of a "witness" of the Spirit, is singularly hopeless; for, at every step, it is obliged to lean upon that which it professes to dispense with and replace. It rests all "quietness and assurance" for penitent hearts on the fruits of the Spirit; and the very chief of those fruits, "love," etc., presupposes the witness of the Spirit by a necessity as clear as that by which repentance presupposes his convincing operation.

No; the sealing and solacing of penitent believers is not left to mere reasoning, especially with a foundation so liable to be misapprehended as our own attainments in grace. It is the work and office of that "other Comforter" whom our dying Lord promised; and let no man take it out of his hand! He it is who "cries" in the heart, "Abba, Father"; he who heals, he who bears witness, he who sheds abroad the love of God, he who enables us to know the things that are freely given to us of God. Any attempts to escape the mystery involved in the Holy Spirit revealing the mercy of God to a human soul, only leads to contradictions and perplexities. To the old question, "How can these things be?" the one sufficient answer is, "They are spiritually discerned." What the Lord spiritually reveals, the soul can spiritually discern; and a Divine presence, or a Divine communication, may be assumed always to carry its own evidence with it, first to the consciousness, and then, by its fruits, to the reason. "One thing I know: whereas I was blind, now I see."

It is not to be wondered at that many who are sincere, and even earnest, pass the days of their pilgrimage in gloom, having no roll in their bosom which they know can be presented "at the celestial gate"; no conscious title to enter into the city; no permanent "joy or peace in believing." Nothing is more dangerous than to divert the eye from the one object of faith. And if persons are not taught to look, and look upon the cross, until their sins are blotted out, and the comforting Spirit

himself heals their wounds, but to seek rest by noting their own progress in the Christian graces, and are at the same time left without any fellowship of saints, through which they might learn by what steps of fear and doubt, of despair and hope and faith, others, whose whole spirit savors of the peace of God, obtained that blessing,--is it not natural that they should walk in dim moonlight, instead of walking in the sun? Yet, even amid those so dealt with, the Lord oftentimes breaks up man's theories by converting a sinner with such manifestation of the Spirit that it would be equally impossible to persuade him that his peace first came by contemplating his graces, and to keep him from telling what the Lord had done for his soul. The character of the Christian Church, as a whole, must always be ruled by the character of individual Christians; for the Church is but the assembly and aggregate of individuals. If, then, as the ages advance, the individual Christian degenerate, the Church must gradually degenerate also, her ministry be debilitated, and her efforts upon the world be less fruitful. All Christian character depends on the relations of the soul with its Creator: if these be cold instead of being joyous, if they be governed by the feeling of a doubtful reconciliation instead of that of a happy sonship, then, of necessity, the life is overcast with the shadows of not improbable perdition instead of being sunned with cloudless hopes of glory; and service is rendered as to an austere Master instead of to a most forgiving and loving Father. Strike from the language of the Christian the words, "Our fellowship is with the Father and the Son," and at once we have a race whose religion is not the religion of John, whose heart strength is not drawn from the same sources as his.

Whether it be in comforts, in sensible communion with the reconciled Deity, or in practical sanctification of life, we contend that all Scripture holds out to his disciples of this actual hour, poor and undeserving though we be, the same sources and the same measure of grace as were open to our brethren of former times. There has been no recall of the Spirit, no curtailing of the "abundant pardon," no abridging of the privileges of the adopted. The promise of the Holy Spirit was not only to the first converts, but, as Peter, addressing them, said, "to us, and to our children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call." However distant from that spot in Jerusalem, and however distant from that moment of time, the call might sound, it would carry with it the promise--even that promise, the fulfillment of which made the early Church so holy and so victorious. The flames, the tongues, the outward signs, were not the saving grace of the Spirit. That was "within you," in the soul of man, and was shown in "new creatures." That saving grace of the Spirit, working in Christians now, constitutes their identity with those of old. Without this, in apostolic times, though one spoke with "the tongues of angels and of men," and could "work all miracles," he was not a true disciple. With this, in our times, though one work no miracle, and speak not with tongues, he is a true disciple; for "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Miraculous gifts were not of the essence, but separable attendants, of a real Christian; and all that was then essential remains to us, unimpaired and free as ever it was to them.

Father, Son, and Spirit, pardon the unbelief which has imagined that thou didst repent of the exceeding abundance of grace once given to thy ransomed Church! Afflict us not, on account of it, by a real withdrawal of thy presence! Manifest forth thy glory anew, by filling thy children with joy and light, that the world may see that thine ancient love and grace remain our heritage!

Next to the question, whether the privileges of the modern Christian, as respects grace, are to be equal with those of the primitive one, comes the question, whether the Christian ministry is now

essentially the same institution as at first. If believers are not now the same as formerly, it is impossible that the same religion should be preserved in the world; and if the ministers be not the same, it is

6. Practical Lessons

CHAPTER VI.

PRACTICAL LESSONS. AT one time we meant to dwell at considerable length upon practical lessons connected with our subject; but this book is already larger than we wished it to be, and we will therefore touch only three topics. We may learn a lesson on the source of power; one on the way to obtain power; and one on the scale on which our expectations of success should be framed. In the application of any instrument, no error can be more fatal than one that affects the source of power. To recur to an illustration before used, any reasoning upon explosive weapons which assumed elasticity to be the source of power, must lead completely astray. If this is to be noted in all things, it is especially to be noted in what affects the regeneration of the world. In merely natural processes, persons proposing to affect the sentiments of mankind must depend largely on their influence, their wealth, and their facilities. Christians frequently permit themselves to fall into a state of mind in which the want of all or any of these is taken to be fatal to their prospects of success, and the acquisition of them to be the first step toward making any impression. But wealth, influence, and facilities, however great, never yet secured results in the spiritual conversion of men; while the most notable triumphs of Christianity have often been gained in the total absence of them all.

Others, or the same men at different times, would rather allow their hopes to rest on order, talent, or truth. But neither are these the source of power. Order is as necessary in Christianity as are bones, ligaments, and skin in a man; talent is as necessary as brain, and truth as blood. But you may have all these, and have a paralytic--aye, have them all, and have but a corpse. You must have both the breathing spirit and that indescribable something we call "power." Indeed, the order of the Christian Church ought to be such, her outward framework so constructed, that she shall not be as a building, which, though it looks more cheerful when there is life within, yet will stand when there is none; but rather as a body, which falls the moment the spirit forsakes it, and tends to decomposition. No Church ought to be otherwise constructed than in entire dependence on the presence of the living Spirit in all her ministerial arrangements. Her frame ought to answer to no definition that would suit an inorganic body; but to answer exactly to the celebrated definition of an organic one--namely, "that wherein every part is mutually means and end." The pervading presence of the Spirit should be assumed, so that, if it be absent, the pains of death shall instantly take hold upon her, and the cry be extorted, "Lord, save, or I perish!"

We must again recall to mind that most wonderful silence of ten days--that long, long pause of the commissioned Church in sight of the perishing world. Never should the solemnity of that silence pass from the thoughts of any of God's people. It stands in the very forefront of our history--the Lord's most memorable and affecting protest beforehand, that no authority under heaven, that no training, that no ordination could qualify men to propagate the gospel, without the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Each successive day of those solemn and silent ten, the perishing world might have knocked at the door of the Church, and asked, "What waitest thou for, O bride of the ascended

Bridegroom? Why dost thou not say, 'Come'? Why leavest thou us to slumber on uncalled, unwarned, unblessed, whilst thou, with thy good tidings, art tarrying inactive there? What waitest thou for?" And every moment the answer would have been: "We are waiting to be 'indued with power from on high'; we are waiting to be 'baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire.'" This is the one and the only source of our power. Without this, our wealth, influence, facilities, are ships of war and ammunition without guns or men; our order, talent, truth, are men and guns, without fire. We want in this age, above all wants, fire, God's holy fire, burning in the hearts of men, stirring their brains, impelling their emotions, thrilling in their tongues, glowing in their countenances, vibrating in their actions, expanding their intellectual powers more than can ever be done by the heats of genius, of argument, or of party; and fusing all their knowledge, logic, and rhetoric into a burning stream. Every accessory, every instrument of usefulness, the Church has now in such a degree and of such excellence as was never known in any other age; and we want but a supreme and glorious baptism of fire to exhibit to the world such a spectacle as would raise ten thousand hallelujahs to the glory of our King.

Let but this baptism descend, and thousands of us who, up to this day, have been but commonplace or weak ministers, such as might easily pass from the memory of mankind, would then become mighty. Men would wonder at us, as if we had been made anew; and we should wonder, not at ourselves, but at the grace of God which could thus transform us.

Suppose we saw an army sitting down before a granite fort, and they told us that they intended to batter it down. We might ask them, "How?" They point to a cannon ball. Well, but there is no power in that; it is heavy, but not more than half a hundred, or perhaps a hundred weight. If all the men in the army hurled it against the fort, they would make no impression. They say: "No; but look at the cannon." Well, there is no power in that. A child may ride upon it, a bird may perch in its mouth; it is a machine, and nothing more. "But look at the powder." Well, there is no power in that; a child may spill it, a sparrow may peck it. Yet this powerless powder and powerless ball are put into the powerless cannon; one spark of fire enters it; and then, in the twinkling of an eye, that powder is a flash of lightning, and that ball a thunderbolt, which smites as if it had been sent from heaven. So is it with our Church machinery at this day: we have all the instruments necessary for pulling down strongholds, and oh for the baptism of fire! As to the way in which this power may be obtained, here we have only to recall the lesson of the ten days--"They continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." Prayer earnest, prayer united, and prayer persevering--these are the conditions; and these being fulfilled, we shall assuredly be "indued with power from on high." We should never expect that the power will fall upon us just because we happen once to awake and ask for it; nor have any community of Christians a right to look for a great manifestation of the Spirit, if they are not all ready to join in supplication, and, "with one accord," to wait and pray as if it were the concern of each one. The murmurer, who always accounts for barrenness in the Church by the faults of others, may be assured that his readiest way to spiritual power, if that be his real object, lies in uniting all, as one heart, to pray without ceasing.

Above all, we are not to expect it without persevering prayer. Prayer which takes the fact that past prayers have not yet been answered, as a reason for languor, has already ceased to be the prayer of faith. To the latter, the fact that prayers remain unanswered is only evidence that the moment of the answer is so much nearer. From first to last, the lessons and example of our Lord all tell us that prayer which cannot persevere, and urge its plea importunately, and renew, and renew itself

again, and gather strength from every past petition, is not the prayer that will prevail. When John in the Apocalypse saw the Lamb on the throne, before that throne were the seven lamps of fire burning, "which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth"; and it is only by waiting before that throne of grace that we become imbued with the holy fire; but he who waits there long and believingly will imbibe that fire, and come forth from his communion with God, bearing tokens of where he has been. For the individual believer, and, above all, for every laborer in the Lord's vineyard, the only way to gain spiritual power is by secret waiting at the throne of God for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Every moment spent in real prayer is a moment spent in refreshing the fire of God within the soul. We said before that this fire cannot be simulated; nothing else will produce its effects. No more can the means of obtaining it be feigned. Nothing but the Lord's own appointed means, nothing but "waiting at the throne," nothing but keeping the heart under "the eyes of the Lamb" to be again and again and again penetrated by his Spirit, can put the soul into that condition in which it is a meet instrument to impart the light and power of God to other men. When a lecturer on electricity wants to show an example of a human body surcharged with his fire, he places a person on a stool with glass legs. The glass serves to isolate him from the earth, because it will not conduct the fire--the electric fluid. Were it not for this, however much might be poured into his frame, it would be carried away by the earth; but, when thus isolated from it, he retains all that enters him. You see no fire, you hear no fire; but you are told that it is pouring into him. Presently you are challenged to the proof--asked to come near, and hold your hand close to his person; when you do so, a spark of fire shoots out toward you. If thou, then, wouldst have thy soul surcharged with the fire of God, so that those who come nigh to thee shall feel some mysterious influence proceeding from thee, thou must draw nigh to the source of that fire, to the throne of God and of the Lamb, and shut thyself out from the world--that cold world, which so swiftly steals our fire away. Enter into thy closet, and shut to thy door, and there, isolated, "before the throne," await the baptism: then the fire shall fill thee; and when thou comest forth, holy power will attend thee, and thou shalt labor, not in thine own strength, but "with demonstration of the Spirit and with power." As this is the only way for an individual to obtain spiritual power, so is it the only way for Churches. Prayer, prayer, all prayer--mighty, importunate, repeated, united prayer; the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, the fathers and the children, the pastors and the people, the gifted and the simple, all uniting to cry to God above, that he would come and affect them as in the days of the right hand of the Most High, and imbue them with the Spirit of Christ, and warm them, and kindle them, and make them as a flame of fire, and lay his right hand mightily on the sinners that surround them, and turn them in truth to him. Such united and repeated supplications will assuredly accomplish their end, and "the power of God" descending will make every such company as a band of giants refreshed with new wine.

If the source of our power, and the way to obtain it, be so plain, how can it be that the "tongue of fire" is so rare? What are the hindrances? Is it because, as many would seem to think, nothing is so difficult to obtain as the grace of the Holy Spirit? We often hear it said, All effort must be unsuccessful without the blessing of God, without the accompanying power of the Spirit; and the tone used indicates that it is therefore proper not to look for any great results, as if the accompanying power of the Spirit was the only thing not to be counted upon. The recognition of our impotency without the Spirit, and of the absolute necessity of his presence and his power, is as needful as the recognition of the fact that without sunshine and rain all labor and all skill would fail to preserve the human race for one season. But the sunshine and the rain are precisely the things

which cost nothing, and on which we may constantly depend. So it is with the baptism and the power of the Holy Spirit. Freer than the air we breathe, freer than the rich sunbeams, freer than any of God's other gifts, because it is the one which has cost him most, and which blesses his children most, that gift is ever at hand; and when we have done what the Lord lays upon us to do, it is dishonoring to him to cherish a secret feeling as if he, being good, not evil, was backward to pour out his Spirit, and to do good to his children. This feeling of unbelief, wherever cherished, must, on the principles of the gospel, be fatal to all power. He alone who magnifies the freeness, the fullness, and the present efficacy of the Lord's grace, can by the Holy Ghost accomplish wonders. Trust, firm trust, straightforward, childlike trust, is the everlasting condition of all cooperation with God. He will not use, he will not bless, he will not inhabit the heart that, at the moment when it offers him a request, says, "I doubt thee." In this age of faith in the natural, and disinclination to the supernatural, we want especially to meet the whole world with this credo: "I believe in the Holy Ghost." I expect to see saints as lovely as any that are written of in the Scriptures--because I believe in the Holy Ghost. I expect to see preachers as powerful to set forth Christ evidently crucified before the eyes of men, as powerful to pierce the conscience, to persuade, to convince, to convert, as any that ever shook the multitudes of Jerusalem, or Corinth, or Rome because I believe in the Holy Ghost. I expect to see Churches, the members of which shall be severally indued with spiritual gifts, and every one moving in spiritual activity, animating and edifying one another, commending themselves to the conscience of the world by their good works, commending their Saviour to it by a heart-engaging testimony--because I believe in the Holy Ghost. I expect to see villages where all the respectable people are now opposed to religion, the proprietor ungodly, the nominal pastor worldly, all that take a lead set against living Christianity--to see such villages summoned, disturbed, divided, and then reunited, by the subduing of the whole population to Christ--because I believe in the Holy Ghost. I expect to see cities swept from end to end, their manners elevated, their commerce purified, their politics Christianized, their criminal population reformed, their poor made to feel that they dwell among brethren--righteousness in the streets, peace in the homes, an altar at every fireside--because I believe in the Holy Ghost. I expect the world to be overflowed with the knowledge of God; the day to come when no man shall need to say to his neighbor, "Know thou the Lord," but when all shall know him, "from the least unto the greatest"; east and west, north and south, uniting to praise the name of the one God and the one Mediator--because I believe in the Holy Ghost.

Unbelief and neglect of prayer generally go together as preventives of spiritual power. Let all of us who are painfully conscious that the results just indicated will never be attained by the instrumentality of men, in the condition in which we are, simply ask ourselves, How long, how often, how importunately have we waited at the throne of the Saviour for the outpouring of the Spirit? Let our closets answer. "The eyes of the Lamb," that are looking through us now, have noted. Oh, is it any wonder that oftentimes we have been powerless, and oftentimes have had but "a little strength"?

Want of true faith and neglect of prayer are sure to make place for faith in the instrument, instead of in the power. When we are not living near the throne, our minds become occupied with questions of order, of talent, or of truth; or, if we sink into yet a lower state, with questions of facility, or influence, or wealth. This Church reform will be followed by great good: the clear development of such or such a doctrine would bring us revival; more luster or strength of talents in

the ministry would insure progress. We only wait the removal of such and such hindrances to open this door; for the supply of pecuniary means, and we shall see good done there; or for the accession to the Church of some person of influence, and God's work will prosper yonder. Faith is sadly wasted when bestowed on such things. Give them their right value, never underrate them, place them where God has placed them; but the fact that you trust in them shows that your heart is wrong. Wait not for these--for the power is not in them but for the baptism of fire.

Among the hindrances which will prevent any one from having the "tongue of fire," none acts more directly than any misuse of the "tongue" itself. If the door of the lips be not guarded, if uncharitable or idle speech be indulged, if political or party discussion be permitted to excite heats, if foolish "talking or jesting" be a chosen method of display, it is not to be supposed that the same tongue will be the medium wherein the sacred fire of the Spirit will delight to dwell. Who has ever worn at the same time the reputation of a trifler and of a man powerful to search consciences?

Another fatal hindrance is any kind of sensual indulgence. Whatever gives the least ascendancy to the body over the spirit, must gradually subdue and ultimately extinguish the fire in the heart. This applies to all sloth, to every luxurious habit, every artificial appetite, and all the pleasures of the table. It is not a little remarkable that while, at the day of Pentecost, the people, on seeing the excitement and animation of the Christians, said, "They are filled with new wine," Paul himself says to us, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." In both these cases there is a suggestion, however indirect, yet unquestionably a suggestion, of some analogy between the condition of being "drunk with wine" and that of being "filled with the Spirit." Nor do we need to seek far for the grounds of that analogy. To men of the world wine is a resort when they want something above their natural strength of mind or body, and in it they seek three things--strength, cheering, and mental elevation. Under its influence they will do more work than they could otherwise; they will cast off their cares, and their mental powers will reach a state which they themselves call "inspiration." That worldly orators, even of the highest reputation, often seek in wine such animation of their powers as is necessary to great success, is only too well known. The physical tendency to seek elevation in such a source cannot be even slightly yielded to, without fatally affecting the "tongue of fire."

Every Christian, who wishes to retain the life of God in his soul, must hold all the enjoyments of the table under a strict law of regard to health and to temperance. For strength, for cheering, and for mental elevation, such as an extraordinary affliction or public effort may demand, he must look alone to power from on high--to the strength and comfort and inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The bare idea of seeking any of these in wine implies a heart already far fallen into the bondage of the flesh. Even without going so far, one may easily pass the bounds of moderation, and drink, not for health, but for pleasure. If the man who drinks to intoxication is miserable and pitiable, he who has learned the bad secret of "how far he can go," and who even acts upon it, although he may never be drunk, is daily intemperate. In one aspect, his social influence is the most dangerous of all; for while one who totally abstains, and one who drinks under a rigid rule of regard for health and moderation, may each contend that they are setting the wisest example that can be set, and while the drunkard may truly say that his very excess is a warning to all about him, he who habitually shows that he drinks as much as is safe is a lure and an enticement to push indulgence as far as it can be done without wreck of character.

Another fatal hindrance is what may be called "aiming at literary effect." When preaching, praying, or any other religious exercise of the tongue is ruled by the idea of composition, it loses the character of a Divine gift. Under that idea, utterance especially is by the aid of the Holy Spirit. With those who look at Christian preaching as an exercise of natural talent, we enter into no discussion. We speak only to those who are seeking the "tongue of fire"; who believe that real Christian preaching is effected only by the help of God. To them, and not to ourselves, we say that nothing will more surely steal away the fire from our sentences than anxiety to deliver them just as they were precomposed, or to precompose them with studious regard to literary grace. Study of style, of words, of the force, forms, and laws of language, we of course recommend. Efforts on the part of every one to gain the best style of which his nature admits--the tersest, strongest, clearest, briefest--we equally recommend. Seeking, like Bunyan, for "picked and packed words," is the instinct of a teacher. Even the study of the art of speaking, against which the vulgar prejudice is so strong, we would, with Wesley and Whitefield, encourage. Mouthing elocutionists may have brought it into disrepute, but that is no reason why hundreds of us should be maimed in health before mid-life by public speaking, when we might have done as much work, and done it better, without the least injury, had we availed ourselves of the science of those who have philosophically studied and taught upon the voice.

[It is often assumed that speaking is a natural exercise, and therefore needs no instruction. The word "speaking" covers a fallacy. Conversation in a moderate tone, and at short intervals, is a natural exercise of the voice; public speaking, in an elevated tone, and for an hour together, is an artificial one. Except in very rare cases of persons singularly favored by nature, this artificial exercise is never performed with the ease of the natural one; and how often it impairs and even destroys health is too notorious to need any mention. Such writers as Mr. Cull and Dr. Rush show that under proper training public speaking may become as easy and as healthy for persons of sound organs as singing is; and to the neglect of this we owe the loss, in their prime, of many of the best and ablest preachers that ever lived.]

While, however, we contend that it is the duty of all who take any part in teaching to labor to the uttermost for every qualification helpful to their work, two things are to be forever and guardedly shut out. The one is, aiming at giving intellectual pleasure, instead of producing religious impression; the other, being careful about words in the pulpit, so as to interfere with dependence upon God for utterance. In the study, attention to style ought to be with a view, not to beauty, but to power. In the pulpit, all thought of style is thought wasted, and even worse. The gift of prophesying in its very ideal excludes relying for utterance upon a manuscript or upon memory. It is the delivery of truth by the help of God. The feeling of every man standing up in the Lord's name ought to be: "I am not here to acquit myself well, nor to deliver a good discourse; but, after having made my best efforts to study and digest the truth, I am here to say just what God may enable me to say, to be enlarged or to be straitened, according as he may be pleased to give me utterance or not." With this feeling of the preacher all appearances ought to correspond. It ought to be manifest that, while he has done what in him lies to be thoroughly furnished, he is trusting for utterance to help from above, and not insuring it by natural means--either a manuscript or memory. We put these two together, because we do not see that any distinction really exists between them. The plea that the manuscript is more honest than memoriter preaching has some force, but certainly not much; for he that reads from his memory is, to the feeling and instinct of his hearers, as much reading as he

who reads from his manuscript. In neither case are the thoughts and feelings gushing straight from the mind, and clothing themselves as they come. The mind is taking up words from paper or from memory, and doing its best to animate them with feeling. Even intellectually, the operation is essentially different from speaking, and the difference is felt by all. For literary purposes, for intellectual gratification, both have a decided advantage over speaking; but for the purposes of pleading, entreating, winning, and creating a sense of fellowship, for impelling and arousing, for doing good, speaking is the natural, this is the Creator's, instrument.

We never say, nor think of saying, that God will not bless sermons read, either from the manuscript or from the memory; for we are sure that both these modes are resorted to by holy and earnest servants of his, who seek his blessing, and obtain it to the saving of many souls. All we say of reading, either from manuscript or the memory, is that it is not scriptural preaching. It is not ministering after the mode of pentecostal Christianity; it is a departure from scriptural precedent, an adoption of a lower order of public ministration, and a solemn declaration that security of utterance gained by natural supports is preferred over a liability to be humiliated by trusting to the help of the Lord. It has its clear advantages, and its clear losses. It secures a gain of elegance, at the cost of ease; of finish, at the cost of freedom; of precision, at that of power; and of pleasure, at that of religious impressiveness. A literary ideal of preaching is vicious. Half-educated people pride themselves on admiring what they consider intellectual, or "splendid." To men of real mind and real education, aiming at literary effect is as distasteful, on the one hand, as are traces of earnestness, looseness, or vulgarity, on the other. Men of great talent or refinement, when speaking great truths, under holy inspiration, must be eloquent or pleasing; but an "intellectual treat" is far from being the ideal of preaching. We have heard efforts of this kind greatly praised, even by aged and venerable ministers, which, when we look back upon them, after years have elapsed, we feel ought not to have been called sermons at all. They were discourses which showed how a certain subject could be treated; but which were never meant to do any work. An acute and profound philosopher, looking upon the pulpit from the chair of the historical professor, treats this point in the following remarkable words:

"Compare, I pray you, gentlemen, the sacred eloquence of the sixth century with modern pulpit eloquence, even in its most palmy days in the seventeenth century. I said just now, that in the seventh and eighth centuries the character of literature had been that it ceased to be a literature--that it had become in fact a power; that in writing and speaking men concerned themselves only with positive and immediate results; that they sought neither science nor intellectual pleasure; and that on this account the age had produced nothing but sermons or similar works. This fact, which shows itself in literature in general, is imprinted upon the sermons themselves. Those of modern times have a character evidently more literary than practical. The orator aspires much more after beauty of language, after the intellectual satisfaction of his auditory, than to act upon the depths of their souls, to produce real effects, notable reforms, efficacious conversions. Nothing of this sort--nothing of the literary character in the sermons of which I have just been speaking to you; not one thought of expressing themselves nicely, of combining images and ideas with art. The orator goes to the point; he wants to do a work; he turns and turns again in the same circle; he has no fear of repetition, of familiarity, not even of vulgarity. He speaks briefly, but recommences every morning. This is not sacred eloquence; it is religious power."

Whenever we are tempted to think that fruitfulness is only to be looked for in connection with superior attainments, the image of Peter preaching in Jerusalem, and of that vast multitude in tears before him, should rise into our view. With what reverence, not unmixed with sorrow, do we often look back on preachers of days now gone, perhaps on some whom our own ears have blessed when we heard them; but more on those of whose mighty voices we have caught faint echoes, sounding in the bosoms of hoary men who heard them in their youth, and have never ceased to hear them, though their tongues have long been silent! When noting our own poor efforts; when seeing how tamely the precepts of Sinai or the songs of Bethlehem have fallen upon men from our lips; seeing that, after our closest thinking, we have seemed as those who beat the air; that, after seeking converts, we have only gained credit; that, when looking for multitudes to be seized with the thought, "What must I do to be saved?" we have only sent them away to discuss our faults or our merits, with perchance here and there a heart touched and contrite ;--when years have thus passed away, and no stronghold of sin brought down, no province completely conquered from the prince of darkness, no great awakening to show that there was a power and a God in the midst of the Church;--when we have seen all this, and much more alike thereto, has not our disposition often been to open a calculation as to our own abilities and difficulties before us, concluding, on the whole, that such as we need not expect to do things which only the mighty could do? How could lips like ours move mankind? True, apostles and prophets moved them. True, Whitefield and Wesley, and hundreds of their coadjutors, near to our days and in our own country, moved them. But then they were the wonders of their age, the seraphim of earth. But what made them seraphim? They were once no mightier than others as to converting souls. Unbaptized with fire, or but slightly touched, their tongues might have charmed, fascinated, set the world discussing their gifts and extolling their abilities; but they would never have shot fires into the souls of men, burned by which the stolid would roar, and the stoical melt, the sedate smite upon his breast, and the corrupt cleanse himself "from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit." Perhaps without the baptism of fire they would never have gained even the airy fame of orators. Their very eloquence may have come chiefly from the Spirit of God. At all events, it was that fire which raised the orator into the apostle, and made their words sound as if Christ's first messengers were risen from the dead. The spectacle of Peter preaching at Jerusalem answers ten thousand arguments of unbelief. Who is that Galilean peasant, and who are that group beside him? They are men of like passions with ourselves. In nature, in gifts, in early opportunities, they cannot be ranked above the average of mankind. Even though they have been favored with the personal teaching and society of Christ for three whole years, they had not, up to this period, shown any extraordinary superiority of character. They have not been even without faults: they have had their disputes among themselves, their unbelief, their faint-heartedness, their strifes about the things of the world, their "false brethren"; yet are they indued with a power of speech which passes all previously conceived reach of eloquence. Is it rational, when looking up to the Spirit which wrought this in them, to doubt whether or not it is within his power to baptize his servants now living with such a baptism as would change the ordinary into the extraordinary, the feeble into the mighty? Whether is it easier for Him to say, "Speak with many tongues," or to say, "I will give thee a mouth and wisdom which all thine adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or to resist"? The former He has said, and common men at once received the power; the latter He has said, and the same common men received the power. The former power we do not seek; but all of us who have any heart for our Master's service, any real intention to bear a part in the battle for the

rescue of mankind, do desire in our very hearts--yea, long with mournful longing for a tongue of fire--to tell of the love of the Saviour, and of the woe of sin, in such tones that the dead ear shall tingle. Is he not able to give the gift now as he gave it then? Is the distrust of his power in this respect, which we find so common; this counting on our own impotence as a lifelong companion; this speaking of what we ought to expect, as if our power must halt where our natural abilities halt; this thinking it really humble to expect little or no fruit; this thinking it meek to be happy without fruit;--is all this a fit answer to the baptism and a fit memorial of the tongues of fire? Do we not there see the Spirit answering forever all doubts as to what ordinary men can be made, and proclaiming to all who bear a message from God, that if they will only wait until they are "indued with power from on high," the effect which of all others will show the working of that power within them will be this--that they shall be raised above themselves, and made to speak with a mouth and wisdom which all who know them will know were not within their natural endowments or attainments? As to the scale on which our expectations should be framed. In our age, invention by aid of natural science often seems to leap almost within the bounds of the supernatural. The impossibilities of our fathers are disappearing, one becoming a traffic and another a pastime. This has produced a state of mind in which nothing seems impossible to natural science. Concurrently with this has arisen a tendency to bring spiritual progress and action within natural bounds. We are proud of our knowledge of the laws of the natural kingdom, and impatient of any phenomena which cannot be judged by them. Yet we do not object to judging the vegetable kingdom by laws totally different from those which we apply to the mineral, and the animal by laws totally different from what we apply to the vegetable, and the pervasive fluids by laws different from those we apply to any of those three kingdoms. To shrink from the marvels of vegetable life because they are unaccountable on chemical principles, or from those of instinct because they are unfathomable mysteries on botanical principles, or from those of intellect because they are inexplicable by the laws of natural history, or from the mysteries of light because they cannot be metaphysically analyzed and conditioned, would not be more unreasonable than to shrink from marvels in the spiritual kingdom, because they cannot be judged by the laws of the natural. The supernatural has its own laws, and there is a supernatural.

Instead of seeking to keep down spiritual movements to the level of natural explanation, in an age when natural marvels reach almost to miracles, we ought rather to be impelled to pray that they may put on a more striking character of supernatural manifestation. Today more by far is necessary to carry into the mind of the multitude a clear conviction, "It is the hand of God," than was necessary in other ages. When men saw few wonders from natural science, they readily ascribed each wonder to Divine agency; but now that they are accustomed to see them daily, moral wonders must swell beyond all pretext of natural explanation, before they are felt to be from God. Is our footing firm? Do we stand, or do we tremble? Is Christianity to seat herself in the circle of natural agency, or to arise from the dust, and prove that there is a God in Israel? Are we to shrink from things extraordinary? Are we to be afraid of anything that would make skeptical or prayerless men mock? Are we to desire that the Spirit shall use and work in us just to such a degree as will never bring a sneer upon us--to pray, as a continental writer represents some as meaning, "Give us of the Holy Spirit; but not too much, lest the people should say that we are full of new wine"? To Christianity this is preeminently the age of opportunity. Never before did the world offer to her anything like the same open field as at this moment. Even a single century from the present time, how much more limited was her access to the minds of men! Within our own

favoured country a zealous preacher would then have been driven away from many a sphere, where now he would be hailed. On the continent of Europe, the whole of France has been opened to the preaching of the word, though under some restraints. In Belgium, Sardinia, and other fields, it may now be said that the word of God is not bound. A century ago the Chinese Empire, the Mohammedan world, and Africa, containing between them such a preponderating majority of the human race, were all closed against the gospel of Christ. China is open at several points. The whole empire of the Mogul is one field where opportunity and protection invite the evangelist. Turkey itself has been added to the spheres wherein he may labor. Around the wild shores of Africa, and far into her western, eastern, and southern interior, outposts of Christianity have been established. Wide realms beyond invite her onward. In the South Seas, several regions which a hundred years ago had not been made known by the voyages of Cook, are now regularly occupied. Could the Churches of England and America send forth tomorrow a hundred thousand preachers of the gospel, each one of them might find a sphere, already opened by the strong hand of Providence, where a century ago none of them could have come without danger. The age, if not so remarkable for agency as for opportunity, is yet very remarkable in this respect, when compared with any that has preceded it. While, on the one hand, we may well humble ourselves that, after so long a lapse of time, Christian men are so few, and Christian operations so feeble, yet, measuring our own day with that of the generation that went before us, we may devoutly magnify our God. Any one of the three great divisions of Christians in England--the Established Church, the Methodists, or the Dissenters--can this day furnish a number of faithful ministers teaching the truth in the fear of God, and wishful to be the instruments in saving souls, supported by a number of spiritually-minded laymen ready for every good work, such that, could they have been presented to John Wesley as the entire force of godly men in the country, would have made him feel as if the army for the whole world's conquest was already raised. Scotland alone could now produce a host of loyal soldiers ready and able to wage the Redeemer's war, such as in his day would have appeared to him almost sufficient to conclude the conquest. Ireland, too, would offer in this respect an amazing advance. In France, where, at the conclusion of the great Peace, scarcely any earnest preachers could be found, they may now be counted by hundreds; and in Germany, notwithstanding all its mists and its blights, not a few are growing up in vigor.

Whether for the direct labors of the pulpit, for united movements of enlightenment, or the ministering of gentle relief to the wants of human society, never, never did the sun shine upon so much agency, so much organization, so much liberty, so much earnest effort. Could we indulge ourselves by forming our own word, and only think of all the good men, good societies, and good works, on which the eye may rest, we might rejoice with unbroken joy, proclaim the full advent of the kingdom of God, and feel ourselves launched on a benign and brotherly age. But alas! alas! the vast world rolls on, a turbid and a freezing stream. When we look first at our own little land, then at the broad earth, we find, for one who fears God and works righteousness, there are thousands who forget God and work wickedness. Christian agency is not, therefore, as some amiable theorists would seem to think, chiefly for training those who are born Christians, or made Christians in baptism, and who need nothing more than Church ordinances, and an open heaven when they die. It is an agency raised up to carry out the great work of conversion which the Lord has begun within the lands of Christendom, and then bear onward the banner until every nation under heaven bows under it.

It is also an age of progress, as much as of opportunity or of agency. What an advance has Christianity made, as to the impress upon our national manners within the last century! On our highest classes and on our lowest, on those who love God and those who love him not, she has imposed many restraints. The vices which remain are every day made more hideous to the public eye. How different the amount of piety in officers and men developed by the horrors of the late war, from what was ever known in an English army before! How different the spiritual condition of many of our rural and manufacturing districts from what they were a century ago! What a change in the morals of the Court, in the temperance of private entertainments! How much more promising the aspect of Ireland! How much more animated the religion of Scotland! What an incalculable advance in America! And within that time the West Indies, Australia, New Zealand, the Society Islands, the Sandwich Islands, the Friendly Islands, the Navigator's Islands, a considerable part of Fiji, and tracts of Southern and Western Africa, may be written down as provinces added to Christendom. Though in some of these place much ungodliness remains, yet in most of them a far more promising state of things exists than was known in any country between the first days of Christianity and the last century. In other countries, beginnings have been made and first fruits gathered; as, for instance, in India, China, and Northern Africa. At the same time, every system of religion not calling itself Christian has decayed. Mohammedanism, Brahmantam, Buddhism, and Paganism have lost territory, adherents, and power. Altogether it may be questioned whether even the progress of the first century has not been equaled, as to positive amount, by that of the last. But when we look at the agents, means, and facilities enjoyed during the last century compared with the first, and at the rapidity with which believers have multiplied themselves in both periods, we at once feel that, as to propagating power, in the face of adverse circumstances and small resources, there is no comparison between them.

It is, on the one hand, as wrong and as dangerous to overlook the success which God has given to his word in the last age, or the unparalleled openings which promise to the Church future conquest, as it is, on the other, to repose on our present possessions, as if the conquest was achieved. What has been done is enough to excite our liveliest gratitude; but if we dwell on it alone, we become enervated and careless. What remains to be done is enough to excite our deepest solicitude; but if we look at it alone, we become dispirited and powerless. Even in England everything is stained: our commerce corrupt; our politics earthy; our social manners chiefly formed after the will of "the god of this world"; our streets crying shame upon us; our hamlets, many of them, dark, ignorant, and immoral; our towns debauched and drunken.

Amid this, much good exists, in which we do rejoice --yea, and will rejoice; but oh, the evil, the evil is, day by day, breaking thousands of hearts, ruining thousands of characters, and destroying thousands of souls! Looking abroad beyond the one little sphere of Britain and America, which we proud boasters of the two nations are prone to look upon as being nearly the whole world --though we are not one-twentieth of the human race, how dreary and how lonely does the soul of the Christian feel, as it floats in imagination over the rest of the earth! That Europe, so learned, so splendid, so brave--what misery is by its fireside! what stains upon its conscience! what superstition, stoicism, or despair around its deathbeds! And yonder bright old Asia, where the "tongue of fire" first spoke--how rare and how few are the scenes of moral beauty which there meet the eye! Instead of the family, the seraglio; instead of religion, superstition; instead of peace, oppression; instead of enterprise, war; instead of morals, ceremonies; instead of a God, idols;

instead of refinement and growth, corruption and collapse; here, there, thinly sown and scarcely within sight one of the other, a school, a book, a man of God--one star in a sky of darkness. And poor Africa! what is to become of the present generation of her sons? Thinly around her coasts are beginnings of good things; but oh, the blood and darkness and woe, the base superstition and the miserable cruelties, under which the majority of her youth are now trained, amid which her old men are going down to the grave!

All this existed a century ago, but was not then known as we know it now. The world is not yet explored by the Church, much less occupied; but the exploration at least is carried so far that we know its plagues as our fathers knew them not; and if our hearts were rightly affected, we should weep over them as they never wept; for although the spread of Christianity has greatly multiplied the number of Christians, the increase of population has been such that more men are sinning and suffering now than were a hundred years ago.

Taking the forces of the Church, comparing them with the length and breadth of the world, and then asking, "Are these ever to be the means of converting all?" we feel that only the promise of God could inspire such a hope. But that promise is so confirmed, illustrated, and exalted by the success of the past century, that when we look back to the few faithful men in this country and in America, men in different circumstances and of different views, who then began in earnest to call the Churches to their work, and see how far their labors and those of their spiritual sons have advanced the kingdom of Christ beyond where it stood then, we are led to say: "Suppose that all the good men, now loving God and desiring his glory, were but to be multiplied in equal ratio during the next century, as those few have been during the last century--what an amazing stride would be made toward the conversion of the whole world!" Is this too much to expect? Are we to conclude that the force of the animating Spirit is spent, and that an age of feebleness must succeed to one of power? To do so is fearfully to disbelieve at once the goodness and the faithfulness of our God. Some say that, because populations have become familiarized with the truths of the gospel, we are not to expect the same converting effects as when those truths were new. If this be so, we had better make way for a generation of rationalists and formalists, to prepare the ground again for spiritual cultivation! Some say that, because the age is so educated, intellectual, scientific, and inquisitive, men are not so susceptible of the influence of Christianity. Then shall we wait for an age less enlightened and less educated? Some say that the age is so unduly active, forcing enterprise and commerce to the point of absorbing every man, that religion is pushed aside. Must we then wait for a duller and more lethargic time? Some say that the Lord does not give us great success lest we should be uplifted. Is it his way to promote humility by giving small results to great agencies, or by giving great results to small ones? And would not results after the pentecostal scale make any of our agencies seem small? These are miserable withes wherewith to bind the giant Church of God. Away with them every one! After going round all the reasons which one hears ordinarily assigned for the greater direct success of preachers in the last century than now, our mind finds rest only in that one reason, which carries a world of rebuke and of humiliation to ourselves: they produced greater effects, simply because of the greater power of God within them.

Every ray of gospel truth that exists in any man is on our side. All intelligence, all intellectual activity, all vigor of character, are more for us than their opposites would be. In fact, they are very much the fruit, the indirect and secondary fruit, of the past triumphs of religion; for it is impossible

that true godliness shall spread among any people, without stimulating their intellectual and social energies. It is hard to imagine a satire on the gospel more bitter than that it should be powerful when new to men, and impotent when familiar; that it should be good for the half barbarous, but not for those whom itself had refined; capable of captivating the inert, but incapable of commanding the masculine and the energetic. We expect ages not less instructed in Christian doctrine, but far more instructed; not intellectually duller, but more active; not darker as to science and literature, but inconceivably brighter; not slower as to invention, enterprise, and progress, but more vigorous by far. And am I to return to "the glorious gospel of the blessed God," whereto I feel that I and mine, my kindred, my country, the race from which I have sprung, the lands in which I have traveled, are all indebted for their purest and brightest things--and say to it, "When these bright ages come, thou shalt lag behind, perhaps recollected as one of the infantine instructors of the world, but distanced by the progress of man"? Let those who assign reasons for our want of fruitfulness which fairly sow the seeds of rationalism prepare to render an account when the fruit of their sowing comes to be reaped.

There is a natural tendency in any movement to lose intensity as it gains surface. When godliness becomes the habit of large numbers, it is not according to the laws of human nature that it should retain, in every individual, all the fervor which it must maintain, in order to exist at all, when it is the peculiarity of an extremely few. But if this fact is to be recognized, it must be remembered that the disadvantage which it presents is easily overcome by the power of grace; and, indeed, a natural counterpoise to this subduing tendency in practical religion is offered in an equally natural accumulative tendency. That decrease of distinction between the Church and the world which is so often noticed does not wholly arise from the Church becoming less Christian, but partly also from the world becoming less wicked. The testimony of a large number of decided men gradually and silently imposes on the world a respect for Christian principles, till the world tacitly accepts many of its moral laws and social standards at the hands of the Church. Every concession of this kind is an advantage to those Christians who mean to conquer all; while it is a seduction to those who repose in the idea of converting a small section of the people, leaving the rest to live in sin.

Put the ungodly in a minority, then vice becomes a social as well as a spiritual blemish, and religion an outward as well as an inward comfort. As the multitude of Christians goes on increasing, there is accumulative power of example, accumulative power of teaching, accumulative power of prayers, accumulative power of Christian training in families, accumulative power of purity in habits, all tending in the one direction--to bring the public sentiment under the dominion of Christ. Towns and villages exist in this country where, within the memory of living men, very few godly persons were to be found; but now one-tenth, one-seventh, and even one-fifth in some cases, of their adult population, are professing to follow Christ, and living more or less worthily of that profession. Can any man help feeling that the unconverted people in such a town are much more likely to be converted than those living where the proportion of the godly is not more than one in a hundred, or one in a thousand? Who could not feel, who would not practically acknowledge the feeling of the accumulative power of Christian progress, if he had to decide in which of two towns his unconverted son should settle for life--one with a believer to every thousand of the population, or one with a believer to every ten? He would instantly say, "In the latter place the prospects of my son's conversion are vastly greater than in the other." What we should feel in an individual case we ought to feel on the great scale--to gather strength and hope,

not feebleness, from past successes, and to become especially impatient of the continuance of sinners in those fields where notable triumphs of grace have already been achieved. What the Canaanites were to the Israelites of old, the unconverted dwelling in our towns and villages are to us at this day. They confuse and weaken us, they allure, they ensnare us, they lead our children astray, they rob us of the fruit of our schools, they damp the zeal of our young converts, they entice families into worldly practices, they tempt our tradesmen, they infect our churches; and never, until they are totally extirpated, can peace and righteousness flourish in our coasts. Impatient of their obstinacy everywhere, we ought to be especially so where victories, won by those who have preceded us, leave us comparatively little to do; for the uphill fight has been fought, the vantage ground gained, and now for the power to complete the triumph! The entire conversion of England and America, within the next fifty years, would not be so great a work for the Christians now existing as the progress made within the last hundred years has been for the Christians then existing. Is it rational to believe that God will less bless his servants in this nineteenth century than in the one that is gone, if they be equally faithful? or that he will shower on this generation of ours less marked benedictions than he did on the one to whom we are indebted for so much? The single consideration of past progress suffices to prove that, on the ground of experience, we are not warranted to conclude that the conversion of the whole world is impossible. Much as may be argued from the slowness of the past progress of Christianity, the last century has so changed the aspect of affairs as now to cast the weight of the argument from experience decisively into the scale of hope. Many, however, will continue to look upon any consistent expectation of the general conversion of men as illusory: the objections of some resting on their views of the constancy of human nature, certain, they think, hereafter as heretofore, to present great numbers of unconquerable opponents to holiness; while others take higher ground, and believe that the general conversion of our race is contrary to the purpose of God. When the question, "Is the conversion of the whole world possible?" is fairly put, the plain answer to it is obviously this: "It is possible, unless it be contrary to the will of God." If he has ordained that it is not to be, an infinite obstacle opposes it; if he has not so ordained, the obstacles which oppose it are finite, and therefore conquerable. Christians can overcome all things but a decree of God. Has he, then, given us any declaration that he does not intend to renew the earth, as a whole, in righteousness? We do not mean to hold any controversy with those who have deliberately adopted the view that the Christian dispensation is a kind of interlude between the Lord's lifetime upon earth and a future earthly reign, meanwhile, bearing witness in his name--a witness for the conversion of a few and the condemnation of the many. We leave them with the praise of being perfectly consistent in expecting small results from the preaching of the gospel and with the responsibility of looking on that gospel in a light which warrants little faith.

We deal with those who regard the gospel as bona fide "good news" for every creature; "good news" which those who heard it before me were bound to tell to me; "good news" which I am bound to tell to every creature living, according to the extent of my opportunities; "good news" to the effect that "the grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared"--news which could not be told to me as good, if it left any doubt whether it was or was not for me; "good news" to every creature, "a gospel for thee."

We take the first two announcements by a preacher under the Christian dispensation, to audiences of sinners, as intended for our instruction and imitation: "Repent and be baptized, every

one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins"; "God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Declarations less direct, personal, or comprehensive than these we have no manner of authority to deliver. We are to "command all men everywhere to repent"; to call upon every one of them to believe; to assure every one of them that Christ is "sent to bless him in turning him away from his iniquities." Nor are we to make such proclamations under the feeling that, although it is our duty to do it, there is no intention on the part of God to second our testimony and give it effect. Hope in the result sustained the apostle in his work, according to his own avowal; for he says, "Therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." This trust in the God and Saviour of all was enough to animate any man in labor and under reproach; and such a trust we should never cast away. The question, whether or not the conversions of the first ages ought to be looked back to by us, as a standard at which to aim, is settled by one of the passages already quoted. After joyfully describing the conversion of the church in Ephesus, where "the word of the Lord" so "mightily grew and prevailed," St. Paul says, that God has done this, "that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." We are living in what were, then, "the ages to come." On us the light of those "exceeding riches of grace" is shining--shining for our encouragement--shining that we may believe that in heathen cities, where great Dianas are adored, we also shall see "the word of God mightily grow and prevail," heathen rites abandoned, bad books consumed, and the craft of idol-makers destroyed.

While this collective number of conversions is given to us as an encouragement, the most remarkable of all individual conversions is placed before us in the same light. "Howbeit," says St. Paul, "for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." Thus we are deliberately forewarned to take the most singular conversion that ever occurred in the early Church, not as a discouragement because of its speciality, but as an intentional manifestation of the wonderful grace of the Redeemer, by which every sinner in all ages, who would fain "find mercy," may encourage himself. The persecutor Paul, converted and forgiven, is for a pattern to individual believers in "the ages to come." The great multitude of "children of wrath" in Ephesus who were made to "sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," are also to us, of "the ages to come," a pattern of the "exceeding riches of grace." Whether our faith be tried in respect to the possibility of the conversion of an individual as unlikely as Saul, or of a number as great as the church of Ephesus, in either case we should believe that the ancient grace is free and mighty this day. Thus trusting in "God, who is the Saviour of all men," we shall both cheerfully "labor and suffer reproach." The same relation which we have shown to exist between hope and labor is also pointed out to us as existing between hope and prayer. "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." Here no one doubts that we are literally commanded to pray for every human being; but if we did not carefully attend to the context, we might run away with a vague idea that we were only to pray as an expression of good will, and that for temporal and national blessings, especially as allusion is made to "kings, and all that are in authority"; that, in fact, the "prayers, and supplications, and intercession, and giving of thanks, for all men," do not mean that we are to pray, supplicate, and intercede, that all men may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth; for that would only be asking what God wills should never be, and therefore what could not be acceptable to him. But,

as if expressly to anticipate this unbelief, the apostle adds: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, a testimony in due time."

Here our encouragement in prayer, supplication, and intercession for all men is grounded first on the clear declaration that such prayer is "good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour"--"our Saviour" giving intensity to the expression, as if reminding us that he who has saved us must be one to whom it is good and acceptable that we should seek the salvation of all. It is further grounded on the express declaration of his will regarding others, that he "will have them to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

Here is not only the assurance that we are right in praying that they may be saved, but right in praying that the truth may be brought to all, and that they may be saved through its instrumentality; praying, in fact, for the universal diffusion of Christ's gospel, and the universal salvation of men in consequence. It is further supported on the ground of the unity of God, the unity of the Mediator between God and men, and the unity of man as regarded by his mediating atonement: "One God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, a testimony in due time."

We have, then, the clear example of the first preachers, the express declaration that the early conversions were as a pattern for the ages to come, the statement that trust in God as the Saviour of all men was the animating strength under apostolic toil and shame, the command to pray for all, and the most formally stated warrant for such prayers boldly to lay hold upon the promises of God.

Many who admit that the scriptural argument points in this direction, yet, looking at human nature, the present condition of mankind, the proportion of Christian agency to population, and the past career of man, will, on the whole, conclude that the conversion of the world is not to be expected. They will also ask us how we can reconcile such an expectation with the free agency of man. We will no further answer them than by recalling the fact that every additional conversion to some extent, however slight, changes the condition of society, and, in so doing, affects the motives which act upon the unconverted, throwing a greater weight upon the side of goodness. A few more decided advances on the part of the Church, in some countries of Christendom, would cast a preponderating weight of social motives on the side of godliness, leaving little to be contended against but the depravity of man's heart, which, even in the purest condition of society, would be enough to demand the most zealous care for the conversion of each human being. This bears first on the general question of natural motives, next on the particular one as to reconciling faith, for the general regeneration of men, with their free agency. We readily admit that, logically, we cannot reconcile them, and certainly we are not anxious to attempt it. All the difficulties which meet us in soberly expecting the conversion of the entire world, equally meet us in soberly expecting the conversion of an entire family. Every question of free agency, motives, human nature, past experience, which enters into the one, enters into the other, though on a smaller scale. But it is only the scale that differs; the elements are the same. Yet who that has felt the faith and love of Christ within him, and has kindred dear to his own heart, has not again and again pleaded that they might all appear, "no wanderer lost, a family in heaven"? Who does not feel that to exercise faith that such a prayer shall be answered is good and wise, and acceptable to God? In fact, all the

difficulty exists as to faith for the conversion of any one individual. The difference between preaching the gospel with a full expectation of doing no more than saving small companies of saints from amid multitudes of sinners, on whose shipwreck no influence is to be exercised beyond holding them a light to sink by, and of looking upon every converted man as one rescued from a common danger, who is immediately to join in rescuing the rest--is such, that in the one case, when a little is accomplished, it is looked upon as what the gospel was sent to do; while, in the other case, every little is taken as but an earnest of the great, and the great as an earnest of the universal. While we aim at few, we shall win but few; for, that our succes

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