

# The King's Highway

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## The Power of Pentecost

Floyd L. Skinner in "God's Revivalist"

"Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you." Acts 1:8.

We are living in a world of power. On every hand is the evidence of exerted energy. Political, financial, social, and intellectual powers seek to control the exercise of human authority.

The world asks us what we have, what we know, and what we can do. But God's chief interest lies in what we are. And herein lies the keynote to the power of Pentecost.

Two channels of thought present themselves:

1. Possessive power, embracing the reactions of Pentecostal purity within the individual.

2. Progressive power, revealed in the effects of holy piety upon others.

### 1. POSSESSIVE POWER OF PURITY

The cleansing of the heart from all sinful tendencies is the primary issue of Pentecost. Without this, all else fails to materialize, regardless of sacrifice or effort.

The necessity of this purifying is implied in Jeremiah's statement, "The heart (by nature) is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"—Jer. 17:9. The two modifying terms "deceitful" and "desperate" tell a tragic story. A depraved heart is our worst enemy, full of wretched, treacherous, unfathomable strivings to gratify its pride, passions, and foolish pleasures. Its owner cannot sense the depth of corruptness hidden beneath its polished and cultured surface, and is often unaware of its tremendous power. But in some unguarded moment, it may "boil over" and expose itself.

The essence of this depravity is rebellion. It is eternal "enmity against," and refuses to be "subject to" the law of God (Rom. 8:7), and is a fixed hatred to any authority that crosses its passionate desires. This native tendency is so powerful as to force its owner to act, think, and speak in direct opposition to his better judgment.

When we are born again, this power is subdued to the extent that all acts of volition, whether mental or physical, are centered in the Divine will, and are accompanied by a sense of Divine approbation. Although the authority of this internal corruptness has been checked, yet its existence is revealed in powerful tell-tale stirrings within, and a proneness to depart from God. Sometimes they break out in word or deed. This is actual sinning, and may show us our keen need of getting rid of this evil principle. Immediately our soul is humbled; but unless we repent, we lose our experience in justification. Here many Christians fail. They feel their need of God, and seek holiness when they should seek to be reclaimed. It is, therefore, only natural when they are re-instated in grace, to think that they have received the baptism with the Holy Ghost; and they are confused when the carnal nature again asserts itself.

A few such outbreaks should be sufficient evidence for us to see the absolute necessity of getting rid of this

internal enemy. The more we strive against it the stronger it appears, until we realize that it is a hopeless task to cope with such power without the help of God; and as a result we confess our carnal condition to Christ in prayer.

The Spirit leads us to abandon our all to infinite wisdom, to consecrate our lives entirely to the Lord to be used in holy living and holy service as He directs. Herein lies a deep paradox, for along with a positive consecration we begin a negative crucifixion, a loathing abhorrence of sinful self, a dying out of the detestable carnal character within, and an emptying of all depraved ambitions.

Scripture promises, such as Ezek. 36:25 and 1 John 1:9, illuminate the soul with faith to believe for the actual cleansing from all self-centeredness and from all unrighteousness.

**Note.** The nature of God requires Him to bestow a blessing upon any seeker who meets the condition of honest and entire consecration. This is often mistaken for the witness of the Spirit to heart purity. May the Lord help us not to stop short, but to press on by "cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," being willing to "walk in the light, as he is in the light," and calling upon God to "break down every idol, cast out every foe," until,

Refining fire goes through my heart,

Illuminates my soul,

Scatters its life through every part,

And sanctifies the whole.

### 2. PROGRESSIVE POWER OF PIETY

This brings us to the second issue of Pentecost, or power in service. This is based upon the fulness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in man's heart, making a dual witness for Christ. Jesus said, "The Spirit of truth . . . shall testify of me" (John 15:26), and in the next verse, "And ye also shall bear witness."

The service of the Holy Ghost is that of conviction to the worldling (John 16:8), and comfort to the church (v. 13). His guiding of Peter "into all truth" at Pentecost resulted in the addition of 3,000 converts. Later, in company with John, Peter was moved by the inner promptings of the Spirit to faith for the healing of the man at the temple gate. As a result, 5,000 men and women became believers. This was due, not to Peter's persuasion, but to the manifest power of the presence of the Holy Ghost in Peter.

Then followed the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira, who kept back a portion of their consecration. Peter, led by the Holy Ghost, sensed their deceit and pronounced their death sentence, which God Himself executed. We read that multitudes, both men and women, were added to the Lord, for "great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as hear these things."

The service of the church depends upon the infilling with the Holy Spirit. This is seen in the text and the con-

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