

By Rev. Julian Rose

In looking at the second chapter of the Book of Acts we find four incidentals of Pentecost. They are "noise" (verse 2), "wind" (verse 2), "tongues" (verse 3), and "fire" (verse 3).

We find sometimes these days that the incidentals of Pentecost are emphasized instead of the essentials. A famous missionary wrote in recent years, "Pentecost must be saved from Pentecostalism." With the growth of some denominations which emphasize the Spirit there has come also an unwarranted accent upon the incidentals of the Spirit, which is entirely disproportionate with the germ purpose as we see it in Acts and early Christian history as well as experience. Pentecost must be rescued from the glorifying of the incidental, the minor and the passing, but it must not, on the other hand, be allowed to dwindle from its true glory. There is a true norm and a focal emphasis.

There was a star upon Jesus' natal morn, but that star was not Christ. There was a dove at Jesus' baptism, but the dove was not the Spirit—it was a type of the Holy Spirit.

There has always been temptation to standardize spiritual realities. Even the apostles before Pentecost did this. But when the Holy Spirit came, the human expectations, standards, and preconceptions were engulfed in God's climatic tide of spiritual grace.

It is said a man found the Holy Spirit as his sanctifier while in desperate self-giving to God in prayer. He was praying under a railroad bridge. The Holy Spirit powerfully baptized him. For some time he advised other folk to go out to the railroad bridge and God would sanctify them. But later he found out that that was dictating to God. He learned that man cannot legislate nor dictate to the Spirit and receive His blessing.

The focus of Pentecost is not noise, wind, tongues, fire nor place, but the Holy Spirit Himself. He is His own best identifying credential. The apostles nowhere essentialize these things, but over and over we find that cleansing and filling with the Spirit is centralized.

These incidentals are marginal, the Spirit indwelling is central. They are illustrative, typical, shadowy—this is the reality. They receive minor notice, but this is major. They were passing, this is permanent.

In Jesus' spiritual patterns there were three ideas woven inseparably into the warp and woof. These ideas are organic in the very nature of vital and essential Christianity.

These trifocal ideas in which Pentecost finds its true axis are:

1. Pentecost is centered in the purity of the Holy Spirit.
2. Pentecost is centered in the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Pentecost is centered in the passion of the Holy Spirit.

1. Pentecost is focused in purity of heart.

Early in Jesus' ministry He indicated the great need of purity (Matt. 15:16-19). In the manifesto on the mount (Matt. 5, 6, 7) He gave the pith of His expectations—and promised great blessing to pure-hearted people (Matt. 5:8). John the Baptist hinted at this thought in Luke 3:16, 17 when he speaks of a purifying process later fulfilled in minutes at Pentecost. In the council (Acts 15:8, 9) Peter expresses purity as the great identity which characterized the Gentile Pentecost and as the one central thing which gave equal standing with the Jewish Christians. In this salient Scripture nothing is said of power for service." Here cleansing

purity, is the middlemost thought in the apostle's mind.

Pentecost is the purifying of the will. Questions are being asked these days, "What can Christ do for the primary emotions? What can Christ do in the field of intellect, motives, will, and choices? How do you know Christianity is true? Can it be adopted by every race in the world? Does it meet the needs of people? Does it satisfy?" We can take these questions to Jesus Christ in the upper room (Acts 1:13) and find glorious answers to them.

There is no greater liability to the believer than an un sanctified will. But the Holy Spirit purifies the soul from unchristian willing. The carnal gravitation is cleansed out by the blood of Jesus. The inborn sin twist and the un sanctified kinks of the will are taken out. Secret zig-zag is taken out and definiteness, spiritual certainty and faith are put in its place. The behaviour of the Christian can become predictable because the behaviour of the will is under the cleansing guidance of the Spirit. The will is cleansed, fortified and toughened by the Holy Spirit.

2. Another part of the trifocus in which Pentecost is centered is spiritual power.

Jesus used a word from which we get the term dynamite. There may be a tendency to mechanize this word and the experience for which it stands, but there is a very real sense in which Pentecost finds its center in power.

The first kind of power is power over sin through the cleaning of Jesus' blood and the sanctifying baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The following is a brief but suggestive list of the powers which the Holy Spirit brings to the Christian:

- Power to face life and win.
- Power to suffer and smile.
- Power to witness.
- Power to be.
- Power to go through.
- Power to shine.
- Power to live others under conviction.
- Power to conquer.
- Power to represent and advertise Jesus.
- Power to serve God and go ahead.
- Power to do personal work in winning souls.
- Power to live a consistent life.
- Power to pull spiritual loads.
- Power to go on to spiritual conquest.
- Power to use your handicaps, trials, and limitations.

- Power to cut new channels for God.
- Power of fellowship with a risen Savior.
- Power of an abiding Comforter
- Power of a spiritual purpose in life.

3. Pentecost finds also a part of its trifocus in the passion it gives.

Most people have some ruling desire, whether it is ever fulfilled or not. What was the ruling passion of Napoleon? Authority. Of Lincoln? Union and freedom for the slave. Of John Hancock and George Washington? American independence. What was the ruling passion of Osler and Pasteur? Medicine. Of Madam Curie? Radium. Of Rockefeller? Oil. Of Jim Hill? Railroads.

The followers of Jesus had ruling passions before Pentecost. Jesus captured those ruling desires and cleansed, empowered, directed and mobilized them into a living spearhead, then thrust these disciples out into an unsaved world.

There is no boredom or ennui in Jesus or in Pentecost. If there had been any before Pentecost it was burnt out in the upper room. There were no dull moments. Life became a battlefield of the Spirit.

The centralizing passion of the newly-baptized

disciples was the death, resurrection and salvation of Jesus. Under the tremendous pressure of the Holy Spirit, evangelism became the glory and the passionate occupation of their lives.

This ruling passion was driving, pounding, throbbing, gripping their hearts. It was urging, pressing, propelling, and hurling them out. Out into Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and eventually unto the uttermost parts of the world—as Jesus had told them—there to bring the only hope of the world—Jesus Christ, the Savior, the Holy Spirit, the Purifier.

O Christians, let us find the true focus of Pentecost, and having found it, let us live in that glorious zone.—The Free Methodist.

STILL, STILL WITH THEE

Still, still with Thee, when purple morning breaketh,

When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee;

Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight,
Dawns with sweet consciousness, I am with Thee.

Alone with Thee, amid the mystic shadows,
The solemn hush of nature newly born;
Alone with Thee in breathless adoration,
In the calm dew and freshness of the morn.

As in the dawning o'er the waveless ocean,
The image of the morning-star doth rest,
So in this stillness, Thou beholdest only
Thine image in the waters of my breast.

When sinks the soul, subdued by toil, to slumber,
Its closing eyes look up to Thee in prayer;
Sweet the repose, beneath Thy wings o'er shadowing,
But sweeter still to wake and find Thee there.—Harriet Beecher Stowe.

A patriot is one who is interested in the public good. It doesn't take a war to prove or disprove it.

Transgression is man's invention. He knew only one way to sin in Eden; God's test of loyalty, the forbidden fruit. God made him upright, but "they sought out many inventions."

Liquor is a factor in more than twenty-five per cent. of all the deaths on Massachusetts highways after sunset, the Massachusetts Safety Council announces. Intoxicated drivers, it was found, are most numerous between midnight and 4 a. m., while the peak hour of accidents to drunken pedestrians was from 11 p. m. to midnight.—Union Signal.

Japan, it is estimated, produces ninety per cent of the world's supply of illicit drugs. It is also estimated that at least half a ton of heroin is shipped weekly from Japanese factories, and that ninety per cent of that amount is shipped to the United States, the remaining ten per cent. being shipped to other nations of the world.—The Gospel Minister.

Wherever God's Law is supreme, life and property are safe. Wherever the Bible is despised or discarded, neither life nor property is secure. When infidel friends were discussing their theories around the dining table one day, Voltaire said, "Hush, gentlemen, till the servants are gone. If they believed as we do, none of our lives would be safe."—D. M. Pantou.