



The Story of Pentecost

Chapter 3

"WHEN the voice of Barnabas had died away, a spirit of deep meditation fell upon the company. Then the Apostle John rose, saying that it was in his heart to say a word at that juncture of the meeting. Every eye in the room was immediately riveted upon him. It could not very well be otherwise, for his presence was remarkably attractive. He was of noble bearing, with a beautiful countenance, that beamed with the affection of which his heart was full. His voice was soft and musical, and yet expressive of the conviction derived from the resoluteness of a lofty purpose. I thought at the time that he looked like an angel in human form; and, since I have had the privilege of making the acquaintance of the inhabitants of this angel world, I am of the opinion that my imagination did not lead me very far astray. Anyway, the appearance of the beloved disciple commanded for him an intensely interested hearing from every individual in the room.

"You will not have time to hear, nor space to record, all the words spoken either by John or the other Apostles who addressed us that morning. I could give them, if necessary. They are indelibly written on my memory, and, amongst the rest, I fancy I hear John speaking now.

"Like Peter, he dwelt upon the character of the gift of the Spirit, describing what he clearly saw would be the natural consequences in our lives of receiving Him fully into our hearts. That was the all-interesting theme of the hour.

"You know something of the nature of the promised Comforter,' the Apostle said. 'You have had an opportunity of seeing His character perfectly portrayed during the last three years in the person and work of our ever adorable Lord. Now, if we receive in all His fulness that same Spirit into our hearts, He will so control us that we shall think as He would think, and feel as He would feel, and act as He would act, and, if circumstances should require it, suffer and die as He would suffer and die, were He in human form to come back to this world again.

"Are you willing,' the beloved disciple asked, in words that, while gentle and calm as a



summer evening's zephyr, nevertheless carried with them an unquestioning conviction which sank down into the very depths of the heart of everyone present. 'Are you willing,' he asked, 'to receive this new and all-mastering Spirit into your souls, to control you entirely, and all the time, so that it shall be no longer your will, but the will of your Lord that shall be done in and by you?'

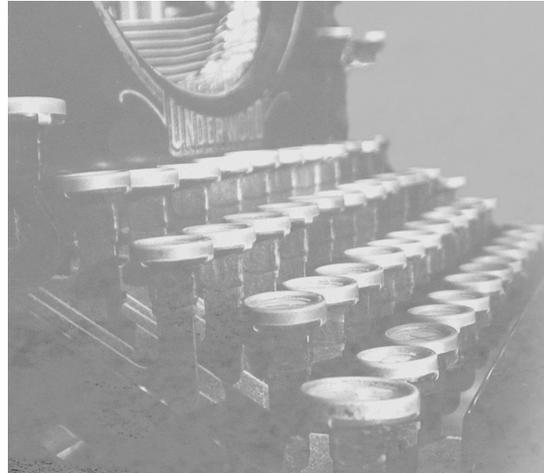
"There was now another dead silence. If you want to know how we felt at that hour, I can only say that we had a deep conviction that we had reached a crisis of more than ordinary importance in the world's history. And so we had, for all the mighty, world-moving events of Christianity which have followed, have been more or less influenced and determined by the decisions and actions of the men and women assembled there during those ten days.

"Then you must remember also that we were all human beings, and human beings of like passions with you, and you know how the publication and enforcement of the same truths affect your people in your meetings, whether held in upper or lower rooms, at the present day.

"Just think for a moment. Here was a miscellaneous crowd of the followers of Jesus Christ invited to give up those loves and pleasures, those appetites and ambitions of life, which were natural to them, and on which the very joy of their existence – nay, their very existence itself – seemed to depend, and to accept in their stead the control and guidance of another Spirit, which would lead them, in all human probability, to toils, hatreds, poverties, imprisonments, and stripes, if not to death itself.

"It is true that those disciples saw afterwards, if they did not see in that room, at that hour, or in the hours that followed, that this way of the Cross would have behind it such supports, consolations, joys, and prospects, supplied by the very Spirit that led them into it, as would make that road of suffering and sacrifice a way of satisfaction, endurance, and peace, and that they would probably come to glory in the Cross, as nearly all in that room ultimately did.

"I was one that did so myself," said Samuel, with flashing eyes, "and have ever since been glorying in the decision as one of the wisest and happiest acts of my life.



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"I made my election that morning when I chose to receive the Spirit of Christ as my Guide, come what might, and have suffered much and long in consequence. With my dear mother I was cast out by my relatives, beaten with many stripes, confined in dungeons deep and dark, and finally torn to pieces by wild beasts to make a holiday for the persecutors of my Lord.

"But the choice I made in that room at that hour brought with it such power and consolation that I never once regretted making it; and, looking back from the banks of this lovely river on which you and I are reclining, with Heaven above and around me, to the track of tears and blood that I trod, you can easily imagine that I do not repent it now."

Then Samuel continued: "As John ceased speaking we all went down in prayer before the Lord, and another season of solemn silence followed, and Mary Magdalene, at the request of Peter, prayed. And, oh! what a remarkable prayer she offered.

"Beginning in a modest manner with softest tones of voice, and in slow and measured sentences, she gradually increased in fervour as her heart became more and more absorbed in her petitions. She asked the Father for light to enable us to understand the sacrifices required from us, and to discern, the value of the boon that was offered. She pleaded for courage to carry into practice the resolutions we might form, and for grace to enable us to persevere in the high and holy course on which we were about to enter.

"Louder and louder she knocked at: the gate of mercy, and with more and more tender earnestness she pleaded with the Father," for the sake of that Saviour, whom we had seen ascend to the heavens only the day before, that He would influence all the hearts bowed before Him to the making of such a deliberate and intelligent surrender of themselves as would ensure the bestowment of the promised gift.

"A wonderfully bright and joyous influence, now seemed to fill the room; a hymn was sung, and the meeting closed."