

## THE PENTECOSTAL GIFT—AN EMANCIPATION

By Dr. S. A. Keen

"God hath not given us the Spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (I Timothy 1:7).

The Apostle Paul here defines the gift of the Holy Ghost in respect to spiritual effectiveness.

In I Timothy 1:18, it is expressly stated that it had been bestowed upon Timothy that he might "serve a good service" (marginal reading). There are two classes of believers—the effective and the ineffective. The ineffective are those good, converted, consistent believers who are, notwithstanding, "unprofitable servants." They accomplish little or nothing in the salvation of souls and the edification of the saints. The effective are those saved people who have been anointed with the Holy Ghost, making them meet for the Master's use, mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. They are not only good people, but good people full of the Holy Ghost. There is a great difference between good men, and good men full of the Holy Ghost. Barnabas was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and much people was added unto the Lord.

The baptism with the Holy Ghost transforms every believer, who receives it, from ineffective to effective. Any Christian life having it, becomes a storm-center of revival. In nature, a storm-center is that point in atmospheric conditions where all the latent forces, which may develop a cyclone, reside. So the soul anointed with the Holy Ghost is the point whence radiates the spiritual forces that precipitate and promote revival. Drop such a soul down anywhere, and spiritual action ensues at once, producing moral upheaval and gracious uplift. John Wesley, hitherto a godly, scholarly churchman, became filled with the Holy Ghost, and thence started a revival that swept across two continents, and into two centuries.

Two aspects of the pentecostal gift as a source of effectiveness are presented by the apostle in the text at the head of this article; first, an emancipation: "God hath not given us the spirit of fear," second, as an endowment: "But of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

It is the gift of the Holy Ghost as an emancipation which we now wish to elaborate. It delivers from fear. God hath not given us the spirit of fear. This is a negative, idiomatic form of expression, designed to enforce a positive thought; namely, the gift of the Holy Ghost inspires fearlessness, courage, boldness. It begets spiritual heroism. Fear is always an enervating and enfeebling presence. It disarms us of personal power. We readily fall victim to the things we fear. Fear cholera, and we are most likely to take it. The Christian life, dominated by fear, is helpless and strengthless. It is a Lazarus, bound hand, foot, and mouth. The only answer the man with one talent could give for its abuse was, "I was afraid." The common excuse now offered for neglect of opportunity, duty, and service by hundreds in the church is, "I am afraid." The gift of the Holy Ghost is a specific for all such fear, which is so prolific a source of discomfort and defeat in Christian life.

It emancipates from the fear of sin. We refer to sin in its activities, combinations, and enormities—sin as it appears entrenched in the hearts of our friends, or rampant and defiant in society, or joined hand in hand in the synagogues of Satan. How much Christian life stands overawed in the presence of this prevalent audacity and desperation of wickedness! It says: "It is no use; nothing can be done." The church quakes and trembles, and confesses, "We are not able for these giants, Anakim, and walled cities of sin." When, however, the anointing of the Holy Ghost comes, fear flees. A holy boldness enters the

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soul, and it says: "God is able." Faith in God supplants the fear of sin. It believes that the "Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil," and that the "gospel is the power of God unto salvation." It does not quail, nor fail under the frowning walls of sin, but is made mighty to the pulling down of strongholds. Baxter went to Kidderminster; found it reeking in vileness, flooded with irreligion, hideous with revelry; but he was filled with the Holy Ghost, stood undismayed, reproved sin, preached righteousness, had faith in God. When twelve years had passed, the parish of Kidderminster was revolutionized. Psalm-singing was heard in almost every home. The Sabbath was hallowed, and the house of God thronged. He did not fear sin, and it fled before him. Nothing inspires such fearlessness of sin as the gift of the Holy Ghost. It transforms one into a Nehemiah saying: "Should such a man as I flee?"

It emancipates from the fear of faces. How sad the spectacle of God's children skulking and dodging from the "fear of man which bringeth a snare!" The world is facing down the church. Never can it be rescued and redeemed until God's people "face about." Then will the world be put to rout. God said to Jeremiah, "Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee," and to Ezekiel: "Be not dismayed at their looks. I have made thy face strong against their faces. Harder than flint I made thy forehead." Having the holy courage that comes by the gift of the Holy Ghost, we do not fear countenance nor crowds. We are just as free to preach, or pray, or praise in the great congregation as in private or before a few people. The fathers and mothers of early Methodism overawed the crowds by their holy boldness. They lifted their heads in prayer; turned toward the audiences when they gave their glowing testimonies; walked right up to the stalwart sinners in the public congregations, and demanded their capitulation and unconditional surrender.

They were not the people who hid behind pews and posts, or talked to God or about God in undertones. O for spiritual bravery like that! We ministers covet crowds; then we are so intimidated when they come, that we can not move upon them. We fear to present the altar, or invite requests for prayer, or call for testimonies, and dodge off into a lecture-room, under the deceit that it is impossible to get people to act publicly in the interests of their souls. So many a sweeping victory becomes an ignominious retreat—and Satan rejoices over the cowardice of the leaders of Israel's host. In our early ministry we used to pray for the multitudes to come to the house of God; God answered us, and sent them, and then we were scared that we could not preach to them. But ever since we received the baptism with the Holy Ghost, like the prophet we could say to the crowds, "Assemble, ye people multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision;" and then expect God, who is the Master of Assemblies, to capture them for himself. We want the masses. Maybe, if God does not send them, it is because we could not face them. Saved from the fear of faces, one can chase a thousand. It does not take as much courage to parade at it does to assault. It is easy to attract, but hard to attack the world. Emancipated from the fear of faces, the soul exclaims: "The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall be afraid?"

It emancipates from the fear of failure. The most insidious form of fear that preys upon Christian effectiveness is the subtle dread of failure. It restrains us from venturing anything for God, lest it may do harm or incur defeat. We hesitate to speak to souls in warning or invitation, for fear they may not receive it. Christian workers shrink from planning largely, lest there should not be success. Christian life is kept from pronounced efforts and enterprises, lest they fail.

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