

“He shall baptize you with the
Holy Ghost and with fire.”

The Tongue of
FIRE

OR

The True
POWER
of Christianity

WILLIAM ARTHUR, A.M.

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SOWING FOR A GREAT AWAKENING

And now, adorable Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, descend upon all the Churches, renew the Pentecost in this our age, and baptize thy people generally—O baptize them yet again with tongues of fire! Crown this [twenty-first] century with a revival of “pure and undefiled religion” greater than that of the last century, greater than that of the first, greater than any “demonstration of the Spirit” ever yet vouchsafed to men!

—William Arthur, concluding prayer in the 1856 original edition of *The Tongue of Fire*

The Lord, who has graciously granted to it His blessing, will not now withdraw that blessing. Its theme is one of interest as enduring as are the relations of the spirit of man to the Spirit of God. May this new edition go forth with a fresh mandate of usefulness from Him who worketh all good. May everyone who shall pass peruse these pages rise from them refreshed for his task in the Church; and may he, endued with new power, seek and behold triumphs of our Redeemer’s kingdom such as will cause him to rejoice with exceeding great joy.

—William Arthur, preface to 1880 new American edition of *The Tongue of Fire*

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PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

THE JOHN WESLEY
COLLECTION

John Wesley's profound legacy and impact on world Christianity during and since his lifetime can be viewed through a number of lenses. The revival that arose under his leadership changed the social and political structure of eighteenth-century England as the poor and lost found hope in the gospel of Jesus Christ rather than in revolution against the crown. The influence of Wesley's Spirit-inspired teaching continued unabated as the Methodist movement spread(s) scriptural holiness across the American continent and lands far beyond.

Wesley's influence as a publisher, if considered separately from all other of his extensive accomplishments, represents an astonishing record in its own right. Wesley lived in a time when Gutenberg's invention of movable type, which had immediately preceded Luther's reformation, had coalesced into specialized printing trades in London. Typefounders and printeries were becoming established and were offering exciting new pathways for the spread of the gospel through inexpensive printed text.

Perhaps more than any other figure of his day, Wesley embraced this new technology and issued sermons, tracts, commentaries, abridgments, biographies, and a host of other items that he considered relevant to the spiritual growth of maturing Christians.

Wesley was vitally driven by the reality of the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. His teaching on entire sanctification, or Christian perfection, is the capstone of his legacy. He worked tirelessly to abridge and republish seminal works by historical figures of previous generations, reaching as far back as the apostolic fathers of the first-century church. He constantly curated voices that communicated the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing believers into the fullness of salvation and lives of holy love.

These writings resourced the early Methodists in their quest to spread the gospel by providing the intellectual and spiritual moorings for the messengers of the movement. Seedbed believes these writings are as relevant to our context today as they were in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Consequently, we consider it a sacred calling to join with those who are recapturing John Wesley's publishing vision for the twenty-first century.

With great joy we present The John Wesley Collection. In the years ahead, Seedbed will reissue selections from this vast collection, which include his fifty-volume Christian Library, some 150 sermons, countless items from his journals and letters, as well as innumerable tracts, hymns, poems, and other publications, most of which have been out of circulation for decades, if not centuries.

The John Wesley Collection is Seedbed's offering to the ongoing Wesleyan tradition, providing rare insight into the heartbeat of a movement whose greatest days are yet to come.

We encourage you to enter these texts with determination. Readers who persevere will soon find themselves accustomed to the winsome tenor and tempo of Wesley's voice and vernacular.

Seedbed's editors are constantly examining this extensive collection of more than 250 years of vital spiritual writing by the Wesleys and successive generations to find the most relevant and helpful messages that will speak to today's body of believers. We commend this old-new publishing work to you as one ready to be transformed by the latent power of these ancient truths. It is our prayer that these timeless words will add fuel to the fire of an awakening ready to ignite once again across the world.

Sola sancta caritas! Amen.

Andrew Miller
Seedbed Publishing

INTRODUCTION TO THE SEEDBED EDITION

If we settle for the assumption that God cannot renew the movement of apostolic zeal we see in early Christianity, the church will die and the world is lost! This is the central challenge of the book you now have in your hands. Read it, and be prepared to have your mind purged of disbelief, your heart kindled with a new passion for the glory of God, and your ministry enflamed with a new expectancy of his transforming power.

William Arthur (1819–1901) was a native Irishman. He was born in Glendun, County Antrim, and moved with his parents to Newport, County Mayo, where he worked as a corn merchant in his early teens. Though raised in the Church of Ireland, he was converted at a Methodist meeting in Westport, and started preaching at the age of sixteen. After training for the Wesleyan Methodist ministry, he set out for India in 1839 on missionary service to work as an evangelist. He returned to England in 1841 due to ill health, and served churches in London and France between 1842–50. He was then appointed as general secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society from 1851–68, after which he spent three years as principal of Methodist College in Belfast. During

this time, he was elected a member of Wesley's Legal Hundred in 1856 and became president of the Wesleyan Conference in 1866. Having become a well-respected leader of the church, he traveled extensively as a representative and speaker at numerous ecumenical conferences in Italy, France, and America. Following the death of his wife in 1888, he moved to Cannes for the benefit of his health and died there ten years later.

John Wesley claimed to be unafraid that Methodism "should ever cease to exist in either Europe or America." The movement was too big, too well organized, and too successful to imagine it disappearing easily. What Wesley feared was that they "should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power." It was not until 1820 that the Methodist Conference was stirred by the first report of numerical decline, and entered a season of soul-searching about what could be done to increase spiritual religion among the societies and for the advancement of God's work in the world. Thirty-six years later, what had been a prognosis for Wesley was becoming a diagnosis for William Arthur. *The Tongue of Fire* was published in 1856 during his leadership of the Missionary Society and clearly reflects the heart of an evangelist, dissatisfied with the languishing spirituality of the church and longing for a renewal of effective ministry and mission. It could also be read against the background of the Second Great Awakening in America (1800–1830s) and the spread of revivalism in Britain and Ireland during the years after its publication.

In his preface to the original edition, Arthur describes his work as "the fruit of meditations entered upon with a desire to lessen the distance painfully felt to exist between my own life and ministry and those of the primitive Christians." Drawing

from the book of Acts, he describes the early church as full of devout and joyful believers, vibrant with spiritual gifts, growing in holiness, and multiplying in numbers. He sets before us the example of apostolic ministry driven by a zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. And he causes us to wrestle with these questions: Why are we not more unsettled by the zombification of the church? Why are we tempted to settle for so little spiritual fruitfulness in our discipleship and mission? Or, to put it another way, Why are we not more hungry for the fullness of spiritual life? And, Why are we not more thirsty for the salvation of others? Arthur's answer would be: we are suffering from power failure!

In the midst of power failure, the most important need for the church is not more effective churchmanship, but a baptism of fire and the fullness of the Holy Spirit! Arthur vividly narrates the events of that first Pentecost, as the tongues of fire descended on the apostles and enabled them to declare the wonders of God in the languages of other nations. Writing some fifty years before the birth of Pentecostalism, and one hundred years prior to the charismatic movement, his imagination is not held captive to the phenomenon of glossolalia, the allure of extraordinary spiritual gifts, or the performance of miraculous signs. For him, the gift of Pentecost is a supernatural power that takes whatever natural abilities we have and enables us to communicate the truth of the gospel with a power that renews souls, revitalizes the church, and revolutionizes society, from the inside out. Pentecostal Christianity means being filled, transformed, and overflowing with divine fire, for the sake of the church and the salvation of the world.

Being baptized by the tongue of fire is about being used as an instrument through whom God speaks to the

world with the power to change lives. Although speaking in tongues may be an extraordinary sign of this gift, the ordinary and abiding reality is a prophetic power of speech that does not come from the art of oratory but the anointing of the Spirit, and it is for everyone! It is a tongue of fire because the same gift of the Spirit also makes us fit for this holy purpose by purifying our hearts and filling us with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. It is the tongue of fire that calls, gifts, and empowers the most unremarkable people to lay down their lives for the mission of God. It is for those set apart by the Spirit of prophecy to be apostles, preachers, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Moreover, it is the tongue of fire that convinces the world about the reality of God, through the holy lives and everyday conversations of ordinary Christians whose lives, words, and deeds become a demonstration of the Spirit's power.

It is one thing to experience the baptism of fire, and another thing to keep the fire burning. William Arthur reminds us that when the Pentecostal wind died down, and the visible tongues of fire disappeared, it was the fullness of the Spirit that remained as a permanent gift to the church. But he witnessed the Methodist movement becoming darkened in an Age of Enlightenment; as the spiritual fire of revival, which gave it birth, was being quenched by the anti-supernatural spirit of modernity. Without the tongue of fire, Arthur shows how doctrine gets judged at the bar of human reason, while theology slides into intellectualism; how holiness gets reduced to the respectability of human behavior, while discipline plunges into moralism; and how the church gets organized into the machinery of a human system, while ministry descends into management. Behind all this lay a culture of progress and the technocratic impulse to substitute faith in God for human ingenuity, and radical dependence

on the Spirit for the ability to predict and control our own future.

The apologetics of modernity were tinged with cessationism and deism. William Arthur laments those that relegated the miraculous power of the Spirit to the early church, and rejected the particular work of the Spirit in favor of a general divine providence, domesticated to our natural abilities. He sees it in the temptation to settle for an inevitable routinization of inward spiritual power in the outward forms of an institutional church.

Today, the visible legacy of this modernist spirit is evident in lifeless and dying churches, as well as the felt need of entire denominations to deploy institutional programs of revitalization. William Arthur would no doubt caution us that unless these efforts actually emerge from, or lead us toward, a fresh baptism of fire and filling with the Spirit, we are in danger of repeating the same mistakes. The invisible legacy of this modernist spirit is not the rejection of Pentecostal Christianity in principle, but being cessationist or deist in practice. The problem of practical atheism does not require us to deny the reality of God's life-transforming presence and power. All we have to do is treat it as either irrelevant or unnecessary for our personal discipleship and church leadership. Arthur notes that nowhere is this more evident than in the way we train people for the ministry; insofar as the call, gift, and power of the Spirit is substituted for ecclesiastical office, natural talent, and higher education.

William Arthur was a missionary, and his primary concern was evangelism, at home and overseas. His study of Pentecost also presses us to ask why we have so little confidence that our ministry will actually make disciples of an unbelieving world. The tongue of fire, and the fullness of the Spirit, endued the apostles and the early church with a power

for the conversion of multitudes, not just a few here and there. Perhaps there is a cessationism, deism, or plain-old practical atheism lurking behind our inability to do great things with God and to expect great things from him. A missionary spirit cannot be attained by laboring to get our message straight, or revising our methods for getting the message out. Arthur notes that there was nothing outstanding about the character, intellect, or eloquence of the apostle Peter, or the primitive Christians in general. Rather, it was the spiritual zeal from which they spoke and the holy example of their lives that brought others from darkness into light. To receive this gift, they had nothing to do but pray and wait.

The tongue of fire that filled their hearts, transformed their lives, and spilled from their mouths was both attractive and contagious. It first landed on the apostles, who moved through the crowd, speaking in tongues and spreading the fire. It then gathered and baptized the church, as a Spirit-filled community, whose close fellowship and spiritual conversation drew people into the kingdom every day.

William Arthur reminds us that the whole world cannot be brought to Christ by professional evangelists, occasional revivals, or even mass evangelism. Rather, the legacy of Pentecostal Christianity is the spontaneous expansion of the gospel, as the tongue of fire continues to separate and spread, from heart to heart, life to life, town to town, and nation to nation. This is the permanent benefit of Pentecost to the church, and true ministers of the gospel are those who continually fan this fire into flame, seek to be filled with the Spirit's power, and look for its visible fruit in the lives of ordinary people. This, and only this, is the convincing proof of real Christianity in an unbelieving world. This is the witness of William Arthur.

I pray the same tongue of fire that inspired the writing of this book will inspire in you a holy dissatisfaction with the lukewarm life, and stir up the perennial question: What shall we do? And the response from heaven will be the same as it was in the beginning: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” May *The Tongue of Fire* bring us to our knees in repentance for our practical atheism, and the temptation to settle for less than life-changing ministry. May it grasp our souls with hungry, thirsty, longing prayer; earnest, persevering, wrestling prayer; for ourselves, the church, and the world. And, as we pray together in one accord, may we lift our eyes heavenward for the gift of Pentecost, and the fulfillment of God’s promise.

Philip Meadows
Advent 2014

A HOLY SPIRIT CREED

I believe in the Holy Ghost. I expect to see saints as lovely as any that are written of in the Scriptures—because I believe in the Holy Ghost. I expect to see preachers as powerful to set forth Christ evidently crucified before the eyes of men, as powerful to pierce the conscience, to persuade, to convince, to convert, as any that ever shook the multitudes of Jerusalem, or Corinth, or Rome—because I believe in the Holy Ghost. I expect to see Churches, the members of which shall be severally indued with spiritual gifts, and every one moving in spiritual activity, animating and edifying one another, commending themselves to the conscience of the world by their good works, commending their Saviour to it by a heart-engaging testimony—because I believe in the Holy Ghost. I expect to see villages where all the respectable people are now opposed to religion, the proprietor ungodly, the nominal pastor worldly, all that take a lead set against living Christianity—to see such villages summoned, disturbed, divided, and then reunited, by the subduing of the whole population to Christ—because I believe in the Holy Ghost. I expect to see cities swept from end to end, their manners elevated, their commerce purified, their politics Christianized, their criminal population reformed, their poor

made to feel that they dwell among brethren—righteousness in the streets, peace in the homes, an altar at every fireside—because I believe in the Holy Ghost. I expect the world to be overflowed with the knowledge of God; the day to come when no man shall need to say to his neighbor, “Know thou the Lord,” but when all shall know him, “from the least unto the greatest”; east and west, north and south, uniting to praise the name of the one God and the one Mediator—because I believe in the Holy Ghost.

—William Arthur, from *The Tongue of Fire*

The Tongue of
FIRE

INTRODUCTION

The Reverend William Arthur scarcely needs an introduction to American readers. The author of that great commercial biography, *The Successful Merchant: Sketches of the Life of Mr. Samuel Budgett*, and of other works which have had an extensive circulation on this side of the Atlantic, and one of the deputation that visited the United States on behalf of the Wesleyan Church Extension enterprise in Ireland, his name is not unfamiliar in this country.

Mr. Arthur was a native of Ireland. He entered the Methodist ministry at an early age. He was active and laborious as a preacher and a writer, and occupied the post of one of the General Secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. Notwithstanding his comparative youth, he was elected to fill a vacancy in the Legal Hundred at the session of the Wesleyan Conference at Bristol in 1856—an indication of the high esteem in which his talents and usefulness were held by his brethren in the ministry.

We will not forestall the reader's judgment by a review of the work before him. If he be a man of evangelical tastes, and can, withal, relish the classical eloquence of one of the

best writers of the age, he will not be put to sleep by *The Tongue of Fire*. The design of this volume is to rouse the church to action. Its utterances are like the staccato notes of the priestly trumpet, summoning the hosts of Israel to battle. It calls for a revival of Christianity according to the Pentecostal type; not the polyglottal endowment, yet "the tongue"; not the visible flame, yet the "fire." The scope of the volume might lead one to lay undue stress on aggressive, converting agencies and immediate, prodigious results, were it not for the specific importance which it attaches to that internal economy of the church by which her members "edify themselves in love." Christian fellowship is here very properly considered as essential to the very being, not merely the prosperity, of the church. Mr. Arthur's creed knows nothing about a "holy catholic Church" apart from "the communion of saints." His Pentecostal Christians are all "filled with the Spirit"—devout, zealous, joyful believers—and he would have all who profess and call themselves Christians to be just like the Pentecostal Christians.

CHAPTER I

THE PROMISE OF A BAPTISM OF FIRE

When John the Baptist was going round Judea, shaking the hearts of the people with a call to repent, they said: "Surely this must be the Messiah for whom we have waited so long." "No," said the strong-spoken man, "I am not the Christ (John 1:20); but One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Luke 3:16).

This last expression might have conveyed some idea of material burning to any people but Jews; but in their minds it would awaken other thoughts. It would recall the scenes when their father Abraham asked Him who promised that he should inherit the land wherein he was a stranger: "Lord, whereby shall I *know* that I shall inherit it?" The answer came thus: he was standing under the open sky at night, watching by cloven sacrifices, when, "behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces" of the

victims (Gen. 15:17). It would recall the fire which Moses saw in the bush, which shone, and awed, and hallowed even the wilderness, but did not consume; the fire which came in the day of Israel's deliverance, as a light on their way, and continued with them throughout the desert journey; the fire which descended on the Tabernacle in the day in which it was reared up, and abode upon it continually; which shone in the Shekinah; which touched the lips of Isaiah; which flamed in the visions of Ezekiel; and which was yet again promised to Zion, not only in her public but in her family shrines, when the "Lord will create upon every *dwelling-place* of Mount Zion, and upon all her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night."

In the promise of a baptism of fire they would at once recognize the approach of new manifestations of the *power and presence of God*; for that was ever the purport of this appearance in "the days of the right hand of the Most High."

Among the multitude who flocked to John came one strange Man, whom he did not altogether know; yet he knew that He was full of grace and wisdom, and in favor with God and man. He felt that himself rather needed to be baptized of one so pure than to baptize Him; but he waived his feeling, and fulfilled his ministry. As they returned from the water side, the heavens opened: a bodily shape, as of a dove, came down and rested on the stranger. At the same time a voice from the excellent glory said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him."

John said, "I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Therefore, when he saw Him walking, he pointed his own disciples to Him, and said, that this was He. They heard the

word, and pondered. The next day, again, John, seeing Him at a distance, said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Now, two of his followers went after the stranger, to seek at His hand the baptism which John could not give—the baptism of fire. They were joined by others. For months, for years, they companied with Him. They saw His life: a life as of the only begotten Son of God. They heard His words: such words as "never man spake." They saw His works: signs, and wonders, and great miracles, before all the people. Yet they received not the baptism of fire!

He began to speak frequently of His departure from them, but His mode of describing it was strange. He was to leave them, and yet not to forsake them; to go away, and yet to be with them; to go, and yet to come to them. They were to be deprived of Him their Head, yet orphans they should not be. Another was to come, yet not another; a Comforter from the Father, from Himself; whom, not as in His case, the world could neither know nor *see*, but whom *they* should *know*, though they could not see (John 14:17). His own presence with them was a privilege which no tongue could worthily tell. Blessed were their eyes for what they saw, and their ears for what they heard. Better still than even this was to be the presence of the Holy Ghost, who would follow Him as He had followed John.

"I tell you the truth," He said, when about to utter what was hard to believe: "I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away." How *could* it be expedient? Would they not be losers to an extent which no man could reckon? The light of His countenance, the blessing of His words, the purity of His presence, the influence of His example, all to be removed; and this expedient for them! "It is expedient for you that I go away for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." Well, but would they not be better with

Himself than with the Comforter? No; just the contrary. They would be better with the Comforter: He would lead them into all truth; whereas now they are constantly misapplying the plain words of Christ. He would bring all things to their remembrance; whereas now they often forget in a day or two the most remarkable teaching, or the most amazing miracles. He would take the things of Christ, the things of the Father, and reveal them unto them; whereas now they constantly misapprehended His relation to the Father, and that of the Father to Him, misapprehended His person, His mission, and His kingdom. Again, He would convince the *world* of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come; and this is not as one teacher limited by a local personality, but as a Spirit diffused abroad throughout the earth. And He would abide with them *forever*, not for "a little while." Whatever, therefore, Christ's personal presence and teaching had been to them, the presence of the Spirit would be more.

Jesus Reveals the Great Commission

Having thus strongly preoccupied their minds with the hope of a greater joy than even His own countenance, the Master laid down His life. Stunned, dispersed, and desolate, they felt themselves orphans indeed. Their Master ignominiously executed, and neither the word of John nor His own word fulfilled: no Comforter, no baptism, no fire! Soon He reappeared, and, as they were met together for the first time since His death, once more stood in the midst of them. He breathed upon them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." With that word, doubtless, both peace and power were given; yet it was not the baptism of fire. During forty days He conversed with them on the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; assigning to them the work of proclaiming

and establishing that kingdom to the ends of the earth. One injunction, however, He laid upon them, which seemed to defer the effect of others. They were to go into all the world, yet not at once, or unconditionally. "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem till ye be endued with power from on high." Apparently more ready to interpret "power" as referring to the hopes of their nation than to the kingdom of grace, they asked, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

He had said nothing of a kingdom for Israel, or in Israel. His speech had been on a higher theme, and of a wider field, namely, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." Such, in various forms, are the words we find Him uttering concerning His kingdom during these forty days. When, therefore, they asked if He would at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel, He shortly turned aside their curiosity. What the Father's designs were as to Israel nationally; what the times when they might again be a kingdom—were points not for them. They had better work, and nearer at hand. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts 1:7). "But," He continued, passing at once from curious questions about the future of Israel, and unfulfilled prophecy, to His own grand kingdom: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." What power? of princes, or magistrates? Nay, quite another power for an unearthly work: "And ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

In these words He traces the circles in which Christian sympathy and activity should ever run: first, Jerusalem, their

chief city; next, Judea, their native land; then Samaria, a neighboring country, inhabited by a race nationally detested by their countrymen; and finally "the uttermost parts of the earth." They were neither to seek distant spheres first, nor to confine themselves always at home; but to carry the gospel into all the world as each country could be reached. This was what He had before placed in their view—the filling all the earth with the news of grace, news that repentance and pardon were opened to men by the power of His atonement.

A New Kind of Kingdom

We have no hint that He ever spake, during the forty days, of other kingdom, royalty, or reign. Not to rule over cities; not to speculate on the designs of the Father and the destinies of the Jew; but to go into the whole world, tell every creature the story of Christ, was to be their princely work. To found a kingdom not over men's persons, but "within" their souls; a kingdom not of provinces, but of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"; a kingdom to be spread not by the arms of a second Joshua, but by the "witness" of the human voice; a kingdom, the power of which would not lie in force or policy, or signs observed in heaven, but in a spiritual power imparted by the Holy Ghost, and operating in super-human utterance of heavenly truth; this was their embassy. For this were they to be endued with power from on high.

But when was this power, so long spoken of, to come? Would John's word ever be fulfilled? The Master has not forgotten it. "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." At length the promise is brought to a point, and its fulfillment near.

Already had He proclaimed Himself King, and marked out the ministers and army, the weapon, the extent, the

badge of citizenship, the statute law, the royal glory, and the duration of His kingdom. With His disciples around Him, standing on a mountain top, heaven above and earth below, He thus proclaimed His kingdom: "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth": here was the King. "Go": here were the ministers and army—an embassy of peace. "Teach": here the weapon—the word of God. "All nations": here the extent. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost": here the badge of citizenship. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you": here the statute law. "And, lo, I am with you": here the royal presence and glory of the kingdom. "Always, unto the end of the world": here its duration (Matt. 28:19-20).

Now again He is rising a hill, conversing with those who had heard this proclamation, as to their part in the establishment of the kingdom. He has clearly promised that, before many days, the long looked-for baptism of fire will come. That implies, that before many days He will depart; for He ever said that He must first ascend. He has answered, or rather rebuked, their curious inquiry as to Israel; has turned their thoughts again to the descent of the Spirit; and is just telling them that, endued with this new power, they shall bear witness to His glory not only at home but abroad. "To the uttermost part of the earth," is the last word on His lips (Acts 1:8)—a startling word for His peasant auditors, accustomed to limit their range of thought within the Holy Land. But He had already said that all power was given to Him "in heaven and in earth." Did not the faith of some disciple reel under the weight of these words?

"In Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to THE UTTERMOST PART(S) OF THE EARTH!" This word is on His lips; they are steadily watching Him: He lifts His hands,

He pronounces His blessing; and in the act (Luke 24:50) lo, His body, which they know "has flesh and bones" like their own, begins to rise! No wing, no hand, no chariot of fire! Upward it moves by its own power; and in that single action commands the homage of earth: for our globe has no law so universal and irreversible as that whereby it binds down all ponderous bodies to its surface. Here this law gives way, and thereby the whole mass of the globe yields to the power of Christ. This placid movement of that body, up from the surface of earth into the heights of the sky, is an open act of sovereignty over the highest physical law; whereby Christ "manifested forth His glory," as Lord and Maker of all physical laws. His proclamation of Kingship is thus acknowledged by earth with its highest homage. Now the heaven adds its homage, stoops in luminous cloud, and robes Him for His enthronement. The everlasting doors lift up their heads. The King of Glory enters in.

The First-begotten from the dead, the Prince of the Kings of the earth, sits down with the Father on His throne; and from Him receives the word, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom!" And again, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." Within the veil they worship the Lamb; and down they speed to His followers, and tell them that they need not gaze. As they have seen Him go, so shall they see Him come, even in the clouds, to judge that world, of which and of its Princes He is King. Thus triply is His kingship owned. Earth permits Him to rise, heaven bows, the angels add their testimony. All things own Him. Unbelief is now impossible. Doubt vanishes away. His word shall not pass unfulfilled. The baptism of fire is at hand.