THE PENTECOSTAL WIND AND FIRE

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A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 18, 1881
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind,
and it filled all the house where they were sitting.
And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, 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."
Acts 2:2-4

FROM the descent of the Holy Ghost at the beginning we may learn something concerning His operations at the present time. Remember at the outset that whatever the Holy Spirit was at the first that He is that now, for as God He remains forever the same—whatsoever He then did He is able to do still, for His power is by no means diminished.

As says the prophet Micah, "O thou that are named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the LORD straitened?" We would greatly grieve the Holy Spirit if we supposed that His might was less today than in the beginning. Although we may not expect, and need not desire, the miracles which came with the gift of the Holy Spirit, so far as they were physical, yet we may both desire and expect that which was intended and symbolized by them, and we may reckon to see the same spiritual wonders performed among us at this day.

Pentecost, according to the belief of the Jews, was the time of the giving of the law. And if when the law was given there was a marvelous display of power on Sinai, it was to be expected that when the Gospel was given, whose ministration is far more glorious, there should be some special unveiling of the divine presence. If at the commencement of the Gospel, we behold the Holy Spirit working great signs and wonders, may we not expect a continuance—nay, if anything, an increased display—of His power as the ages roll on?

The law vanished away, but the Gospel will never vanish. It shines more and more to the perfect millennial day. Therefore, I reckon that, with the sole exception of physical miracles, whatever was wrought by the Holy Ghost at the first, we may look to be wrought continually while the dispensation lasts.

It ought not to be forgotten that Pentecost was the feast of first fruits. It was the time when the first ears of ripe corn were offered unto God. If, then, at the commencement of the Gospel harvest we see so plainly the power of the Holy Spirit, may we not most properly expect infinitely more as the harvest advances, and most of all when the most numerous sheaves shall be ingathered? May we not conclude that if the Pentecost was thus marvelous, the actual harvest will be more wonderful still?

This morning my object is not to talk of the descent of the Holy Spirit as a piece of history, but to view it as a fact bearing upon us at this hour, even upon us who are called in these latter days to bear our testimony for the truth. The Father has sent us the Comforter that He may dwell in us till the coming of the Lord. The Holy Ghost has never returned, for He came in accordance with the Savior's prayer to abide with us forever.

The gift of the Comforter was not temporary, and the display of His power was not to be once seen and no more. The Holy Ghost is here, and we ought to expect His divine working among us. And if He does not so work, we should search ourselves to see what it is that hinders, and whether there may not be something in ourselves which vexes Him, so that He restrains His sacred energy, and does not work among us as He did aforetime.

May God grant that the meditation of this morning may increase our faith in the Holy Ghost, and inflame our desires towards Him so that we may look to see Him fulfilling His mission among men as at the beginning.

I. First, I shall call your attention to THE INSTRUCTIVE SYMBOLS of the Holy Spirit, which were made prominent at Pentecost. They were two. There was a sound as of a rushing mighty wind, and there were cloven tongues as it were of fire.

Take the symbols separately. The first is *wind*—an emblem of deity, and therefore a proper symbol of the Holy Spirit. Often, under the Old Testament, God revealed Himself under the emblem of breath or wind. Indeed, as most of you know, the Hebrew word for "wind" and "spirit" is the same.

So, with the Greek word, when Christ talked to Nicodemus, it is not very easy for translators to tell us when He said "spirit," and when He said "wind." Indeed, some most correctly render the original all the way through by the word "wind," while others with much reason have also used the word "spirit" in their translation.

The original word signified either the one or the other, or both. Wind is, of all material things, one of the most spiritual in appearance. It is invisible, ethereal, mysterious, hence, men have fixed upon it as being nearest akin to spirit.

In Ezekiel's famous vision, when he saw the valley full of dry bones, we all know that the Spirit of God was intended by that vivifying wind which came when the prophet prophesied, and blew upon the withered relics till they were quickened into life. "The LORD hath his way in the whirlwind," thus He displays Himself when He works. "The LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind," thus He reveals Himself when He teaches His servants.

Observe that this wind on the day of Pentecost was accompanied with a sound—a sound as of a mighty rushing wind. For albeit the Spirit of God can work in silence, yet in saving operations He frequently uses sound. I would be the last to depreciate meetings in which there is nothing but holy silence, for I could wish that we had more reverence for silence, and it is in stillness that the inner life is nourished.

Yet the Holy Ghost does not work for the advancement of the kingdom of God by silence alone, for faith comes by hearing. There is a sound as of a mighty rushing wind, when the Word is sounded forth throughout whole nations by the publishing of the Gospel. If the Lord had not given men ears or tongues, silent worship would have been not only appropriate but necessary—but inasmuch as we have ears, the Lord must have intended us to hear something, and as we have tongues, He must have meant us to speak.

Some of us would be glad to be quiet, but where the Gospel has free course, there is sure to be a measure of noise and stir. The sound came on this occasion, no doubt, to call the attention of the assembly to what was about to occur, to arouse them, and to fill them with awe! There is something indescribably solemn about the rush of a rising tempest. It bows the soul before the sublime mystery of divine power. What more fitting as an attendant upon divine working than the deeply solemn rush of a mighty wind?

With this awe-inspiring sound as of a mighty wind, there was clear indication of its coming from heaven. Ordinary winds blow from this or that quarter of the skies, but this descended from heaven itself—it was distinctly like a down-draught from above.

This sets forth the fact that the true Spirit, the Spirit of God, neither comes from this place nor that—neither can His power be controlled or directed by human authority, but His working is ever from above, from God Himself. The work of the Holy Spirit is, so to speak, the breath of God, and His power is evermore in a special sense the immediate power of God.

Coming downward, therefore, this mysterious wind passed into the chamber where the disciples were assembled, and filled the room. An ordinary rushing mighty wind would have been felt outside the room, and would probably have destroyed the house or injured the inmates, if it had been aimed at any

one building—but this heavenly gust filled but did not destroy the room—it blessed, but did not overthrow the waiting company.

The meaning of the symbol is that as breath, air, wind, is the very life of man, so is the Spirit of God the life of the spiritual man. By Him are we quickened at the first. By Him are we kept alive afterwards. By Him is the inner life nurtured, and increased, and perfected. The breath of the nostrils of the man of God is the Spirit of God.

This holy breath was not only intended to quicken them, but to invigorate them. What a blessing would a breeze be just now to us who sit in this heavy atmosphere! How gladly would we hail a gust from the breezy down, or a gale from the open sea! If the winds of earth are so refreshing, what must a wind from heaven be!

That rushing mighty wind soon cleared away all earth-engendered damps and vapors. It aroused the disciples, and left them braced up for the further work of the Lord. They took in great draughts of heavenly life. They felt animated, aroused, and bestirred. A sacred enthusiasm came upon them, because they were filled with the Holy Ghost. And girt with that strength, they rose into a nobler form of life than they had known before.

No doubt this wind was intended to show the irresistible power of the Holy Ghost, for simple as the air is, and mobile and apparently feeble, yet set it in motion, and you feel that a thing of life is among you. Make that motion more rapid, and who knows the power of the restless giant who has been awakened.

See, it becomes a storm, a tempest, a hurricane, a tornado, a cyclone. Nothing can be more potent than the wind when it is thoroughly roused, and so, though the Spirit of God be despised among men, so much so that they do not even believe in His existence, yet let Him work with the fullness of His power, and you will see what He can do.

He comes softly, breathing like a gentle zephyr, which fans the flowers, but does not dislodge the insect of most gauzy wing, and our hearts are comforted. He comes like a stirring breeze, and we are quickened to a livelier diligence—our sails are hoisted and we fly before the gale. He comes with yet greater strength, and we prostrate ourselves in the dust as we hear the thunder of His power, bringing down with a crash false confidences and refuges of lies!

How the firm reliances of carnal men, which seemed to stand like rocks, are utterly cast down! How men's hopes, which appeared to be rooted like oaks, are torn up by the roots before the breath of the convincing Spirit! What can stand against Him? Oh! that we did but see in these latter days something of that mighty rushing wind which breaks the cedars of Lebanon, and sweeps before it all things that would resist its power.

The second Pentecostal symbol was *fire*. Fire, again, is a frequent symbol of deity. Abraham saw a burning lamp, and Moses beheld a burning bush. When Solomon had built his holy and beautiful house, its consecration lay in the fire of God descending upon the sacrifice to mark that the Lord was there. For when the Lord had dwelt aforetime in the tabernacle, which was superseded by the temple, He revealed Himself in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

"Our God is a consuming fire." Hence the symbol of fire is a fit emblem of God the Holy Spirit. Let us adore and worship Him. Tongues of flame sitting on each man's head betokened a personal visitation to the mind and heart of each one of the chosen company.

Not to consume them came the fires, for no one was injured by the flaming tongue—to men whom the Lord has prepared for His approach, there is no danger in His visitations. They see God, and their lives are preserved. They feel His fires, and are not consumed. This is the privilege of those alone who have been prepared and purified for such fellowship with God.

The intention of the symbol was to show them that the Holy Spirit would illuminate them, as fire gives light. "He shall lead you into all truth." Henceforth they were not to be untrained children, but to be teachers in Israel, instructors of the nations whom they were to disciple unto Christ—hence the Spirit of light was upon them.

But fire does more than give light—it inflames—and the flames which sat upon each showed them that they were to be ablaze with love, intense with zeal, burning with self-sacrifice. And that they were to go forth among men to speak, not with the chill tongue of deliberate logic, but with burning tongues of passionate pleading, persuading, and entreating men to come unto Christ that they might live.

The fire signified inspiration. God was about to make them speak under a divine influence, to speak as the Spirit of God should give them utterance. Oh! blessed symbol, would God that all of us experienced its meaning to the full, and that the tongue of fire sat upon every servant of the Lord. May a fire burn steadily within to destroy our sin, a holy sacrificial flame to make us whole burnt offerings unto God, a never-dying flame of zeal for God, and devotion to the cross.

Note that the emblem was not only fire, but a tongue of fire, for God meant to have a speaking church. Not a church that would fight with the sword—with that weapon we have nought to do—but a church that should have a sword proceeding out of its mouth, whose one weapon should be the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I should think from what I know of some preachers that when they had their Pentecost, the influence put upon them was in the form of tongues of flowers. But the apostolic Pentecost knew not flowers, but flames. What fine preaching we have nowadays! What new thoughts and poetical turns! This is not the style of the Holy Ghost.

Soft and gentle is the flow of smooth speech which tells of the dignity of man, the grandeur of the century, the toning down of all punishment for sin, and the probable restoration of all lost spirits, including the arch-fiend himself. This is the Satanic ministry, subtle as the serpent, bland as his seducing words to Eve.

The Holy Ghost calls us not to this mode of speech. Fire, intensity, zeal, passion as much as you will—but as for aiming at effect by polished phrases and brilliant periods—these are fitter for those who would deceive men than for those who would tell them the message of the Most High. The style of the Holy Ghost is one which conveys the truth to the mind in the most forcible manner—it is plain but flaming, simple but consuming. The Holy Spirit has never written a cold period throughout the whole Bible, and never did He speak by a man a lifeless word, but evermore He gives and blesses the tongue of fire.

These, then, are the two symbols, and I should like you to carefully observe how the Holy Spirit teaches us by them. When He came from the Father to His Son Jesus it was as a dove. Let peace rest on that dear sufferer's soul through all His days of labor, and through the passion which would close them. His anointing is that of peace—He needed no tongue of flame, for He was already all on fire with love.

When the Holy Spirit was bestowed by the Son of God upon His disciples it was as breath—"He breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Ghost." To have life more abundantly is a chief necessity of servants of the Lord Jesus, and therefore the Holy Ghost visits us.

Now that we have the Holy Spirit from Christ as our inner life and quickening, He also comes upon us with the intent to use us in blessing others, and this is the manner of His visitation—He comes as the wind, which wafts the words we speak, and as fire which burns a way for the truth we utter.

Our words are now full of life and flame. They are borne by the breath of the Spirit, and they fall like fire-flakes, and set the souls of men blazing with desire after God. If the Holy Spirit shall rest upon me or upon you, or upon any of us, to qualify us for service, it shall be after this fashion—not merely of life for ourselves, but of fiery energy in dealing with others.

Come on us even now, O rushing mighty wind and tongue of fire, for the world has great need. It lies stagnant in the malaria of sin, and needs a healing wind. It is shrouded in dreadful night, and needs the flaming torch of truth. There is neither health nor light for it but from You, O blessed Spirit. Come, then, upon it through Your people.

Now put these two symbols together, only mind what you are at. Wind and fire together! I have kept them separate in my discourse hitherto, and you have seen power in each one—what are they together?

Rushing mighty wind alone—how terrible! Who shall stand against it? See how the gallant ships dash together, and the monarchs of the forest bow their heads.

And fire alone! Who shall stand against it when it devours its prey? But set wind and fire to work in hearty union! Remember the old city of London? When first the flames began, it was utterly impossible to quench them because the wind fanned the flame, and the buildings gave way before the flame-torrent.

Set the prairie on fire. If a rain shower falls, and the air is still, the grass may perhaps cease to burn, but let the wind encourage the flame, and see how the devourer sweeps along while the tall grass is licked up by tongues of fire.

We have lately read of forests on fire. What a sight! Hear how the mighty trees are crashing in the flame! What can stand against it! The fire sets the mountains on a blaze. What a smoke blackens the skies—it grows dark at noon. As hill after hill offers up its sacrifice, the timid imagine that the great day of the Lord has come.

If we could see a spiritual conflagration of equal grandeur it were a consummation devoutly to be wished. O God, send us Your Holy Ghost in this fashion—give us both the breath of spiritual life and the fire of unconquerable zeal, till nation after nation shall yield to the sway of Jesus.

O You who art our God, answer us by fire, we pray You. Answer us both by wind and fire, and then shall we see You to be God indeed. The kingdom comes not, and the work is flagging. O that You would send the wind and the fire! You will do this when we are all of one accord, all believing, all expecting, all prepared by prayer. Lord, bring us to this waiting state.

II. Secondly, my brethren, follow me while I call your attention to THE IMMEDIATE EFFECTS of this descent of the Holy Spirit, for these symbols were not sent in vain.

There were two immediate effects—the first was *filling*, and the second was *the gift of utterance*. I call special attention to the first, namely, filling—"It filled all the house where they were sitting." And it did not merely fill the house, but the men—"They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." When they stood up to speak even the ribald mockers in the crowd noticed this, for they said, "These men are full," and though they added, "with new wine," yet they evidently detected a singular fullness about them.

We are poor, empty things by nature, and useless while we remain so—we need to be filled with the Holy Ghost. Some people seem to believe in the Spirit of God giving utterance only, and they look upon instruction in divine things as of secondary importance. Dear, dear me. What trouble comes when we act upon that theory! How the empty vessels clatter, and rattle, and sound! Men in such case utter a wonderful amount of nothing, and even when that nothing is set on fire it does not come to much.

I dread a revival of that sort, where the first thing and the last thing is everlasting talk. Those who set up for teachers ought to be themselves taught of the Lord—how can they communicate that which they have not received? Where the Spirit of God is truly at work, He first fills and then gives utterance—that is His way. Oh that you and I were at this moment filled with the Holy Ghost.

"Full!" Then they were not cold, and dead, and empty of life as we sometimes are. "Full." Then there was no room for anything else in any one of them! They were too completely occupied by the heavenly power to have room for the desires of the flesh. Fear was banished, every minor motive was expelled.

The Spirit of God as it flooded their very being, drove out of them everything that was extraneous. They had many faults and many infirmities before, but that day, when they were filled with the Spirit of God, faults and infirmities were no more perceptible. They became different men from what they had ever been before—men full of God are the reverse of men full of self.

The difference between an empty man and a full man is something very wonderful. Let a thirsty person have an empty vessel handed to him. There may be much noise in the handing, but what a mockery it is as it touches his lips. But fill it with refreshing water, and perhaps there may be all the more silence in the passing of it, for a full cup needs careful handling. But oh, what a blessing when it reaches the man's lips! Out of a full vessel he may drink his full.

Out of a full church the world shall receive salvation, but never out of an empty one. The first thing we want as a church is to be filled with the Holy Ghost. The gift of utterance will then come as a matter of course.

They ask me, "May the sisters speak anywhere? If not in the assembly, may they not speak in smaller meetings?" I answer, yes, if they are full of the Holy Ghost. Shall this brother or that be allowed to speak? Certainly, if he be filled, he may flow. May a layman preach? I know nothing about laymen except that I am no cleric myself—but let all speak who are full of the Holy Ghost.

"Spring up, O well." If it be a fountain of living water, who would restrain it, who could restrain it? Let him overflow who is full, but mind he does not set up to pour out when there is nothing in him—for if he counts it his official duty to go pouring out, pouring out, pouring out, at unreasonable length, and yet nothing comes of it, I am sure he acts, not by the Holy Spirit, but according to his own vanity.

The next Pentecostal symbol was *utterance*. As soon as the Spirit of God filled them they began to speak at once. It seems to me that they began to speak before the people had come together. They could not help it—the inner forces demanded expression, and they must speak.

So when the Spirit of God really comes upon a man, he does not wait till he has gathered an audience of the size which he desires, but he seizes the next opportunity. He speaks to one person, he speaks to two, he speaks to three, to anybody—he must speak, for he is full, and must have vent.

When the Spirit of God fills a man, he speaks so as to be understood. The crowd spake different languages, and these Spirit-taught men spoke to them in the language of the country in which they were born. This is one of the signs of the Spirit's utterance.

If my friend over yonder talks in a Latinized style to a company of costermongers, I will guarantee you the Holy Ghost has nothing to do with him. If a learned brother fires over the heads of his congregation with a grand oration, he may trace his elocution, if he likes, to Cicero and Demosthenes, but do not let him ascribe it to the Holy Spirit, for that is not after His manner. The Spirit of God speaks so that His words may be understood, and if there be any obscurity, it lies in the language used by the Lord Himself.

The crowd not only understood, but they felt. There were lancets in this Pentecostal preaching, and the hearers "were pricked in the heart." The truth wounded men, and the slain of the Lord were many, for the wounds were in the most vital part. They could not make it out—they had heard speakers before, but this was quite a different thing. The men spake fire-flakes, and one hearer cried to his fellow, "What is this?" The preachers were speaking flame, and the fire dropped into the hearts of men till they were amazed and confounded.

Those are the two effects of the Holy Spirit—a fullness of the Spirit in the ministry and the church—and next, a fire ministry, and a church on fire, speaking so as to be felt and understood by those around. Causes produce effects like themselves, and this wind and fire ministry soon did its work. We read that this "was noised abroad." Of course it was, because there had been a noise as of a rushing mighty wind.

Next to that we read that all the people came together, and were confounded. There was naturally a stir, for a great wind from heaven was rushing. All were amazed and astonished, and while some inquired believingly, others began to mock. Of course they did—there was a fire burning, and fire is a dividing thing, and this fire began to separate between the precious and the vile, as it always will do when it comes into operation.

We may expect at the beginning of a true revival to observe a movement among the people—a noise and a stir. These things are not done in a corner. Cities will know of the presence of God, and crowds will be attracted by the event.

This was the immediate effect of the Pentecostal marvel, and I shall now ask you to follow me to my third point, which is this—

III. The Holy Spirit being thus at work, what was THE MOST PROMINENT SUBJECT which these full men began to preach about with words of fire?

Suppose that the Holy Spirit should work mightily in the church—what would our ministers preach about? We should have a revival, should we not, of the old discussions about predestination and free agency? I do not think so. These are happily ended, for they tended towards bitterness, and for the most part the disputants are not equal to their task.

We should hear a great deal about the pre-millennial and the post-millennial advent, should we not? I do not think so. I never saw much of the Spirit of God in discussions or dreams upon times and seasons which are not clearly revealed. Should we not hear learned essays upon advanced theology? No, sir—when the devil inspires the church, we have modern theology—but when the Spirit of God is among us, that rubbish is shot out with loathing.

What did these men preach about? Their hearers said, "We do hear them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." Their subject was the wonderful works of God. Oh, that this might be to my dying day my sole and only topic—"The wonderful works of God."

For, first, they spoke of *redemption*, that wonderful work of God. Peter's sermon was a specimen of how they spoke of it. He told the people that Jesus was the Son of God, that they had crucified and slain Him, but that He had come to redeem men, and that there was salvation through His precious blood. He preached redemption.

Oh, how this land will echo again and again with, "Redemption, redemption, redemption, redemption by the precious blood," when the Holy Ghost is with us. This is fit fuel for the tongue of flame—this is something worthy to be wafted by the divine wind.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." This is one of the wonderful works of God of which we can never make too frequent mention.

They certainly spoke of the next wonderful work of God, namely, *regeneration*. There was no concealing of the work of the Holy Spirit in that primitive ministry. It was brought to the front. Peter said, "Ye shall receive the Holy Ghost." The preachers of Pentecost told of the Spirit's work by the Spirit's power—conversion, repentance, renewal, faith, holiness, and such things were freely spoken of and ascribed to their real author, the divine Spirit.

If the Spirit of God shall give us once again a full and fiery ministry, we shall hear it clearly proclaimed, "Ye must be born again," and we shall see a people forthcoming which are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of the will of God, and by the energy which comes from heaven. A Holy Ghost ministry cannot be silent about the Holy Ghost, and His sacred operations upon the heart.

And very plainly they spoke on a third wonderful work of God, namely, *remission* of sin. This was the point that Peter pushed home to them, that on repentance they should receive remission of sins. What a blessed message is this—pardon for crimes of deepest dye, a pardon bought with Jesus' blood, free pardon, full pardon, irreversible pardon given to the vilest of the vile when they ground their weapons of rebellion, and bow at the feet that once were nailed to the tree. If we would prove ourselves to be under divine influence, we must keep to the divine message of fatherly forgiveness to returning prodigals. What happier word can we deliver?

These are the doctrines which the Holy Ghost will revive in the midst of the land when He works mightily—redemption, regeneration, remission. If you would have the Spirit of God resting on your labors, dear brothers and sisters, keep these three things always to the front, and make all men hear in their own tongue the wonderful works of God.

IV. I shall close by noticing, in the fourth place, what were the GLORIOUS RESULTS of all this. Have patience with me if you find the details somewhat long.

The result of the Spirit coming as wind and fire, filling and giving utterance, was, first, in the hearers' *deep feeling*. There was never, perhaps, in the world such a feeling excited by the language of mortal man as that which was aroused in the crowds in Jerusalem on that day. You might have seen a group here, and a group there, all listening to the same story of the wondrous works of God, and all

stirred and affected, for the heavenly wind and fire went with the preaching, and they could not help feeling its power.

We are told that they were pricked in the heart. They had painful emotions, they felt wounds which killed their enmity. The Word struck at the center of their being—it pierced the vital point. Alas, people come into our places of worship nowadays to hear the preacher, and their friends ask them on their return, "How did you like him?" Was that your errand, to see how you liked him?

What practical benefit is there in such a mode of using the servants of God? Are we sent among you to give opportunities for criticism? Yet the mass of men seem to think that we are nothing better than fiddlers or play-actors, who come upon the stage to help you while away an hour.

O my hearers, if we are true to our God, and true to you, ours is a more solemn business than most men dream. The object of all true preaching is the heart—we aim at divorcing the heart from sin, and wedding it to Christ. Our ministry has failed, and has not the divine seal set upon it, unless it makes men tremble, makes them sad, and then soon brings them to Christ, and causes them to rejoice.

Sermons are to be heard by the thousands, and yet how little comes of them all, because the heart is not aimed at, or else the archers miss the mark. Alas, our hearers do not present their hearts as our target, but leave them at home, and bring us only their ears, or their heads. Here we need divine aid. Pray mightily that the Spirit of God may rest upon all who speak in God's name, for then they will create deep feeling in their hearers!

Then followed an *earnest inquiry*. "They were pricked in their heart, and they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Emotion is of itself but a poor result unless it leads to practical action. To make men feel is well enough, but it must be a feeling which impels them to immediate movement, or at least to earnest inquiry as to what they shall do.

O Spirit of God, if You will rest on me, even me, men shall not hear and go their way and forget what they have heard! They will arise and seek the Father, and taste His love. If You would rest on all the brotherhood that publish Your Word, men would not merely weep while they hear, and be affected while the discourse lasts, but they would go their way to ask, "What must we do to be saved?"

This is what we need. We do not require new preachers, but we need a new anointing of the Spirit. We do not require novel forms of service, but we want the fire Spirit, the wind Spirit to work by us till everywhere men cry, "What must we do to be saved?"

Then came *a grand reception of the Word*. We are told that they gladly received the Word, and they received it in two senses. First, Peter bade them repent, and so they did. They were pricked to the heart from compunction on account of what they had done to Jesus, and they sorrowed after a godly sort, and quit their sins.

They also believed in Him whom they had slain, and accepted Him as their Savior there and then, without longer hesitancy. They trusted in Him whom God had set forth to be a propitiation, and thus they fully received the Word. Repentance and faith make up a complete reception of Christ, and they had both of these. Why should we not see this divine result today? We shall see it in proportion to our faith.

But what next? Why, they were *baptized* directly. Having repented and believed, the next step was to make confession of their faith—and they did not postpone that act for a single day—why should they? Willing hands were there, the whole company of the faithful were all glad to engage in the holy service, and that same day they were baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

If the Holy Ghost were fully with us, we should never have to complain that many believers never confess their faith, for they would be eager to confess the Savior's name in His own appointed way. Backwardness to be baptized comes too often of fear of persecution, indecision, love of ease, pride, or disobedience—but all these vanish when the heavenly wind and fire are doing their sacred work. Sinful diffidence soon disappears, sinful shame of Jesus is no more seen, and hesitancy and delay are banished forever when the Holy Spirit works with power.

Furthermore, there was not merely this immediate confession, but as a result of the Spirit of God, there was *great steadfastness*. "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine." We have had plenty of revivals of the human sort, and their results have been sadly disappointing. Under excitement, nominal converts have been multiplied—but where are they after a little testing?

I am sadly compelled to own that, so far as I can observe, there has been much sown, and very little reaped that was worth reaping, from much of that which has been called revival. Our hopes were flattering as a dream, but the apparent result has vanished like a vision of the night.

But where the Spirit of God is really at work the converts stand—they are well-rooted and grounded, and hence they are not carried about by every wind of doctrine, but they continue steadfast in the apostolic truth.

We see next that there was *abundant worship of God*, for they were steadfast not only in the doctrine, but in breaking of bread, and in prayer, and in fellowship. There was no difficulty in getting a prayer meeting then, no difficulty in maintaining daily communion then, no want of holy fellowship then. For the Spirit of God was among them, and the ordinances were precious in their eyes.

"Oh," say some, "if we could get this minister or that evangelist, we should do well." Brothers, if you had the Holy Spirit you would have everything else growing out of His presence, for all good things are summed up in Him.

Next to this there came *striking generosity*. Funds were not hard to raise—liberality overflowed its banks, for believers poured all that they had into the common fund. Then was it indeed seen to be true that the silver and the gold are the Lord's. When the Spirit of God operates powerfully there is little need to issue telling appeals for widows and orphans, or to go down on your knees and plead for missionary fields which cannot be occupied for want of money.

At this moment our village churches can scarcely support their pastors at a starvation rate—but I believe that if the Spirit of God will visit all the churches, means will be forthcoming to keep all going right vigorously. If this does not happen, I tremble for our Nonconformist churches, for the means of their existence will be absent—both as to spiritual and temporal supplies they will utterly fail.

There will be no lack of money when there is no lack of grace. When the Spirit of God comes, those who have substance yield it to their Lord. And those who have but little grow rich by giving of that little, and those who are already rich become happy by consecrating what they have. There is no need to rattle the box when the rushing mighty wind is heard, and the fire is dissolving all hearts in love.

Then came *continual gladness*. "They did eat their meat with gladness." They were not merely glad at prayer meetings and sermons, but glad at breakfast and at supper. Whatever they had to eat, they were for singing over it. Jerusalem was the happiest city that ever was when the Spirit of God was there.

The disciples were singing from morning to night, and I have no doubt the outsiders asked, "What is it all about?" The temple was never so frequented as then—there was never such singing before—the very streets of Jerusalem, and the Hill of Zion rang with the songs of the once despised Galileans.

They were full of gladness, and that gladness showed itself in *praising God*. I have no doubt they broke out now and then in the services with shouts of, "Glory! Hallelujah!" I should not wonder but what all propriety was scattered to the winds. They were so glad, so exhilarated that they were ready to leap for joy.

Of course we never say, "Amen," or "Glory!" now. We have grown to be so frozenly proper that we never interrupt a service in any way, because to tell the truth, we are not so particularly glad, we are not so specially full of praise that we want to do anything of the sort. Alas, we have lost very much of the Spirit of God, and much of the joy and gladness which attend His presence, and so we have settled into a decorous apathy! We gather the links of propriety instead of the palm branches of praise.

God send us a season of glorious disorder. Oh for a sweep of wind that will set the seas in motion, and make our ironclad brethren now lying so quietly at anchor to roll from stem to stern. As for us, who are as the little ships, we will fly before the gale if it will but speed us to our desired haven.

Oh for fire to fall again—fire which shall affect the most stolid! This is a sure remedy for indifference. When a flake of fire falls into a man's bosom, he knows it, and when the Word of God comes home to a man's soul, he knows it too. Oh that such fire might first sit upon the disciples, and then fall on all around!

For to close, there was then *a daily increase* of the church—"The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Conversion was going on perpetually. Additions to the church were not events which happened once a year, but they were everyday matters, "so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

O Spirit of God, You are ready to work with us today even as You did then! Stay not, we beseech You, but work at once. Break down every barrier that hinders the incomings of Your might. Overturn, overturn, O sacred wind! Consume all obstacles, O heavenly fire, and give us now both hearts of flame and tongues of fire to preach Your reconciling word, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—ACTS 2

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—317, 449, 451

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.