

Lecture 7 The Day of Pentecost.

Acts 2.

"Another Comforter"

Thirteen Lectures on the Operations of the Holy Ghost.

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In the Acts of the Apostles we reach a totally new day, in the ways of God with earth. It is the day of the Holy Ghost. There was the day of creation; there was the day of law; and there was the day of testing, culminating with the presence of the Son of God on earth — a Man in lowly grace, as the gospels record His history. Earth did not want that Man. It refused Him. It condemned Him to death, and gave Him a place with malefactors. It slew Him. Earth thought a borrowed cradle, a borrowed cross, and a borrowed tomb, were enough for Him, and to get quit of Him was all man wanted. But God raised Him from the dead, and put Him into glory. He ascended to heaven, raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Two paths were open to God — to draw the sword of His vengeance from its scabbard, and let retributive judgment fall upon a godless, and Christ-rejecting world, or, on the ground of the Son of Man having glorified Him in death, to open the floodgates of His heart to the utmost, and give the most wonderful gift that He yet had to give, for, already, He had given His only begotten Son. God chose the latter alternative, and gave the Holy Ghost.

Now that is a fact, the gravity of which cannot be exaggerated. It is absolutely impossible to exaggerate the importance of that which I am justly entitled to call, The day of the Holy Ghost. There is another day coming, when the Lord Jesus will appear in power and glory, and when all will be in subjection to Him. That is called "The day of Christ," but during the time of His absence, which Scripture designates by the remarkable title of "the night," the Holy Ghost is come to bring light into the darkness, which the world has really created for itself. Remember that the Lord Jesus was "the light of the world." He says, in the eighth of John, "I am the light of the world"; and, again, in the ninth chapter, knowing that His rejection was decided on, adds, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." But the world cast out, yea, extinguished — as far as it could — the light, and thus rejected on earth, He is claimed anew by heaven, and "received up into glory." Who replaces Him here? The Holy Ghost — One whom the world cannot see, because it knows Him not, nor believes in His presence. But the Christian knows Him, for He comes not only to dwell with him, but to be in him. He is Light, for He is God, and God is Light, and He brings divine light to the hearts of the saints.

In the second of Acts we reach the moment, when this day of the Holy Ghost is inaugurated. If you take the trouble to search the pages of the Acts of the Apostles, you will be struck by the great number of times the Spirit of God, as a Divine Person, here on earth, is spoken of therein. Certainly above fifty times is the Holy Ghost spoken of, in this way, in this

book. The first chapter opens with it, as Luke reminds Theophilus, that his gospel was a record "of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he *through the Holy Ghost* had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen." This interesting book opens with the history of Jesus, in resurrection, giving, through the Holy Ghost, commandments to His loved ones. Everything in Christianity takes its colour and pattern from Christ. In the gospels we have already seen that Jesus received the Holy Ghost, at His baptism, personally for Himself, as the expression of God the Father's infinite delight in, and favour towards Him, as Man, and in the Acts we shall find that He receives the Holy Ghost, anew, in order to give it to those who are His own, and, by His indwelling, to bring them into the enjoyment of the position, and place that belong to Himself, by right and title, and which He now shares with His redeemed ones, on the ground of redemption.

In the second chapter accordingly we find the record of the coming of the Comforter, "the promise of the Father," the Holy Ghost as a Divine Person, coming into this world. What precedes His descent is exceedingly interesting, and beautiful. In the first chapter the Lord is seen commanding His disciples "That they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (vers. 4, 5). John the Baptist had thus marked Jesus out, — "The same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John 1: 33). Now, the Lord Himself, in answer to that character given Him by the Baptist, says, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." Furthermore, in the eighth verse, He says, "Ye shall receive *power*, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; 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." Three things mark the Acts — pardon, power, and prayer. Pardon, through the Saviour's blood; power, by the indwelling Spirit; and prayer, as the normal attitude of the saint. Written by the same pen, the Acts develop that character of the life of Christ, which Luke's gospel so strikingly depicts. There He, the truly dependent Man, is seen in entire dependence — praying seven times — the perfect number (see Luke 3: 21, Luke 5: 16, Luke 6: 12, Luke 9: 18, 29, Luke 11: 1, Luke 22: 41). Similarly, divine life in the disciples, and, as in Jesus, energised by the Holy Ghost, is seen, when in its normal state of freshness untarnished by the world, continually dependent in prayer (see Acts 1: 14, 24, Acts 2: 42, Acts 3: 1, Acts 4: 31, Acts 6: 4, Acts 7: 60, Acts 8: 15, Acts 9: 11, 40, Acts 10: 2, 9, 30, 31, Acts 11: 5, Acts 12: 5, 12, Acts 13: 3, Acts 14: 23, Acts 16: 13, 25, Acts 20: 36, Acts 22: 17, Acts 28: 8). What a lesson for all our souls!

"And, when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, *Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*" He is to come back in power and glory to this earth. The character of the Lord's second coming given here, is that of the appearing, not the rapture. It is in power He is to come back to the Mount of Olives, according to Old Testament Scripture, and His heavenly people will be with Him in that day of His glory.

"Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where

abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and *with his brethren.*" This is a change from the seventh chapter of John's gospel, where we read, "For neither did his brethren believe in him" (ver. 5), but, thank God, His brethren appear to have been converted by this time, and are found in the circle of blessing in the second of Acts. And what are they doing here? It is very blessed to see that "they continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." There is a lovely moral state of soul evident here, preceding the wonderful manifestation of the grace of God in the gift of the Holy Ghost, which the next chapter records, and I may surely say that this moral state is of vast importance for all God's children. Although there cannot be now a new baptism of the Holy Ghost, there is such a thing as the Christian being "filled with the Spirit." We are exhorted to be so filled; and the disciples, in the book of the Acts, are often seen to be so filled, and are but anticipating what is urged on the Ephesians — "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5: 18); and I am sure it is just in proportion, as there is the true spirit of dependence, of prayerfulness, and of waiting on God, that the Christian is, now-a-days, "filled with the Holy Ghost."

But now, coming to the second chapter, we read, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." What is the meaning of the expression "Day of Pentecost"? For the explanation of the term I must ask you to go to Leviticus 23. There we are told at the ninth verse, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest; and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it" (vers. 10, 11), — that is, the first day of the week. Now this twenty-third of Leviticus is a chapter full of the deepest profit and blessing for the believer, because it gives a divinely perfect picture, of the ways of God in grace. It is a chapter that gives us the solemn feasts of the Lord. Omitting the first — the Sabbath — which stands by itself, you will observe that Israel's *first* great feast was the passover, and their *seventh* the feast of tabernacles; atonement, and glory; redemption, and the millennium. Between these two points we have the feast of unleavened bread (vers. 6-8); the resurrection of Christ (vers. 10-14); the gathering out of the Church — Pentecost (vers. 15-21); the awakening of Israel (vers. 24, 25); and their repentance and reception of Messiah (vers. 27-32). Nothing could be more complete, or morally lovely and instructive. The blood of the Lamb, practical holiness founded thereon; Christ's resurrection and ascension to glory; the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost to form the Church of God, the blessing of the "poor" and the stranger (ver. 22); the awakening of the Jews — their repentance and national restoration; and, finally, the appearing of the glory, and the establishment of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus.

We read, "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover." The passover is the basis of all that follows, and is a figure and type of the death of Jesus. The passover, as we have already seen, when speaking on John 7, has its antitype in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost distinctly says in 1st Corinthians, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." That is the basis of all God's dealings with us. And what is the basis of our relationship with God? The death of His Son, and here, in the figure of the passover, it comes

out. Then there is the feast of "unleavened bread," the practical holiness, founded on redemption, which is to mark the saint. Then in verses 10 and 11, which I have read to you, we have another wonderful typical truth. When Israel had got into the land, and had reaped the harvest, what were they to do? They were to bring a sheaf of the first-fruits to the priest, "and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you; on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it." We were looking at the antitype of the wave sheaf last Lord's Day evening. We saw then that the Lord Himself, having risen out of the grave, immediately said to Mary, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God." Yes, the true wave sheaf is Christ risen from among the dead, and ascended to God, a sample of the harvest, that the "corn of wheat" brings forth, if it die. The Holy Ghost gives us the most distinct interpretation of the passage, when He says, "But now is Christ risen from among the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15: 20). Death had ruled over man, but there has gone into death One, upon whom death had no claim, and He has risen out of death, the first-fruits of them that slept.

Now we are going to look tonight at the other "first-fruits." The Lord said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth *much fruit*." And now as we read on in the twenty-third of Leviticus, the fourteenth verse says, "Ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the self-same day that ye have brought an offering unto your God." There cannot be the possibility of having peace, or rest, or the enjoyment of real blessing before God, unless you get, not only the assurance that Christ died for you, but, that Christ has risen, and is presented before God, and accepted for you. And now see what follows in the fifteenth verse: "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number *fifty* days." There we have Pentecost. The Greek word Pentecost means fifty. On the fiftieth day they were to present what we now read of, "And ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord." All Israel were to present two wave loaves on that day. What is so strikingly prefigured in Leviticus 23 found its fulfilment in the second of Acts. First of all look at the figure. "Ye shall bring out of your habitation two wave loaves, of two tenth deals; they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; *they are the first-fruits* unto the Lord" (ver. 17). Oh! but, you say, "the wave sheaf" was "the first-fruits," how can these two baked loaves be "first-fruits"? Remember that Christ and His people have the same life, as now set forth in Him risen; the same nature, the same place, the same relationship before God; and just as He first, as Man, received the Holy Ghost, so His people, on the righteous ground, that He has provided an atonement effected in death, likewise receive the Holy Ghost, as the second of Acts unfolds.

Of the two wave loaves it is said, "they shall be of fine flour; they shall be *baken* with *leaven*." Is it not very remarkable that leaven, which always in Scripture is the symbol of a corrupting, ever-spreading principle of evil, here comes in? What are we to learn from this? I have no doubt that the truth typified by the two wave loaves, presented to the Lord, on the day of Pentecost, is the Holy Ghost come down to form, and present the Church — the assembly — before God, in all the acceptability of the work and Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. But although we be forgiven, through His name, and have our sins all washed away in His blood, and although we know we are justified through faith in His name, as all our sins were borne by Him, and our sin judged in the cross, is there therefore no evil left in the believer, or in the Church? Scripture

says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Our sins are all forgiven, but the existence of the flesh, as yet being in the believer, is always recognised, though its *existence* does not give a bad conscience; only when it *acts* is that the result. The fact that the evil of the flesh is yet existent in the Christian, is illustrated by the type of the leaven, which, as already observed, means only what is evil, in Scripture. But observe — that it *was baked*. Every woman in this audience knows, that if she puts the yeast — the leaven — among the flour, it will go on working, and rising, until she does one simple thing. What is that? Fire it — put it into the oven, and bake it. Then it stops working. Herein is a great practical truth for us. God has judged the evil of the flesh, in the cross, and put it from His sight judicially, through the work of His Son. We are to judge the flesh in ourselves, that it may not work. In the eighteenth verse you read, "And ye shall offer *with the bread* seven lambs without blemish, of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be for a burnt offering unto the Lord, with their meat offering, and their drink offering, even an offering made by fire, of sweet savour unto the Lord. Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a *sin offering*, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings." Thank God, the evil which the leaven typifies, as existing in the loaves, though baken and not working, is divinely and perfectly met by the value of the sin offering — the figure of the death of Christ, that death which He died for us. Yes, the truth is this, the atoning death of the Saviour has been accepted by God, and that atonement absolutely clears the believer, and the Church, from all possibility of imputation of guilt, and though the existence of sin in the flesh is still recognised, as being in the believer, still it is under control. Its presence is divinely and perfectly met, and answered, by the sin offering which Christ has already presented.

The wave sheaf, then, has been presented before the Lord — Christ risen from the dead — and accepted; and the two loaves "baken with leaven," I have no doubt, figuratively represent the Church, accepted in all the value of Christ's acceptance. There are two component parts of the Church — the Jew and the Gentile. The Jew is introduced in Acts 2, and the Gentile in Acts 10, and I would not say that the two loaves do not hint at this, but when we come further on in the New Testament narrative we find, not two loaves, but one loaf (1 Cor. 10: 17), expressive of the unity of the Church. In connection with the chapter in Leviticus, I would refer to a striking passage in the Epistle to the Romans, where the apostle Paul says that grace is given to him of God, "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." The connection of the "wave loaves," and Pentecost with this, is apparent.

Pentecost, then, prefigures the descent of the Holy Ghost, coming to form and present the Church before God, in all the acceptability of the Person, and the work of Him, who has glorified God absolutely in death, and whom God has brought out of death, and put at His own right hand in glory, and then "gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1: 22, 23). That Church is composed of sinners, taken from Jew and Gentile, quickened by His Spirit, washed in His blood, and now indwelt by the Holy Ghost.

Here then, in Acts 2, Pentecost, the day for which the Saviour longed, had come. He had gone up after being seen for forty days. Ten days were spent by the disciples in prayer, and then the promise of the Father came from the glorified Man at the right hand of God, put there by God

Himself, on the ground of the work, by which He had infinitely glorified God, having, through redemption, obtained the right to take into glory all those who are now led to trust in His name. This truth, however, could not be known until the Holy Ghost came down, of which we will now read. "They were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Observe two things here. All *the house was filled*, and the disciples were *all filled* with the Holy Ghost, and "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." In verse 4 you have the absolute fulfilment of what the Lord says of the Comforter in the fourteenth of John. "He dwelleth *with* you, and shall be *in* you" (ver. 17). When He filled the house, He was *with* them; when He filled them, individually, He was *in* them. When Jesus was upon earth it was "*God with us.*" When He died on the cross for our sins, and God raised Him from the dead, there came out the blessed truth of "*God for us.*" But now we get the essential truth of Christianity. What is that? "*God in us.*" God, the Holy Ghost, dwelling in us — a truth, beloved friends, of incomparable importance.

This must have been a wonderful scene. A company of a hundred and twenty believers are seen bowing in prayer before the Lord, and all of a sudden, there comes the sound of this rushing mighty wind. The sound is heard, but as far as the house is concerned nothing is visible. God attests the presence of this new Person — new, I mean, so far as His being on earth, after this kind, is concerned. A divine Person, in a totally new character, and manner, is on earth. God attests this first of all by "a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind" that made itself everywhere felt as "it filled all the house where they were sitting," and then, "there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." You have thus the unique truth of the Holy Ghost, personally dwelling in the bosom of the assembly, and next you have Him resting on each individual.

Why have we here the Holy Ghost, taking the form of "cloven tongues, like as of fire." When the Spirit came down upon Jesus, at His baptism, it had "a bodily shape like a dove" (Luke 3: 22), sweetly in accord with the character of the Lord, and His mission. He was personally pure, and holy, and sinless, and His ministry was to be, if I might say so, of a non-aggressive character. You would naturally connect the thought of the dove with Christ. He was gentle, and quiet, and you know His voice was not to be heard in the streets. He was not to strive. The bruised reed He would not break, and the smouldering flax He would not quench. On the other hand, the "cloven tongues, as of fire," indicated testimony, bold, firm, unflinching, universal, world-wide testimony. I think that the tongue of fire which was seen on the head of each, was not merely a divided flame, or forked, as we should say, but that tongue of fire had a good many divisions. That is what the Greek would signify. Until now the testimony of God had been confined to one nation, and to one tongue. Now, by the Holy Ghost, the testimony of God was to go to the ends of the earth, and to every nation thereon. But why "cloven tongues, as of *fire*?" Many people believe that *fire* means power and blessing. That is never the thought in Scripture. Fire is always symbolical of the searching action of God's holiness. Here it would seem to be the testimony of the Word of God, and nothing can burn a man, like the Word in the power of the Holy Ghost. If you have been a convicted sinner you know that. Every saved man can go back to the time when God's Word, driven by the Holy Ghost, went like a red-hot iron through his conscience to the depths of his moral being. If, my friend, you evade the "fire" of God's Spirit on earth, you will know soon — ah! far too soon — in the depths of hell what fire means. You must

know "fire," here or there. You must feel the fire of the Holy Ghost that breaks you down, convicts you of sin, and burns up your pride now, or the eternal fire, that is never quenched, and into which the impenitent sinner must go for his folly and sin, must be yours for ever. Mark you! you must meet "fire" somewhere. God grant that you may meet it in the day of the Holy Ghost — the day of grace — *now*. There is nothing but grace in this chapter.

The disciples, we read here, "were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost came to dwell in them, as the Spirit of power, and the Spirit of testimony. This is the grand point of the second of Acts, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." The believer really has no power until he receives the Holy Ghost, and, mark! he does not receive the Holy Ghost to become a believer. He comes to him after he is a believer. No doubt the Holy Ghost it is, that first convicts you, and leads you to judge yourself, to repent, and to believe the gospel, but that is in a different character of operation altogether, from His coming to the believer, to dwell in him, as the gift of God.

The apostle Peter thus puts the matter, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the *gift* of the Holy Ghost" (ver. 38). Again, in the eighth chapter, you remember Peter says to Simon the sorcerer, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the *gift* of God may be purchased with money" (Acts 8: 20). The great point of the passage is the personal coming of the Spirit. The power to speak with unknown tongues, the power to do miracles, and the power to preach, were but the *signs*, and *effects*, of the presence of the Holy Ghost. The reception of Him personally, is the grand thing in the second of Acts. The gift itself is infinitely greater than any effect it could produce. They received Him then, and were "filled with the Holy Ghost."

We will now look at the effects. First (ver. 4) "they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." This marvellous effect of the Spirit's presence soon gathers the multitude, and you have such a testimony as you find nowhere else in Scripture. The mercy of God is now about to reach multitudes, in the very tongues to which, in His just displeasure, men of old had been doomed. It is remarkable that people were present from all quarters. If I might say so, God rings the great bell of the universe, to gather together this varied company, to hear about His Son. "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language." Most of them were Jews, or Jewish proselytes. All kinds of speculations filled their minds, for "they were all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans. And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born. . . . We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." What do you think the Lord's servants spoke about? About Jesus, and not about themselves. That day "the wonderful works of God" formed their glorious theme, as, in many languages, they unfolded the truth of His love, the wonderful death of His Son, and the way in which God was glorified by that death.

Have you ever contrasted this scene with a remarkable chapter in the Old Testament, the eleventh of Genesis? I must ask you to turn back to it, because the contrast is so beautiful. There we read, "And the whole earth was of *one language*, and of *one speech*. . . . And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may

reach unto heaven." They never got there. They were wanting to get there by brick and mortar. How does God take us to heaven? He puts Christ there first, and then sends the Holy Ghost to link us with Him in heaven. Some people think today that they will get to heaven by "brick and mortar," *i.e.* by hard work for salvation. Works, rites, and ceremonies, take the place of Christ in their struggle to get to heaven. My "brick and mortar" friend, you will not find yourself in heaven for eternity, but in a very different place. Christ is God's way to heaven. Faith, not works, can alone take you there.

But these Babel builders further say, "Let us *make us a name*, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord said, Behold the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do; and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city." (in passing, just let me say to you, my friend of "brick and mortar," you had better leave off building too. You had better just come to Jesus, and let Him save you.) "Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth" (Gen. 11: 1-8).

Now, what has all that to do with the second of Acts, you ask? In one sense nothing, but in another sense a great deal. The confusion of tongues in the eleventh of Genesis, was the just judgment of God on the pride of the first man, but the Holy Ghost's coming down, and indwelling the one hundred and twenty, and enabling them to speak in every language under the sun, about Jesus, was the just answer of God to the lowly pathway of that humble Man, who went down to death, not to make Himself a name, but to make God a name, and to give God righteous title to take a new name altogether, that of "God our Saviour." Therefore, you see you have in Acts 2, if I may say so, the reversal of the eleventh of Genesis. You have the action of the second Man — the Lord Jesus — weighed, and valued, and appraised by God: and as the result of His obedience, and lowliness, and of His glorifying God, even in death, the scales of the sanctuary, in which man is weighed, are turned in favour of man, and the Holy Ghost comes down to overcome the difficulty, which the sin of the first man had brought in. For the moment these unlettered Galileans are empowered by the Holy Ghost to speak, in all these languages, of the love, and glory, of the second Man, the last Adam, now gone into heaven, He having first of all accomplished redemption. Wonderful testimony to God's estimate of the life and death of Jesus!

Returning now to the second of Acts, we find that the effect of this reversal of Genesis 11 was, that "they were all amazed, and were in doubt, (Saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine" (vers. 12, 13). But Peter, full of the Holy Ghost, says, "These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy," etc. Observe that Peter does not say this is a *fulfilment* of Joel's prophecy, in its full and complete force. He says, "This is that which was spoken," and not any other kind of agency or power. That which is spoken of in Joel will have its larger, and absolute fulfilment, in a day yet to come. What they saw was what Joel spoke of, *i.e.* it had been foretold in a certain sense by Scripture.

The very first service the Holy Ghost does is, if I may so say, to shake out and hoist aloft the flag on which is emblazoned, "WHOSOEVER SHALL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED." Salvation through the name of Jesus is what that means. It is the Gospel in its simplest possible form. Whosoever, therefore, desires to be saved may be. There is salvation, for anybody who will have it, through the name of Jesus.

Peter then passes on, and tells them of the life of Jesus — of God's delight in Him; how man refused Him, put Him to death, and put Him in a grave. He also tells them how God raised Him, and put Him into glory. In verse 32 it says, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore 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, which ye now see and hear." There was indisputable evidence, that there was now upon earth a divine Person, who had come in a totally new character. And whence had He come? He had come from the exalted Man in glory. On earth once, this Son of Man had received the Spirit of God for Himself, and in the power of that Spirit He lived, and walked, and "through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God." Now, alive from the dead, as Man, He passed into glory, carrying manhood to the very throne of God.

Now I pray you carefully to look at the expression, "And having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost." Jesus has received the Holy Ghost twice. Once for Himself, personally, on earth, and the second time, when in heavenly glory, and on the ground of redemption, He receives the promise of the Father. Who for? For us. Psalm 68 indicated, and anticipated this, when it said, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men (or, as it may be more literally rendered, *in man*); yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

Peter lets his hearers distinctly understand that now had come the fulfilment of what is spoken of in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of John. It was "the promise of the Father" actually come. As Son of Man, Jesus had gone up, and was with the Father. Earth had lost Him. The Father had received Him back again. He had said, "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you" (John 16: 7). Now the Holy Ghost had come, as the promise of the Father. To do what? To bring the believer into the Father's presence, and cause him to live in the atmosphere of the Father's house. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4: 6). It is by the Holy Ghost that the believer is now brought into relationship with God consciously, so that he says, Father!

There is all the difference in the world between having the Spirit, and not having Him. It comes out in the prayers of God's people. You will tell where a man is spiritually, better by his prayers, than by his general speech. I have heard some of the children of God pray, as if they were but poor beggars. Suppose a beggar comes to your house. You hear his knock. By its very character you learn who it is, and say, That is a beggar! You know it is a beggar. He gets a crust, or a copper, and goes his way. Half-an-hour goes by when the bell rings violently, then a loud knock, and if there be any delay in opening, perhaps even a kick at the door follows. "Ah!" you say, "that is my boy come home from school." The boy knows he is perfectly welcome, and he is in haste to get in, where love waits to receive him. I believe that many of the children of God do

not know what it is to be thoroughly at home, in the presence of the Lord, with this sense, I am a child, as near to the heart of God, as Christ is; I am welcome there, and He loves to hear my voice. The wave sheaf is accepted for me, and the Holy Ghost is dwelling in me, to lead me into, and keep me happily occupied with, the love that has brought me near to itself. The eighth of Romans says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (ver. 16). The Holy Ghost has come to put the saint in the enjoyment now of what belongs to him for eternity. Well, you say, I shall be very happy in heaven by-and-by! Why are you not now on earth? If somebody left you a fortune in the Funds, would you say, I will draw the first dividend when I die? I do not think you would. You would rather say, I wonder when I shall get it, I should like to know when the dividend warrants are to be paid.

You see the Holy Ghost has come down to put the soul now, into the enjoyment of its heavenly relationships, with the Father, and the Son, and to lead it into abiding communion with the Father and the Son. That is Christianity. But, alas, Christendom has forgotten that the Holy Ghost is here. That is why you so frequently hear the prayer that the Spirit of God might be poured out. If ever you hear it again, you would do the petitioner a true service by asking him if he ever read the second of Acts. The Holy Ghost has come. The Spirit of God is here. What would the Lord have thought, when on earth, if one day while He, and His twelve disciples were passing along, one of them had turned, and prayed to God fervently, that He would send His Son? I think one of the eleven would have turned on him, and said, "What are you talking about? He is already here." Similarly, what inconsistency is it to pray for the Holy Ghost to be poured out! Ah! you say, we thought He was only an influence. I know it. But I want you to see this evening that He is a Divine Person come here, and abiding here, in the name of Christ — here to act for Christ, and here to put the soul in the enjoyment of communion with the Father and the Son.

The peculiarity of the way in which the Holy Ghost fell on the Jew at Pentecost, I will reserve for next Lord's Day evening, as it will come in more naturally with the subject then to be before us. It may now suffice us just to read what Peter says. "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." What he proposed to that quickened multitude was repentance, baptism, and the reception of the gift of the Holy Ghost. "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off" (these are undoubtedly the Gentiles; they have a claim upon Christ's love, as well as the Jews), "even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly (the expression "gladly" is doubtful) received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

Why are souls not similarly converted now? It is not a question of the vessel, or the preacher. The reason why we do not see similar blessing is that we do not expect it. I meet you, and remark that last Lord's Day, at a Gospel meeting, six souls were converted. "Ah! you don't say so!" is your reply, in these words, giving expression to the unbelief of your hearts. Look at this Pentecostal scene — no less than three thousand! Is there an unconverted man here this evening? You had better not go away unconverted. If you do, you are surely going to hell. You are going to your doom, and that the lake of fire. You are once more turning your back on Christ;

you had better bow before Him, and get saved now. If three thousand were converted that day, may *you* not well be saved tonight? Surely.

The contrast between the day when the law was given, and broken, and the day when the Holy Ghost was given, is very striking. You remember that when Moses came down from the mount with God's law, written on the tables of stone, and reached the camp, he found the people, instead of obeying that law, dancing round the golden calf — "And Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount" (Ex. 32: 19). "Who is on the Lord's side?" is next his query and Levi buckled on his sword, "and there fell of the people that day three thousand men." Three thousand men were cut off from Israel, and destroyed on the day that the law was broken, whereas three thousand souls were saved, and added to the Church, the day the Holy Ghost came down to tell men that there is a Saviour in glory. Delightful thought! There is a Saviour in glory for me, and for you, and, if still unsaved, you may be saved just now. Well, it is a lovely sight that of three thousand souls being converted. What a scene to the eye and heart of the Saviour! What joy was there too in that vast multitude! Look at the hundred and twenty! How their hearts would be fit to burst for joy. Three thousand! What congratulation! What greetings, as, Thank God I am saved! were heard among these thousands. Fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters there may have been among the three thousand one hundred and twenty now believing in the name of Jesus, and all receiving the Holy Ghost.

And what do they do now? We read in verse 42 — "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship." They were filled with the Gospel of the exalted Christ. They then received the doctrine the apostles proclaimed; and that produced fellowship. Yes, "fellowship, and breaking of bread," was the order of the day, Breaking of bread once in six months? Oh! no. They were far too deeply touched by the love of Christ for that. They could not put it off for six months in those days. "They continued *stedfastly* in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." The breaking of bread was the expression of the one body, into which they were now baptized by the Holy Ghost, though they had not got the revelation of that truth as yet. Further, they continued stedfastly "in prayers." And I have no doubt the prayer-meeting was as crammed as the meeting for the breaking of bread. The brethren used to pray in those days. Now they come to prayer-meetings, but oftentimes you hear but few voices? How is this? Will you say — They have not "the gift of prayer." God forbid that any should have what you call "the gift of prayer." Such a gift I find nowhere in Scripture. Fluency in public prayer is oftentimes a snare to the possessor, and a distress to all that hear him. Its lack is no loss. True prayer is always simple. The reason why real prayer is often lacking is that the heart is full of the world, or under the influence of the presence of man, and "the fear of man bringeth a snare." They continued stedfastly in "prayers," not prayer-meetings. Oh for the stedfastness of those days! We are, alas! so half-hearted, so worldly, and so unspiritual. The Lord stir us all up to be more like these early Christians!

Now, note what follows. "They continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people." How true is it, when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Here then, was the Church formed, in the power of the Holy Ghost, and we find, "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." I do not doubt He worked quietly and blessedly, but He had 3,120 red-hot witnesses of Christ that day in Jerusalem, and if in Edinburgh today there were as many, and as bright, for Christ, what a stir there would be in the town. If you go home tonight with your heart full of Christ, and tell somebody else about it, and others did the same, depend upon it there would be a great stir. "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." But you say, These were Pentecostal times. True, but what does the Pentecostal time mean? It means that the Holy Ghost had come down, and is He not here still? Thank God He is: the same faithful Spirit of grace, and true servant of Christ's glory. The Lord give us to believe in His abiding presence, to count on His power, and to seek His guidance, each step of the way, and in all that concerns the work of the Lord.