

# PENTECOST

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E. P. ELLYSON, D.D.



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# PENTECOST

## I. THE DAY

*"When the day of Pentecost was fully come"—Acts 2:1*

God has His own divinely arranged time card, His schedule of events; He has His times, seasons and days, His year and week and day calendar in His revealed program for man. In His arrangements given through Moses for Israel there is the "Year of Jubilee," the six days of work, the one-day-sabbath of rest; then there are the set feasts, some continuing for a week and some but for one day. These are all fixed as to time as are the special days on this calendar, and God is careful from His standpoint to observe these exact times. Pentecost was one of these days of the divine calendar and the exactness of time is indicated in the sentence quoted above, "When the day of Pentecost was fully come." The disciples in the upper room waited until the calendar day arrived. Ten days after the Ascension, fifty days after the resurrection, it came exactly according to the prophetic calendar.

Pentecost holds one of the most prominent places in sacred history. It is prominent in the Old Testament annals; it is prominent in New Testament times; it is prominent in the history of the Christian church. It has not always been given its purposed place by men, has not been observed or experienced or carried out by them as divinely designed, but God has never failed. Its place of prominence and importance in the divine program is beyond question. Men have sometimes neglected it, or have brought it into disrepute, but here it is standing out in bold relief. Men reject it at their peril. The church neglects it at the price of its larger success.

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## 1. PENTECOST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

This may at first be questioned. Those who read the Bible carelessly or do not read it observingly, and it may be, read the Old Testament but little, may never have seen this day in this part of the Bible and hence have not learned that there was a Pentecost in these Old Testament times. The word Pentecost does not occur in the Old Testament except in the chapter or page headings. It is not a word belonging to the language in which the Old Testament was written and hence it does not appear in the text, but its equivalent—"fiftieth day," does appear and refers to that which holds a prominent place in Israel's worship.

The command was given to Israel, "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles"—Deut. 16:16. In Ex. 23:16 the second of these feasts is called "the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labors," and the third is called "the feast of ingathering." The Passover was kept at the beginning of the feast of unleavened bread and the feast is sometimes called the "Passover Feast." This was held from the fourteenth to the twenty-first of their month Abib, parts of our March and April. From the close of this feast, "ye shall count unto you . . . seven sabbaths" or weeks, "even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days" (pentecost) (Lev. 23:15, 16), to the second feast. It is this day that is called "the day of Pentecost" in the New Testament. The place of holding these feasts was Jerusalem and the women often accompanied the men for these times of worship and commemoration.

The Old Testament tells us of genuine religious experiences of fellowship with and worship of the true God. But the expression of this was almost entirely in set ritual and ceremonies to be observed, much of which was connected with their temple service. These feasts had their place in this service and had a triple purpose. They were a means of worship of the true God; they were commemorative of some special past event, something that God had done in His dealings

with Israel; and they were prophetic, looking forward in symbol to something of great significance in the divine program for man that was to come to pass at some future time, to a fulfillment of that for which these symbolic forms and acts stood after which the symbolic observance would no longer be needed. These were in some way all connecting with the coming of Christ.

The first of these feasts, the Passover and Unleavened Bread, was kept first in commemoration of Israel's deliverance from the Egyptian bondage at which time the death angel passed over the homes of Israel because the blood of the paschal lamb was upon their door posts. It was kept second as a means of worship and expression of appreciation for what God had done and was doing for them. It was kept third looking forward to the shedding of Christ's blood, the great Paschal Lamb, His death on the cross and the atonement made to deliver men from the bondage of sin. The second of these feasts, the Feast of Weeks, or the Feast of Harvest, looked back to the giving of the law and the setting up of the nation at Sinai. Its forward look was to the advent of the Holy Spirit, His special dispensational coming into the world, the bringing of the law into the heart and the setting up of the church. This prophetic or forward looking phase of these observances was not understood by those who kept them. This revelation was held for a future time. Only brief glimpses of this are given at times by the prophets, and then but poorly comprehended by any of the people, but the New Testament makes all of this very clear.

There are two things in the description of this second Feast (Ex. 23:17-21) that we should particularly notice. (1) The offering of the two loaves of bread. The wheat is now ripening ready for the harvest. They go to the field and mark some of the grain that is already fully ripened—the first fruits. This is harvested, ground into flour, and two loaves are baked for the feast. These two loaves may suggest that both Jew and Gentile have an equal right to the benefits of the fulfillment when that time comes. There was no leaven in the bread of the Passover, but leaven is to be put into these

loaves. This, however, is killed by the fire in baking before they are used in the Feast. Leaven always pictures sin. The Passover was a deliverance from outward bondage. Here the sin is within. Pentecost is a baptism with fire cleansing from the sin within. (2) The sin offering and other offerings were part of this feast, but the trespass offering was omitted. The act of sin, trespasses, had already been cared for in the Passover.

## 2. PENTECOST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

It has been said that the New Testament is concealed in the Old Testament, and the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament. It may also be said that the Old Testament is prophecy and symbol and the New Testament is fulfillment and manifestation. The legalism and the ritualism of the Old Testament all point forward to the spiritual realities of the New Testament. Someone has said, "As the bark fits the tree, so do the Old Testament forms, laws and ceremonies fit the spiritual realities, experiences and standards of the New Testament."

As we approach the Passover time the conditions were preparing for the tragedy of Calvary. When the day for the killing of the paschal lamb arrived, Jesus was being tried before the Roman governor. And in the midst of the slaying of these lambs, Jesus gave up His life on the cross. The fulfillment was on time according to the calendar. So as the fiftieth day, the Pentecost time, drew near the disciples were in waiting, ready—"with one accord, in one place"—in the upper room. When the day was fully come, again the fulfillment came on calendar time. God always fulfills, and fulfills on time. "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 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, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance . . . and when this was noised abroad the multitude came together and were confounded because that every man heard them speak in his own language. . . . And they were all amazed

and were in doubt saying one to another, What meaneth this?" After Peter had answered this question "then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Thus we have the prophecy of the Feast of Pentecost fulfilled, the symbolism revealed, the picture turned into reality and put in action. And all through the New Testament the working of the Holy Ghost is clearly seen.

### 3. PENTECOST IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

In the history of the Christian church we have the results of the fulfillment of that for which this day, this Feast of Pentecost, stood in the practical affairs of men as it has been worked out by men, and in the carrying forward of the work of the church and the kingdom. Here we have man's attitude toward this Pentecost fulfillment and the results following this attitude. This attitude has had very much to do with the church's successes and failures through all of the Christian centuries.

## II. ITS MEANING

*And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Acts 2:12.*

Jesus, just before His ascension, had said to the apostles, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high"—Luke 24:49. He had also told them, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me" Acts 1:8. The disciples have followed this instruction and as a result of their tarrying, when the day of Pentecost had fully come, the Pentecost fulfillment came upon them and they immediately went forth to witness. When they were all filled with the Holy Ghost they all began to speak under the inspiration of the Spirit. Pentecost brings something of a spiritual inspiration. There were 120 who had received this Pentecost fulfillment and 108 of these were laymen or laywomen. And remember that they all began to speak. As this became known, "was

noised abroad, the multitude," a very great crowd came together. This being the feast day there were many thousands of people in the city. This witnessing—the shining faces, the joyfulness, their behavior and the inspiration of the Spirit accompanying their words, got hold of the crowd and there was great interest and excitement. Some few had their answer and mockingly said, "These men are full of new wine." But the rest were amazed and in doubt and were asking, "What meaneth this?" Peter now comes to the front as the preacher and answers this question.

The word Pentecost has come into some disrepute because of the unscriptural presentations by some and the actions sometimes carried on under the professed inspiration of Pentecost. Many books have been written on the subject which do not at all agree in their interpretations. There is much confusion in the general thinking as to the meaning Pentecost. As a result many have looked upon it as dangerous territory and have left it alone. But this will not do, for here it is prominently in the Bible with much importance attached to it. And why should we have this confusion in our thinking. Peter has, under divine inspiration, given us a clear answer to the question, "What meaneth this?" Let us listen to him.

We do not have Peter's entire sermon. The record tells us that, "with many other words did he testify and exhort." Probably we have but the outline or a mere digest. But we have enough to give us a clear answer to the questions. Some in the crowd having suggested a false explanation, that "these men are full of new wine," he first gives a negative answer. But you will notice that he did not give much time to this. Our Gospel has its negatives, but its positives are of the greater value and must be given the larger attention. Peter simply denies the charges and gives the positive proof of their falsity. "These are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day." Then he turns immediately to the positive answer, which he gives in two parts. First, "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." It is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy as to the dispensational coming of the Holy Spirit,—"I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh,"

which will result in special divine manifestations through those who receive Him, such as the sons and daughters prophesying, the young men seeing visions and the old men dreaming dreams. And it will follow that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." It is the beginning of a great dispensation of divine manifestation and evangelism.

Peter's second answer to this question is that it is the fulfillment of "the promise of the Father," and he gives the ground upon which this was accomplished. There are six steps in this presentation. (1) The life of Jesus. "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you." (2) The crucifixion of Jesus. "Ye have taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slain." (3) The resurrection of Jesus. "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death." (4) The ascension and exaltation of Jesus. "Therefore being at the right hand of God exalted." (5) The receiving of the promise by Jesus. "And having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost." (6) Jesus sends this fulfillment of the promise of the Father to the disciples. "He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." Pentecost is Christ's purchased gift, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the fulfillment of the Promise of the Father. This promise could not be fulfilled directly to fallen man. Christ must first make the atonement for sin, for forgiveness and cleansing, and as a result of His purchase price receive the promise in the name of humanity and then pass it on to those persons who are prepared to receive it. No true presentation of Pentecost can in anyway take honor from Christ. It is His purchased gift and to receive the gift will greatly honor Him. And being a gift from one who is Infinite Love, who is so greatly concerned as to man's highest welfare, and has been willing to purchase it for us at so great price, it must be something that is very desirable and helpful, that has in it nothing of disadvantage or unpleasantness. Pentecost is certainly a gift that we should be glad to receive. To fear such a gift or hold back from it is a reproach on the good One who has so kindly provided it.

But this purchased gift is especially Christ's purchased gift for the church. There were 120 in this group—apostles, laymen and laywomen, who at this time received this gift. These were the charter members, or were ready for charter membership in the church. Just a few days before this when Peter made his great confession of Christ's deity, He had said, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18), thus showing it had not been built. Israel had had their "congregation" and their synagogue service, but no church. The church is a new institution, a New Testament, a Christian arrangement. It is an arrangement made, an institution set up by Jesus Christ—"I will build my church." Immediately after Pentecost it is recorded that "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47), showing that the church had then been set up. At the close of Peter's sermon we are told that "there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (v. 41). These were added to the one hundred and twenty, and to this total were added daily such as should be saved—added to the church. The one hundred and twenty must then have been the charter members of the church and the time of their being built into a church by Christ must have been the day of Pentecost. They were a group of saved persons whose lives were already surrendered to Christ and had been accepted by Him. "They were all with one accord in one place" waiting for the promise, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Thus it is clear that, while this was the dispensational advent of the Holy Spirit into the world, it was the church group to which and through which He came, it was the church group which were prepared and which He filled.

Christ arranged for the church as the institution through which His work should be carried on in the world after He had left it in His flesh form. It is the responsible agency for the propagation of Christianity through the world. He said of this group, "As thou (the Father) hath sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John 17:18). He commanded them, "ye shall be witnesses unto me" in all the world (Acts 1:8), and "Go ye therefore and teach all na-

tions" (Matt. 28:19), and "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15). Never was there such a serious task assigned to men. The church has in some real sense been made responsible for the Gospel in this age of the world's history.

The work of the Church is different, there is nothing else just like it. It cannot be successfully carried on in just the same way as other things. How well did Jesus understand this, so much better than we do. He knew that mere natural powers, creaturely activity, organization and method could not put this task over. These things might lead to success in worldly affairs, in business corporations, in temporal undertakings, but not for the church; the church cannot be placed on the plane of temporal business. We may learn some good lessons from business success and methods. And the church is worthy of the very best organization and methods. But at their best these will fail in the accomplishment of the real task of the church. Jesus would not send His church forth in this condition. He made such provision for them that they might successfully do the task assigned. At its very beginning, practically simultaneously with its setting up, He gave to them as a gift that which assured their success. This promise of the Father was not only the promise of the coming of a Person but in this coming was an endowment of power. "Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49), and "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). The Pentecost in bringing the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, brings within the life a dynamo of spiritual power to equip one successfully to do and carry on the work of the church. And if we have wires properly arranged, the connections correctly made, the switches in order, we can succeed, and succeed largely with the work of the church. And this is the meaning of Pentecost. It gives an unction, an inspiration of supernatural origin that assures the success of the church. We can do the work if we will but receive the Pentecostal gift and work under this Pentecostal empowerment.

## III. ITS METHOD

*They . . . began to speak . . . as the Spirit gave them utterance* (Acts 2:4).

Pentecost, as we have seen, was the dispensational coming of the Holy Spirit, the beginning of the Dispensation of the Holy Spirit. This was a dispensation of Christianity, the result of a purchased gift of Christ which He shed forth in the world; the giving of the Holy Spirit as the divine Executive to carry on through the church, the organization set up by Christ for the carrying on of His work in the world after His leaving it in His flesh form; an arrangement to make possible the success of the work of the church. The church being composed of individuals this will of course be first a work with the individual, but it does not stop there. Pentecost is a work for and through the whole church to the whole world. Pentecost is not simply a crisis experience, it is also a continuous dispensation with its program and methods. Pentecost is the provision for the successful evangelization of the world and the establishing of a Christian social order, which provision, if the arrangements were fully carried out by men, would result in the successful accomplishment of this purpose. But this calls for the Pentecostal life and for Pentecostal methods as we are now considering them.

In this study of the Pentecostal methods we note first, that the church is not an institution of or for clergymen, nor is its work alone that of preaching. It is to have what may be called its clergy, but these are not to be some superior, aristocratic, domineering order; they are to be but leaders of the people, and among the people as one of them. It is to have its preachers, which preaching is very essential, and for its protection in purity may be placed under special ordination, but this is only one part of the work. On the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came and took His executive seat in the church, in symbolic representation He "sat upon each of them" (Acts 2:3), and there were one hundred and twenty persons present. These were all disciples, were all followers of Jesus; but only twelve of them had as yet been set apart for this special serv-

ice as represented by the clergy or the preacher—the twelve apostles. There were then one hundred and eight laymen and laywomen in the company. And in the symbolic representation when the Holy Spirit came He sat upon them all—the whole church. As a result “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (v. 4). Thus do we have the baptism with the Holy Spirit, the infilling and empowering of the Spirit; and sanctification, the cleansing and setting apart by the Spirit, being received by both preacher and layman, each and every one. It is the Pentecostal program, which is the program of Christianity, that every member of the church receive the Pentecostal experience, and just in proportion as this is fulfilled is the completeness of success possible. Our church manual requires that all of our preachers shall have and continue in this experience of Pentecost. This, no doubt, is as far as the manual requirement should go, but this must not be interpreted to in any measure release the layman from this obligation. Every member of the church that fails to receive this experience when light has been received thereby withdraws from the church just that much of power and efficiency and thus contributes to the weakness of the church. It is a serious thing for a member of the church to fail of this empowering.

We note second, that this is the whole church serving. On the day of Pentecost, not the preachers alone, but they all “began to speak . . . as the Spirit gave them utterance” (v. 4). What did they do? Evidently they began to witness as Jesus had said they should when the Holy Spirit had come upon them. And they so witnessed that the multitude made up of persons from many nations all “heard them speak in their own language” (v. 6) and understood what they were saying—telling of “the wonderful work of God” (v. 11). They gave an effective witness. Under the conditions then present this called for the miraculous gift of tongues, not unknown tongues however, which miracle could be repeated, and no doubt would be repeated, were there a sufficient reason for so doing. But such a reason does not seem to exist. Only a few can preach, only a few more can teach, but all can and should witness, and can witness effectively under the Pentecostal anointing.

Not that we would take any thing of honor from the preacher nor in any way undervalue the work of preaching, for we must have strong and straight preaching and efficient leadership; but it is quite apparent that we have greatly underestimated the work of the lay membership and placed an unproportionate emphasis upon the work of the clergy. Have we not in our thinking relative to the pastor quite largely thought of him as hired to do the work of the church—our work, for us? And are we not allowing him to do it? This is a most serious mistake and is a cause of much failure in the work of the church. The pastor is but the leader; he is not employed to do the work, but to lead the whole church in service. On the day of Pentecost it was this witnessing of all, the very large majority of whom were the lay members, that resulted in the crowd being amazed and asking, "What meaneth this" (Acts 2:12). The work of the day of Pentecost did not begin as a clergymen's movement, nor by preaching, but by witnessing. Probably the apostles led out in this and joined with the others in the witnessing, but they did not come into prominence, nor was there any preaching, until after the lay members had done a faithful work of witnessing. This lay witnessing first created the interest and questioning as a background for the preaching. And who will question but that this background had much to do with the success of the preaching when it did come.

We would take from Peter no glory that belongs to him. He filled a most important and necessary part and did it well. And yet we probably have given to Peter and his preaching a bit too much credit, or too exclusive credit, for the Pentecost results. We have not sufficiently considered the background and atmosphere in which he preached and how this was created. It was not until the lay witnessing stirred up this interest that "Peter, standing up with the eleven" other preachers, "lifted up his voice and said unto them" (v. 14), began to preach to them. The Pentecostal method was first witnessing and then preaching, a service of the whole church, both lay members and clergy faithfully doing their part under the divine anointing. When this program was thus carried out the

results were very wonderful—"they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there was added unto them about three thousand souls" (v. 41). And this result did not stop with the mere addition. There was no doubt continued teaching and these who were added "continued steadfast in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking bread, and prayer"; and this was not alone in the temple or synagogue service but also "from house to house" (vs. 45, 46). And yet more, "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (v. 47).

The question now arises, Can these results be repeated and have we any right to expect them today? This question provokes another one: Why not if we are still in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit and the Pentecostal methods are followed? In the face of these questions how quickly we begin to apologize and present excuses. But is there any impossibility of the continued repetition of these results? Was Christianity to have its largest results at the beginning? Certainly not. But in our thinking of this we must be careful how we make numbers the measure of the results. Three thousand standing out alone, and especially when we think of there being but one worker, looks very large; but set this same number against the great crowd gathered from the seventeen nations on this feast day, which may have been much over a million, and the one hundred and twenty workers, and it does not look quite so large. The size of the groups that we have to work with at any one time makes such a number of converts utterly impossible. But with the crowds we have may we not have at least a proportionate number of converts and an equal steadfastness. It will have to be admitted that the results we are seeing and the reports we are giving do not compare very favorably with the Pentecost account. If we possessed the Pentecost anointing as fully as we might and lived under it as is our privilege, and followed the Pentecostal method, would it be thus?

The Christian program is a program for the whole world through the service of the whole church. This calls first for the whole church to be filled with the Holy Spirit and live

under this anointing, to have the Pentecostal experience with all that it means. This calls second for the whole church serving; for preaching, teaching and witnessing; for clergy and lay members all serving in their respective places. And this must be not only in the congregation at the church but from house to house and personal work everywhere. Have we not failed to follow this program and method as fully as we should? We have thought of the pastor's work and responsibility and emphasized this. We may not have given the attention we should to his equipment and experience and proper relation to the Pentecost, but we have kept his work largely to the front. But neither the layman nor the pastor has thought of the lay responsibility with the seriousness that it demands. Pastors have not organized and used the laymen for the spiritual work of the church as they should have done, and the laymen have not felt their responsibility for this part of the work. A few have entered into the business side of the work, some have served on the boards or committees, and many have contributed of their means, but there has been far too little witnessing and personal work. As a result pastors have preached with no proper background having been created in the community, in the homes and places of business and elsewhere; evangelists have been called and revival meetings attempted under the same conditions, and no Pentecostal results have followed.

It is not enough that the preacher shall go through the form of preaching no matter how profound his thought or eloquent his delivery; he must preach as the Spirit gives him utterance, under the inspiration and unction of the Spirit. With this there must be created this background in the home, on the street, in the places of business, and wherever possible. There must be teaching in the home and in the church under the inspiration and unction of the Spirit. This teaching is as important as the preaching. There must be witnessing by word of mouth and example, by good deeds and helpful contacts, witnessing wherever we may be. This teaching and witnessing is a work largely of the lay membership and should be as faithfully done as is the preaching.

The undeveloped and unused forces now within the church are a great host. Among these are those without any Christian experience who are all unprepared for the work and may be counted out until they have been converted. Their number should be reduced to the minimum as soon as possible by getting them converted. There is a multitude in the church with some spiritual life but without the Pentecost. Here also is a great task to bring these as largely as possible into this experience. There are some who have experienced the Pentecost. The inactivity of so very many of these as to witnessing and teaching, as to personal contacts and evangelism, is appalling. If all of these lay forces were but filled with the Spirit and aggressively doing their part in spreading the gospel throughout the world the results would be amazing. If this were the case there would then be a background created such as would greatly increase the effectiveness of preaching and all of the work of the church. Pentecostal methods will surely bring Pentecostal results.

#### IV. THE ATTITUDE

*They were all with one accord in one place (Acts 2:1).*

God respects His own creation and does not break His own law. The more limited laws are overcome by superior laws, which is according to law, hence no law is broken. The superior law is the will of God. When God made man He made him a free moral agent, made him with freedom of will, freedom of choice within certain bounds, and within these bounds He always respects this freedom. The Pentecostal experience is within these bounds and in His work with man the Holy Spirit respects this freedom of choice. So far as man is concerned the whole Pentecostal field is dependent upon attitudes. The Holy Spirit does not force Himself upon man. He will present His claims and seek to win man, but man must make his own choice, extend his invitation and meet the conditions. The Holy Spirit does not enter and abide where He is not wanted and made at home. To receive the Pentecost man must be desirous, willing and seeking; must be con-

secrated and promise obedience; must be yielded to the Spirit's mastery and control. People do not receive the Pentecost unless they want it, and want it bad enough to make the necessary consecration and are willing to go the Christian way as fully as they know it, and go this way cheerfully. Unless man takes this attitude toward the Holy Spirit and His work he will receive no Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit is faithful in His approach and urge upon man. "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). The Holy Spirit makes a universal appeal. But this free agency of man, and the Spirit's respect for it, makes it possible for finite man to resist and reject the infinite God, to resist the Holy Spirit, and to continue in this rejection. What a tremendous power is this free will! What dangers, and yet what glorious possibilities there are here! What a personal responsibility! Stephen charged the people of his times and their fathers of this resistance of the Holy Spirit, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51). What judgment shall be passed as to this age? We may receive the Holy Spirit or we may reject Him. Our attitude toward Him will determine His treatment of us. We may have His blessing and favor if we will, or we may close the door against all of His efforts to help us.

This rejection of the Holy Spirit is a very dangerous thing. One may carry this rejection to the point where it becomes blasphemy. Blasphemy is extreme disrespect, irreverence, defiance of God. To reject such a One who has such a purpose toward us as has the Holy Spirit, is certainly great disrespect; it is irreverent and defiant treatment. It is much more serious treatment than we think. How much of this there may be before it becomes blasphemy we cannot say, but to reject the Holy Spirit's offered work for us is to go in that direction. When it does become blasphemy, this is to break off the chance of salvation and heaven. "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in dan-

ger of eternal damnation" (Mark 3:28, 29). As a result of their attitude toward the Holy Spirit man may be hopelessly lost and yet live on here in the world. We do not know who these are, we are not able to judge, but the fact is clear that there may be such a lost condition. To know this should make us fear to reject the Holy Spirit in any way.

But this fear is not alone because of the danger of blasphemy. There are other results that follow wrong attitudes toward the Holy Spirit that fall short of blasphemy that should be carefully avoided. After one has received the Pentecostal experience then all through the Pentecostal life this matter of attitudes is very important. Many make poor advancement in the Pentecostal life, or receive in but a small degree the benefits provided in this life, also through many there is but a small manifestation of this life to others. This is largely because of their attitudes which hinder the Spirit's work with them. There are two particular attitudes or treatments of the Holy Spirit against which we are especially warned in the Bible. The first of these is, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). It is the continued presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit that is our safety and sealing for heaven, and to lose Him is to lose eternal life. How careful we should be not to grieve Him. We all know what it means to be grieved or to grieve someone else. The Holy Spirit may be grieved at one without leaving him, as parents may be grieved with their children without disowning them. But when such a condition is provoked, and so long as it continues, there will be a hindering of the fellowship and a weakening of the power of service; and if allowed to run on without correction it will bring serious results. As soon as such a condition is discovered it should be immediately remedied by confession and forgiveness. We are like children in the family of God and because of our immaturity and ignorance it may be impossible for us to avoid all grieving of the Spirit, but this should be reduced to the very minimum and there should be immediate correction in every case. This is the only way we can keep our experience clear.

There are many ways in which we may grieve the Spirit, and some of these may seem quite small. But we must remember that the small foxes spoil the vines and not be careless. We may grieve the Spirit by our neglect of Him, by being so busy with things we fail to recognize His presence and to seek His counsel and help; we rush on in our own strength and after our own initiative, thoughtless of Him. We may seem to forget His presence, that He is abiding with us, and not notice Him as we should. We may fail to recognize and appreciate His help and take honor to ourselves and not praise and honor Him. We may fail in our faith to draw from Him and appropriate the blessing and help that He has provided. Oh, yes, there is much more in the Pentecostal provision than we are seeing manifested by those who claim to have the Pentecost experience. And our carelessness at this point of grieving the Spirit may be the cause of much of this. Shall we not take the attitude of carefulness at this point.

We are again cautioned to "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:19). This is a stronger word than grieve. To quench means to cool off something that is hot; to suppress, or allay, or quiet down; to smother down the fire so there is no blaze, or it may be to put it clear out. We may by various means and ways thus retard and hinder and weaken the work of the Holy Spirit in and through our lives, and the results here are even more serious than grieving the Holy Spirit. We may quench the Holy Spirit by a failure to obey Him, or by not fully carrying out His directions, or by trying to do the thing some other way of our own choosing, or by some compromising positions or questionable deeds. There are ways of doing right things that are wrong and destroy to a greater or less degree the desired effect. Right things may be done in the right way but not in the right mood and the right effect be lost. This quenching the Spirit is sure to result in the spiritual fires, within the life burning low, and it may be, and often is carried to the extent where it goes clear out and the Holy Spirit withdraws from the life. This may not be a permanent leaving as in the case of blasphemy. By a restoration of the proper

attitude He may be brought back, but it is nevertheless a serious and quite dangerous thing to thus quench the Spirit. It seriously hinders the work and brings something of a reproach upon the cause.

From these considerations the importance of our attitude toward the Holy Spirit is very apparent. It is to be feared that we have sometimes overworked the expression "get the blessing," and may have been too quick to say "you haven't got it" when we have observed certain lacking conditions. We sometimes seem to have assumed that all that was necessary was to get the experience, that if we really got it there was nothing further for us to do, that it would take care of itself and carry on; and then when there has not been the carrying on that there should be we have assumed that the fault was the absence of the experience. Of course it may be that the experience is missing, but it may be that the fault is in the attitude we have been taking which has grieved or quenched the Spirit without His having yet left the life. The whole Pentecostal experience and manifestation are dependent upon this attitude of the person. Our only safety, and the only way to have the Pentecostal manifestations as they should be seen and heard and felt, is in keeping an open mind and willingness to submit to and follow fully the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It is "to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32) that God gives the Holy Spirit; and it is those that "are led by the Spirit of God" who "are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). Our attitudes may be much more the cause of our spiritual condition and the smallness of our spiritual efficiency than we think.

That we may not be mistaken or hindered at this point we should understand something as to the methods which the Holy Spirit uses in His instruction and guidance of men. The Holy Spirit is to guide us into the truth (John 16:13), but there are many voices and many spirits in the world seeking to influence us. Because of this we are exhorted to "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1), and there is a liability of our being deceived. We

must guard carefully against this deception by an eagerness for the true light. We will note briefly five of these methods.

1. The Holy Spirit speaks directly to us by special impressions. But Satan may also be the author of impressions, and as an angel of light may deceive us, as he has many others. Impressions not properly tested have led to much error and falsehood. Never follow an impression hastily. Remember, the Lord will always give time for the necessary proving. The unreasonable urge to hurry is a mark of the satanic origin. But this testing must not be prolonged under the hidden excuse of unwillingness or unbelief.

2. The Holy Spirit leads largely through the Word. He never leads contrary to the Bible, and this is the final court of appeals. To follow the Spirit without the Word will lead to fanaticism and heresy, to follow the Word without the Spirit will lead to formality. And since Satan may quote the Bible (Matt. 4:6), one must not be satisfied with any careless quotation of texts or any superficial and fanciful interpretations. The Spirit and the Word must go together always.

3. The Holy Spirit will use our judgment and reason. God gave us our brains, and since He does not make useless things He expects us to use them along with the other powers He has given us. No leadership will be contrary to reason; it may be beyond but never contrary to sound reason. We must think, and think twice before we act. Our mental powers have been so warped by the fall that they are not sufficient nor safe as the guide, but they are to be used under the Spirit's guidance.

4. The Holy Spirit will lead through divine providence. But we must be sure that the providence is divine. If providence alone were sufficient then Jonah would have been justified in fleeing from Nineveh, for there was a boat ready to sail to Tarsus when he reached the wharf. But the Holy Spirit never leads to the impossible, so there will be a way where He really leads.

5. The Holy Spirit may lead through the advice of a Christian friend. Advice is plentiful, and often it is cheap and even useless, so it must never be taken hastily or careless-

ly, it must never be taken as final. And yet it must not be ignored lightly. The Master has commanded teaching and preaching and witnessing, hence there must be a place for listening and following. The advice of a friend or leader has often been invaluable.

Safe leadership is not to be found in any one of these methods alone, but in some combination of a part or all of these methods. Under the Pentecostal experience, where the heart condition is right and eager for truth, the Holy Spirit will lead one quite safely if he is careful. Mistakes there will be because we are finite, but there need be no serious error. If we will but have the right attitude the Holy Spirit will reveal the things of God, and of Christ, and the Word to us; will make known necessary truth to us and guide us safely. He who is sincere and careful and obedient need not fear, "for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (2 Pet. 1:10).

## V. THE TRAGEDY

*Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost (Acts 7:51).*

In Stephen's wonderful defense before the Sanhedrin of the Jews, at which time he was sentenced to death as the first Christian martyr, he charged the people of his day of repeating the sins of their fathers, and of taking the attitude of opposition to the Gospel and persecuting the church as they were doing, because of this sin in refusing to hear and follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51). But all of the resistance of the Holy Spirit and the tragedy which has followed has not been confined to the outside and those opposing the church. As we saw in the last chapter, the exhortation is given to the church to "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God," and to "Quench not the Spirit." But right in the face of these exhortations, and of all the splendid promises connected with the receiving of the Holy Spirit, the great tragedy of the world, and of church history, has been the neglect, and

often the rejection of the Holy Spirit, especially in His Pentecostal work—the rejection of Pentecost.

The Pentecost is in no sense a substitute for, nor does it offer any substitute for, the human agency; for human leadership, or organization, or methods of procedure in the work of the church. The Holy Spirit did not come to dispense with men and their work, for this is necessary to the church; He came not to do the work apart from men, but to help men in their work. When men work together organization and methods are necessary. The Holy Spirit respects this and He came to put life and efficiency into these arrangements. Pentecost provides an indwelling presence and inspiration and guidance.

When Jesus came into the world it is recorded of Him, "a body hast thou prepared me" (Heb. 10:5). He came through the door of human birth, "made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4); came as a babe with a body of His own in which He lived and through which He worked. It was necessary for Him thus to come in order to accomplish the task for which He was sent. But not so with the Holy Spirit. His task was different and for Him to have come with a body of His own would have made it impossible for Him to have accomplished His special dispensational work. He came as divine Personality without a body, as Spirit only to share with us our bodies, with our permission of course; to indwell and fill and to work with and in us through our bodies. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" (1 Cor. 6:19), and thus "we are laborers together with God" (1 Cor. 3:9), the Holy Spirit working in and through us. Thus does He carry on His work in the world. But He works through groups as well as individuals, men are to co-operate under His leadership. Thus He works through the church, through the organization and the methods which are necessary for men in their co-operative work.

The church is worthy of the very best human leadership, organization, equipment, and methods. There must be no carelessness as to these arrangements or lack of training. To be careless or indifferent in these matters will hinder and limit

the success of the work. But these at their best without this indwelling presence and inspiration which the Pentecost brings will fail of the purposed results. In the Old Testament when Israel lost the spirit out of the very arrangements which God had commanded, their feasts and other ceremonial observances, He rejected these. This is His word. "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them" (Isa. 1:13, 14). And in case of empty profession and formal church services and mere human activities we can expect nothing less in this dispensation.

Early in the history of the church there developed a tendency for men to grasp the control lever and carry on under their own leadership. They were unwilling to submit themselves in their leadership to this divine mastery and guidance as the Pentecost required. In the preaching there developed a tendency to drift into the intellectual and oratorical and neglect the inspiration and unction of the Holy Spirit, to trust in the human skill and method and neglect the divine help. Culture and learning and human skill were substituted for Pentecostal experience and empowering. Hence the history of the church has been such as it has with its intolerance and bitterness and wars; with its controversies, heresies, inquisitions and reformations; with its unwholesome political alliances and social failures; with its mottled record of good and bad. Not that it has been all bad, or mostly bad, but that the leaven of evil has been placed within the loaf and instead of having it burned out in the Pentecostal experience, the baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire, it has spread through the whole until all has been affected so that the church has failed to influence the world for Christ and the Christian way of life as it should have done. Very soon after the day of Pentecost this condition became apparent. Diotrephes loved "the pre-eminence" and opposed the Apostle John (3 John 9). "Demas

hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4:10).

The history of the church has been one of drifting and reformations. We are living in a time of scientific discovery and of human culture, of professed enlightenment and advancement, but in a drift far back from the reformation of the Wesleys. There is a lack of spiritual power and leadership. We now have the very best of equipment and the most improved scientific methods, with a strongly educated ministry, but so often with a conspicuous absence of any spiritual manifestation. All is on the level of the human and there is no lifting into the genuinely spiritual. We have erected large plants with the latest improved machinery, and with extensive power lines running to all parts of the world with the switches all arranged, but the juice running through these wires is so largely only human energy resulting in nothing more than creaturely activities which fails to achieve the purposed results. Much cultural and social, and some moral results have been reached but there is spiritual poverty and a loss of real Christian religious influence. The wires are not properly connected with the right dynamo, the Pentecost manifestation is missing.

Possibly the opportunity and the temporal and intellectual equipment for successful work by the church was never greater than at the present time, but in the light of the pentecostal results the failure in spiritual manifestations, soul winning, and establishment in genuine Christian personality is glaring. Where do we have the witnessing that produces wonder and amazement and questioning; and where is the preaching that causes the pricking of the heart and enquiring as what shall be done? and where is the answer that brings the pentecostal results? Where are the revivals and class meetings and Wesleyan results? Methods may change, and the forms of manifestation, but the empowerment and spiritual results should continue.

Think now of these Christian centuries of Church history since "the day of Pentecost had fully come" and the church was given the Pentecostal experience, and the world still so

largely unchristianized, and the Christianity which we do have so often of such a poor type. Think also of the generations past with the great number in each generation not reached. Think of our present age with its spiritual impotence and failure to reach our generation. This is tragedy indeed. We have not seen the working of the pentecostal program nor the pentecostal results according to the promise. Can this be for any other reason than that the pentecostal provision has not been largely experienced nor the program followed?

During the years of church history pentecostal movements have occasionally sprung up, but usually these have been outside of the church and not accepted by the church. One of the most successful of these was the reformation and revival under the leadership of John Wesley, one result of which was the Methodist church. But these movements often have been under, or have soon come under an unwise leadership that has led into extremes of doctrines or behavior with a lack of the real pentecostal experience, and the movement has come into disrepute and has failed. In recent years certain of these movements have appeared with some *and* added to the Pentecost—Pentecost and fire, the fire movement; Pentecost and extreme demonstration, the “holy rollers”; Pentecost and speaking in tongues, the tongues movement in various forms; Pentecost and extreme views of healing or of the coming of the Lord, and such like things—some of which may be all right in their place but not as an “and” to Pentecost. In these movements the “and” has soon become the thing emphasized and the Pentecost has been largely forgotten. As a result, there has been a certain reproach attached to the word Pentecost in the thinking of many people.

But in spite of this condition there is a true Bible Pentecost which is the need and the privilege of the church. John Wesley has proved this and demonstrated something of what it would mean to the church of our times if the Pentecostal experience was largely received and the program followed. Religious history is free to honor Wesley as a great church leader but is quite shy in acknowledgment of the special secret of his success. Without his Pentecostal experience and his

teaching of the "second blessing, properly so called," apart from his Christian experience and doctrine, Wesley would not have been the leader and have accomplished the work which he did.

Possibly no truth is more hated and opposed by Satan than this of Pentecost. He understands quite well that this experience brings an empowerment that means efficiency and the success of the work of the church in the spread of the gospel and the winning of souls. Hence he makes every effort to prevent the church from receiving the Bible Pentecost. He seeks to bring the whole Pentecostal arrangement under disrepute by these "ands," or by questionable behavior and radical profession and eccentricities or by any other means possible, or to discount the value of the Pentecost and exalt the power of human effort and training so the church will become indifferent to Pentecost, or to convince them that Pentecost is fanaticism or radicalism and should be shunned. And we know something of how well he has succeeded. His first aim of course is to prevent all gospel propaganda and to keep people from being converted. If he can succeed in no other way in this he will direct religious education around any definite conversion into a mere intellectual and professional religious life and formal church membership. But if he does not succeed in this and people will get converted, he is then even more strongly determined that they shall not receive their Pentecost and become efficient witnesses, teachers and preachers. And his success in this purpose is the great tragedy of church history. Not that Christianity has been inefficient or failed, but that the church has so poorly represented and propagated it. Not that the church has failed beyond other human institutions, for it has been the greatest of them all and has succeeded as well as any of these, but that it has, and is, falling so far short of what it might be. Yes, this is tragedy indeed.

## VI. THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY

*"For a great door and effectual is opened unto me"*  
(1 Cor. 16:9)

George Croft Cell in his new book, "The Rediscovery of John Wesley," at the close of his last chapter says, "The tide has turned; we stand at the end of an age of humanism in religion that is going out, and on the threshold of a revival of genuine Christianity that is coming in." How fully this judgment may be correct we cannot say, but it is to be hoped that we are upon the verge of such a renaissance of Christian faith. But there is one thing that is quite apparent, that is, that a considerable company of people are tired of the mere formality and theorizing of much of the church religion of to-day; of the absence of reality of experience, and of practical help for life's needs, and the satisfactory solving of life's problems. The church seemingly failed during the world war and has been largely impotent since the war and has lost something of prestige. There has been no revival, and religious education has not lifted in its experience-centered program much above the human and has not reached the spiritual and evangelistic. The supernatural has been but slightly touched and has not been brought into human experience and practical life in the helpful and satisfying way that it should have been brought. As a result of this church condition many have turned away from the church disappointed and with lost confidence in religions. Anti-religious movements seem to be increasing and anti-religious propaganda growing stronger. But there are others, and their number is not small, who are hungry and thirsty and on the search for better things. They are calling for reality in religion and for practical helpfulness to meet human need such as Pentecost provides. And there has been some turning toward Pentecost. The Pentecost anniversary of two years ago brought this somewhat before the thinking of the people. A few new books have been written bearing on this subject, some religious periodicals have given it a bit more attention, and a few preachers have given it more

prominence. But as yet no strong forward movement has been launched.

With Amos of old we may disclaim all connection to the prophetic office, but we do have a conviction that we are now in something of a crisis time; that there is at this time a ripeness for a strong, sane, intelligent presentation of the true Bible Pentecost without any "ands" or extras attached; that there is a great and effectual door open awaiting someone to enter it. Not only so, but that the group that enters this door now will be the really spiritual church influence tomorrow. Oh, no, not that they will convert the whole world, for the world is not going to be thus taken. Even to the very last there will be a great host of Christ rejectors who will be turned to the left hand. But there seems now to be a rather unusual open door to the one who is ready and will pay the price to enter it.

To enter this door, to meet the need of this opportunity, there must be a strong presentation of experiential Christianity, accompanied with a clear manifestation of this in practical Christian living revealing the power of Christianity to meet human need in salvation and solving life's problems satisfactorily. This presentation and manifestation must be under the special inspiration of the Spirit's presence and a shedding forth of that which may be seen and heard and felt (Acts 2:33). This will begin with initial salvation, the new birth. Conversion must be definitely and seriously present with no suggestion that by any process of religious education this may be made unnecessary. This must be followed by an intelligent, persistent, Biblical presentation of Pentecost—sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and how to make this a practical and helpful and satisfying experience in the day by day life. And these experiences must be presented not alone as means of getting one to heaven but also to help one to be and to become more and more the person he should become here in this world, a growing Christian personality, and to solve all of his life problems in a satisfying Christian way; this must be presented in a winsome way as having the promise of the life that now is and that which is

to come. Pentecost must be presented with this conversion background not only as something required or demanded but as something needful and helpful and desirable, something practical and satisfying and profitable. It must be presented in a reasonable, appealing and winsome way. If this open door is properly entered and used a strong Pentecost movement may be set going which will mean intensified world evangelism and better spiritual church conditions. The world needs such a forward movement. Who will enter this open door, who will make this presentation, who will champion this intensified Pentecost movement, who will reap this reward?

In seeking an answer to this question we must keep in mind that the God who is no respecter of persons is also no respecter of churches. Whosoever will pay the price and do the work, may do so, and will be blessed. However, some may be in a better condition for this task than others. We will rejoice in any who will enter the door and make good. The work should be done and somebody must do it. And we are especially interested in our own group. As we see the situation there does not seem to be any group in a better condition for this task than the Church of the Nazarene. The opportunity is open to all, and some others may be, or become prepared and enter this door and make good, but none seem to have a better chance of success than does the Church of the Nazarene. And is it not a fact that we must either thus move forward or we will drift back into coldness and formalism, possibly retaining the doctrine but without the power thereof?

Our reason for feeling as we do as to our particular fitness to enter this open door is fivefold. First, Pentecost is strongly in our doctrinal statement; it is one of the high points of our emphasis and a chief reason for our existence as a denomination. Second, we have an unstained history. For more than a quarter of a century we have been standing for this truth. Certain of the "ands" have tried hard to get in among us without success. We have come through without one of these hitched to us, and we have made no compromise of the doctrine. Third, we have the organization and a fair amount of equipment. Our organization is quite ideal and

well adapted to the task, neither extremely episcopal or congregational. Fourth, we have the numbers. We are not a large church, but there is enough of us if we all faithfully work at the job to put it over in a strong way. And we have the possibility of successful leadership. Fifth, our history has already been rather phenomenal. We have been especially favored of the Lord and have had good success. If we will enlarge our program to meet the need, become more intense, keep sane and faithful, may we not expect this favor to be continued and our success enlarged?

Will it then be presumption or improper for us to ask the question that Mordecai asked of Esther, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14). Is not this a day of our opportunity? It may be to others also, but it certainly is to us. If this is the case, what a tragedy if we shall fail. And what will be the result both to ourselves and to others? We must not fail. It would be folly for us to deny that there is a possibility of our failing. Others have failed in the past, and we may fail now. Knowing this should make us consider this subject very thoroughly and sincerely. Again, we say, we must not fail.

The question now becomes pertinent, what will be necessary for us to keep from failing? Several things may be said in this answer. Evidently it is up to us. We can succeed if we will, but will we? First, it is imperative that we really have the Pentecostal experience ourselves and that this fact be clearly apparent in our lives and service. It will require much more than a correct credal statement, more than sound and straight preaching, and more than profession. These alone will satisfy neither God nor man. The call today is for reality, and nothing but real experience will meet the need. On the day of Pentecost they were filled with the Holy Spirit, a real four-in-one experience, and this experience was clearly manifest in divine unction, was seen and heard. And remember, they were all filled, not just the apostles or clergy, which condition we must have again if we are to have these results. We cannot succeed as we should over a holding back and unsanctified membership.

Second, while there must be efficient leadership there must also be a division of labor, all working and each doing his or her part. This is a whole church program. And all must be carried on under the leadership and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Men are not to become mere machines, but they are to be servants under leadership and inspiration, they are to work as the Spirit gives them utterance, and direction. We must have preaching, as great preaching as possible; we must have witnessing, as great witnessing as possible; we must have serving, as great serving and living by both clergy and laity as possible. The pastors and evangelists must preach under the special unction of the Spirit and present Christianity, and especially the Pentecost, in a simple and understandable and winsome way. The Church school teachers and parents must teach the same things in the same way, adapted to the age groups. The whole church must witness to the wonderful works of God so they that hear will understand. There must be such an unction on all of this that people will be given the heartburn, and those who are not right with God will be pricked in their heart. There must be such an anointing on the church as will cause wonder and amazement. And this must be taken advantage of in such a way as to lead into the Christian life. It can be done.

Third, there must be a vision, and a desire, and faith; and this must be as extensive as possible. "Where there is no vision the people perish" (Prov. 29:18). "Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge" (Isa. 5:13). Ignorance and lack of vision beget indifference, and indifference undertakes nothing. We must first have some knowledge of the possibilities, and then a deep desire reaching out toward that possibility, and a strong faith for its accomplishment. But when the Spirit is poured out then your men shall see visions and dream dreams (Acts 2:17).

Fourth, there must be manifestations, something to be felt and seen and heard. This is not the spectacular and sensational. Such will attract the curious who are looking for the circus entertainment type. This is not the result that we desire. It is the attractive glory, and unction, and super-

natural presence and drawing that can be both felt and seen; it is that lifting up of Jesus that will draw all men unto Him; it is that which has the clear marks of the spiritual and which will move men in the direction of Christian experience and service that we want.

Pentecost was not only a crisis experience for the individual, but was also the ushering in of a new dispensation which was to be continuous and progressing, it brought a new experience and methods that were to be followed out into the years. And in this progress it provides for special times of refreshing, fresh anointings and new outpourings of the Spirit, for deepening and enlarging experiences. There is nothing here of a "third blessing" in the sense that conversion and sanctification are blessings, but beside the gradual growth there are also special seasons of blessing of a more definite character that are much needed. It was not long after the day of Pentecost when the church was together and it is recorded of them, "And when they had prayed the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). Yes, both the individual and the church need these refreshings and refillings to keep them full of life and energy and wide awake. We all need occasionally to get out in a good downpour of heavenly rain without an umbrella and get a good soaking up. And there come times when the church needs special blessing for larger service. Does the Church of the Nazarene at this time need a fresh outpouring of Pentecost and fresh anointing of the Spirit? If we are to enter this open door we must have this. Some places may now be having it to some degree, but as yet we are having nothing adequate to meet the need of today. What would it mean to ourselves and to the world if we could have a fresh outpouring of Pentecost? What is to hinder our having it? What will be the consequences if we do not have it? Do we not need it on all phases of our work? Shall we now call an altar service and all become seekers? A ready response will mean the continued and enlarged favor of the Lord and of our phenomenal history. If we miss the opportunity now our loss will be serious.

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