

By Dr. Samuel Chadwick

God waits to fill ordinary people with extraordinary power and turn a baffled faith into a rapturous conquest.

Pentecost challenges the very citadel of our faith. The gift of the Spirit is the distinguishing feature of the Christian religion. It is the very soul of our faith. In His indwelling Presence is the secret of all Christian experience, and in the abiding energy of His power is the dynamic of all Christian service. The promises concerning the Spirit challenge us. The record of the Day of Pentecost challenges us. The history of the Christian church challenges us. Do we believe in the Holy Ghost?

The blessing of Pentecost is the blessing of fullness. The symbols of wind and fire reveal the mission and quality of the Gift, but the essential truth is that they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Fire, power, courage and joy had their source in the fullness of the indwelling Spirit. They overflowed because they were filled to overflowing. In the Upper Room on the first day of the resurrection the risen Lord had breathed on them and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Pentecost verified and completed an infilling Presence and an overflowing power. It is the fullness that makes the difference.

The blessing affects the whole being. The seat of the indwelling Presence is the innermost recesses of the spiritual being, but it permeates, energizes and controls every faculty of our nature. It is another incarnation of which the body is the consecrated believer. The Holy Ghost clothed Himself with the waiting disciples in the upper room, and He still clothes Himself with consecrated believers. He clothes Himself, and they are clothed in Him. In them He finds a body, and in Him they find the power of spiritual expression and execution. Without confusion, without loss of personal consciousness, without change of inherent qualities, there are mutual appropriation and oneness of operation.

The effects are seen in the apostles on the day of Pentecost, and in every particular the experience corresponds to the promise. Jesus had said the coming of the Spirit would bring fullness of knowledge. "(In) that day ye shall know." Things He could not teach them they would know with certainty when the Spirit of Truth had come, and they did. There is nothing more wonderful on the Day of Pentecost than the wisdom and certainty with which they taught. Prophecy shone with new meaning, and the facts of Christ's death and resurrection were interpreted in the light of the eternal purpose of God. The Word of God became new, and the history of Christ's teaching and ministry was filled with a new meaning to them, but Pentecost changed all their outlook. The Scriptures were made luminous in the light of the Holy Ghost.

The change in their characters was even greater than the change in their knowledge. The Gospels portray these men as proud and contentious, selfish and cowardly; but the first pages of the Acts of the Apostles tell another story. Something had happened between the judgment hall and the streets of the city. Resurrection found them all shivering behind closed doors for fear of the Jews, but at Pentecost they were openly preaching Jesus and

charging the rulers with His death. Pentecost transformed them. It was the fullness that made the difference between timidity and joyous daring; shivering weakness and exultant power. They were jubilantly fearless and hilariously happy. That is the difference Pentecost always makes.

How does the challenge find us? Do we measure up to the standard of the fullness of Pentecost? Is not the explanation of our confusion in the lack of it? The gift is not for the working of miraculous deeds, for there were men filled with the Holy Spirit who wrought no miracle. There is danger that we claim more than is promised, but how do the unchallenged tests find us? What about our assurance of heavenly things? There is an end of uncertainty when the fullness of Pentecost is known. Have we power over sin? The Spirit of Truth is the Spirit of Holiness. He sanctifies in truth. The Day of Pentecost changed carnal thought into spiritual vision, pride into humility, selfishness into love, and cowardice into courage. It changed hearts and transformed lives. Victory comes by fullness. Have we the joy of conquest over sin? Is the character of the average Christian anywhere near the standard of a Spirit-filled soul? What about the love of the world? Jesus said He was One "whom the world cannot receive." They are an irreconcilable antagonism. What has become of the doctrine of separation? If believers were filled with the Spirit, would they haunt the world's gaudy fountains and brackish springs? It is mockery to profess fullness and go about panting with thirst and gasping with vanity.

What about the power for service? Is our decline due to external difficulties or internal weakness? Think of the host of workers, the vastness and variety of their service, the earnestness and ingenuity of their labors, and the scanty result of it all. Pentecost brought awakening, conviction, conversions, and baptism. The gift of the Spirit is the gift of power, and the lack of power is due to absence of His indwelling fullness.

There is no doubt that the one thing needful for the church is the blessing of Pentecostal fullness. The flood would sweep away all the rubbish, fill all the dykes, and fertilize all the desert. The work of God cannot be accomplished without the fullness of the Spirit, and everywhere God waits to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. It is His will that every believer should be filled with the Spirit, overflow in the power of the Spirit, and in all things prevail in the Spirit. The blessing is for all; the conditions are simple, unalterable and universal. God waits to fill ordinary people with extraordinary power, and to turn a baffled faith into a rapturous conquest. How? Ask Peter and James and John! They were deeply attached to the Lord Jesus Christ before Pentecost. They had left all for His sake, but were still without Pentecost. They believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; were witnesses of His death and of His resurrection; they were workers, stewards, preachers, evangelists, workers of miracles, without Pentecost. Then they heard the promise of the Spirit and set themselves to claim, wait and pray, and according to the Word the Spirit came, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.—Triumphs of Faith.

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Pentecost was a memorable occasion in the lives of the early disciples. Not so much because of its traditional setting, but because of what they experienced individually. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, the promise of the Father had come, they were endued with power from on high. It was Pentecost with a new emphasis!

Preparation is precedent to Pentecost. This Scripture account tells that the disciples were all of one accord. This came about as a result of tarrying and making the proper adjustments. S. D. Gordon states that the requisites for the Spirit's incoming are: a surrendered will, a yielded body, an emptied heart, and an appropriating faith. When such a state exists it will not be long before the Comforter comes.

June 6, 1954, is Pentecost Sunday, fifty days after the resurrection. It is one of the great days in all the history of the human race. Pentecost was provided as a part of the great plan of salvation and was intended to meet a definite need in the heart of the believer. Since this is so, it has been repeated and will be repeated everywhere and at all times when men believe and meet the conditions to make it possible.

As we approach Pentecost Sunday we are not stressing alone the observance of just another day in the historic calendar of the Church, but we are stressing a period of heart preparation which shall prepare us for a release of the power given on that day.

If Pentecost is given its rightful place in the Church, it will be because believers and God's holy people allow it to be so. It is in keeping with Scriptural teachings that those who believe in and have experienced cleansing power of the Holy Spirit, endeavor to stress the true meaning of Pentecost particularly at the season between Easter and Pentecostal Sunday.

A group of church leaders at the National Holiness Convention in 1952 presented a resolution which was adopted, calling on all believers and ministers of heart holiness to take the lead in observing Pre-Pentecost Week. Many religious periodicals have accepted this challenge and have given space in these periodicals to the daily devotional readings prepared by the National Holiness Association for Pre-Pentecostal Week. The outworking of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost changed fearful, doubting, vacillating disciples into dynamic, effective, courageous messengers, witnesses, and evangelists, who so effectively presented the claims of Jesus Christ, His death, resurrection, and ascension that 3,000 gladly received the Word and continued "steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers . . . And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Make Pre-Pentecost Week a time of fasting and prayer. A prayer vigil will intensify the effects of Pentecost Sunday. It has been suggested that "preachers pray in the study, in the homes, and in public places—'pray without ceasing'." Let the family prayer be revitalized. Parents pray with and for the children. Study the promises, and believe for an outpouring of the Spirit of God, and a release of the power of Pentecost will sweep clean from the church all hindering weights and create channels through which Pentecostal power can flow to this generation."