

The Life of Faith Chapter 2 The Advent of the Spirit

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Transcript

The Life of Faith

Chapter 2

The Advent of the Spirit

It is highly important we should closely observe how that each of the Eternal Three has been at marked pains to provide for the honour of the other Divine Persons, and we must be as particular to give it to them accordingly. How careful was the Father to duly guard the ineffable glory of the Darling of his bosom when he laid aside the visible insignia of his Deity and took upon him the form of a servant: his voice was then heard more than once proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son". How constantly did the incarnate Son divert attention from himself and direct it unto the one who had sent him. In like manner, the Holy Spirit is not here to glorify himself, but rather him whose Vicar and Advocate he is (John 16:14). Blessed is it then to mark how jealous both the Father and the Son have been to safeguard the glory and provide for the honour of the Holy Spirit. If I go not away, the Comforter will not come" (John 16:7); he will not do these works while I am here, and I have committed all to him. As my Father hath visibly "committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John 5:22, 23), so I and my Father will send him having committed all these things to him, that all men might honour the Holy Spirit, even as they honour the Father and the Son. Thus wary and careful are every one of the Persons to provide for the honour of each other in our hearts (Thomas Goodwin, 1670).

The public advent of the Spirit, for the purpose of ushering in and administering the new covenant, was second in importance only unto the incarnation of our Lord, which was in order to the winding up of the old economy and laying the foundations of the new. When God designed the salvation of his elect, he appointed two great means: the gift of his Son for them, and the gift of his Spirit to them; thereby each of the Persons in the Trinity being glorified. Hence, from the first entrance of sin, there were two great heads to the promises which God gave his people: the sending of his Son to obey and die, the sending of his Spirit to make effectual the fruits of the former. Each of these Divine gifts was bestowed in a manner which suited both to the august Giver himself and the eminent nature of the gifts. Many and marked are the parallels of correspondence between the advent of Christ and the advent of the Spirit. 1. God appointed that there should be a signal coming accorded unto the descent of each from heaven to earth for the performance of the work assigned them. Just as the Son was present with the redeemed Israelites long

before his incarnation (Acts 7:37, 38; 1 Cor. 10:4), yet God decreed for him a visible and more formal advent, which all of his people knew of; so though the Holy Spirit was given to work regeneration in men all through the Old Testament era (Neh. 9:20, etc.), and moved the prophets to deliver their messages (2 Pet. 1:21), nevertheless God ordained that he should have a coming in state, in a solemn manner, accompanied by visible tokens and glorious effects. 2. Both the advents of Christ and of the Spirit were the subjects of Old Testament prediction. During the past century much has been written upon the Messianic prophecies, but the promises which God gave concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit constitute a theme which is generally neglected. The following are among the principal pledges which God made that the Spirit should be given unto and poured out upon his saints: Psalm 68:18; Proverbs 1:23; Isaiah 32:15; Ezekiel 36:26,39:29; Joel 2:28; Haggai 2:9. In them the descent of the Holy Spirit was as definitely announced as was the incarnation of the Savior in Isaiah 7:14. 3. Just as Christ had John the Baptist to announce his incarnation and to prepare his way, so the Holy Spirit had Christ himself to foretell his coming, and to make ready the hearts of his own for his advent. 4. Just as it was not until "the fullness of time had come" that God sent forth his Son (Gal. 4:4), so it was not until "the day of Pentecost was fully come" that God sent forth his Spirit (Acts 2:1). 5. As the Son became incarnate in the holy land, Palestine, so the Spirit descended in Jerusalem. 6. Just as the coming of the Son of God into this world was auspiciously signalized by mighty wonders and signs, so the descent of God the Spirit was attended and attested by stirring displays of Divine power. The advent of each was marked by supernatural phenomena: the angel choir (Luke 2:13) found its counterpart in the "sound from heaven" (Acts 2:1), and the Shekinah "glory" (Luke 2:9) in the "tongues of fire" (Acts 2:3). 7. As an extraordinary star marked the "house" where the Christ-child was (Matthew 2:9); so a Divine shaking marked the "house" to which the Spirit had come (Acts 2:2). 8. In connection with the advent of Christ there was both a private and a public aspect to it: in like manner too was it in the giving of the Spirit. The birth of the Saviour was made known unto a few, but when he was to "be made manifest to Israel" (John 1:31), he was publicly identified, for at his baptism the heavens were opened, the Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove, and the voice of the Father audibly owned him as his Son. Correspondingly, the Spirit was communicated to the apostles privately, when the risen Saviour "breathed on, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22); and later he came publicly on the day of Pentecost when all the great throng then in Jerusalem were made aware of his descent (Acts 2:32-36). 9. The advent of the Son was in order to his becoming incarnate, when the eternal Word was made flesh (John 1:14); so too the advent of the Spirit was in order to his becoming incarnate in Christ's redeemed: as the Saviour had declared to them, the Spirit of truth 'shall be in you" (John 14:17). This is a truly marvelous parallel. As the Son of God became man, dwelling in a human "temple" (John 2:19), so the third person of the Trinity took up his abode in men, to whom it is said, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). As the Lord Jesus said to the Father, "A body hast thou prepared me" (Heb. 10:5), so the Spirit could say to Christ, "A body hast thou prepared me" (see Eph. 2:22). 10. When Christ was born into this world, we are told that Herod "was troubled and all Jerusalem with him" (Matthew 2:3); in like manner, when the Holy Spirit was given we read, "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were troubled in mind" (Acts 2:5, 6). 11. It had been predicted that when Christ should appear he would be unrecognized and unappreciated (Isa. 53), and so it came to pass; in like manner, the Lord Jesus declared, "The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him" (John 14:17). 12. As the Messianic claims of Christ were called into question, so the advent of the Spirit was at once challenged: "They were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?" (Acts 2:12). 13. The analogy is yet closer: as Christ was termed "a winebibber" (Matthew 11:19), so of those

filled with the Spirit it was said, "These men are full of new wine" (Acts 2:13)! 14. As the public advent of Christ was heralded by John the Baptist (John 1:29), so the meaning of the public descent of the Spirit was interpreted by Peter (Acts 2:15-36). 15. God appointed unto Christ the executing of a stupendous work, even that of purchasing the redemption of his people; even so to the Spirit has been assigned the momentous task of effectually applying to his elect the virtues and benefits of the atonement. 16. As in the discharge of his work the Son honored the Father (John 14:10), so in the fulfillment of his mission the Spirit glorifies the Son (John 16:13, 14). 17. As the Father paid holy deference unto the Son by bidding the disciples, "Hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5), in like manner the Son shows respect for his Paraclete by saying, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Revelation 2:7). 18. As Christ committed his saints into the safekeeping of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7; 14:16), so the Spirit will yet deliver up those saints unto Christ, as the word "receive" in John 14:3 plainly implies. We trust that the reader will find the same spiritual delight in perusing this chapter as the writer had in preparing it. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit came as he had never come before. Something then transpired which inaugurated a new era for the world, a new power for righteousness, a new basis for fellowship. On that day the fearing Peter was transformed into the intrepid evangelist. On that day the new wine of Christianity burst the old bottles of Judaism, and the Word went forth in a multiplicity of Gentile tongues. On that day more souls seem to have been truly regenerated, than during all the three and one half years of Christ's public ministry. What had happened? It is not enough to say that the Spirit of God was given, for he had been given long before, both to individuals and the nation of Israel (Neh. 9:20; Haggai 2:5); no, the pressing question is, In what sense was he then given? This leads us to carefully consider the meaning of the Spirit's advent. 1. It was the Fulfillment of the Divine Promise. First, of the Father himself. During the Old Testament dispensation, he declared, again and again, that he would pour out the Spirit upon his people (see Prov. 1:23; Isa. 32:15; Joel 2:28, etc.); and now these gracious declarations were accomplished. Second, of John the Baptist. When he was stirring the hearts of the multitudes by his call to repentance and his demand of baptism, many thought he must be the long expected Messiah, but he declared unto them, "I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Luke 3:15, 16). Accordingly he did so on the day of Pentecost, as Acts 2:32, 33 plainly shows. Third, of Christ. Seven times over the Lord Jesus avowed that he would give or send the Holy Spirit: Luke 24:49; John 7:37-39; 14:16-19; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; Acts 1:5, 8. From these we may particularly notice, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father... he shall testify of me" (John 15:26): "It is expedient for you that I go away; for 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). That which took place in John 20:22 and in Acts 2 was the fulfillment of those promises. In them we behold the faith of the Mediator: he had appropriated the promise which the Father had given him, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:33)—it was by faith's anticipation the Lord spoke as he did in the above passage. The Holy Spirit was God's ascension gift to Christ, that he might be bestowed by Christ, as his ascension gift to the church. Hence Christ had said, "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you." This was the promised gift of the Father to the Son, and the Saviour's promised gift to his believing people. How easy now to reconcile the apparent contradiction of Christ's earlier and later words: "I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter"; and then, afterward, "If I depart, I will send him unto you." The Spirit was the Father's answer to the prayer of the Son; and so the gift was transferred by him to the mystical body of which he is the head (A. T. Pierson in The Acts of the Holy Spirit).

2. It was the fulfillment of an important Old Testament type. It is this which explains to us why the Spirit was given on the day of "Pentecost", which was one of the principal religious feasts of Israel. Just as there was a profound significance to Christ's dying on Passover Day (giving us the antitype of Ex. 12), so there was in the coming of the Spirit on the fiftieth day after Christ's resurrection. The type is recorded in Leviticus 23, to which we can here make only the briefest allusion. In Leviticus 23:4 we read, "These are the feasts of the Lord." The first of them is the Passover (v. 5) and the second "unleavened bread" (v. 6 etc.). The two together speaking of the sinless Christ offering himself as a sacrifice for the sins of his people. The third is the "wave sheaf (v. 10 etc.) which was the "first fruits of the harvest" (v. 10), presented to God "on the morrow after the (Jewish) Sabbath" (v 11), a figure of Christ's resurrection (1 Cor. 15:23). The fourth is the feast of "weeks" (see Ex. 34:22; Deut. 16:10, 16) so-called because of the seven complete weeks of Leviticus 23:15; also known as "Pentecost" (which means "Fiftieth") because of the "fifty days" of Leviticus 23:16. It was then the balance of the harvest began to be gathered in. On that day Israel was required to present unto God "two wave loaves", which were also designated "the first: fruits unto the Lord" (Lev. 23:17). The antitype of which was the saving of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost: the "first fruits" of Christ's atonement (compare Jam. 1:18). The first loaf represented those redeemed from among the Jews, the second loaf was anticipatory and pointed to the gathering in of God's elect from among the Gentiles, begun in Acts 10. 3. It was the beginning of a new dispensation. This was plainly intimated in the type of Leviticus 23, for on the day of Pentecost Israel was definitely required to offer a "new meal offering unto the Lord" (v. 16). Still more clearly was it fore-announced in a yet more important and significant type, namely, that of the beginning of the Mosaic economy, which took place only when the nation of Israel formally entered into covenant relationship with Jehovah at Sinai. Now it is exceedingly striking to observe that just fifty days elapsed from the time when the Hebrews emerged from the house of bondage till they received the law from the mouth of Moses. They left Egypt on the fifteenth of the first month (Num. 33:3), and arrived at Sinai on the first of the third month (Ex. 19:1, note "the same day"), which would be the forty-sixth. The next day Moses went up into the mount, and three days later the law was delivered (Ex. 19:11)! And just as there was a period of fifty days from Israel's deliverance from Egypt until the beginning of the Mosaic economy, so the same length of time followed the resurrection of Christ (when his people were delivered from hell) to the beginning of the Christian economy! That a new dispensation commenced at Pentecost further appears from the "tongues like as of fire" (Acts 2:1). When John the Baptist announced that Christ would baptize "with the Holy Spirit and with fire", the last words might have suggested material burning to any people except Jews, but in their minds far other thoughts would be awakened. To them it would recall the scene when their great progenitor asked the God who promised he should inherit that land wherein he was a stranger, "Lord, Go whereby shall know that I shall inherit it?" The answer was, "Behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp. . ." (Gen. 15:17). It would recall the fire which Moses saw in the burning bush. It would recall the "pillar of fire" which guided by night, and the Shekinah which descended and filled the tabernacle. Thus, in the promise of baptism by fire, they would at once recognize the approach of a new manifestation of the presence and power of God! Again, when we read that "there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them" (Acts 2:2), further evidence is found that a new dispensation had now commenced. The word, sat, in Scripture marks an ending and a beginning. The process of preparation is ended and the established order has begun. It marks the end of creation and the beginning of normal forces. "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." There is no weariness in God. He did not rest from fatigue: what it means is that all creative work was accomplished. The same figure is used of the Redeemer. Of him it is said "when he had made purification for sins (be) sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high". No other priesthood had sat down. The priests of the

Temple ministered standing because their ministry was provisional and preparatory, a parable and a prophecy. Christ's own ministry was part of the preparation for the coming of the Spirit. Until he 'sat down' in glory, there could be no dispensation of the Spirit. . . . When the work of redemption was complete, the Spirit was given, and when he came he sat. He reigns in the Church as Christ reigns in the heavens. There are few incidents more illuminating than that recorded in "the last day of the feast" in John 7:37-39. The feast was that of Tabernacles. The feast proper lasted seven days, during which all Israel dwelt in booths. Special sacrifices were offered and special rites observed. Every morning one of the priests brought water from the pool of Siloam, and amidst the sounding of trumpets and other demonstrations of joy, the water was poured upon the altar. The rite was a celebration and a prophecy. It commemorated the miraculous supply of water in the wilderness, and it bore witness to the expectation of the coming of the Spirit. On the seventh day the ceremony of the poured water ceased, but the eighth was a day of holy convocation, the greatest day of all. On that day there was no water poured upon the altar, and it was on the waterless day that Jesus stood on the spot and cried, saying: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Then he added those words: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture has said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water." The apostle adds the interpretative comment: "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him were to receive: for the Spirit was not given because Jesus was not yet glorified." "As the scripture hath said." There is no such passage in the Scripture as that quoted, but the prophetic part of the water ceremony was based upon certain Old Testament symbols and prophecies in which water flowed forth from Zion to cleanse, renew, and fructify" the world. A study of Joel 3:18 and Ezekiel 47 will supply the key to the meaning both of the rite and our Lord's promise. The Holy Spirit was "not yet given", but he was promised, and his coming should be from the place of blood, the altar of sacrifice. Calvary opened the fountain from which poured forth the blessing of Pentecost (Samuel Chadwick *The Way to Pentecost*). We have considered the meaning of the Spirit's descent, and pointed out that it was the fulfillment of Divine promise, the accomplishment of Old Testament types, and the beginning of a new dispensation. It was also the Grace of God flowing unto the Gentiles. But first let us observe and admire the marvelous grace of God extended unto the Jews themselves. In his charge to the apostles, the Lord Jesus gave orders that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47), not because the Jews had any longer a covenant standing before God - for the Nation was abandoned by him before the crucifixion—see Matthew 23:38—but in order to display his matchless mercy and sovereign benignity. Accordingly, in the Acts we see his love shining forth in the midst of the rebellious city. In the very place where the Lord Jesus had been slain the full gospel was now preached, and three thousand were quickened by the Holy Spirit. But the gospel was to be restricted to the Jews no longer. Though the apostles were to commence their testimony in Jerusalem, yet Christ's glorious and all efficacious Name was to be proclaimed "among all nations". The earnest of this was given when "devout men out of every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5) exclaimed, "How hear we every man in his own tongue?" (v. 8). It was an entirely new thing. What occurred in Acts 2 was a part reversal and in blessed contrast from what is recorded in Genesis 11. There we find "the tongues were divided to destroy an evil unity, and to show God's holy hatred of Babel's iniquity. In Acts 2 we have grace at Jerusalem, and a new and precious unity, suggestive of another building (Matthew 16:18), with living stones—contrast the "bricks" of Genesis 11:3 and its tower" (P.W. Heward). In Genesis the dividing of tongues was in judgment; in Acts 2 the cloven tongues was in grace; and in Revelation 7:9, 10 we see men of all tongues in glory. We next consider the purpose of the Spirit's descent. 1. To witness unto Christ's exaltation. Pentecost was God's seal upon the Messiahship of Jesus. In proof of his pleasure in and acceptance of the sacrificial work of his Son, God raised him from the dead, exalted him to his own right hand, and gave him the Spirit to bestow upon his Church (Acts 2:33). It has

been beautifully pointed out by another that, on the hem of the ephod worn by the high priest of Israel were golden bells and pomegranates (Ex. 28:33, 34). The sound of the bells (and that which gave them sound was their tongues) furnished evidence that he was alive while serving in the sanctuary. The high priest was a type of Christ (Heb. 8:1); the holy place was a figure of heaven (Heb. 9:24); the 'sound from heaven' and the speaking "in tongues" (Acts 2:2, 4) were a witness that our Lord was alive in heaven, ministering there as the High Priest of his people.

2. To take Christ's place. This is clear from his own words to the apostles, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever" (John 14:16). Until then, Christ had been their "Comforter", but he was soon to return to heaven; nevertheless, as he went on to assure them, "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you" (marginal rendering of John 14:18); he did "come" to them corporately after his resurrection, but he "came" to them spiritually and abidingly in the person of his Deputy on the day of Pentecost. The Spirit, then, fills the place on earth of our absent Lord in heaven, with this additional advantage, that, during the days of his flesh the Saviour's body confined him unto one location, whereas the Holy Spirit—not having assumed a body as the mode of his incarnation—is equally and everywhere resident in and abiding with every believer.

3. To further Christ's Cause. This is plain from his declaration concerning the Comforter: "He shall glorify me" (John 16:14). The word "Paraclete" (translated "Comforter" all through the gospel) is also rendered "Advocate" in 1 John 2:1, and an "advocate" is one who appears as the representative of another. The Holy Spirit is here to interpret and vindicate Christ, to administer for Christ in his Church and Kingdom. He is here to accomplish his redeeming purpose in the world. He fills the mystical Body of Christ, directing its movements, controlling its members, inspiring its wisdom, supplying its strength. The Holy Spirit becomes to the believer individually and the church collectively all that Christ would have been had he remained on earth. Moreover, he seeks out each one of those for whom Christ died, quickens them into newness of life, convicts them of sin, gives them faith to lay hold of Christ, and causes them to grow in grace and become fruitful. It is important to see that the mission of the Spirit is for the purpose of continuing and completing that of Christ's. The Lord Jesus declared, "I am come to send fire on the earth: and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:49, 50). The preaching of the gospel was to be like "fire on the earth", giving light and warmth to human hearts; it was "kindled" then, but would spread much more rapidly later. Until his death Christ was "straitened": it did not consist with God's purpose for the gospel to be preached more openly and extensively; but after Christ's resurrection, it went forth unto all nations. Following the ascension, Christ was no longer 'straitened' and the Spirit was poured forth in the plenitude of his power.

4. To endue Christ's servants. "Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49) had been the word of Christ to his apostles. Sufficient for the disciple to be as his Master. He had waited, waited till he was thirty, ere he was "anointed to preach good tidings" (Isa. 61:1). The servant is not above his Lord: if he was indebted to the Spirit for the power of his ministry, the apostles must not attempt their work without the Spirit's unction. Accordingly they waited, and the Spirit came upon them. All was changed: boldness supplanted fear, strength came instead of weakness, ignorance gave place to wisdom, and mighty wonders were wrought through them. Unto the apostles whom he had chosen, the risen Saviour "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father", assuring them that "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come unto you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:2, 4, 8). Accordingly, we read that, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1): their unity of mind evidently looked back to the Lord's command and promise, and their trustful expectancy of the fulfillment thereof. The Jewish "day" was from sunset unto the following sunset, and as what took place here in Acts 2 occurred during the early hours of

the morning—probably soon after sunrise—we are told that the day of Pentecost was "fully come. The outward marks of the Spirit's advent were three in number: the 'sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind", the "cloven tongues as of fire", and the speaking "with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance". Concerning the precise signification of these phenomena, and the practical bearing of them on us today, there has been wide difference of opinion, especially since the beginning of this century. Inasmuch as God himself has not seen fit to furnish us with a full and detailed explanation of them, it behooves all interpreters to speak with reserve and reverence. According to our own measure of light, we shall endeavour briefly to point out some of those things which appear to be most obvious. First, the "rushing mighty wind" which filled all the house was the collective sign, in which, apparently, all the hundred and twenty of Acts 1:15 shared. This was an emblem of the invincible energy with which the Third Person of the Trinity works upon the hearts of men, bearing down all opposition before him, in a manner which can not be explained (John 3:8), but which is at once apparent by the effects produced. Just as the course of a hurricane may be clearly traced after it has passed, so the transforming work of the Spirit in regeneration is made unmistakably manifest unto all who have eyes to see spiritual things. Second, "there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them" (Acts 2:3), that is, upon the Twelve, and upon them alone. The proof of this is conclusive. First, it was to the apostles only that the Lord spoke in Luke 24:49. Second, to them only did he, by the Spirit, give commandments after his resurrection (Acts 1:2). Third, to them only did he give the promise of Acts 1:8. Fourth, at the end of Acts I we read "he (Matthias) was numbered with the eleven apostles". Acts 2 opens with "And" connecting it with 1:26 and says, "they (the twelve) were all with one accord in one place" and on them the Spirit now 'sat" (Acts 2:3). Fifth, when the astonished multitude came together they exclaimed, "Are not all these which speak Galileans?" (Acts 2:7), namely, the "men" (Greek, "males") of Galilee" of 1:11! Sixth, in Acts 2:14, 15 we read, "But Peter standing up with the eleven lifted up his voice and said to them, Ye men of Galilee and all ye that dwell in Judea, be this known unto you and hearken unto my words: For these are not drunk" - the word "these" can only refer to the "eleven" standing up with Peter! These "cloven tongues like as of fire" which descended upon the apostles was the individual sign, the Divine credential that they were the authorized ambassadors of the enthroned Lamb. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a baptism of fire. Our God is a consuming fire. The elect sign of his presence is the fire unkindled of earth, and the chosen symbol of his approval is the sacred flame: covenant and sacrifice, sanctuary and dispensation were sanctified and approved by the descent of fire. "The God that answereth by fire, he is the God" (1 Kings 18:24). That is the final and universal test of Deity. Jesus Christ came to bring fire on the earth. The symbol of Christianity is not a Cross, but a Tongue of Fire (Samuel Chadwick).

Third, the apostles 'speaking with other tongues" was the public sign. 1 Corinthians 14:22 declares "tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not", and as the previous verse (where Isa.28:11 is quoted) so plainly shows, they were a sign unto unbelieving Israel. A striking illustration and proof of this is found in Acts 11, where Peter sought to convince his skeptical brethren in Jerusalem that God's grace was now flowing forth unto the Gentiles; it was his description of the Holy Spirit's falling upon Cornelius and his household (Acts 11:15-18 and cf. 10:45, 46) which convinced them. It is highly significant that the Pentecostal type of Leviticus 23:22 divided the harvest into three degrees and stages: the "reaping" or main part, corresponding to Acts 2 at Jerusalem; the "corners of the field" corresponding to Acts 10 at "Caesarea Philippi" which was in the corner of Palestine; and the "gleaning" for "the stranger" corresponding to Acts 19 at Gentile Ephesus! These were the only three occasions of "tongues" recorded in Acts. It is well known to some of our readers that during the last generation many earnest souls have been deeply exercised by what is known as "the Pentecostal movement" and the question is frequently raised as to whether or not the strange power displayed in their meetings, issuing in

unintelligible sounds called "tongues", is the genuine gift of the Spirit. Those who have joined the movement - some of them godly souls, we believe - insist that not only is the gift genuine, but it is the duty of all Christians to seek the same. But surely such seem to overlook the fact that it was not any "unknown tongue" which was spoken by the apostles: foreigners who heard them had no difficulty in understanding what was said (Acts 2:8). If what has just been said be not sufficient, then let our appeal be unto 2 Timothy 3:16, 17. God has now fully revealed his mind to us: all that we need to "thoroughly furnish" us "unto all good works" is already in our hands! Personally the writer would not take the trouble to walk into the next room to hear any person deliver a message which he claimed was inspired by the Holy Spirit; with the completed Scriptures in our possession, nothing more is required except for the Spirit to interpret and apply them. Let it also be duly observed that there is not a single exhortation in all the Epistles of the New Testament that the saints should seek "a fresh Pentecost", no, not even to the carnal Corinthians or the legal Galatians. As a sample of what was believed by the early "fathers" we quote the following: Augustine saith, Miracles were once necessary to make the world believe the gospel, but he who now seeks a sign that he may believe is a wonder, yea a monster." Chrysostom concludeth upon the same grounds that, "There is now in the Church no necessity of working miracles", and calls him a "false prophet" who now takes in hand to work them (William Perkins, 1604).

In Acts 2:16 we find Peter was moved by God to give a general explanation of the great wonders which had just taken place. Jerusalem was, at this time of the feast, filled with a great concourse of people. The sudden sound from heaven "as of a rushing mighty wind's filling the house where the apostles were gathered together, soon drew thither a multitude of people; and as they, in wonderment, heard the apostles speak in their own varied languages, they asked, "What meaneth this?" (Acts 2:12). Peter then declared, "This is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel." The prophecy given by Joel (2:28-32) now began to receive its fulfillment, the latter part of which we believe is to be understood symbolically. And what is the bearing of all this upon us today"? We will reply in a single sentence: the advent of the Spirit followed the exaltation of Christ: if then we desire to enjoy more of the Spirit's power and blessing, we must give Christ the throne of our hearts and crown him the Lord of our lives.

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