

still long enough to try their faith, and prove whether their hearts were right before God. For ten days they continued in prayer and supplication, looking for the fulfilment of the promise. Jesus had assured them before his ascension that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence; and they determined to wait until this baptism came down. What a spectacle, and what an example to follow! There is the waiting Church in that upper room at Jerusalem, not sitting down in idleness and inactivity; but waiting at the throne of grace, pouring out their hearts in earnest supplication, and confidently expecting to receive power from on high. They wait, and when Jehovah's set time has come the blessing descends.

Look first at the position in which his blessing finds them. They were all with one accord in one place. Of all that hundred and twenty mentioned in the previous chapter, not one is absent. There are the Apostles, the women, Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brethren; their hearts all glowing with love to the glorified Saviour, looking for the fulfilment of his promise.

Not only, however, are they all gathered together in one place, but, better still; they are all of one accord. There are no divisions, strifes, or upbraidings of one another for past unfaithfulness. While Jesus was with them in bodily form, very often had they fallen out by the way, and given vent to angry words, jealousies and variance. Now, however, this has all ceased. They are united together in the closest bonds of fellowship and peace. They are one in heart, in soul, desire and expectation. Glorious fact—mighty source of strength and energy for the Lord's work, this being of one accord. United they stand side by side, are helpers of one another's faith and love, are prepared for the reception of the blessing, and able to cope successfully with the powers of the world, the flesh and the devil. Union is strength; it is a mighty power in itself, and must prevail more and more in the Church, if she would secure the divine influences, and walk in the strength of omnipotence. Nothing grieves the Spirit so much as strife and variance; while on the other hand, if Christians love one another and are of one accord, they can then lay hold of the Spirit, and confidently expect its blessed influences to be poured out.

Look now at the way in which this divine power comes down. They are gathered together with one accord in one place, when suddenly there comes a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and fills all the place where they were assembled. It is not a natural wind, but something far more mysterious, a spiritual force, which, rushing on with overwhelming power, surrounds them on every side. It comes down from heaven, and there is seen as the result, resting upon the heads of them all, "cloven tongues like as of fire." Tongues, to signify that the power of God under the new dispensation should be manifested forth through the living voice of men, commending the truth to the hearts and consciences of the unconverted. Cloven tongues, to show the diversities of the Spirit's operations, and that the Gospel was not to be proclaimed only in one language, but that all nations should hear in their own familiar speech the glad tidings of the Gospel of peace; and tongues of fire, to set forth the irresistible energy, the burning fiery eloquence with which the Apostles should speak, and quicken into spiritual life those dead in trespasses and sins.

Yes, the influence of the Spirit, as it manifests itself forth through the living voice of man, is indeed a tongue of fire, which strikes the heart of the sinner, burns out the dross and corruption of the soul, and warms up our whole spiritual nature with the living flame of love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness and faith.

Mark again the persons upon whom these cloven tongues descend. It comes upon each one of them. It was not the twelve Apostles only, or the seventy whom the Lord had ordained as preachers of the word, who received the divine influence, but the women also with Mary the mother of Jesus and his brethren. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost. No one among that hundred and twenty was left without the cloven tongue, but upon every one the divine fire