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THE IDEAL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
By Seth Cook Rees

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DEDICATION

In loving dedication to the wife of my youth, who for twenty years has been my greatest earthly blessing, and who still abides with me amidst the sorrows and joys, trials and triumphs of a conquering Christian life.

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01 -- OPENING

For at least six thousand years God has had his idea of what the Pentecostal Church should be. From the time he first viewed the wreck and ruin of the race, wrought by that miracle of hell, sin, he knew what was possible for Him to bring out of the debris. Just as a sculptor, before ever he touches the marble with chisel or mallet, has a clear conception of his statue; just as a painter sees his picture long before the brush begins to transform the face of the canvas; just as the architect conceives of his building in his mind, while as yet not a line has been drawn nor a stroke of work accomplished; so God saw from the first the possibilities of grace in the Church, the Bride, the Lamb's wife.

Every pure and true man has his idea of what he desires to find in the woman who is to be his wife. Like the needle to the pole, her heart must be true to her husband. She must not flirt with other men nor cast adulterous glances at old lovers. Separated from all others, she must be loyal to him. No noble man will ever bear to the old homestead, to father and mother and loved ones, a wife whom he even suspicions as unworthy. She must not only be pure and true herself, but she must be capable of entering fully into the secrets of his life, of sharing his sorrows as well as his joys, of sympathizing with him, both in his sufferings and in his triumphs.

So Christ had his idea of what he would like to have as a bride. He has most emphatically expressed his wishes concerning the character of the wife who is to be his companion throughout eternity. Splendid preparations are now being made for the celebration of the nuptials; and she, whom the spotless Christ bears on his arm into the royal halls of glory, must fill his idea.

If we can know God's opinion, if we can find out his thought concerning any matter, it is of no consequence to us what churches think or what creeds say. It makes no difference about the jargon of the schools. From the "Thus saith the Lord" there can be no appeal. God has not left us in the dark as to what his thought for the church is. He has taken every pains to give us a clear understanding of Christ's wishes and desires in the matter; and whatever Christ has desired to see in his church, his bride, is made gloriously attainable and possible through the power of the cross.

In the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we find plainly enunciated the characteristics of the "Ideal Pentecostal Church." May the dear Holy Spirit anoint our eyes to see the truth as it is set forth in this Scripture.

* * * * *

02 -- COMPOSED OF REGENERATED SOULS

The Ideal Pentecostal Church is composed of regenerated souls. There is not an unconverted person in all its membership. Moreover, God's definition of regeneration differs from that of man. It means more by fearful odds than is popularly supposed for a man to be Scripturally regenerated. The New Testament type of spiritual birth does not come about by the mere raising of the hand, the signing of a card, the donning of a badge, the submitting to ordinances, or the joining of a society called a " church."

Bible regeneration is preceded by deep and pungent conviction for sin, and a repentance that unhesitatingly renounces the "world, the flesh, and the devil." It regulates all the irregularities of outward life. If we had more old-fashioned conviction, followed by old-fashioned conversion, resulting in old-time shouting, we would have far more candidates for the baptism with the Holy Ghost.

But this is an age of compromise, and the baneful results are seen in the nature of the converts produced. An ease-loving, pleasure-seeking, time-serving, compromising church does not, and can not, turn out healthy converts. A good start is valuable in anything; and it is eminently true in Christianity. The one hundred and twenty had been converted, either under the ministry of that inflexible preacher of righteousness, John the Baptist, or else under the teaching of Christ himself. Jesus said that they were branches of the true Vine. He admonished them to rejoice that their "names were written in heaven," and in his great sacerdotal prayer, he tells the Father that they are not of the world, even as he is not of the world. These men had forsaken their nets and followed Christ, and when "the day of Pentecost was fully come" it found them pursuing a manner of life in which " they were continually in the temple blessing and praising God. "They hugged reproach and loosened their hold on earthly things.

Regeneration is a conscious experience. They who are regenerated KNOW IT. If we are not assured of our regeneration, no one knows it to be a fact, not even God himself. If we are not fully aware that we are born from above, it is not a fact, and a preacher's saying so will not make it true. The witness of the Holy Spirit will let us know it, when we are really regenerated ; and so satisfactory is this "witness" to him who receives it that he would not thank a committee from the upper skies to appear and confirm it.

Regeneration is replete with joy, with warm religious feeling, and with real fervency of spirit. Indeed, it usually produces more of these heavenly graces than many possess who claim entire sanctification. There is a great lack of warmth, glow, and holy emotion in the religious world today. The emotional element in salvation is by no means a small one. "The kingdom of God is righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost." Joy and peace are both feeling. Thousands say that they have taken Christ by faith, but that they have never had a clear witness of the Spirit to their pardon. What a farce! Much of our teaching about "taking it by faith" and " holding on by faith," et cetera, is responsible for this deplorable state of affairs. Beloved, faith has a bit of evidence in it, and real genuine faith gets an answer. Faith is the means by which we get all our blessings and, when genuine, is always honored by the witness of the Spirit.

Regeneration brings us resurrection life. We no longer plod toward the grave, but have turned our backs on the sepulchre and are speeding toward Galilee with a glad message for the

disciples. Many, burdened with spices to embalm their Lord, with sad, sorrow-stricken faces, crawl dismally toward the tomb, forgetting that Christ has risen from the dead. One throb of his pulse was sufficient to burst asunder the bands of death, break the waxen seal, throw open the sepulchre door, and stun and paralyze the sturdy Roman guard. And with Him, we also, in the power of His resurrection life, step out from the dark tomb and climb upon the casket of our old life in glorious, glad-some triumph. Many are busily attempting to embalm Christianity. The churches, in so far as they are merely sects or societies, may be embalmed and, alas, many of them are, reminding us of Egyptian mummies, sleeping peacefully in their several sarcophagi, opened to view only on state occasions. Expert undertakers tell us that the chemicals positively refuse to act so long as there remains the slightest particle of life. Thank God, a living Christian cannot be embalmed. The antiseptics of the world do not affect a living church in the slightest. This poor world is dying for the want of men and women who will go and publish the fact that Jesus has risen from the dead and is alive for evermore. The cross and the sepulchre, when viewed from certain standpoints, are bleak and dark and cold. Most of the professors of religion stand on the north side of the cross, full in its dark, gloomy shadow, chilled to the marrow, and almost dead. But, blessed be God, there is a south side, genial, warm, sunny and bright. It is the place of spring-time. Flowers leap up from the ground; the birds sing overhead; and fountains of sparkling, living, inexhaustible water play in abundance.

"I've reached the land of Beulah,
The summer-land of love,
Land of the heavenly Bridegroom,
Land of the Holy Dove;
My winter has departed,
My summer-time has come,
The air is full of singing,
The earth is bright with bloom."

* * * * *

03 -- A CLEAN CHURCH

"Purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts xv. 9). Holiness is a state; entire sanctification is an experience; the Holy Ghost is a person. We come into the state of holiness through the experience of entire sanctification, wrought by the omnipotent energies of the Holy Ghost. This is the "baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire " administered by Christ himself, as John the Baptist declares. He did not mean that there were two baptisms, one with the Spirit and another with fire, but one "baptism with the Holy Ghost " under the symbol of fire.

There are some things which the application of water will not cleanse. Water may cleanse the loose dirt on the outside, but fire alone can make inwardly, intrinsically clean. Metal ore is not refined by mere washing -- it must undergo the crushing and smelting processes. Again and again the base ore is subjected to the fiery ordeal, until every iota of the useless grit and undesirable sand is destroyed and the metal is left free from alloy. So the water of regeneration will free the soul from external sin-commission, but the sanctifying process of the Spirit is requisite if the heart is to be holy and sinless.

Poisonous air may be driven from old wells and mine-shafts with fire. The deadly gases must yield before the flame. And the fire of the Spirit will rout all miasma and malaria from both pulpit and pew.

Nothing is more refreshing on a hot, sultry July afternoon than a thunderstorm. A few vivid flashes, a half-dozen dashes of blinding flame, and lo, the atmosphere has become bracing and invigorating. Of all urgent needs, none is more truly evident than that the church ought to be struck with double-gear lightning from the upper skies. The jagged bolts should be allowed to play on both preacher and people. This celestial electricity would sweeten the spiritual atmosphere in our churches and in our own souls. It would burn away all the fog of uncertainty and unbelief and doubt, and give us convictions born of assurance.

Proud flesh requires the fire. Nothing rivals it in the dispatch and effectiveness with which it does its work. A Boston physician told me that, with all the modern discoveries of science, there had been nothing found that would do but fire. In the moral world there is nothing obtainable that will cure proud flesh in our natures and in our churches except Pentecostal fire. This alone will kill the "brag," the pomp, the gusto, the ungodly strut so evident in so many professors of religion today. Let us take down our lightning rods, all our preventatives, and fire, celestial fire, will leap over the battlements of heaven and fall upon us, slaying all our pride, destroying all our tin, dross, and reprobate silver, and giving us a joyous release from all chaff and from all that is lightweight.

Those who have received their Pentecost live pure, holy lives. They never practice unclean habits, whether secret or known. They do not have unclean thoughts, unchaste desires, or unholy passions. They do not use wine, beer, tobacco, snuff or opium. True, a man may have his name on a church-book and yet indulge in these things of which we speak; but he might just as well have it on a board fence, for it does not make him a member of the Pentecostal company. He may "belong to the meeting-house," but he is not one of this blessed fire-crowned throng.

Men who are in unholy connection with this Godless world in lodges, fraternities and Christless institutions, or who will stoop to the commercial trickeries of this age, or who will lend their influence to abet a questionable business, have not been through the furnace of the upper room. Pentecostal Christians have "clean hands and pure hearts." "Hands" in the Bible refers to the outward, manifest, visible life. It refers to what man sees. The word has regard to conduct. The life must be clean. A man can not be in close contact with the world without being contaminated. Lot well nigh became a Sodomite by dwelling in Sodom and among Sodom's inhabitants; and intimate relationship with men of unrighteous lives always means demoralization for the Christian. "Clean hands" hold no bribes, they never deal unjustly, they do not give thirty-five inches for a yard nor fifteen ounces for a pound, they do not pay debts at forty cents on the dollar when they could do more.

The behavior of the tongue is included in the life. The conversation must be pure and chaste, never vulgar, never immodest. The jest with its indelicate association is never heard on the month of the Pentecostal saint.

The phrase "clean heart " relates to the inward, invisible, secret nature -- that which God alone sees. It describes a condition of things in which there is no pride, or anger, or jealousy, or envy, or strife, or selfishness, or worldly ambition, or any unholy temper. Desire for place or position in church or state is purged away. We who are of the Pentecostal Church see no one who has a place we would desire. We are not wire pulling to get a position. We are saved from political scheming in ecclesiastical circles, as well as elsewhere. In honor we prefer one another. There can be no anxiety, for God makes all our appointments for us.

When the heart is clean the Holy Ghost saves us from all peevishness, fretfulness, sensitiveness and touchiness. We hardly know when we are insulted and, therefore, never take offense. As Dr. Carradine says, we get so we "can live on cold shoulder and cold tongue." We are not looking out for slights. If any one pays any attention to us, it is that much more than we deserve, that much clear gain.

How plainly uncleanness of heart reveals itself in the actions, tempers and ambitions of the disciples previous to their Pentecost! They were selfish: they wanted the best places. Instance John and James bidding for chief seats. Notice the anger and indignation consequent upon the rest of the twelve hearing of the request of the two brothers. But, passing the upper room experience, we look in vain to find evidences of envy or self-seeking in these men. That Pentecostal electrocution forever put an end to the self-life.

How this fiery cleansing would relieve the church today! Office-seeking preachers would not buttonhole the bishops. This continual lobbying of which the presiding elder or superintendent is the unhappy subject would cease. Men would be more anxious to show their devotion to Christ and self-denial for his cause, than to obtain the best appointments. An unheard of thing might possibly be, viz., a vacancy on the official board, and no one sitting up nights concocting a scheme which would lift him to the place.

Would-be generals are abundant nowadays. There are plenty of men who would gladly boss God's army. They want to be bell-sheep. They must tinkle the bell, and no one else. If they can't be bell-sheep, they won't be sheep at all, but turn goats. Certainly we need the holy flame to extirpate unholy ambitions.

Before Pentecost, the disciples were sectarian. One poor fellow was having a glorious time casting out devils. "Does he follow us?" "NO." "Forbid him. Stop the revival; complain to the authorities! Schism! Tendency to divide! Come-out-ism!" There are thousands of people who have no sympathy with a work, however praiseworthy, without the movers in that work are in full unison with them on all points.

A revengeful spirit crops out in the pre-Pentecostal disciples. "Opposition?" "Down with fire!" "Do not like to hear us preach?" "Rain brimstone!" This is the un-Christlike spirit of even some so called Holiness preachers. "We can't punish you, but God can. We will get the Lord to revenge us." How different is the meekness, the heart-lowliness of the Son of God. "Despised" and "rejected" yet he opened not his mouth. "Vengeance and retaliation are burned out of us when we are sanctified, and unholy resentment thereafter finds in the soul no place.

* * * * *

04 -- A POWERFUL CHURCH

"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." There can be no success without power. Power is the very condition of success. It is the all-important need of the people of God, for by its presence failure is placed beyond the range of possibility. The word translated in our Authorized Version as "power" is the word from which the term "dynamite" is taken. Indeed, no violence whatsoever is done to the text if we read: "Ye shall receive dynamite after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." "Behold I have given you dynamite above all the dynamite of the enemy." Thus we see that Pentecostal power is, in the spiritual world, what dynamite is in the material. Consider its explosive, overturning effects in the ministry of the Apostles. "These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also." "To the carnally minded, the world appears right side up though in reality it is upside down, and in need of the reversive dynamite of the Holy Ghost.

This power is promised to us, and with it success is sure. Not only is its possession a privilege, but a positive duty. We are as certainly commanded to "be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might as we are commanded not to steal. It would, therefore, be just as proper for you, a Christian, to get up in class or testimony meeting, and talk about your tendency to steal, to lust, or to lie, as to talk about your "weakness," "shortcomings," "crooked paths," or "feeble remarks." Weakness is a spreading malady. Strength is a spreading energy. I can not afford to be weak, for it is not merely a misfortune to fail -- it is a crime in the sight of high heaven.

If a man may be as strong financially as his financial backing, why may we not be as strong spiritually as our spiritual backing? We ought never to think of failing until the resources of heaven are completely exhausted. We should make no arrangements for defeat until we are certain that heaven is bankrupt. If we are cabled to the throne we may expect to fall only when the white throne itself crumbles, totters and goes down. Glory! Most of Christians are looking out for a soft place to fall. They make preparations to tumble. They are like the sister who said she could "never give up the blessed old doctrine of falling from grace." They believe so thoroughly in backsliding that they indulge in it frequently.

No one says that it is impossible to backslide; but certainly it is not necessary to sin. We are not preaching impeccability, but we are magnifying the grace of God in its ability and power to save from sin and make the human heart victorious. "All things are possible with God" and "All things are possible to him that believeth." Faith is the alchemy which changes fear to courage, "crooked paths" to king's highways, and "feeble efforts" to glorious "exploits." If we fear a fear it will come upon us. He who indulges in talk about "crooked paths" will have plenty of "crooked paths" to talk about. He who refers to his public communications as "feeble remarks" in general describes the true nature of what he says; if he thinks they are "feeble," they are "feeble," so great is the importance of faith. If a man has a message from God and delivers it "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" he will have no occasion to speak of his ministry as an "effort" or "endeavor." Mere endeavorers do nothing but endeavor, and are satisfied with simply endeavoring. They do not talk of success. Victory is not expected. They anticipate but little, and are never disappointed.

Let us repeat: The Pentecostal Church is a powerful church. This power is not the power of numbers. Israel was often weakest as a matter of fact when she numbered the most; while Gideon's three hundred were more mighty than his thirty-two thousand. Many a church of six hundred members is filled with pygmies, dwarfs, and stunted babies. "New-born babes desiring the sincere milk of the Word" they have not, neither would they know what to do with them if they had them, for they have not had a convert in five years. These stunted weaklings are "whiney," finicky, hard to please; they must be petted and coddled and put up in scented cotton, requiring the nursing of two hard-working pastors continually.

Many a church-society with a large membership is struggling along, scarcely maintaining an existence, using almost every questionable means to eke out the money necessary to keep the thing going, while some little Holiness mission with no earthly backing whatsoever is having hundreds of souls saved. We know a small Holiness mission in New York City which averaged one hundred and thirty-five converts a month. Thus we see God is not so particular about quantity as he is about quality. Israel always made a mistake when she began to consider numbers and enumerate the people. God was all she needed. The tendency of all ages is to count noses and trust in a crowd. The effort today is to make a greater showing. Ministers make a grave mistake in bending every energy to increase the membership; we need to stop and clean up what we have. We may carry the report of large numbers to Conference or our annual gatherings, but when the judgment day has cut our bloated statistics down to the real count we may be unable to recognize our congregations. We would rather have a dozen men and women separated from the world and filled with condensed lightning from the upper skies than to have a huge convocation of timeserving ecclesiastics. The writer knows men who have been fished out of the slums, saved, wholly sanctified, healed, and charged with chain-lightning until he would rather have them sit near the pulpit and pray while he preaches than to be backed by a whole bench of bishops.

Again, the power of the ideal Pentecostal Church is not that of intellect or brains. We are told that knowledge is power, and yet many who stuff their heads and starve their hearts grow weaker every day. This power of which we speak is not the product of seminaries, colleges and universities. It does not come by metaphysical research or philosophical reflection. The ancient Greeks were cultured and oftentimes refined, but utterly destitute of this power. The musty records of the Chinese show a keen appreciation of scientific methods and brains fertile in the production of philosophies, yet the Celestials, even in the palmy days of Confucius, knew nothing of this power. Corinth, noted for her rhetoricians, famed for her learning, a sort of modern Oxford, Edinburgh or Boston, was notorious for vice and crime. Many of the brainiest congregations in cultured, hyper-refined New England have not spiritual power enough to withstand the most consumptive, the sallowest, the silliest, the puniest devil that hell ever turned out. Some of Boston's "four hundred" want nothing better than the childish, effete religion of the heathen Burmese. Even though it is dubbed "Christian Science," that does not conceal its real character, for it is neither Christian nor scientific. We place no premium on ignorance. Thank God, we have a few scholarly, representative men who know the power of spirituality and who are sufficiently wise as to refrain from depending on their learning, eloquence or erudition, but put their confidence in the Holy Ghost himself. But, alas! many a poor preacher who is a D. D., LL. D., Ph. D., should add N. G.

Moreover, this power is not the power of wealth. It does not consist in flocks and herds, in broad acres of verdant land, in heaps of gold and silver, in stocks and bonds, nor in any form of material substance. The members of the Pentecostal Church had but little, and they sold what they did have and flung it cheerfully into the treasury of the Lord. In the world, congregations are often measured by their financial standing. Not so above. God is not after money. He is no beggar. "The cattle on a thousand hills are his." In the hollow of his hand he holds the wealth of the universe. He hath need of nothing in the economic line.

In the early church money was a secondary matter, if it was a matter at all. To be poor did not disconcert the preachers of primitive days. "Silver and gold have I none," said Peter, as, in company with John, he met the cripple at the temple gate. In these days we hear of little else in the meetings of committees, boards of stewards, Ladies' Aid Societies, etc., but the threadbare cry of "Money! money! How shall we raise it?" "Where will we get the money?" is the first question when anything is to be undertaken in the church. Socials, entertainments, fairs, bazaars, festivals, broom-drills, kissing-parties, Mother Goose parties, poverty suppers, clam bakes, bean suppers, oyster stews (with few oysters), and every other devilish clap-trap that hell can invent are resorted to for the purpose of raising money to carry on God's holy work! What a shame that we are so poor that we must gull sinners out of their money by selling them ten cents worth of oysters for twenty-five cents! Our God is not a beggar.

When Christ commissioned his preachers, nothing was said about money except that a prohibition was made to the taking of much of it on their journeys. As the church has grown wealthy she has always lost her power to convict and convert sinners. Some monks were busily engaged in counting over huge piles of shining gold when Thomas Aquinas entered the room. "The time is no more when the church is compelled to say, 'Silver and gold have I none,' " remarked one of the counters. After a moment of grave thought the "Doctor Angelicus" replied, "True, and the time is no more when she can say, 'In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk.' " It is the general rule that the more expensive the church edifice, the less spirituality in the society; the higher the church steeple, the lower the real piety.

We make a great mistake in catering to moneyed men. The writer has often been surprised and pained to see a man in "poor raiment" come into the congregation, look in vain for a seat, and finally forced to be content with an inconvenient one by the door. But let the man in "fine raiment" and "gold ring" appear, and instantly a half-dozen people are on their feet motioning the visitor forward, pew-doors fly open as if by magic; all that the "moneyed man" may have a seat.

The strength of the church does not consist of brains, or numbers, or culture, or rhetoric, or schools. It does not reside in dignities, titles, scepters, thrones, stocks or bonds. The strength of the ideal Pentecostal Church is the Holy Ghost himself. He and no other is the power of this great army of the Lord. He is not a mere influence; he is not the breath of God, he is not an emanation from Deity ; he is not the abstract power of God. He is God himself, the third Person in the trinity. He comes into the church by coming into the individual members, and thus by his omnipotent energy he purifies, electrifies and endues her with power.

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05 -- A POWERFUL CHURCH -- (Continued)

There is a widespread misapprehension as to what spiritual power really is. It is not power to found colleges nor maintain great universities. It is not power to teach the arts or sciences, to build pyramids, to drive steamships, to run express trains, or to establish telegraphic communication. These things are caused by other forces, other powers, than the purely Pentecostal. It is not power for political scheming or wise statesmanship. There are many things, good things, perhaps, which it is not the special function of this power to accomplish.

Positively, it is power to destroy the works of the devil and to save man from sin and from hell. But where, we ask, are the works of the devil? If they are to be destroyed, they must be located, and the power applied to them where they are. Some maintain that the works of the devil are located in the saloon, in the liquor traffic, and so we find men who give all their strength for the overthrow of this hellish business. Others believe that the brothel, social impurity and licentiousness are the works of the devil. Laboring under this impression, certain persons bend all their energy to the work of the social purity movement. Still others assert that the works of the devil are housed in secret societies, and they therefore bend every energy toward the overthrow of these Christless institutions. We admit that the devil is actively engaged in the maintenance of these gigantic evils, and yet we must get on a warmer track than any of these if we are to find his workshop, his place of business, where he turns out his samples. The place to which we have reference is the human heart. If from it the devil's works are cast out the man leaves the saloon and the woman forsakes the brothel; the lodge man renounces his order, and worldly entanglements are severed.

The works of the devil are not located in our heads, in our intellects. If they were, Yale, Harvard, Brown, Amherst, and Dartmouth might be able to cure the disease. Neither is sin to be located in the body. No medicine can reach it. Even if one be healed by Divine power he is not necessarily delivered from inbred sin. Many marvelous cases of Divine healing are recorded in which the healed person was not sanctified. Sin is located in the heart, the spiritual, affectional nature of man. "Out of the heart," says Christ, "proceed evil thoughts," etc.

The Pentecostal power, the power of the Holy Ghost, lays an axe at the very root of the tree, and, instead of dealing with branches and limbs, it attacks and destroys all roots of pride, anger, jealousy, malice, envy, strife, impatience, worldliness, unholy ambition, lust, and all impurity even in its most complex ramifications. It delivers us from all grumbling, whining, peevishness, fretfulness, fearfulness, sensitiveness and touchiness. It blessedly relieves us of all pomp, gusto and brag. The bluster and braggadocio of swaggering depravity entirely departs. That yeasty "puff" so characteristic of carnality when lauded and commended has yielded to a more solid and satisfactory tissue. Men may flatter and use "soft soap," but the Holy Ghost man does not puff up; they may criticize and severely censure and mercilessly condemn, and yet he does not puff down.

This power of Pentecost delivers a man from a thirst for place in the church. No one holds a position that he wants for himself. He is not offended if others are used more than he. He is not "hurt" if others are honored and he is slighted. He rejoices in the prosperity of another, and that

not with a smirking, hypocritical semblance of rejoicing, but with a real, heartfelt gladness that "in honor the other" is preferred.

"The Holy Ghost coming upon" us furnishes such power that all work runs easily. "My yoke is easy," says the Lord. One who has received the gift of the Holy Ghost never has to rely on human dependencies or outward circumstances. The writer was one day sailing down the Narragansett Bay in company with a member of his church when suddenly the brother called his attention to the "Walker Armington," remarking that it was the only vessel of its kind on the Atlantic Coast. "What is there peculiar about this vessel?" he asked, for it was but one of the many beautiful four-masted schooners which filled the bay. "Notice," said the gentleman, "the black smoke issuing from the top of one of the masts. The schooner is fitted out with an engine, and thus is able to sail up and down this crooked channel without requiring the assistance of a tug." "That," I said to myself, "is but a symbol of my own experience. Since I received the Holy Ghost I am not dependent upon any fleet of tugs."

That queenly, graceful "floating palace," the "Connecticut," was approaching our Providence harbor one morning in a heavy fog. As the steamer rounded Field's Point the pilot failed to hear the foghorn, and the huge ship slipped onto the bar. The full strength of the massive engines only lurched the steamer from side to side and ground her hull more firmly in the sand. Tugs were sent for; but the combined efforts of many tugs only showed their utter incompetency to float the vessel. What was to be done? There was but one thing to do. Wait until God's moon by the magic of its attraction had lifted the sea five feet, and then it was that the "Connecticut" floated with perfect ease. Five feet of God's water under the ship's keel were worth more than all the tugs. So with us when we cease our own struggles. When we stop trusting in our friends to tug us loose, when we turn our eyes from all things human up to the great God, then he will lift us with the tide of love that swells in his bosom and waft us to a calm haven with perfect ease. Instead of tearing us to pieces by pulling at us, he gently puts the "everlasting arms" beneath us and raises us and bears us swiftly away from all bars and shoals. It is so delightfully easy when we let him do it all. We are informed by false teachers that "God helps the man who helps himself," and that God will not do anything for us that we can do for ourselves. But this is not Bible. It is damaging teaching. Thus thousands seek God only to supplement their own unholy efforts. They call on him only when they have completely failed. In the utmost extremity God is to be resorted to. What a pity! All our doings are deadly. We reach a point where we must do nothing: Christ must do all. "Ye shall not fight in this battle. The battle is not yours but God's." "It is not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." "For he that is entered into his rest he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from his." When we receive the Holy Ghost we retire from business; we are then at leisure; we enter upon a Sabbath of rest that never ends, a Sabbath that must not be broken.

So long as we endeavor to care for ourselves, God will give up to us the entire monopoly of the business, and it is awfully hard work. But when we receive him, he takes entire charge and manages everything. We go out of business. We sell the entire stock, the fixtures, the stand, everything to him. We make a clear warranty deed to all we have; we turn in all, past, present and future, things known and unknown, future friends and foes, wealth or poverty, prosperity or adversity, coming conquest and seeming failure. Our reputation is included in the consecration. No longer will we seek it, defend it, or try to take care of it. We will quit itching to run down every little rumor the devil sets flying from lip to lip concerning us. We transfer ourselves with all

our belongings over to God. We surrender the papers, we hand over the keys. God cancels the mortgages, pays the taxes, and keeps up repairs on the property. What a relief! Hallelujah!

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06 -- A WITNESSING CHURCH

"Ye shall be witnesses unto me." "They all began to speak." Spontaneously, instinctively, the witnessing tongue began to vibrate. Never once did the fire-touched disciples think of sitting down and holding a silent meeting. Equally foreign to them was the idea of hiring someone one to speak for them or to sing for them. Testimony is the invariable concomitant of life in a church. Only when the church has drifted from her great spiritual center and ignored and rejected the Holy Ghost has she lost her testimony.

Numerous and diverse are the substitutes offered in place of this God-ordained and God-originated way of stopping the mouth of the world and raining heart thrilling conviction upon the soul. Sometimes increased religious activity is proffered in lieu of testimony. However good this activity may be, it will never produce the end God intended testimony should produce. If the "great unwashed," the unsaved and unattracted about us are ever reached it will not be by essays on the harmony between science and religion. It will not be by learned treatises in defense of orthodoxy, or rose-scented, high-school-girl themes on "The March of the Nineteenth Century." These subjects may be of value to the preacher for mental discipline, but they are not only hard on a congregation but they utterly fail to save men from sin and a yawning hell!

A live church has a ceaseless ringing testimony. It has been well said that "A voiceless church is a powerless church. The Holy Ghost is the power for witnessing. He gives the testimony irresistible, unanswerable force? Men are reached not by argument, not by logical syllogisms, but by the testimony of really live witnesses, witnesses who have convictions born of certainty, who "speak that they do know." An objector can meet logic with logic, Greek roots with Greek roots, and the jargon of the schools with the same language; but he does not know what to do with experience, with what is positively known.

The devil's hottest persecution has always been directed against public witnessing. No one has ever suffered opposition for having piety in the heart merely; a few have encountered it for possessing godliness in the home; but the concentrated powers of earth and hell have ever been marshalled against public witnessing for Jesus. Rome's energies were exhausted in an attempt to crash the testimonies of the early churches. Ten fierce persecutions followed one another in quick succession. To be a witness meant to die, so that the word for witness (martyr) came to mean one who died for "the testimony of Jesus." But although hundreds of thousands spilled their blood yet the churches "multiplied and grew." During the severe persecution of the early Quakers, when the adult members were imprisoned until there were none to keep up the public meetings, and it seemed as if this public testimony must cease, the children of the Friends, ten, twelve and thirteen years of age, met together and maintained the meetings while the fathers and mothers were in jail. Persecution, fierce and savage, greeted this youthful piety, but no power on earth or in hell could withstand their fire-filled witnessing. Red-hot rings were put on their tongues, and yet with indistinct, pitiful words they would still testify.

On one occasion three Quaker ministers were to be burned at the stake. The persecutors so arranged that the second and third should witness the death of the first, while the third was to behold the torture of both first and second. The three men agreed among themselves that the one who was burned first should, if his faith failed not, testify in the last moment of his consciousness by lifting up one hand, thus encouraging the other two. The first of the martyrs was led forth, tied to the stake, and enveloped by the rising flame. When he had burned almost to a crisp and they thought he would never move again, the sufferer lifted both hands over his head and clapped them three times. Though racks and dungeons and stakes are no longer in vogue, yet testimony is as much needed and as much hated as in the days of virulent, violent persecution.

When spirituality runs low in the church, class-meetings, prayer-meetings, covenant-meetings, and testimony-meetings are sparsely attended, while in the same church throngs crowd to the fairs, the festivals, the bazaars, the bean suppers, the donkey parties and the entertainments. Contrast with this condition of affairs a church "filled with the Spirit." Witnessing meetings are large and the childish rattles which we have mentioned are no longer needed.

When a man really receives the Holy Ghost, he wants to testify to what God has done for and in him. An impelling power constrains him to speak even in the gaunt face of grim death. If those who have died for Jesus' sake had but held their peace there would have been no martyrs. They were offered their lives if they would but keep still. No one told them not to "live it" but "teach no more in this name." All the opposition which pitted itself against Jesus was due to his public preaching and work. If he had moved around quietly, if he had delivered lectures on the Talmud instead of preaching the "Sermon on the Mount," if he had talked hazily of evolution instead of exhorting to holiness, the Jews would never have risen to put him to death. "Live it, but keep still about it," says the devil; but life is made up largely of what we say, and he who shuts out the Son of God from his speech debars Him from his heart. Let him refrain from a confession of the Holy Ghost, and he will not have power to live it anywhere. "Heart-faith" and "lip-confession" are twins, and must not, can not, be separated.

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07 -- KNOWS NO GENDER

The ideal Pentecostal Church is without distinction as to the prominence given to the sexes. The women were equally honored with the men when the Spirit was poured out. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women." "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." "And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit." Women, as well as men, are to prophesy when this holy baptism with the Spirit shall be administered. No reference is made in Scripture to the ruling of a General Conference or an Ecumenical Council.

Originally, woman was not only man's helpmeet but his equal. "They twain shall be one flesh." Sin cursed and degraded her, until in dark heathendom we find her as man's slave. She is a beast of burden in many pagan countries. Enslaved, degraded, abused, she is brought lower than the brute. Well might Mr. Moody say, "I would rather be a donkey in heathen lands than a

woman," for in those countries men set a greater value many times upon their donkeys than upon their wives.

But just in proportion as the grace of God and the light of the Gospel are shed abroad, in that proportion woman is elevated, until at Pentecost she stands, a second Eve, by the side of her husband, sharing in the beatific blessings of the baptism with the Spirit.

Taking humanity as a whole, it may be said with confidence that more genuine New Testament piety can be found among women than among men. From the days of Pentecost until this hour, whenever Holy Ghost revivals have been produced, holy women have mothered them, nursing into strength and vigor the nascent converts. Many an Elizabeth Frye, or Mary Fletcher, or Sibyl Jones has blessed the world with her holy ministry. The world will never get over the fragrant effects of the loving lives of these saints.

Nothing but jealousy, prejudice, bigotry, and a stingy love for bossing in men have prevented woman's public recognition by the church. No church that is acquainted with the Holy Ghost will object to the public ministry of women. We know scores of women who can preach the Gospel with a clearness, a power, and an efficiency seldom equaled by men.

Sisters, let the Holy Ghost fill, call and anoint you to preach the glorious Gospel of our Lord.

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08 -- A LIBERAL CHURCH

"And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all as every man had need."
"Neither was there any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the price of the things that were sold and laid them down at the apostles' feet."

It is not the manner of liberality to which we desire to turn our attention, but to the spirit lying back of the generous action. The manifestation may alter, but the spirit of Pentecost never changes. From the days of the Apostles until this hour, whenever Pentecostal fire has fallen upon men or churches it has invariably burned the purse strings off and filled the possessor with the spirit of liberality. Spiritual lightning burns up all miserliness, stinginess, penuriousness, and covetousness, causing us to give in a princely way. We then for the first time, having our eyes illumined by the Holy Spirit, really perceive that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." We apprehend the law of Divine grace that the more we give the more we have.

This is, of course, contrary to all human law and precedent. It is diametrically opposite to human reasoning. The world says: "If you would be rich, save all you get and get all you can." God says: "Go sell all that thou hast and give to the poor." The world would have said that it was the sheerest folly to ask a widow woman who, with her son, was starving, to give away the last handful of meal in the barrel. But when she gave the precious food to God's prophet, God gave her a larder that never failed. It was God's way of opening up to the widow inexhaustible supplies.

That handful of meal from the bottom of the barrel, doubtless stale and musty, was the key that unlocked the storehouse of boundless provisions.

"There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet but it tendeth to poverty. "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall himself also be watered again." "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly: and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." "Not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver." "Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the firstfruits of all thine increase. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." All that we give to the Lord is clear gain; all we save is lost. All we scatter will keep forever; all we keep will rot.

Our hoarded money will eat our flesh like fire. Many in our churches feel that every dollar they put into the Lord's work is just so much out of pocket. It is no wonder, when we remember this, that people cry, "Hard times" when money is needed. But the liberal giver never complains of hard times. A man who gives unstintedly and gives unto the Lord will always have something to give.

Those who complain of hard times in the churches which the writer has been permitted to serve have been those who give little or nothing. As a matter of fact, they give nothing, for they fail to pay even their rent, which is one-tenth of their income, to say nothing of a free-will offering over and above the just debt.

A Pentecostal Church will always have plenty of money without prostituting herself by unholy connection with this Godless, Christless world. She will never have to hire or sell herself to the world to get money. She will never become a slave to the Gentiles, feeding them with oysters, clams, cake, or ice cream. She will never need to turn the house of God into a second-rate theater, nor desecrate the temple with merchandise of any kind. Pentecostal liberality will liquidate our church debts, cancel our mortgages, and fill our church treasury to overflowing. It will send millions to the foreign field for the salvation of the heathen. When a man receives the Holy Ghost he ceases to put a five-dollar hat on his head and put five cents in the missionary collection; he will stop wearing a twenty-five-dollar overcoat until he can put more than a quarter in the basket for church purposes.

In one of our New England conventions a wealthy man and his wife came to the altar seeking the baptism with the Holy Ghost. They did not seem to be able to get the witness, and we wondered why. They were back again the next night. The usher informed us that, when the plates were passed, the gentleman put in one penny while his wife dropped in two. When the call was made, here came the couple again. We do not need to say that such stingy seeking as this was in vain. It is doubtful whether they received even three cents worth of spiritual blessing.

A Christian lady was complaining one day after she returned from church about the dullness of the sermon. Her little boy, who sat beside her in the pew, and had noticed the amount of her offering, spoke up quickly, "Why, mamma, what could you expect for a nickel!"

Nothing will ever protect the church from a bankrupt treasury and a burden of debt but this generosity breeding flame from the skies. When it falls, pew rents, entertainments, bazaars,

festivals, poverty suppers and all other devilish nonsense will disappear. Lord, send down this fire!

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09 -- A DEMONSTRATIVE CHURCH

"These men are filled with new wine." "It was noised abroad" and the people "were all amazed." The world admires and commends enthusiasm in everything but in religion. This country is a perfect hive of human industry. We hear the hum and roar and buzz of a million ceaseless activities. The very atmosphere is charged with commercial, political, social and intellectual enthusiasm. Indolence and sloth can hardly be tolerated. And yet with all this anything like healthy religious feeling is looked upon with suspicion, and the intoxication of the Spirit is branded as fanaticism. Thus thousands of people are silenced by adverse criticism.

Hundreds of churches are dying from propriety. We are not told specifically what the church at Pentecost did, but it is very evident that they conducted themselves in such a manner as to cause the public to think that they were all drunken. We also know that when Christians receive the Holy Spirit now, one will weep, another will shout, still another will jump, while a fourth will be still as death with a holy hush in his soul. But a spiritual church, from Pentecost to the present, has always been a noisy church. Pentecostal enduements are always "noised abroad." No one would suspicion the ordinary congregation of today as being intoxicated unless it should be thought that they were in the advanced stages, drowsiness for example.

Hosts of people have lost the light and joy from their souls simply because they have failed, refused or neglected to give expression to the movings of the Spirit within. Many have confessed that they have felt again and again that they ought to say "Amen!" or "Praise the Lord!" or "Hallelujah!" in the public congregation of the people, but they refrained and in a short time had nothing to say "Hallelujah!" about.

In the early days of Quakerism, ministers often preached to acres and acres of people in open fields and, at such times, often hundreds would fall and lie on the ground under the slaying power of the Holy Spirit. Primitive Methodism not only had roomy "Amen-corners" filled with ringing "Amens" but shouting was general throughout the congregation. When Jonathan Edwards in the Congregational Church at Northampton preached "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" men grasped the pillars of the house, the backs of the pews, seeing, as they firmly believed, their feet slipping over the brink into a bottomless hell! Sobbing, weeping and wailing went up as from the damned themselves. It was estimated that five hundred souls were converted as a result of that sermon. The writer himself has seen six hundred people seeking God at one time.

During a camp meeting held at Portsmouth, Rhode Island, at the close of a sermon by one of our fire-crowned Holiness evangelists, sixty-five persons fell on their faces in the straw, without even the conventionality of an "invitation." At another time at the same camp a saintly brother was preaching when the power so fell upon the people that before the sermon was finished they began to come forward and prostrate themselves at the altar. Strong men would start toward the front and

fall before they could reach the altar. This was continued until forty-two souls were on their faces crying unto God. And yet no one had hinted at having an altar service.

In January, 1894, the Holy Ghost fell upon a congregation of staid, conservative Quakers in Western Indiana. No one was asked to come to an altar; no effort was made to create any demonstration. One sister arose, came to the altar, and began to weep. One person after another followed until the large altar was completely filled. Then convicted souls began to go down in the body of the congregation. Away back by the door people knelt in prayer. All in a few moments, holy fire had fallen from the upper skies, swept over that large audience, and leveled hearts to the ground. Many were praying vocally at the same time (a thing quite out of order in a Quaker meeting). Sobbing and laughing, shouting and weeping, waving handkerchiefs and shaking hands, were seen in all parts of the house.

We are not encouraging thunder out of an empty cloud. We would not be understood as commending the rattle of an empty wagon. But that freedom from excitement which is so complimented by the world, and which is so common in nearly all Protestant churches will never bring a harvest of souls.

The inexhaustible fertility of the soil in the Delta of the Nile is owing to the annual overflow of the river. Many a preacher, orthodox, upright, respectable, a strong reasoner, and a delightful speaker, never does much good because he is so excessively proper that he never enjoys a freshet. This preacher may challenge the admiration of the community with his eloquence; the people may listen with enrapt attention; they may express freely their approbation; and yet no one is saved from sin, no heart turned back from hell. Polished, refined, rhetorical, yet this preacher is powerless to turn men to God. What does it mean? He needs a freshet to fill his soul from bank to brae.

We are as much commanded not to quench the Spirit as we are commanded not to steal. The Holy Ghost will not remain in our hearts unless he can reign without a rival. He must not be grieved, repressed, insulted, or even questioned as to the propriety of the course He takes with us.

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10 -- IS MAGNETIC, ATTRACTIVE

"Multitudes came together." One of the greatest problems of the day which confronts Protestantism is, "How shall we reach the masses?" Great convocations are held and from large platforms the question is discussed again and again. Ways and means are devised, but nothing adequate is found. A New York millionaire says, "The masses shall be reached and I will give a million and a half dollars to accomplish it." But money fails. Some one suggests that we get the most brilliant, eloquent, "drawing" ministers. But, alas, the preacher finds it hard work to draw sinners into the church over the obstructing corpses of dead church members. One suggests a new pipe organ, but as soon as the novelty of the great instrument wears off, the masses fail to come. A zealous aestheticist insists on more frescousing, a little more stucco work, a new carpet, and another canary in the choir. A gourmandizer suggests the possibility of drawing men by way of their stomachs. So the H. O. G. Society fits up a kitchen in the church and proceeds to sell thin

oyster-soup at three hundred per cent profit. But with all this nonsense of the church puttering around in a kitchen, the unsaved masses are unreached and unattracted. The Committee on "Ways and Means" finally says, "We must have a new church." So one hundred and fifty thousand dollars worth of stone and brick and mortar is piled up and surmounted by a weather-vane, emblematic of the wind-influenced congregation worshipping beneath. This mass of matter is dubbed "a church." But, alas, while its superb auditorium will seat twelve hundred easily, the Reverend Mr. Jones, D.D., LL.D., Ph.D., reads his infantile sermonette on Sunday morning to an audience of three hundred and fifty!

We meet in minister's meetings to discuss and deplore the situation. We listen to long essays on the subject in which everything is suggested as remedial except the one, and only one thing that will prove efficacious. Who dares to say that the ministers themselves should tear down their lightning-rods, go down on their faces in an "upper room," and tarry until the heavenly flame leaps the chasm from celestial altar to human heart, consuming ministerial and church pride, delivering the ministry from false dignity, hell-concocted starch, and bringing it on a level with the people it was designed to help? Then we would depend on God, instead of on a few brains. We would rely on the Holy Ghost rather than on "big sermons," spread-eagle rhetoric, and highfalutin bombast. The blessed Spirit would then accomplish what our efforts, our movements and our methods can never accomplish. This spiritual electricity from high heaven will burn up our rubbish, attract the attention of the world, and bring back to the church the "lost art" of soul-saving.

When Moses was traveling along the highway at Horeb he saw a bush on fire, and yet it was not consumed. "And Moses said I will now turn aside and see this great sight why the bush is not burnt." Everyone admits that this is a hurrying, busy time. It is a fast age. "Life is too short," men cannot wait. Swifter than the turning of this eastward wheeling earth is man's means for the transference of thought, so that Boston news is read in San Francisco two hours before its dated occurrence. But with all the competition and push and bustle of this rapid life of ours, if a church should get on fire with holy flame the people en masse would turn aside to see "this great sight."

Note the agility and celerity with which people turn out to a fire. The writer was stopping in an eastern city when at midnight the fire-bell began to ring. He threw up the window and saw people from every direction pouring forward towards the building from whose roof the flames were rising. All classes and conditions were mingled in the excited, interested throng. He saw among others an old white-haired man on crutches hobbling along toward the scene of the conflagration. The lame and the lazy, the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the white and the black, all are fascinated by a fire. A fire in the pulpit and a fire in the pew will draw the multitudes together. God's description, his pen-picture, of a minister is "a flame of fire." This pulpit-flame six feet long and white-hot will attract all classes within its sweeping range.

The Pentecostal Church spent no money in advertising. She had in her attractions of the most magnetic character. Sensationalism will fail, as it always has. The artful skill of man will not succeed. The writer is acquainted with a church in a New England city where for thirty months this holy fire attracted the crowds, summer and winter, week in and week out. During the hot months of July and August, when the greater part of other churches were gone to the sea-shore to keep cool (as if a refrigerator needed cooling), this Pentecostal Church was packed to the door

while people were turned away for want of standing-room. A fire-crowned church will never want for crowds.

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11 -- PUTS PEOPLE UNDER CONVICTION

"They were pricked in their hearts." "And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment." The blessed Holy Ghost "when he is come" into the hearts of believers will convict sinners of sin. He is invariable in the faithfulness with which he answers the faith of Christians in this matter.

The conviction that fell upon the people in Bible times is comparatively rare in these days. Genuine Scriptural conversions, however, are preceded by, deep and pungent conviction for sin. Jesus came to save, not the righteous, but the sinner conscious of his sinfulness. He seeks the lost; and unless men find out that they are lost, they will never be saved. We make a sad mistake when we receive persons into church membership who do not give evidence of being saved. The popular revivals of the last quarter of a century have been very superficial. The method which consists of raising the hand, signing a card, entering an enquiry room -- where the "seeker" (?) sits bolt upright like a post and coolly converses on the subject of religion -- and finally "taking it by faith," is an awful fraud and a burlesque on the true revival. It is a deception that is appalling. Thousands are swept into the "church" and from thence into hell! Souls are dropping into the mouth of the pit in platoons and battalions for the want of men who preach a faithful gospel. The superficial revivals to which we have referred only make it more difficult for those who do thorough work.

Even among some so-called Holiness teachers and workers there is a tendency to superficiality. Many seekers are taught to make the profession the condition of obtaining the grace. "Just claim it by faith and say, 'It is done,' and it is done." You ask these wrongly-instructed people if they know they are saved or sanctified. The answer is: "Well, I have just taken Christ for my Saviour, or Sanctifier," as the case may be. "I am simply trusting. I have not had the witness of the Spirit, but I do not depend on feeling. I am just standing on the promise." This whole thing is nonsense and a farce. In the first place, the essence of a promise is contained in its fulfillment. It is folly to talk about standing on a promise if the promise is not fulfilled. Faith is not an effort. Faith rests and always gets an answer. Faith springs up readily in thoroughly submitted soil. Not one person in a thousand has any real difficulty with his faith in getting divine experiences. If pardon is the thing sought, repentance is usually the catch. If the seeker is after a clean heart the shortage is in his consecration.

When a sinner has done a thorough job of repenting, the grace of faith is present to cause faith to spring up. When a believer has gone down, down to the very bottom in his consecration until he has lost confidence in himself and in everybody and everything else to sanctify him, it will be the easy, yea, the natural thing for him to do to fall over on God and trust Him. Some say, "I have taken it by faith, but I have not received the evidence." Impossible. Faith itself "is the evidence of things not seen," and real faith always brings the witness of the Spirit. The witness of

the Spirit moves us out of the realm of faith into the province of knowledge. What we believed we have come to know. True faith is the channel through which we get all our blessings from God.

He who believes will hear from God. To claim that the conditions are all met and yet no news has been received from heaven is to give God the lie. Thus a "life of faith" is not a bread-and-water diet. It is a life in which we "eat bread without scarceness." We have three full meals a day if we want them. The man who "lives by faith" is much more likely to get porterhouse steak than chuck.

Superficiality must be avoided. The conviction of the Holy Ghost must be operative if men are to cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" He is the "Executive of the Godhead," and He alone is competent to guide souls. We make a mistake in most of our altar services by talking so much to seekers. No one can talk them through, or sing them through, or shout them through. If you do the work you will have to do it again in a short time. The Holy Spirit can convict souls until they will be glad of a chance to rush to the altar and cry out to God. If we tease people to an altar and tease them to pray and tease them to believe and tease them to testify, we will have the endless task of teasing on our hands, and even then we can't keep them from backsliding. But if, on the other hand, souls are sufficiently convicted to break up and cry out and pray through to complete victory, they will not need any one to tell them that they are saved; they will know it.

One of the great mistakes of this age is that many think and say that "Splendid ends can be reached only by the use of splendid means." The demand, therefore, is for splendid means. But this premise is not true. God can do great things with a "Moses' rod," a "ram's horn," a "shepherd's sling," or an "ox-goad." He can take the things that are not and bring to naught the things that are. A strand of copper wire is dead and powerless of itself. You may insert it in a keg of gunpowder without any startling results. It is perfectly harmless. But let the electric current be turned on to this ineffectual wire, and thousands of tons of rock are hurled into the air. Let the submarine cable receive the wondrous spark, and under thousands of miles of unfathomed sea it flashes the message of God.

A common mistake among workers is to bow down to the implements used. God lets us catch a few fish, and we burn incense to our nets. We fail to give him the glory. May not God trust us with great success without danger of our filching the glory?

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12 -- HAS HEALTHY CONVERTS

They are described as "continuing steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship." A healthy mother gives birth to healthy children, and a church spiritually strong will have strong and vigorous converts. It is of incalculable value to have a good start in anything. This is eminently true in religious experience. There is such a thing as being wellborn spiritually. A feeble church, if she have converts at all, will have feeble ones. She may have life and power enough to put sinners under conviction and, perhaps, get them to a place of prayer, but she will fail in faith and prayer to bring them forth, to get them to a place of victory.

A revival which does not greatly increase and strengthen the spiritual vigor of the church is superficial. Much of the so-called revival work is so shallow that the thousands of counted "converts" can not be located in four months after the special services have closed. They can not be found in the prayer-meeting. They are absent from the class-meeting. They do not attend the Sunday preaching services. The only evidence of their religious existence is the name on the church register. A union meeting of one hundred days was held in one of our large cities, under the leadership of a noted evangelist. Hundreds of persons signed cards and made profession of religion. In a few months the converts were not to be seen. Indeed, the pastors themselves confessed that their churches were in a worse condition than before the special services. Another evangelist went to a certain city and began preaching an old-fashioned, fiery gospel. His "pulpit manners" were uncouth and objectionable. The truth itself was sent forth in great rugged chunks, with edges and corners almost incapable of polish. Even the pastor was disturbed. But the evangelist continued in the fear of God, and the Lord vindicated His truth, sending power and conviction on the people until three hundred and twenty-five souls made profession of salvation, joining the church on probation. At the end of six months two hundred and seventy-five of this number were received into full membership.

We read of strong converts at Thessalonica. Paul says of them, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only but also in power," and they "received the word in much affliction with joy in the Holy Ghost." They were such strong converts that though they had not been sanctified wholly yet they were "ensamples to all that believe" and their "faith Godward" was "spread abroad." What was the secret of this vigor? Paul, himself a man filled with the Holy Ghost, began his ministry among them by "reasoning with them, opening and alleging out of the Scriptures." He had no stock of thrilling anecdotes; no heart-rending deathbed scenes to stir up the people. He preached a gospel that carried with it conviction for sin. It so stirred the conscience and so effectively set in array the sins of the sinner before his eyes that souls were eager to call on God for pardon. It was not Paul's "personal magnetism" or eloquence that produced these results. He declared that he preached through "infirmity of the flesh." "I was with you," he says, "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling and my speech was not with enticing words of man's wisdom but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." Paul denies that he is strong either in natural or acquired ability. He is careful to say that he preached "in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power" and for this very reason his converts "stood in the power of God."

If the Pentecostal Church had such a thing as a "minister's meeting" those who took part certainly did not meet to simply deplore the situation, read papers and pronounce the benediction. Decline in piety was felt to be a grave question. It was too serious a matter to be dealt with lightly. The backslidden brother must be restored by those "that are strong." Effective and divinely ordained methods must be used. We can hardly imagine a member of the early church suggesting church work as a remedy or preventative for backsliding. It was not thought that the converts must have mission work, a Sunday school class, or a place in the choir to hold them in the church. More probably the converts did not feel that they needed to be held. Doubtless the question with them was "To whom shall we go?" for, on the day of Pentecost, they "that gladly received the word were baptized." Too many of the so-called "converts" of today are coaxed and almost compelled

to join the church. No wonder that they have so little heart for real church work and very quickly drift by the law of gravitation and consciousness of kind to their own company.

To be well-born spiritually means that the convert have a clear, satisfactory witness of the Spirit with his own that he is born of God. After this preliminary work of grace is completed in the heart, if he is instructed and encouraged to "tarry until" he is "endued with power from on high," he will continue steadfastly in the apostles' faith, doctrine and fellowship. The baptism with the Holy Ghost is the only safeguard against backsliding. Some one has said that "God justifies us that he may sanctify us, and he sanctifies us that he may keep us justified." There are few people living justified lives who are not also living sanctified lives. We hear a great deal said about "sinning and repenting" among Christian people, so-called. That there is much sinning among those who talk in this way, we doubt not; but that there is much hearty repentance, we can not believe. Repentance of sin means forsaking sin with no secret purpose of remaining a sinner. This attitude of the soul God demands before he pardons. God certainly has no more tolerance for sin in the heart or life of a Christian than he has in a sinner. One would suppose that if leniency were granted anywhere it would be in the case of those who do not know by experience what it means to have sins pardoned. But God hates sin wherever found, and gives no license in any instance for its committal or retention. We therefore believe the number of those who thus forsake sin and repent of it every day to be very small. They either give up in despair or seek and obtain a grace which keeps them from sin.

"They continued steadfastly " in prayer. The Pentecostal Church was not divided into praying and nonpraying members. All of the members were praying people, and prayer became such a fixed habit with them that they were steadfast in it. There were offered no inducements to attend prayer-meeting, such as cake, coffee, and a "short, spicy service." Ah, no; they made no stipulations as to the length of their prayers. The lone Man on the mountain deep in midnight prayer was ever before them. The Holy Ghost taught the early saints what to pray for, and they received answers. They "stirred up themselves to take hold on God." They knew how to continue in prayer and "watch in the same." Baxter stained his study walls with praying breath. Epaphras, one of the members of the early church, "always labored abundantly in prayers." All members of the Pentecostal Church do the same. If our fathers had known as little of the power of prayer as many church members do today, some of our great religious bodies would never have existed. If they had indulged in the practice of resorting to everything else before calling on God, as is so common now, we would have had no great denominations.

Someone asked an old saint what she thought of the new minister, who had just delighted the body of his hearers with an eloquent sermon. "I do not know," she answered, "I have not heard him pray." The Pentecostal Church took everything to God. He must redress all their wrongs, defend their characters, and protect their property. "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer . . . let your requests be made known unto God," was the exhortation ever ringing in their ears. They lived in an atmosphere of prayer, and died praying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

There is a great demand in these days for a race of moral heroes and heroines -- men and women who can withstand the surging tide of worldliness and the spirit of compromise, and who can not be bribed, bought, or brow-beaten into the desertion of the truth.

If the Holy Ghost was allowed to convict people for sin, and they were taught to look to God for the witness of their salvation, instead of relying on themselves, their feelings, the word of the evangelist, or the opinion of the pastor, God would answer them from heaven and they would desire no further evidence. They would then remain "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Amen.

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THE END