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CONSUMPTION

The Sabbath-School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Third Quarter—Lesson II.—July 10.

THE DESCENT OF THE
SPIRIT.—Acts 2:1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—When he, the
Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide
you into all truth.—John 16:13.

WAITING FOR THE PROMISES OF
THE FATHER.—Ver. 1. Who. There
were 120 disciples (1:15), the more
devoted and earnest of the believers
on Christ, most of them
Galileans (2:7). This num-
ber included the 11 apostles (1:13),
the brethren of Jesus (1:14), who
seem at this time to have become
believers, though formerly they did
not accept him (John 7:5), and the
women who were the devoted fol-
lowers of Jesus. Among them were
Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary
Magdalene, Mary, wife of Cleopas,
Joanna, wife of Chuza, Susanna,
Salome, Mary and Martha of
Bethany.

Where. In the upper room in
Jerusalem, a large room like a hall,
used for special purposes. It was
doubtless the room where the dis-
ciples were when Jesus appeared to
them after his resurrection.

How long. Here they remained
from the ascension, 40 days after
the resurrection, till Pentecost, 50
days after the Passover, counting
from Saturday before Christ's resur-
rection. Thus the time would be
about ten days.

What doing. In prayer and
supplication because, although the
gift was promised, the way to the
blessing was through prayer. The
promise encouraged not idleness and
inactivity, but earnestness in prayer.

The reason for prayer is a condi-
tion of the best blessings lies not in
God's unwillingness to give, but (1)
there is need of strengthening and
increasing our faith. (2) Prayer
intensifies our desire and our appre-
ciation of the gift. (3) Prayer pre-
pares us to receive the gift, in far
larger measure than would other-
wise be possible. (4) Prayer makes
us realize that the blessing is a gift
from God, and thus brings us into
closer relation with him.

THE PROMISE FULFILLED.—THE
HOLY SPIRIT BESTOWED.—Vers. 1-3.
And when the day of Pentecost.
The second of the three great Jewish
feasts, the Passover being first, and
the third the feast of Tabernacles,
in which all the males were required
to go up to Jerusalem. Pentecost
is the Greek name of the feast, de-
rived from Pentecostos, fiftieth;
because it was kept on the fiftieth
day after the Passover sabbath.
Among the Hebrews it was called
the Day of First Fruits, the Feast
of Weeks, because seven weeks later
than the Passover, and the Feast of
Harvest; i. e., of Wheat Harvest.

Why this took place on the Day
of Pentecost. (1) Because at this
feast, being in the summer, greater
numbers were present in Jerusalem
than at any other season, from all
parts of the world. From a census
taken in the time of Nero more than
2,700,000 were gathered at the
Passover, and still greater numbers
came to Pentecost. Thus the good
gift would most easily be carried
back to all parts of the world. (2)
It was the "feast of harvest, the
feast of the firstfruits," and so it
was meet that it should witness the
first great gathering of the fields
that were white to harvest, when
3000 were converted in a day. (3)
It was one on which, more than any
other, the Israelite was to remember
that he had been a bondsman in the
land of Egypt, and had been led
forth to freedom; and it was,
therefore, a fit time for the gift of
the Spirit, which was to guide the
Church into the truth which should
make men free indeed. (4) Accord-
ing to Jewish tradition, the Law
from Sinai was given on this day.
It was a day of revelation from God;
and therefore especially fitting for
this new gift from heaven of the
Holy Spirit, who reveals the truth
and implants the new heart that
enables men to obey the law as
naturally as good fruit grows on a
good tree. (5) By the presence of
Jews from all lands, it commemor-
ates the universal brotherhood of
Israel. Was fully come. Soon after
dawn, some time before nine o'clock,
the third hour. They were come.
The 120 mentioned above. With
one accord in one place. Doubtless
in the upper room where the apostles
abode. And suddenly. Without
any previous indication. They were
expecting the fulfilment of Christ's
promise, but in what manner it
would be fulfilled they did not know.
There came a sound from heaven. A
sensible, outward expression of the
spiritual reality, so that there could
be no mistake, no uncertainty. As
of a rushing mighty wind. It is
not said that there was any wind,
but only a sound as of a wind. The
audible sign filling the room an-
nounced the Power represented by
it as doing the same. The wind is
a symbol of the Holy Spirit. (1)
It is invisible. (2) It is powerful.
(3) It is secret, hidden in its action.
It is all-pervasive. The air pene-
trates even the hardest rocks. (5)

It is the means of life. It filled all
the house. As a token that it filled
every part and faculty of the soul,
which is the temple of the Holy
Ghost, and that it would extend
over the whole earth. And there
appeared. After the audible sign
immediately follows the visible.
Cloven tongues like as of fire. Ob-
serve, not tongues of fire, but ton-
gues of a fiery, burning appearance,
though without real heat. Plump-
tre likens it to a shower of fiery
tongues. And it sat upon each of
them. There appears to have been
no discrimination between the
apostles and the others, nor between
the men and the women. The ap-
pearance was not a momentary
flash; the influence was to be per-
manent.

The Symbol of the Flame. This
symbol of the Holy Spirit represent-
ed the light which should shine into
each mind, revealing the truth of
God. The light which the disciples
should impart to the world. Light
cannot be hidden. If it ceases to
shine, it ceases to exist. The burn-
ing energy and zeal with which the
disciples should be subdued. The
comfort, warmth, cheer, life, joy,
blessing, which the Holy Spirit
would impart. The resistless power
with which the Spirit consumes
errors, and burns up evil. It is a
purifying, cleansing power.

The Symbol of the Tongue repre-
sented the means by which they
were to spread the Gospel. A ton-
gue of fire—man's voice, God's truth;
man's speech, the Holy Spirit's in-
spiration. It was manifold to ex-
press the comprehensive character
of the gift of the Spirit; the Spirit
of God was a gift designed for all
countries, nations and tongues.
There was one Spirit, but many
tongues.

THE EFFECTS OF THE OUTPOURING
OF THE SPIRIT.—Vers. 4-12. And
they were all filled with the Holy
Spirit. Implies a reception from
the Spirit of extraordinary powers,
in addition to ordinary sanctifying
grace. That the Holy Spirit was
not now for the first time bestowed
upon men is plain from the fact that
the same language here employed is
used respecting Elisabeth, Zacharias
and John the Baptist; and the Old
Testament repeatedly makes men-
tion of the influence of the Holy
Spirit upon the minds of the pro-
phets and others. That which was
peculiar in this event is that now
for the first time all were filled with
the Holy Ghost, not merely the
apostles; and the influence was not
occasional and transient, but abid-
ing. But the chief difference is the
abundance and power with which
the Holy Spirit is now given, thus
characterizing the Gospel times as
the dispensation of the Spirit. For-
merly like the early dawn, light,
now like the full splendor and
power of the day; formerly like the
first early fruits, now like an abun-
dant harvest. Began to speak with
other tongues. Other than their
mother tongue. This showed what
had been meant by the promise of
speaking with new tongues.

What was the Gift of Tongues?
The disciples began to speak in
various languages; viz., the languages
of the nations below enumerated,
and perhaps others. (1) Was this
speaking in various languages a gift
bestowed on the disciples for their
use afterwards, or was it a mere
sign, their utterance being only as
they were mouthpieces of the Holy
Spirit? The latter seems certainly
to have been the case, for Peter makes
no allusion to the things said; there
is no trace whatever of such a power
(speaking in various languages) be-
ing possessed or exercised by the
apostles; there is no need of such a
power, for the Greek, or at most the
Greek and Latin, was the medium
of communication throughout the
known world; Paul, who spoke with
tongues more than all could not
understand the dialect of Lycaonia.
I believe, therefore, the event relat-
ed in our text to have been a sudden
and powerful inspiration of the Holy
Spirit, by which the disciples utter-
ed, not of their minds, but as mouth-
pieces of the Spirit, the praises of
God in various languages, hitherto,
and possibly at the time itself, un-
known to them. And there were
dwelling in Jerusalem. Permanent
residents and pilgrims who had come
up to the feast. Devout men. Truly
religious men, waiting for the ap-
pearing of the promised Messiah.
Out of every nation under heaven.
Only a very small portion of the
Jewish people lived in Palestine
during the times of our Lord and
his Apostles; by far the largest
number were natives of other lands,
dwelling in large colonies or in small
communities. Now when this was
noised abroad. It must mean either
the sound of the rushing, mighty
wind, or the sound of the disciples
talking in the various languages.
Most modern interpreters regard it
as the sound made by the coming
of the Spirit. The multitude came
together, and were confounded.
Either the individuals were per-
plexed, or, more probably, the whole
assembly were thrown into excite-
ment, discussing the meaning of the
singular phenomenon. Every man
heard them speak in his own language

(or dialect). The meaning is,
not that all the disciples spoke all
the dialects, but that each one spoke
in some one, so that all were heard.
It would seem that each apostle was
speaking to a group, or to individu-
als. Are not all these Galileans. All
the eleven apostles were inhabitants
of Galilee. Provincials, notoriously
rough and usually of little culture,
were men most unlikely to be ac-
quainted with foreign idioms. In
our own tongue wherein we were born.
Persian, Syriac, Aramaic, Arabic,
Coptic, Greek and Latin were lan-
guages used by the inhabitants of
the places named. The Gospel be-
longed to all languages, and makes
all peoples one. Parthians, Medes,
Elamites. In the Persian kingdom.
Mesopotamia. The country lying
between the river Tigris and the
Euphrates. Here were captives
from Israel, and the Jewish captives
were left by Nebuchadnezzar.
Judea. Judea appears in the cata-
logue of nations, because St. Luke
desired to enumerate all the lan-
guages spoken that day by the dis-
ciples on whom the Spirit had fallen.
Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia,
Pamphylia. These were all coun-
tries within Asia Minor. Egypt.
The vast numbers of Jewish resi-
dents in Egypt had necessitated the
translation of the Hebrew Scriptures
into a language they could under-
stand. Two-fifths of the population
of the great city Alexandria were
said to have been Jews. The parts
of Libya about Cyrene. Libya
lay to the west of Egypt. Cyrene
was a large city of Libya, where the
Jews, amounted to a fourth part of
the whole population. Strangers
from Rome. These were, no doubt,
a Latin-speaking people. Jews and
proselytes. Jews by birth, and
proselyte converts from heathenism.
The numbers of these proselytes
were very great in all the large
cities, and especially in Rome.
Crete. Inhabitants of Crete, now
called Candia, a large and well-
known island in the Mediterranean
Sea. Arabians. Large numbers of
Jews were settled in Arabia. The
wonderful works of God. The dis-
ciples praised God in these different
languages, thus offering to him, on
this birthday of the new creation,
the homage of all nations. Were
all amazed, and were in doubt. They
did not know what to make of what
they saw and heard.

This was the birthday of the
Christian Church.
1. Some believed. Their souls
were prepared to understand the
good news, and were open to re-
ceive the truth.
2. Some mocked. Such is always
the case in a revival of religion.
3. There was a marvellous change
in the disciples. Their whole nature
was transformed. Peter, speaking
to this crowd, seems hardly a rela-
tion of the man who, skulking
around the trial, thrice denied his
Lord.
4. There came a wonderful power
upon the people, leading 3000 of
them to become disciples in one day.
Such a power has been often felt
since, and nothing can account for
it but the Holy Spirit of God.

PRACTICAL HINTS.
The condition of the descent of
the Holy Ghost with converting
power in the Church is ever the
same as at his first coming.
The gift is to all, for all should
have part in the work.
The gift is adapted to all. It
speaks to each one's soul, each one's
needs.

The disciples were first enlight-
ed and blessed, and through the
people.

The blessing came upon the dis-
ciples, to those who were prepared
by living up to the light they had.
The baptism of the Spirit is the
way of power. The weak, the un-
learned, the poor become mighty.

The W. C. T. U. Column will
found on page 2.

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