



# The King's Highway

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### PENTECOST

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"And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:3, 4).

The Whitsuntide festival once a year turns our attention to the events of Pentecost. It is the birthday of Christendom. The Christian dispensation was inaugurated on that day by the gift of the Holy Spirit. It was the most wonderful day the world had ever seen since God made man in his own image. It closed a dispensation that had lasted for thousands of years, and opened another that will continue till the end of time. It was a sample day. The signs were temporary but their significance is for all generations. Within the proceedings of that day may be found all the forces manifest in all succeeding days. As the day so is the dispensation.

#### The Preparation for Pentecost

The preparation for Pentecost may be said to have been going on from the beginning. Through all the history of Israel God had been preparing the world for the coming of His Son, and the Son came that this gift to the race might be procured. But there was an immediate preparation in the work of Christ. The Holy Spirit could not be given until the work of Christ was accomplished.

In John 7:30 we are told that Christ's words on that occasion were spoken of the Spirit which was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. The words quoted by Jesus find their interpretation in the symbolism of the Old Testament. In Ezekiel 47, and Zechariah 13:1; 14:8, we have the new dispensation set forth under the figure of a river. That river flows from the place of sacrifice, in Ezekiel from under the altar, and in Zechariah from the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. In Revelation 21 the river flows from a throne on which is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. How completely this is fulfilled in Jesus Christ! The Spirit comes from the cross. Calvary is the explanation of Pentecost. The gift of the Spirit is the purchase of His Blood. Until sin had received its atonement, the Spirit could not come. Until that was accomplished Christ's glorification could not begin, and until He was glorified the Spirit could not be given.

There was also a preparation of the disciples. He needs a prepared people. In this also there was an extended and immediate preparation. Through all their intercourse with Christ they were being familiarized with

the Spirit. They knew Him for He abode with them in the person of their Lord (John 14:17). But as they neared the end He spake much to them of the Spirit which should be given them when he should have returned to the Father. He taught them concerning the Spirit, He told them of their great privileges in Him. Thus He prepared their minds to seek and to receive Him, and begot within them a great desire for His coming. This preparation was completed after the ascension of Christ into heaven. With the promise that they should be endued with power not many days hence, they returned to the Upper Room and there continued in earnest, believing prayer, ten days waiting the promised gift.

These are the abiding conditions of the Spirit's coming! Glorify Christ; search the Scriptures concerning the Spirit; and pray for His coming and assuredly your Pentecost will not be long delayed.

#### The Signs of Pentecost

Signs signify quality and mission, and the signs of Pentecost are full of meaning. A cyclonic wind which filled the house and a cloud of fire accompanied His coming. Christ had Himself spoken of Him as the wind at once so mysterious and so manifest, and John the Baptist had described His baptism as one of fire. The form in which He comes signifies the kind of work to be done. He came upon Jesus not as a fire but in the form of a dove; He comes upon the disciples not as a Dove but as fire. In the sinless Son there is no need for wind or fire. In the sinful disciple there is no home for the Dove. For us the Spirit is fire.

The figure is familiar enough. It has influenced our daily speech in every direction. We speak of friendships as warm, and of love that burns. We mourn our chilling reserve and cold indifference. We speak of passions that are fiery and of enthusiasms that are at white heat. Christ sets them ablaze. He kindles within them a moral and spiritual enthusiasm that purifies, impassions and transforms them. The flame sat upon each of them as a tongue of fire. Not the tongue of the learned, or of culture, or of eloquence, but of fire. That is the gift of God and the mighty weapon of His people. The Spirit is a Spirit of utterance, and Spirit-inspired speech is always forceful, appropriate, and effective.

#### The Marvels of Pentecost

The greatest marvel of that marvelous day was the effect of the Spirit's coming upon the disciples. What a change it wrought in them! It set fire to their understanding. It turned those common-place fishermen and tax gatherers into prophets, teachers, and advocates. They received the Spirit of Truth, Who taught

them all things. It gave them courage as well as certainty. Their shrinking timidity and cowardly terror were burnt up in the blaze of the Spirit's baptism. You look in vain for the Peter of the judgment hall on that day. He is a new man. The Peter at the fire and the Peter baptized with fire are nothing akin. It filled them with power. What force there is in their speech! What an unconscious look of strength there is in their bearing! A different company from that baffled band at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration! It filled them with joy. They were so full of gladness, people said they were drunk. They were intoxicated with God, not wine.

Spirit-filled men are always joyful. No wonder the effect upon the world was so startling. They were astonished, arrested, and perplexed. Sixteen different nationalities listened to a man who knew no language but his own, and each heard the word in his own tongue! As they heard they were convicted of their sin and cried out in distress of soul. And three thousand of them were savingly converted to God that day.

Have you received the Spirit, or are you resisting Him? Have you had your Pentecost, or are you living on the Old Testament side of the Cross?

—Heart & Life.

#### BOLDNESS IN THE GOSPEL

Shall I, for fear of feeble man,  
The Spirit's course in me restrain?  
Or undismayed in deed or word,  
Be a true witness of my Lord?

Awed by a mortal's frown, shall I,  
Conceal the word of God Most High?  
How then before Thee shall I dare  
To stand, or how Thine anger bear?

Shall I, to soothe the unholy throng,  
Softener Thy truth, or smoother my tongue,  
To gain earth's gilded toys, or flee  
The cross endured, my Lord, by Thee?

What then is he whose scorn I dread?  
Whose wrath or hate makes me afraid?  
A man! an heir of death! a slave  
To sin! a bubble on the wave!

Yea, let men rage; since Thou wilt spread  
Thy shadowing wings around my head;  
Since in all pain Thy tender love  
Will still my sure refreshment prove.

Give me Thy strength, O God of power,  
Then let winds blow, or thunders roar,  
Thy faithful witness will I be;  
'Tis fixed I can do all through Thee.

—Trans. by J. Wesley.