

Christian Life and Work.

THE FULNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

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THIS is pre-eminently the dispensation of the Spirit. It was foretold by prophets, and spoken of by Christ, especially when His departure drew near. Not only so but the *fulness* of the Spirit had been prophesied. "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," said Joel, implying largeness of Spiritual blessing. "I will pour water on him that is thirsty and *floods* upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring," spake Isaiah. When Ezekiel, in vision, saw issuing from the threshold of the temple the waters that were for the Spiritual healing of the peoples, he saw them first but to the ankles, then to the knees, then to the loins, and then a great river that could not be passed over. And Jesus said that from those who believe on Him should "flow rivers of living water; but this He spake of the Spirit which they that believed on him should receive."

The results of the Spirit's work in the individual believer, in the Church, and in the world, are here typified, and we have no reason to conclude, that, great as has been the Spiritual enlargement of the Church in the past, there are not to be witnessed still wider and grander effects in these latter days. No man can tell the vast spiritual possibilities of a whole Church filled with the fullness of the Spirit.

When one is converted and consecrated to God the Spirit becomes a source of rivers of living waters in Him; and, this is not to be merely a temporary thing but the ordinary condition of his life. Pentecost is too often looked upon as a kind of Transfiguration Mount, designed for a favored few and at rare intervals. Surely this is not the whole Gospel. We believe rather that this is the high tableland of ordinary Christian life upon which all God's children may walk in the light of His reconciled countenance and in the fullness of grace and peace.

I. First, then, there is the promise to believers that they shall be filled with the Holy Spirit. More than this, there is the express command, "Be filled with the Spirit," and this promise, this command, applies to every believer.

II. Its fulfilment is a matter of history. Mary was filled with the Holy Spirit, and Elizabeth, her cousin; Zecharias and Simeon; those who waited for the promise of Christ after He ascended; and the whole Christian assembly at Jerusalem. The Lord appeared to Saul "that he might be filled with the Holy Ghost." Barnabas was "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith"; and the disciples at Antioch were "filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost."

It has been suggested that the "Acts of the

Apostles" might be aptly called the "Acts of the Holy Ghost," for it was His Divine personality that was behind all, working with irresistible power in the apostles and disciples, and accomplishing such mighty results.

Is not the "Acts of the Apostles" a model for the Church in every age? Is it not the Divine Manual for the Church of Christ? We appeal to it for our form of government; why not for our marching orders? The Secretary of the A. B. C. F. M. stated, at one of the annual meetings of the society, that he was accustomed to give outgoing missionaries, as a complete handbook of instructions, a copy of the "Acts of the Apostles"—an excellent example. And if it is a good manual for founding churches among the heathen, is it not also good everywhere? The history of the Spirit's work should repeat itself continually.

III. *The purpose for which believers are filled with the Holy Ghost.*

1. Utterance, God wants tongues to declare His doings among men. Each believer is a new creation from death to life. Angels give it a tongue in heaven; who is to give it a tongue on earth? Surely the new created soul.

Then there is the work of the Spirit in the heart day by day, the manifestation of His grace, His power, His love. These are wonderful works of God, which should be uttered for His glory. The early Christians spake as the Spirit gave them utterance; and "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word." Paul preached to Aquila in the workshop, and a man whom God fills with the Holy Spirit will find a tongue to tell what God has done and is doing for his soul. If he remain dumb, the Holy Spirit will withdraw His fullness of blessing from him, and he will be among the large and unprofitable class of Christians, the spiritual mutes of the Church of Christ.

2. Another purpose of the Holy Spirit in filling a believer's heart is to glorify Christ. "He shall glorify me," said Christ, "for he shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you. For what? To keep silent about it? Nay, verily. He shines in us, that we may shine in others. Every communication of the Spirit is designed to add to the history and glory of redemption. "Ye are my witnesses," saith the Lord.

3. Sanctification. Holiness is the condition of our communion with God, who wants us to be separated from the world and sanctified wholly to Himself. The Spirit He gives is the Spirit of Holiness, and the fullness of His indwelling must go hand in hand with holiness.

4. Spiritual fruitfulness in the graces of Christian character and in good works. One who is filled with the Holy Spirit will excel in love to God and man. He will have joy in spiritual things, and the peace of God will rule in his