

## CHAPTER III

### *The Dynamic Church*

Pentecost was the inaugural day of a new dispensation. In heaven the session and assize of the Redeemer had begun, and on earth the Spirit had come to reside in the Church as Vice-regent of the Lord Jesus, and as the Plenipotentiary of God. The gift of the Spirit was the proof of the enthronement of the mighty Mediator; it signalized His coronation day. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this, which ye now see and hear"

(Acts 2, 33).

*Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious!  
See the "Man of sorrows" now  
From the fight return victorious:  
Every knee to Him shall bow!*

*Hark the bursts of acclamation!  
Hark those loud triumphant chords!  
Jesus takes the highest station:  
Oh, what joy the sight affords!*

*Crown Him! crown Him! angels, crown Him!  
King of kings, and Lord of lords!*

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As one old writer has said. "God, for the sake of our Saviour's honor, and for the glory of His undertaking, had in His wisdom determined that so incomparably excellent a gift should be the reward of His obedience, the consequence of His triumph, the effect of His intercession above, an ornament of His royal state, a pledge of His princely munificence; it was reserved as a most rich and majestic gratuity fit to be conferred at His coronation when He solemnly was inaugurated to sovereign dignity and invested with power superlative."

When the alabaster box was broken, when His suffering flesh was rent, the Spirit of Jesus was poured forth in the Church, and all the house of God was filled with the fragrance of that anointing. "God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Heb. 1, 9).

*Indeed, Pentecost was the initial day of a new order.* It was a sample opening page of a new book entitled, "The Acts of the Holy Ghost", or "The Autobiography of the Holy Spirit." It was a new beginning — the commencement of a new spiritual life, a new relationship, a new fellowship, a new authority, and a new power. "Not yet" was changed to "This is that" (John 7, 39; Acts 2, 16). This new life created a new fellowship of men, a new race incorporated into Christ (I Cor. 12, 13; II Cor. 5, 17; I Peter 2, 9). Mantled with unction, they went everywhere preaching the Word. Theirs was a spontaneous evangelism. They did not need to conduct clinics or conventions concerning the task of evangelism. Methinks they held no large conferences to stir the believers to evangelize the lost. Oh, no! such a notion never entered their heads. Saturated with the Spirit, filled with the love of Christ, bubbling over with their new-found joy, they crusaded for Christ. It was as natural as breathing to them. "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." It was spiritual combustion! So great was their enthusiasm and aggress-

iveness that the enemy hurriedly called a council meeting with the theme, "How can we stop this Gospel epidemic?" ("that it spread no further" Acts 4, 15—17). The more they were persecuted and insulted, the more dynamic they became. Soon they were accused of being "these that have turned the world upside down" (Acts 17, 6). Glory! they abode in the Pentecostal fervor, preached the Pentecostal Gospel, lived the Pentecostal life, and garnered a Pentecostal harvest!

Scarcely anyone would affirm that we are living today in this blessed apostolic atmosphere. "How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street. The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!" (Lam. 4, 1—2).

Our palatial buildings, our large membership rolls, our high-salaried pastors and popular evangelists are no proof of dynamic Christianity. The early Church had none of these elements of success. God must deliver us from the awful discrepancy into which we have drifted. The godly remnant in the book of Lamentations, after surveying the awful condition of Zion, cried out in agony, "Wherefore dost thou forget us forever, and forsake us so long time? Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old" (Lam. 5, 20—22). All over the world saints must come to the place of penitence and desperation, and cry: "Oh, God, forgive us! Oh, God, bring us back to the place of simplicity and power!" Oh, dear child of God, this would be revival, restoration, recovery and renewal! The Church has allowed herself to become the custodian of dead creeds rather than the trumpeters of living faith! We are playing with the gravedigger's shovel, when God wants to give us a resurrection trumpet. "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." (Luke 9.60.)

”There was a time when, because of the martial and uncompromising spirit, the Church found itself living in the catacombs and carrying on a kind of guerilla warfare. That, of course, was in the days when faith acted in scorn of consequence. And the Church of the catacombs was more consistent and more majestic than the Church on the stage with popular footlights. To a large extent the Church has become a band of suave saunterers, when the Lord wants it to be an army of stern soldiers. When the Church settles down to the comforts of a religious club and forgets its holy crusade, it abides alone.”

*Pitchers for the lamps of God —  
Hark! the cry goes forth abroad!  
Not the beauty of the make,  
But, ah! the readiness to break,  
Marks the vessels of the Lord,  
Meet to bear the lighted Word!*

In interpreting the causes of declension and departure, we must mention three glaring sins; the reasons for the loss of purity, power, passion and purpose.

*First: The tragedy of Fundamentalism is that we are fighting over the doctrine of Pentecost.* The devil is laughing, while souls are perishing. The heart of Christ is broken, the Spirit is grieved, and the Church is powerless. We don't wish to argue with any believers concerning the precious Spirit, for they either know Him or do not know Him (John 14, 7; II Cor. 13, 14). Many who have the correct terminology have no experience; and many who have the wrong phraseology have the right experience.

Whatever your exposition of this great Natal Day of the Church, one fact is incontestable: Pentecost is always associated with power. The greatest marvel of the Spirit's out-

pouring is the transformation of the disciples themselves. Those commonplace fishermen and taxgatherers were turned into prophets, teachers, and flaming heralds. Their fearfulness and timidity were burnt up in the blaze of the Pentecostal baptism. In vain would we have looked for the Peter of the Judgment Hall on that day! He is become a new man. The Peter *at* the fire and the Peter baptized *with* fire have nothing akin. The Pentecostal robe was a mantle of power. They were robed "with power from on high." This was the authentic touch of God upon their lives.

The Acts of the Apostles is the subsequent history of Pentecost. In this book we find a pageantry of power. You can write this word *power* over every chapter, every verse, and every incident. The apostles now had power to come out from behind closed doors. They had power to testify, power to suffer, and power to die. While in the home of the Rev. Sidney Evans, brother-in-law and co-worker of the late Evan Roberts of revival memory, we listened in awe to the first-hand account of the mighty movement of the Spirit in 1904. This work of grace has been rightly called: "Something Wonderful Happened." Yes, something always happens when the Holy Ghost is given His rightful place in the Church. As my dear friend, "La Marechale" (eldest child of General William Booth) has so beautifully stated, "We do not have a book of the 'Resolutions of the Apostles,' but, because of spiritual power and Gospel triumphs, we have the 'Acts of the Apostles.'" In this book are the mighty exploits of the primitive apostolic Church. "The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits." It is a great book, for therein we find great power and great grace (4, 33), great fear (5, 11), great wonders and great miracles (6, 8), great persecution (8, 1), great joy (8, 8), and great suffering (9, 16).

We are living in a wonderful age, the latter days of the dispensation of the Spirit. Says the seraphic Scotsman, Samuel



Rutherford, "If you would be a deep divine, I recommend to you the anointing." Let us stop our cavilling and seek earnestly the Spirit's anointing.

*The second great sin is the denial of the personality of the Holy Ghost.* Even in evangelical circles, education is sometimes placed before the blessed Spirit.

We are not against culture and learning for the saints of God, but when they usurp the place of the Spirit, we cry out in protest. Well we remember visiting a well known fundamental university to speak at the chapel service. The first question the chairman asked us evangelists was, "Have you any doctor's degrees?" He was greatly disheartened to discover that one of us had not, but was soon cheered when told that another of the party held a doctorate. I was astounded! Here was a school emphasizing the mighty work of the Holy Ghost in the Church, and yet leaning so heavily on education.

We thank God for all the cultured, learned men in the Church of God, like the Apostle Paul, but the first essential of any Christian worker is the mighty anointing of the Spirit. Those who lean on degrees will "die by degrees," without the power of the Spirit. If any man could have spread the Gospel by native ability and human learning, surely it was Paul. Yet we discover that the fulness of the Spirit was the supreme qualification for his ministry. "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel; for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 9, 15—17).

Fletcher of Madeley was for a while principal of Lady Huntingdon's Training College for ministers at Trevecca in Wales. One who sat under his instruction, speaking of his

sessions in the classroom, says: "Such seasons generally terminated thus: Being convinced that to be filled with the Holy Ghost was a better qualification for the ministry than any classical learning, after speaking for a while in the schoolroom, he used to say, 'As many of you as are athirst for the fulness of the Spirit, follow me into my room.' On this many of us would instantly follow him, and there continue for two or three hours seeking the face of the Lord."

The *third great sin is compromise with the world*. There is no difference between Hollywood and Modernism. Hollywood is the world's pleasure, while Modernism is the world's religion. Both belong to this present evil age. (Gal. 1, 4). Both are controlled by the "prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephes. 2, 2). There seems to be a diabolical plot to wed evangelicals to the world system in these last days of a dying dispensation of grace. It is sheer cant for a pastor to cry out for revival, and yet to compromise with the enemies of the Cross. It is mere hypocrisy to plead for evangelism, while compromising with those who deny the Evangel! A revival which is not based solely on the fundamentals of the faith is like a blaze of pine shavings which ends in smoke. The apostate system of the Protestant Church will in a coming day pave the way for the anti-Christ.

I will not knowingly have fellowship in the Gospel with any man who denies any of the fundamentals of the faith: the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures; man's guilty condition before a holy God; the necessity of regeneration; the miraculous Christ in His virgin birth, sinless life, vicarious atoning sacrifice, physical resurrection; His glorious ascension and coming again, and the eternal damnation of the unsaved.

Christ has died in vain if we are not delivered from the pleasures of this world. We have heard of sincere believers seeking the Lord's face for revival in a church where half its

members were engaged in worldly amusements far on into the night. We should as soon have thought of hearing that the apostles sang profane songs at the time of Pentecost.

*The Church and the World walked far apart  
On the changing shore of time;  
The World was singing a giddy song,  
And the Church a hymn sublime.*

*Half shyly, the Church approached the World,  
And gave him her hand of snow;  
And the false World grasped it and walked along,  
Assuring in accents low.*

*And they of the Church, and they of the World  
Walked closely in hand and heart,  
And none but the Master, Who knoweth all,  
Could tell the two apart.*

*All her witnessing power, alas! was lost,  
And the perilous times came in;  
The times of the end, so often foretold,  
Of form, and pleasure, and sin.*

*" . . . . thou art poor, and naked, and blind,  
With pride and ruin enthralled,  
The expectant Bride of a Heavenly Groom,  
Now the harlot of the World!"*

May God raise up a mighty band of 'Gospelers' to strike a mighty blow at this spiritual adultery. May God give us grace to stand true with our garments unspotted, with the silver trumpets of redemption pressed to our lips sounding out the glorious Gospel.



"They have healed also the hurt of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush; therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jer. 6, 14—16).

Oh, for an utter abandonment to the Holy Spirit! Oh, for faith to abandon utterly these devices of carnality, and to throw the Church without reserve upon the power of the supernatural. The Acts of the Apostles is the fountain-head of all evangelical, revival literature. We are fully persuaded that if pastors, elders, evangelists, Bible teachers and missionaries would go on their knees before God to study this glorious textbook, they would be led into the mighty experience of the first principles. Whenever, in any period of the Church's history, a little company has sprung up, plastic and pliable in the hands of the divine Spirit, then a new Pentecost has dawned.

Let us go forth in the might of the Spirit to the ends of the earth, proclaiming the old-fashioned Gospel, sharing in our own experience its crucified message.

*The Cross, it standeth fast, Hallelujah!  
The winds of hell have blown,  
Yet, 'tis not overthrown,  
Hallelujah for the Cross!*

*It is the old Cross still, Hallelujah!  
On which the Living One  
Did for man's sin atone.  
Hallelujah for the Cross!*

*Oh, Cross, on thee I lean, Hallelujah!  
Old, and yet ever new,  
I glory still in you.  
Hallelujah for the Cross!*

*The blood is on thee yet, Hallelujah!  
The blood that maketh clean  
The soul from stain and sin.  
Hallelujah for the Cross!*

*And yet beyond thee still, Hallelujah!  
I look and see a throne —  
Christ's throne and mine, in one.  
Hallelujah for the Cross!*

HORATIUS BONAR