

THE PENTECOSTAL EFFUSION OF THE SPIRIT.

BY J. TEAZ.

The record of the above event is given us in the opening verses of the second chapter of "the Acts of the Apostles."

The *time* was Pentecost, or the "Feast of Weeks." This feast was intended to commemorate the giving of the law at Mount Sinai; it was also the harvest festival, and as such was the most largely attended of all the Jewish feasts.

The *place* is supposed by some to have been in the upper room where the last supper had been eaten with the disciples; others however think it was in a side chamber of the Temple,—as Josephus says there were thirty such large chambers adjoining the main building. This latter view seems to be the most probable, chiefly on account of the number of disciples present (120) and the hour of the day, which was nine o'clock, the hour of morning prayer, when pious Israelites were expected to be in close proximity to the Temple.

The fact of the Spirit being given to the disciples was not in itself so very remarkable: such a thing had been common in old Testament times although not to the same degree. One of the accompanying manifestations however attracted the attention of the gathering multitudes, and stands forth unparalleled in sacred history. The disciples "began to speak with *other* tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." At the tower of Babel, as a result and punishment of sin, language was confused so that man could not hold converse with his fellow; while at Pentecost it would seem as if that barrier was removed, or at least in the case of the disciples neutralized.

The multitudes were amazed; some honestly enquired what it all meant; others, mocking, said "these men are filled with new wine." Men to-day read the record with somewhat similar results. The sceptic would have us believe that it is all a myth, or a mistake on the part of the writer of the Acts, while some professing Christians explaining it on rationalistic grounds come almost to a similar conclusion. To us, however, believing in the inspiration of Scripture, such speculations have no weight. The narrative is simple and explicit. The disciples were all Gallileans, thus confined to one country, and that a country which was proverbial for the ignorance of its inhabitants; then there were men present from all parts of the known world; twelve or fifteen different nationalities being expressly mentioned, all of whom heard the disciples speak in the various languages. Such evidence cannot be set aside by any legitimate method of criticism. The gift of tongues however is only one of the minor details, and, indeed it is questionable whether in the *same kind* it was ever afterwards exercised by any of the Apostles. This was unnecessary for the Greek language was at that time the common medium of intercourse among the nations, and was almost universally spoken in the countries where the gospel was first preached. The Pentecostal effusion itself as an *event* and a *fact* rising up like a great pillar on the boundary line between the two dispensations. This is the theme which demands consideration.