

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

And an Highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness.—Isa. 35-8

VOL. XXIX.

MONCTON, N. B., AUG. 15, 1933

NO. 1

THE COMING OF PENTECOST

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Text: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come."—Acts 2:1.

Waiving the privilege of introductory remarks, there are four considerations in reference to the day of Pentecost to which I would ask your attention:

First, Pentecostal Candidates, answering the question, To whom did the day of Pentecost fully come?

Second, Pentecostal Coincidences, answering the question, With what accompaniments did it come?

Third, Pentecostal Consequences, answering the question, With what results did it come?

To whom did the day of Pentecost come?

This is our first inquiry. In whom was the Holy Spirit so completely released that ever-memorable day? What sort of a group was assembled there in that tarrying place? Fortunately we have sufficient evidence from the records to provide us with a basis for judgment. To state it tersely, they were disciples. They did not belong to the world; they belonged to Christ. And this difference of relationship appears to constitute a point of such importance that upon it one can determine whether or not he is justified in expecting a Pentecost for himself. Recall, for example, the words of Jesus in the 14th of John: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." (John 14:16, 17). Whom the world cannot receive! The Baptism with the Holy Ghost is not for the "natural man." The "natural man" must be born of the Spirit, after which he may join the company of those who receive from the lips of Jesus the blessed assurance: "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence." (Acts 1:5). If this sounds arbitrary, not to say artificial, it is because we do not understand the back-lying facts which have to do with spiritual preparation and capacity. Jesus did not say, "whom the world shall not receive;" He said, "whom the world can not receive." We do not teach algebra to third-graders, nor does God find it possible to induct unregenerates into the deep, full, holy life for which Pentecost properly stands.

Again, the members of this group to whom the Holy Ghost was given were in earnest. In addition to possessing the title conferred on them by virtue of a prior relationship to Christ, they had the certificate of heart-hunger. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." No sooner had Jesus gone from them than they resorted to a place of prayer. "Good-bye Ascension mount, we are seeking an upper room. Good-bye, friends and foes alike,

if you are not going our way, we shall have to part company. The command is upon us; 'Tarry.' The promise is ringing in our ears: 'power from on high.' Look for us no more until we have received 'the promise of the Father' of which our ascended Lord spoke to us." That was their attitude. They did not passively wait, they earnestly inquired and confidently expected. They "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." Do we want our personal Pentecost? Then let us be in dead earnest. A mild interest in full salvation will get us nowhere. But, filled with a consuming desire to be wholly the Lord's and indwelt by His Spirit, we may assuredly expect the promised fulness. One cannot help fearing that many of the current attempts to rationalize Pentecost, rather than realize it, are due to a tragic lack of a profound earnestness such as is willing to take the costly way marked out by the upper room heralds of all the years.

Passing from the thought of Pentecostal candidates we advance to the suggestion of Pentecostal Coincidences. With what more or less incidental accompaniments did this epochal day make its appearance?

For one thing, at Pentecost the natural and the supernatural met, not to clash but to blend. The attendant phenomena—the blast of wind, the shaken house, the tongues of fire—while they do not belong to the set of central, inner facts pertaining to the gift of the Spirit, nevertheless have their place and meaning. They speak to us, for example, of the living unity of the universe. "Natural" and "supernatural," "physical and spiritual;" our tendency is to block them off from each other in hard and fast fashion. The science of the generation just passing talked so loudly and so long about the "uniformity of nature" and the "reign of natural law" that it frightened us into an almost complete denial of the miraculous. Now, with the coming of Einstein and others, the place of relativity and contingency in the natural order is being given some recognition. The God of souls is the God of the stars. The God of faith is the God of fire. Where faith is truly operative, manifestations of the Divine may be expected both within and without the ordinary course of things. Pentecost says so.

A second coincidence: the language of the Holy Spirit is revealed as a universal language. It happened that representatives of numerous peoples were gathered at Jerusalem. Can the Holy Spirit speak to and work in any but Jewish minds and hearts? The second of Acts is your answer. We hear, they cried, "every man in our tongue." There was nothing fictitious about that; no farcical jargon there. It was the Holy Spirit "poured out upon all flesh," speaking a language that has universal accent. English, French, Spanish, German, Mandarin, Hindustani or Greek, whatever your tongue. He can speak to you.

A third interesting incidental that I should

like to point out will appear to you if I raise the question, Where were these disciples when the Holy Ghost was given? Luke says they were in "the house." Tradition goes further and says they were in the home of John Mark. Pentecost—where? Right in the house. Not necessarily in the synagogue, not at the temple, not before some sacred shrine, but in an ordinary dwelling will the Holy Spirit manifest Himself. God proposes to domesticate saintliness. Men associate holiness with the dim light of noble cathedrals; God says, "I can make you pure and keep you victorious in the midst of your busy home life, your taxing office life, your trying factory life." The Holy Spirit would teach us that if our religion does not work at home, it is not what it ought to be. At Pentecost He says: "I'll take the humdrum and hallow it. I'll take the common-place and give a daily coronation."

And then there is the coincidence of posture. What was their position when they received the Holy Spirit? Left to my own imagining, I would probably presume them to have been kneeling. Perhaps you would both be wrong. Luke declares they were "sitting." I retain the conviction that they had been kneeling, but the point is that when the heavens opened and the Spirit descended, He found them in a sitting posture. I once heard a lady say to another who was kneeling at the altar for the Pentecostal blessing: "Take your hat off; I never yet saw any one get sanctified with a hat on." Well, she may have spoken the truth. If so, it was merely a confession on her part of the pathetically limited experience she has had: Hat or not hat, kneeling, lying or standing, if we are given up to God, we need not wait another minute for our Pentecost. Before the message closes, before the altar appeal is made, even this very moment you may open the door of your heart and let this Holy Guest come in.

We are now ready for our third major line of inquiry: Pentecost Consequences. We advance from things incidental to things central, from things variable to things vital. Broadly and fundamentally, Pentecost fully come means, first, personalities fully possessed, and, second, resources fully adequate.

Take the first: I am adhering closely to the language of the context. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Personalities fully possessed—God-possessed, Spirit-filled. I say personalities because that is an inclusive term. Their hearts were filled, but that was not all. Luke says, "They were filled." Pentecost is total. It represents God in the glorious realization of all His claims upon the total being, body, soul and spirit, intellect, sensibilities and will. Nor is it total only; it is climacteric. It is the spiritual consummation of ages and dispensations. From the dark day of man's fall until the dazzling day of his infusion with the gift of the Holy Ghost, God had been coming closer to him, progressively establishing more intimate and