

PENTECOST

C. W. Butler

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come."

First, the day of Pentecost is God's day. It is God's day by previous appointment. He planned this wonderful climactic day of spiritual dynamics and blessing when He planned the redemption of man. Pentecost is not an after-thought in the plan.

It is God's day not only by His appointment and plan, but by His provision. He made provision for this great event by the supreme sacrifice of Calvary—a sacrifice which harmonized His self-giving with law and government.

It is God's day in its content. It is wholly supernatural. No man nor all men in a combined effort could have provided the content of this day. It marked the advent of God by His Spirit, coming to the temple of human personalities as an abiding presence. It is supernatural in its accomplishments. It goes into man's nature and searches like a rushing mighty wind. It tries the inner life of man like a flame of liquid fire. It reaches depths and conditions that no surgeon's knife can touch and that no human effort can change. His work is as radical as though the Ethiopian skin should be changed or the leopard's spots removed. Pentecost accomplishes in and for human personality that which is impossible from any other source or standpoint. It is supernatural in its manifestations. Under its gracious influence men say and do things as they never said or done them before. There is a sound to Pentecost and a tongue which only those who receive this gift can fully understand. It takes out something that is old and undesirable and implants within something that is new and rich and desirable.

Secondly, while it is God's day, it is His day pre-eminently for man. The appointment was for man; the provision is for man, and its content is for man. It becomes in a most wonderful sense man's day. It is man's day not for the world of the impenitent, but pre-eminently for the new redeemed family of God.

Christ came to reveal the Father. He was, however, known by those who were even His followers simply after the flesh until the glorious event of Pentecost. Under the illumination of the Holy Spirit's presence, the possessors became immediately aware and confirmed in the fact that God was in Christ. They now came to know Him after the Spirit. It takes the Holy Ghost in His official presence and work to enable us to know God and to know Him in Christ.

Pentecost, as a personal experience for believers in Jesus, marks the advent of a person in a new and abiding relationship. The advent of the Spirit and His abiding presence becomes a veritable judgment day both to the inner life and the outward practices of the believer. The symbols of wind and fire were present. These symbols illustrate the work of the Spirit to us in His judgment aspects.

His presence becomes a revealing presence. How He searches the very thought and intent of the heart. How He reveals all the hidden depths of inward sin. He truly sends forth judgment unto victory in the kingdom of the believer's selfhood.

Again, His is an illuminating presence. He greatly intensifies the light in which the individual is walking. By His illumination, our

ethical standards are searched, and if there has been any questionable or doubtful thing in our outward living, His illumination brings it to light.

Thank God, His presence is not only a searching, revealing, illuminating presence; it is a healing and purifying presence. He heals the inward hurt of our human selfhood and establishes judgment within, and fills and submerges our selfhood with the righteousness which is of God by faith.

Thank God, He comes to abide. His abiding presence becomes a comforting presence to us, and, further, a protecting presence. By His tender inward promptings and checks, He will both comfort and protect us every step of our journey. He will make the believer sensitive to both error in doctrine and mistakes in practice. We do not claim for His work in these two particulars that He will render a believer faultless, for we have limitations in our comprehension and appreciation of things, but we will be much less likely to mistake in either our apprehension of truth or of duty and right conduct when He abides within.

His presence and the peace of God which He imparts is the final arbiter of all questions which are not decided by a direct teaching of Scripture. He carries the principles involved in the revealed Word into realms where there is no direct deliverance in the written Word.

He is also an empowering presence. Pentecost does not make a storage battery of the believer, but it unites him to the living dynamo of a Presence Who imparts needed strength, power and courage as the human agent takes right attitudes and makes right choices in relation to every duty, temptation, and circumstance of life. He is there, generating power to execute right decisions in us both in the rejection of evil and in the performance of that which is good.

He not only empowers for service, but He furnishes the believer the motive and passion for sustained activity in building the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit has a world interest. He moves those who are His and possessed by Him with the holy passion toward the lost. He precipitates the burden of the prayer of travail and thus through and by the believer in whom He dwells. He promotes the actual work of human redemption, precipitating conviction and leading to salvation through the efforts of the Word ministered and witnessed to by those who are His.

His presence, indwelling the believer and unveiling Christ and filling with the fullness of God, gives spontaneity both in experience and in service. His presence within is likened to a well of living water springing up unto eternal life, and again His presence is likened unto rivers of living water flowing from within. He reveals the indwelling presence of Christ as "the smitten rock out of which gushed an abundant supply of living water." Thus, His is a refreshing presence. He saves from deadness and dullness in our Christian experience. He quickens and illuminates the Word, making it a living word to our consciousness.

BLIGHT OF UNFORGIVENESS

Many years ago I visited an old man on his deathbed. He was a man whom nobody liked—hard, sullen, taciturn and sour. If you met him on the street and wished him good-day, he would keep his eyes straight in front of him, grunt sulkily and pass on. He lived in a tumble-down old hut away back in the bush.

He spoke to nobody, and he made it perfectly plain that he wished nobody to speak to him. Even the children shunned him.

Some said he was a hermit; some that he was a miser; some that he was a woman hater; some that he was a fugitive from justice, a man with a guilty secret. But they were all wrong. The simple truth was that in his youth a companion had done him a grievous injury. "I'll remember it to my dying day," he hissed, in a gust of passionate resentment. And he did.

But when his dying day actually came, he realized that the rankling memory of that youthful wrong had soured and darkened his whole life. "I've gone over it by myself every morning," he moaned as he lay gasping in his comfortless shanty, "and I've thought of it every night. I've cursed him a hundred times a day. I see now," he added brokenly—a suspicion of moisture glistening in his eye, "that my curses have beaten out my soul; they have been like gall on my tongue, and gravel in my teeth. My hate has hurt nobody but myself. But God knows it has turned my life into hell!" It was true.

The man at whom he had spat out his venomous maledictions, had done all a man could do to atone for the suffering that he had thoughtlessly caused a generation back. Upon him my gnarled old friend's bitterness had produced little or no effect. It was the man who cherished the sinister memory who suffered most. It shadowed his life; it lent a new terror to death; it expelled every trace of brightness, and excluded every ray of hope; and at last, a grim and ghostly companion, it lay down with him in his cold and cheerless grave.—F. W. Borcham, in *The Christian Digest*.

REVIVAL OR REVOLUTION

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bring post-war security. Security can come to our nation, and civilization as a whole, only through the awakening power of God manifest in the hearts of men through the atoning merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We must evangelize or perish.

OUR REDEEMER LIVETH

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore."—Rev. 1:18.

Surely, it is grand to know that our Redeemer liveth. A minister was in his study preparing an Easter sermon when the thought gripped him that the Lord was living. He jumped up and paced the floor repeating to himself, "Why Christ is alive. He is not the great 'I was,' but He is the great 'I Am.' Because He lives, I shall live also." "And the angel said unto the women, He is not here: for he is risen, as he said."

Someone said, "Tell it to the sinner, that he may drop his burden of guilt into the open grave. Tell it to the mourner, that the dead in Christ shall rise again. Tell it to the discouraged and lonely, that an Omnipotent God, a loving Friend is theirs."

"Tell it to the children, that their sweet praise may resound on eternity's shore. Tell it to the aged, that their hearts may thrill with the prospect of immortal youth. Tell it to the trusty worker, the faithful servant, that God's promises of reward are sure, because Christ is risen. Tell it all over the earth, that they who now sit in darkness may see the Light."—Selected.