

LOVEFEAST.

THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT.

BY R. PEARSALL SMITH.

HAVING always known that upon conversion the believer received the Holy Spirit, and that His guidance and power would be known, when needed, in unfolding the treasures of Scripture, in service or in trials, I had not looked for any other manifestations of His presence. And yet there was a large class of passages in the Old and in the New Testament, the conditions of which were not fully met by any consciousness of my own, full as had been the knowledge of pardon, adoption, and standing in Christ; nor yet by a later experience, which came to me ten years after my conversion, of the wonderful inward cleansing of the blood "from all sin."

I had read, "Whosoever that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be *in him* a well of water springing up into everlasting life." This was not true in my experience, in the full meaning evidently intended by the words. There did not always, from my heart, "*flow* rivers of living water" freely and spontaneously. Too often the force-pump, rather than the fountain, would have represented my condition. As I gazed in the mirror of the Word, upon the glorious person of my Lord, my soul was often bowed in adoring love, but I had never come to "*know*" (John xiv. 17) the Comforter in such a fullness that I could realize His indwelling presence as even better than that of the visible person of Jesus.

I had read that as men were "possessed" by an evil spirit, and led to do things far beyond their natural powers, so those "filled with the Spirit," seemed to be carried out of and beyond themselves. I had read the charge against the Apostles, of being "drunken," and that afterward Paul brought the same thought of the elevation of wine, as the illustration of being "filled with the Spirit." This seemed to be an ordained condition, since God's commands are always promises, just as His promises are commands; the promises being always larger

even than the commands. As yet I had never known, in my own consciousness a being thus "filled with the Spirit," or the meaning of John the Baptist's declaration, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

So ignorant was I, even in the matters of the greatest importance to my spiritual interests, that, in finding the inward cleansing and the outward "victory" over sin,—that "faith which overcometh" the world,—I did not press beyond my educational habits of thought to recognize that a far more glorious manifestation of God was yet to be known by the Spirit. I then scarcely noticed that it was *after* our Lord had breathed on His disciples with the words, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," they had yet to wait ten days at one time in prayerful expectation for the more full baptism of the Spirit; nor that it was sometime *after* this event, that "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." I was not, indeed, in the condition of the "disciples, who has yet had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost;" and yet I had formed no conception of what the promised baptism "with the Holy Ghost and with fire" could be.

Deeply thankful for the privileges of "sanctification through faith," realized in an unexpected fullness a few months before, I one day joined in the woods a few Christians who had met to wait before God for the baptism of the Spirit. Except a few low hymns or brief prayers, the half hour was spent in solemn silence. At length "there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the [place] where they were sitting:"—no uninspired words could so describe my impressions. And yet no leaf above nor blade of grass below was moved,—all nature was still. It was to our souls, not to our senses, that the Lord revealed Himself by the Spirit. My whole being seemed unutterably full of the God upon whom I had long believed. The perceptions of my senses could bring no such consciousness as was now mine. I understood the super-sensual visions of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Paul. No created thing was now so real to my soul as the Creator Himself. It was awful, yet without terror. I lost no part of my senses, and yet they were