

emblem of purity, simply because there was nothing in Him to cleanse away. Upon us He comes as fire, because, as sinful creatures, our dross must be purged away by the fire of God's love. You find when the people of Samaria believed (Acts 8: 12-17) Peter and John came down to them, and prayed over them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. When Paul came to Ephesus, he found certain disciples and said unto them, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" (Acts 19: 2, R. V.) and they had not so much as heard whether there was a Holy Ghost. There are many, at this day, who know their sins are forgiven, but their little faith and little knowledge make them no better than legal professors. You find in the life of the Apostles before Pentecost, a picture of thousands of Christians at this day. They had been called, and had left everything for Jesus, they had been converted, and taught of Him, and He had appeared to them after His resurrection, and comforted them with His richest blessing, He had expelled the last doubt from Thomas' heart, He had even breathed upon them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost,"—and yet they were told to tarry at Jerusalem. Why? Because the Holy Ghost was not yet given in His fulness. He was, and always had been, in the world living and ruling; Moses was filled with the Spirit, John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit; but the difference was this: before Pentecost it was God's prerogative to give Him here and there to a select few, but after Pentecost He was to be the birthright of every believer who would claim Him, and have his soul filled with the Spirit of Jesus.

You notice in the Apostles' lives what we see in our own,—a mixture of ignorance, faith, and unbelief. Again and again they cannot understand our Lord, and you find them saying, "Lord, increase our faith." Some people think that a good prayer, and I do not want to find fault with it; but I want you to notice that when this petition was presented, Jesus indicated no special approval of it, but turned with loving compassion, and said, "If ye *had* faith as a grain of mustard seed . . . it should be done,"

as much as to say, "It is not more faith you want, but you need to use what you already have." After Pentecost you never hear them saying, "Lord, increase our faith." The disciples then were filled with faith and the Holy Ghost. The fear and timidity which had so often overcome them were gone, and they were no longer afraid to go abroad and face the world. How many of us are afraid to speak for Jesus, afraid to bring the subject of religion into our conversation! Fear and timidity are part of the carnal man, and every man experiences them more or less, until he comes under the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He may be able to say to the Saviour, "Thou art my Saviour," and to God, "Thou art my Father;" but, nevertheless, fear clings to him until it is cast out by "perfect love." But when the Holy Ghost takes possession of him, he is able to speak the word of God with boldness. You find the disciples, before their baptism, forsaking the Lord Jesus at the very time of His need. When He needed them the most, they were all forsaking Him. And you find Christians, in our own days, singing—

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love."

I do not say it is not true of them, but I do say they should hesitate before singing it. What would be thought of the man who would not hesitate to sing—

"Prone to wander, wife, I feel it,
Prone to leave the wife I love."

And yet people do not blush to tell the Lord to His face that they are prone to wander, when all the time there is the remedy at hand to take out the proneness to wander, and put into us the proneness to follow Him. The baptism of the Holy Ghost destroys all the proneness to forsake Jesus, and, in its place, brings in the abiding power to keep the soul walking with Him.

What does it mean to be baptized with the Holy Ghost? Some people think it means that they will be called to go out from home, and everyone they touch will receive power through them; and if they do not feel that power pervading their being to the tips of the fingers, they conclude they have not any. Let me