

Chapel Flock



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Vol. 40 Issue 779

Oct. 30, 2013

Worship Music

[This Little Light Of Mine-Addison Road](#)

[Love Comes Down- Kerrie Roberts](#)

[Hope Now- Addison Road](#)

Prayer

Lord, please forgive me for the times I've been a whiner and a complainer. I am so sorry that I've made life miserable for the people who work with me at my job or at church. I recognize that I complain more than I should, and I admit that I have been wrong. I repent for my wrong behavior, and I'm asking You today to help me make a mental adjustment. Help me learn to be thankful for the blessings I have and for the salary my employer pays me. Help me to serve with a happy heart and to be a continual source of blessing instead of a continual source of complaint. Let all that I do be done in love, and as unto the Lord. I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

[" The Call"](#)

Charles Stanley

Chapel Flock.....text a prayer..... request telephone number.....

(316) 247-3623

Or----

If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

chapel-flock@sbcglobal.net

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[David Wilkerson](#)

[Greg Laurie](#)

[Virtue for Women- Cathe Laurie](#)

1 THE KING [David] shall joy in Your strength, O Lord; and in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! 2 You have given him his heart's desire and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah [pause, and think of that]! 3 For You send blessings of good things to meet him; You set a crown of pure gold on his head. 4 He asked life of You, and You gave it to him—long life forever and evermore. 5 His glory is great because of Your aid; splendor and majesty You bestow upon him. 6 For You make him to be blessed and a blessing forever; You make him exceedingly glad with the joy of Your presence. 7 For the king trusts, relies on, and is confident in the Lord, and through the mercy and steadfast love of the Most High he will never be moved. 8 Your hand shall find all Your enemies; Your right hand shall find all those who hate You. 9 You will make them as if in a blazing oven in the time of Your anger; the Lord will swallow them up in His wrath, and the fire will utterly consume them. 10 Their offspring You will destroy from the earth, and their sons from among the children of men. 11 For they planned evil against You; they conceived a mischievous plot which they are not able to perform. 12 For You will make them turn their backs; You will aim Your bow [of divine justice] at their faces. 13 Be exalted, Lord, in Your strength; we will sing and praise Your power.

Other Scripture references for each specific book of Psalm....

Psalm 21:6 (AMP)

6 For You make him to be blessed and a blessing forever; You make him exceedingly glad with the joy of Your presence.

Genesis 12:2 (AMP)

2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you [with abundant increase of favors] and make your name famous and distinguished, and you will be a blessing [dispensing good to others].

Psalm 21

Again, to the chief musician, the psalm of David.

The king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and you have not withheld the requests of his lips (Psa 21:1-2).

Now the Selah indicates, really, sort of a change of thought. It sort of introduces a new idea. It is just sort of a rest, and then introducing of a new idea, new thought pattern.

For you prevent him with the blessings of goodness: you set a crown of pure gold on his head. He asks for life from thee, and you gave it to him, even the length of days for ever and ever. His glory is great in thy salvation (Psa 21:3-5):

He is talking about the king's delight in the Lord, and how he was just so gracious for what God has done.

For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance. For the king trusts in the LORD, and through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved. Your hand shall find out all your enemies: your right hand shall find out those that hate thee. You will make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the LORD will swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them. Their fruit will you destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men. For they intended evil against thee: they imagined mischievous devices, that they are not able to perform. Therefore thou shalt make them to turn their back, when thou shalt make ready your arrows upon thy strings against the face of them. Be thou exalted, LORD, in your own strength: so will we sing of thy praise and thy power (Psa 21:5-13).

(Through The Bible c 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Bible commentaries, 1979-1986)

Tongue of Fire (1858); by William Arthur; formatted for e-sword by David Cox (c) 2007

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 xiv. 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 ix. 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 xxii. 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 iii. 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 vi. 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 xx. 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, I Corinthians xiv. 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 x. 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 "spoke 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 their native tongue?

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 828-830)

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