

gifts of grace. And numbered in this church also were *her* kindred and *his* kindred; "his brethren," who apparently for some time alternated between belief and unbelief, now drawn to him in admiring love, and now driven from him by fear and shame, but at length settling down into an assured trust in his mission and Messiahship. And assembled with these were the apostles, who had passed through a curriculum of instruction and discipline at the feet of their Lord, and were now waiting for that other Comforter who should vivify all they had learnt, and make them meet for their high and glorious apostleship.

It is obvious that these were not unforgiven, unrenewed, unsanctified sinners, who had to receive their first gift of saving grace in the Pentecostal Spirit. We should grievously err were we to suppose that justification and regeneration were experiences utterly unknown to these disciples of Jesus. Surely they had "received him," and to them he had "given power to become the sons of God." Love, the root-principle of holiness, had been implanted within them; and their lives exhibited that "newness" which the regenerating grace of God alone can bestow. If, then, it was not the Spirit of adoption, assuring them of God's paternal love, nor the Spirit of regeneration, transforming and renewing their fallen nature, which they received in the gift of the Pentecostal Spirit, what was it?

This is a most important question, and in its right answer we find a gracious lesson for the Christian Church in every age. As might have been expected, the miraculous phenomena connected with this gift of the Spirit have bulked very much upon men's attention. The voice from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, filling all the house where they were assembled, the appearance of cloven tongues like as of fire sitting upon each of them, have commanded the wonder and the awe of all who have drawn near to see this great sight. But whilst these miraculous phenomena thus powerfully strike the ear and arrest the eye, they are not in themselves the real power and glory of Pentecost. They are simply *signs*—signs, not of something miraculous and abnormal and never to be repeated, but of a grace and power intended for the Church for all time. So Peter, the primate of the apostles, interpreted, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophecy" (Acts ii. 16-18.) The glory of Pentecost is that it brought a high spiritual experience and a mighty power to make it known.

The speciality of the gift of the Holy Ghost was its *fulness*. "They were all *filled* with the Holy Ghost." They had previously received of the Spirit, and up to the measure which they had received the Spirit they were sanctified by him; but the measure was not "the fulness," and their sanctification, therefore, was incomplete. Even the very apostles had been envious, jealous, contentious. In the day of their Lord's ignominy and suffering they had been timorous and cowardly, while their "chiefest" had denied him with oaths and curses. But just as the rushing mighty wind filled all the house where they were sitting, and the entire building was resonant with the heavenly voice, so every believer in that assembled church was filled with the Holy Ghost, and his whole nature was touched, elevated, sanctified by the power of the Spirit. To be thus "filled with the Holy Ghost" cannot mean less than an *entire sanctification* of the nature. When a room is filled with light, the darkness is utterly dispersed; and when a believer is filled with the Spirit of holiness, all sin is excluded. There are some gases which serve as a vacuum for other gases, both alike filling the same space. Not so is it with holiness and sin.