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Pentecostal Poise

By Dr. Peter Wiseman

Pentecost has long since ceased to be a mere historical feast. Since the Pentecost recorded in Acts 2, it has been an outstanding Christian event, a crisis in the life of believers. The great typical institution passed into its fulfillment; the institution commemorating the giving of the law issued into the giving of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the blessed Holy Ghost given to the Church, Christian believers. Thus now the Pentecostal experience is a vital and important event in the life of the Church. That it is for all, there can be no doubt, for Peter said, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39).

There frequently has been associated with the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit peculiar conceptions as to one's actions on receiving the Holy Spirit. Peter's statement on the Day of Pentecost, "These [men] are not drunken, as ye suppose," seems to have been the chief basis for such conceptions. The writer on one occasion listened to a message likening the Spirit-filled man to a drunken man. There were, of course, some good comparisons, some good truth; but, for the most part, it was, to say the least, poor Biblical homiletics: a misconception of the experience of the Upper Room, an overemphasis on the external. Signs there were and manifestations of God's presence, and we have no disposition to question any manifestation of the Holy Spirit. We welcome such. But after all, signs and emotional manifestations are external. They vary, they come and go; but the Holy Spirit comes to stay and abide with you forever.

The true Pentecostal experience is to be filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:4). This is vital and the most important; not the "sound" even from heaven; not "cloven tongues like as of fire," not the "shaking" of the place, not even to "speak with other tongues"; but, rather and conclusively, the Holy Spirit filling them, abiding within, to live in them, speak and work through them. When the storm is on, when the clouds hang low and are dark, when reverses come, when we are misunderstood, when the emotional nature goes on strike, when as far as feelings are concerned one may not feel so religious as at other times, when the "enemy shall come in like a flood," the blessed Holy Spirit is there, assuring and comforting by His presence.

The inwardness of the Christian Pentecostal experience is marked by a new sense of personality, Divine Personality indwelling human personality. It is not the matter of "it" or

"things" but fellowship with the divine Person, being filled with and controlled by that Person.

The experience is marked by a new sense of purity. Strife has ceased within, the war in the soul is over; the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has liberated, has conquered (Rom. 8:2). The heart is purified. They purified (aor.) their hearts by faith (Acts 15:8-9). The two outstanding characteristics in the early apostolic Church were "great grace" and "great power," the moral purity aspect as well as the power aspect (Acts 4:33). The Apostle Peter is a good illustration of the difference before and after the Day of Pentecost.

There is a new passion; a clean Spirit-filled heart is a passionate heart. The early group would welcome death for the cause of Jesus Christ; indeed, Peter, it is traditionally reported, felt unworthy to die like his Lord, so he requested that he be crucified with his head downward and his feet where his hands should be. They lived unto death; with hearts aflame with constraining love, they bled and died for their Lord. We sing, "Let me burn out for Thee"—but they did it. We have words, they had deeds.

There is a new power, the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit. The promise was, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8). Power to die for the Lord! Power, not from institutions, not from wealth or influence, not from learning, not from ability, but power from "on high"! Power to pray, power to labor, power to suffer, power to accomplish—the power of the Holy Ghost!

The experience is marked by a new poise, by which is meant an evenness of equilibrium, a new balance. Negatively, not "drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." That full life is a balanced life; a walk that is circumspect, as wise (not as fools), redeeming the time, gathering up and putting to good service the precious moments. The reason for this is, "The days are evil . . . understanding . . . the will of the Lord . . . speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph 5:15-20). This is Pentecostal poise.

In the eyes of those who are drunk with the cares of this life, drunk with pleasure, yes, in the eyes of the professors without the possession, the mere nominal church members, people of this poise may be looked upon as being a little off, even though, according to God's standard of fullness, they are quite on;

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The Spirit of Might

By Dr. Oliver G. Wilson

There is much work to be done; powerful foes to meet, giant obstacles to be removed, long marches to be made, heavy loads to carry. This will require men of iron nerves, strong will, and bold enthusiasm. The time is gone—if there ever was such a time—for weak, puny, flabby, fearful men in the army of the Lord. We must be strong in faith, indomitable in courage, fearless in battle, and eager on the long marches.

The Church of Jesus Christ was given the great task of evangelizing the world for Christ. Christ gave us the essential equipment to a glorious accomplishment of the task in Acts 2:17-18—

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Might. He comes into the interior personality of the believer to quicken all the latent talents and supply powers which the soul never before possessed.

We have grown weak, ineffective, defeated as we have relied upon self-effort, natural beauty, and human ability. But wherever the group or the individual, in utter self-abandonment, recklessly launches out on the Spirit of Might, results startling and supernatural have followed.

As the Church has increased her litanies she has in about the same proportion weakened her impact upon a sinful generation. When the love of beauty induces the worshipper to be more concerned with aesthetic tastes and ornate language than with simply unpremeditated witnessing to Christ's work in the heart, to that extent the Church becomes savorless salt, and is useless to society.

When the Spirit of God came upon Othniel he drove out the invading armies from Mesopotamia. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon and with three hundred valiant men he drove off the enslaving Midianites in number like the sand of the sea. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah and the enemies were subdued. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson and he rent a lion, and slew a thousand enemies with nothing in his hand but a dry bone.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Might. Give place to Him, Allow Him to so possess you that your strength will be multiplied a thousand fold, and your effectiveness many times. —Wesleyan Methodist.