



LESSON II.—JANUARY 12.

The Promise of Power Fulfilled.

Acts ii., 1-11. Memory verses 1-4. Read Acts ii., 1-36; Joel ii., 21-32.

Golden Text.

'The promise is unto you and to your children.'—Acts ii., 39.

Daily Readings.

- Monday, Jan. 6.—Acts ii., 1-21.
- Tuesday, Jan. 7.—Acts ii., 22-36.
- Wednesday, Jan. 8.—Joel ii., 21-32.
- Thursday, Jan. 9.—Rom. i., 9-16.
- Friday, Jan. 10.—Rom. viii., 1-14.
- Saturday, Jan. 11.—iii., 13-21.
- Sunday, Jan. 12.—I. Cor. xii., 4-13.

Lesson Text.

(1) And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. (2) And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. (3) And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (5) And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. (6) Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. (7) And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? (8) And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? (9) Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, (10) Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, (11) Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

Suggestions.

The disciples waited on God for ten days. There were a hundred and twenty of them, (Acts i., 14-15), both men and women. Those were days of great preparation and searching of hearts. It meant a great deal for that little company to come apart from the world and wait obediently for the fulfilment of the Father's promise, it took great faith, too. Yet without that obedience and faith they could have obtained nothing from God.

They needed the ten days; in them they could review the past and see wherein they had failed, probably as Peter looked back over the previous six weeks he thought with bitter sorrow of his weakness in denying his Lord and prayed earnestly for power to stand true and to proclaim boldly his belief in the risen Saviour. So, also, the others must have prayed each for the power in the place they knew themselves to be weak. Those ten days were given them not only that they might confess their sins and get the way perfectly clear between God and themselves, but also that they might get right with their neighbors. Those who hold jealousy or a grudge against their neighbors or cherish pride or an evil spirit of any kind in their hearts, are not ready for Pentecost. We must be willing to give up everything before we can receive the Holy Spirit.

The word Pentecost means 'fiftieth,' it was a Jewish feast of the first fruits (Deut. xvi., 10) or harvest, held fifty days after the Pass-over. Our Lord was crucified at the Pass-over feast time which had for hundreds of years typified this great sacrifice of the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world (John i., 29). He rose from the dead and for forty days went in and out among

his disciples, then he ascended into heaven. On the day of Pentecost Christ presented to God, as it were, the first fruits of his earthly toil, the little band of noble men and women who had given up all to follow him, and who were prepared, as far as in them lay, to proclaim his truth to the uttermost ends of the earth. To show his acceptance of the offering, God sent his fire down, that each one of these souls might be a living sacrifice, to burn and shine for him, and to be lights in the world, their lives constantly pointing to that great Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John i., 9), our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Fire is one of the most striking symbols of the blazing righteousness of God (Heb. xii., 29; Mal. iv., 1-2; Zech. ii., 5; Ex. iii., 2-4). When John the Baptist was preaching the immediate coming of Christ he promised that whereas his baptism was with water, the Coming One would baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire (Luke iii., 16). This promise was literally fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, for the fire of God descended in the likeness of flaming tongues and lighted upon the hundred and twenty disciples, men and women, alike, flaming, but not consuming, just as the Lord Jehovah in ancient days appeared to Moses in the bush which was all in a flame but did not burn up at all. The fire of the Holy Ghost burns up sin and dross making the soul pure and good like gold tried by the fire. Gold loses nothing by being put in the fire, but it gains purity by having the dross burned out.

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost. God's gifts are boundless, we set the limits by the measure of our own capacity to receive. God wants to give this his best gift to every one of his children. Many Christians to-day are seeking this gift and wondering why God does not send it to them. They must first be sure that they are living in perfect obedience to God and then obey him still farther, not by continuing to plead, but by simply receiving the Holy Spirit into their hearts by faith, and then, recognizing his presence there by faith whether there is any particular feeling or not. Some natures are not emotional nor given to ecstatic joy, but the presence of the Comforter may always be recognized by the deep calm inward peace in which the soul rests. Open your heart to God, ask him to cleanse it and to make you willing to give up everything that would hinder the coming of the Holy Spirit, then take him at his word (John xiv., 16-17; xv., 26-27; Acts i., 8). Believe and keep on believing.

Questions.

- How many disciples were present at Pentecost?
- In what visible form did the Holy Spirit come?
- What did this typify?
- What power was then given to the disciples?
- How did they use this power?
- Have you received the Holy Spirit?

C. E. Topic.

Sun., Jan. 12.—Topic.—Entering the Kingdom.—John iii., 1-8; v., 24.

Junior C. E. Topic.

ARE YOU MR. PLIABLE?

- Mon., Jan. 6.—Yield not to sinners.—Prov. i., 10.
- Tues., Jan. 7.—A constant heart.—Ps. lvii., 7.
- Wed., Jan. 8.—Established by God.—II. Thess. iii., 3.
- Thu., Jan. 9.—Unmovable.—I. Cor. xv., 58.
- Fri., Jan. 10.—Stand fast.—I. Cor. xvi., 13.
- Sat., Jan. 11.—Tossed to and fro.—Eph. iv., 14.
- Sun., Jan. 12.—Topic.—Pilgrim's Progress I. Are you Mr. Pliable? Phil. iii., 13-14; Jas. i., 6-8.

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How I Was Cured of the Tobacco Habit.

I feel it my privilege, as well as my duty, to give my experience for the benefit of those boys who are struggling against tobacco. I commenced when a boy, and used tobacco for fifteen years. After I was converted, I felt I could not thank the Lord for tobacco, and so gave it up. I stopped using it, but had such a hankering after it, especially when I saw others using it, and had such a sore mouth, that really I was in misery.

I kept on reading God's Word, and seeing that great promise written in Mark xi., 24, where it reads, 'What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.' I just got down on my knees and asked God to take away the desire for tobacco, and, thank the Lord, he did so. I am an old man now, and from that day to this I have not had the least desire for tobacco. I counted up what it had cost me in the year. It was about the price of an acre of wheat, which was worth something fifty years ago, and I gave the money to the missionary cause.—P. Leinster, in 'Christian Guardian.'

Cigarette Smoking and Crime.

At the recent Charities Conference in Cincinnati, E. George Torrance, superintendent of the Illinois Reformatory, made the following startling statements from his own experience:

On the first day of this month we had 278 boys between the ages of ten and fifteen. Of 63 of this number with the average age of 12, 58 were cigarette smokers; of 133 of them with the average age of 14, 125 were cigarette smokers; 82 were 15 years of age, of whom 73 were cigarette smokers.

This demonstrates that 92 percent of the whole number were in the habit of smoking cigarettes at the time they committed the crimes for which they were sent to the reformatory; but even more astonishing is the fact that 85 percent had become so addicted to their use as to be classed at the time as 'cigarette fiends.' The use of intoxicating liquor is to be condemned; it destroys manhood, destroys homes, beggars wives and children, and fills jails, penitentiaries, and reformatories, but not to one-tenth the extent of the cigarette does it start the boy from ten to fifteen on the way to become a criminal.—'Michigan Advocate.'

An English Specialist.

'Do you know how many hours a day Dr. B. works?' a hospital nurse asked me the other day.

'No,' I answered; 'but if, as you say, he is making several thousand pounds, I suppose he takes things easily.'

'Easily!' she exclaimed. 'Do you know he never does less than sixteen hours a day, counting railway journeys. Operation follows operation; and I have seen him start off by a night train after twelve hours here, and get home next morning, after attending to a case in the country, ready to go his usual rounds. And,' she added, 'he will tell you his secret is never to take any stimulant.'

The next day I asked him for myself, and his answer I shall not forget: 'But for my habit of abstinence, I could not do half the work I can now manage without fatigue of brain and body.'—'Day of Days.'

A Mechanic's New Idea.

A mechanic about thirty years of age, having a wife and four children, was wont to step into a beer-saloon close by twice a day and pay five cents each for two glasses of beer. For many months he did this, under the impression that it was necessary for a hard working man. But one day, while toil-