

Lesson 127

The Pentecostal Revival

(1901-)

Many church people became dissatisfied and uneasy in the closing years of the nineteenth century. They saw that the professing church was too formal and that it had lost its power. Worldliness and lack of faith were prevalent. Some of the people began to pray for more spiritual food and for God to make a change in the churches and in their individual lives. They did not know just what to pray for, but they recognized their need of special help. (See Malachi 3:16-18; Matthew 5:13-16; 25:1-13; Luke 11:1-13.)

In 1900, a small group of Bible students and their teacher at a small Bible school in Topeka, Kansas, read in the Book of Acts how God poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost. They believed God would give them a similar experience, so they began to fast and pray. They met for a New Year's Eve watchnight service. On the first day of the new century, a young woman began to speak with tongues as evidence that God had given her the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Mighty manifestations of God's power were present among them. (See Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:1-4.)

Later, others spoke with tongues as inspired by the Spirit, and others gave the interpretations of the messages. In each case there was a deepening religious experience, new power, zeal, joy, and love. The new Pentecostal revival then spread to Galena, Kansas, and afterward to Joplin, Missouri. Then, a great stirring in Houston, Texas, followed. Smaller revivals broke out in other parts of Kansas, Missouri, and Texas, as well as in Arkansas and Oklahoma.

A group of people in Los Angeles, California, heard that God was again pouring out the gift of the Holy Ghost. They began to gather and pray. W. J. Seymour, a humble black preacher from Houston, Texas, had been invited to Los Angeles. Even though he had not yet received his own baptism, he told the people what God was doing. He met opposition, however, and church doors were closed against him. Therefore, he and a group of both white and black believers met in prayer in cottage meetings. On April 9, 1906, God poured out the Holy Ghost in a marvelous way. One after another spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The believers then met in an old livery stable at 312 Azusa Street. It was only an old, white-washed wooden building, but God's Spirit was there, and scores of people received the Holy Spirit as in the days of the apostles. Preachers and other people from around the world came to inquire and pray. They, too, received the baptism of the Spirit and went home to preach the blessed message.

In the years 1906 and 1907, news of the Pentecostal revival came to most nations of the world. The British Isles heard the message; hundreds of Pentecostal missions are now scattered over Wales, England, and Scotland. Scandinavian countries heard the good tidings. Central Europe and the Balkan states were slower in receiving the message, but the Word went forth now with good results, although the believers suffered real persecution at times. Russia has its band of Pentecostal overcomers who will receive the crown of life from Jesus on that day. Of recent years, there have been encouraging results in France, Italy, and other nations in Western Europe.

The Holy Ghost outpouring came early to India, with marvelous signs. Some reported seeing fire above the heads of young girls as they knelt in prayer. Many people in China received the Spirit and spoke in beautiful tongues, inspired by the power of God. Missionaries labored faithfully in Japan; often, whole families of Japanese people accepted Jesus and received the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit visited Egypt as well. A great revival placed the Pentecostal work in that land

prepared for the ministry under his father's direction.

In 1811, he married Margaret Brown at West Liberty, Virginia. He stayed at the home of his father-in-law, who later deeded him the home property. Campbell took steps to become naturalized and also began a series of preaching tours.

In 1812, he took the lead in organizing the Disciples of Christ (Christian Church), based on the doctrine that the Bible, and especially the New Testament, should be the only creed. Water baptism by immersion was adopted as the only scriptural mode. Campbell's father, mother, wife, sister, and others joined the movement. Campbell aimed to restore primitive Christianity as the way to unite all Christians, which, he contended, was essential for the conversion of the world. The Lord's Supper was observed as a memorial on the first day of every week. (See John 17:20-21; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-26.)

The Baptists and the Disciples of Christ received considerable opposition from other churches at that time because of their insistence upon complete immersion in water as the only scriptural mode of baptism. The Disciples of Christ, or Christian Church, today forms one of the larger Protestant denominations in the United States.

William Miller (1782-1849)

William Miller was born in Massachusetts. He obtained most of his education through the books he purchased with the income he earned by chopping wood. He became a farmer in Vermont in 1803 and moved to Low Hampton, New York, in 1816. He was captain of a company of militiamen in the War of 1812. Miller became a member of the Baptist church at Low Hampton. He became convinced, about 1818, that the second coming of Christ to the earth would occur in his lifetime. In 1831, he began to lecture on Christ's soon coming to the earth, setting the date at 1843 and later at 1844. The time came, but Christ did not appear. Many of his followers became discouraged and joined other churches, but about fifty thousand remained under his direction. Miller assured them, from the Bible, that the coming of Jesus was near, although he made a mistake in setting the date.

The Adventists organized as a sect in 1845. Today there are six branches of this church. The most numerous is the Seventh-day Adventist, followed by the Advent Christians, or First Day Adventists. The Seventh-day Adventists believe in strict observance of the Sabbath, or seventh day, and obedience to the Ten Commandments. They also forbid the eating of unclean meats, such as pork. They deny natural immortality and declare that immortality can only be gained when Jesus comes to gather His people in the air. They believe sinners will be destroyed in the lake of fire, not punished there for eternity. Finally, they believe the earth will be desolate for a thousand years while Jesus and the saints are in heaven. (See Malachi 4:1; Romans 6:23; I Corinthians 15:50-54; Revelation 20.)

Lesson 128

Doctrine of the Early Pentecostal Revival

The Pentecostal people came from many churches including Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Christian, Adventist, and Catholic. They carried many ideas into the Pentecostal movement from their original denominations. Some beliefs, though, were shared in common by all Pentecostal saints. People who came directly into Pentecost from the world readily accepted the teachings presented them by their pastors and teachers.

People came for the main purpose of being filled with the Holy Ghost as in Acts 2:4, 10:44-46, and 19:6. They considered the baptism of the Spirit both an essential and a privilege.

Each person who received the Spirit spoke with tongues as evidence that God had granted him the baptism or gift of the Spirit. Genuine repentance was necessary before God gave the baptism to the seeker. (See Mark 1:14-15; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:38.) The seeker believed in the cleansing of his sins through the blood of Jesus, which was shed for him. (See John 3:16; I Peter 1:18-20; I Peter 2:21-25; I John 1:7-9.)

Baptism by immersion followed confession of Christ and repentance. (See Acts 2:38; Mark 1:9-11; Matthew 28:19-20.) In some cases, people received the Holy Spirit before baptism in water. They were baptized afterward, as was the household of Cornelius (Acts 10:45-48). At first, the usual formula for baptism in water was in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Light on baptism in Jesus' name had not been given to more than a very few.

They anointed the sick and prayed for them to be healed. (See James 5:14-15.) And God healed numbers of people of various diseases and ailments through their prayers. They also recognized the value of fasting as an aid to prayer. (See Matthew 17:18-21.)

Furthermore, they regarded holiness in life as essential for salvation (I Peter 1:13-16), and they believed that the fruit of the Spirit was part of the saints' heritage (Galatians 5:22-24). The early Pentecostals forsook the pleasures of the world that they might find true joy in serving Jesus. (See I John 2:15-17.) God granted the different gifts of the Spirit to the believers, as He willed. (See I Corinthians 12:1-11.)

As a group, the Pentecostal people were happy and anointed of the Lord, serving Jesus with joy and zeal. They witnessed of Jesus' love to others and met often for worship and praise. One of their favorite verses of Scripture, next to Acts 2:4, was Hebrews 13:8. The Bible was their supreme authority; they believed that the Book of Acts was a true account of the early church and a pattern for the people of God to follow. (See II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:16-21.) They believed the Tribulation was coming to the earth but that Jesus would come and take His people out of it. He would descend from heaven; the graves of departed saints would open, and the living saints would be caught up with them in the air to meet Jesus, their Lord, and they would be given immortality. (See I Thessalonians 4:13-18.)

between 1912 and 1914. Then, in April 1927, revival began in Assiout Orphanage. Hundreds of children were blessed.

The gospel call reached the people of South Africa. Many of the English, the Dutch, and the black Africans gladly accepted God's best gift. Hundreds of Zulus were filled with the Holy Spirit. The Zulus historically were one of the most powerful tribes in Africa. But the Lord planted a precious work among them. The repentant and baptized Zulus showed a most humble and self-sacrificing spirit, often giving much help to spread the gospel of Jesus.

God raised up workers who pushed into India, China, Australia, the Philippines, South America, and even into the neglected places of the United States and Canada.

It is apparent that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). Wherever He sees a hungry, yielded heart, He fills, and the good work is going on.

Some Spirit-filled people have grown cold or indifferent; some have gone back to formal churches or into the world. Others, though, have kept their love for Jesus, realizing they must keep true to the end to receive the reward promised by our Savior. Persecution, trials, temptation, hard times, and discouragement have strengthened them. Many of the older preachers have died; God is calling new workers to replace them and enlarge the work. Misunderstanding and division cannot permanently hold back God's power and blessing. He is illuminating His Word and giving new visions. He is empowering the saints to endure trials and ministering a deeper spiritual peace and blessing to them. God will have a people; the good work goes on; the Good Shepherd is leading His flock.

Lesson 129

The Jesus Name People

(1914-)

When Jesus was with His disciples, He told them He had many things to say that they were not yet able to bear and He promised that the Spirit would guide them into all truth (John 16:12-13). Before Jesus left the earth, He commanded His disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19). He also said that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name (Luke 24:47).

On the Day of Pentecost, when Peter preached under the anointing of the Spirit, he commanded the Jews to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38). Moreover, the people of Samaria were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:16). Later, Peter baptized the household of Cornelius in the name of the Lord, shortly after he had explained that Jesus Christ was Lord of all and that God granted the remission of sins in His name (Acts 10:36, 43, 47-48). Several years later, Paul rebaptized the disciples of John the Baptist from Ephesus in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:5).

Not a single verse in the Bible describes anyone being baptized using the formula "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Baptism was always performed in the name of Jesus Christ or the Lord Jesus. From a careful study of the Book of Acts we conclude that the name to be invoked in water baptism is the name of Jesus.

Scripture commands us to do everything, whether in word or in action, in the name of the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:17). Furthermore, Scripture declares that the whole family in heaven is named after the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:14-15). And we are told that God has given Jesus a name which is above every name and that every knee shall bow to the name of Jesus and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to God's glory (Philippians 2:9-11). Finally, Matthew 12:21 reminds us that the Gentiles shall trust in Jesus' name. There is only one name above all others, and that is the name of Jesus. It is a privilege and an honor to be baptized in Jesus' name.

Jesus foretold that His followers would suffer persecution and that others would hate them above all people for His name's sake (Matthew 24:9; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:17).

In the early days of the Pentecostal revival, some believers received the light on baptism in Jesus' name. Most, however, were content with the formula of the trinity, or baptism in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. As time went on, these people began to regard with suspicion those who advocated baptism in Jesus' name. Finally in 1915, some of the saints who refused to give up their faith in Jesus' name baptism began to meet in churches of their own. There they enjoyed spiritual liberty. The Jesus Name saints were especially numerous in the South, including Texas and Louisiana; in the Midwest, including Indiana and Illinois; in California; and in the Northwest. Soon the movement grew strong in other parts of the United States and in Canada.

We believe that water baptism in the name of Jesus is one of the latest truths God has restored to prominence. All churches should consider this question with prayer and a careful study of the Bible. The name of Jesus is helpful in resisting the attacks of Satan as the Tribulation draws nearer.

There is one God, who is one Spirit. (See Deuteronomy 6:4; John 4:24; Ephesians 4:4-6; II Corinthians 3:17.) God is invisible (I John 4:12), and because of His love, He desired to reveal Himself to the world. He did this through His Son, Jesus (John 3:16; II Corinthians 5:19). Jesus was born in Bethlehem and suffered on the cross, that we might be redeemed from sin and death. (See Luke 2:4-21; 23:33-38; Romans 5:8-11; I Corinthians 2:2; II Corinthians 5:17-21; Galatians 6:14.)

Lesson 130

A More Excellent Way

God has done wonderful things for His people since the days of Martin Luther. He has shown us justification by faith in Jesus, water baptism in the name of Jesus, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. He has also widely restored healing for the sick through prayer. He has shown us how to live a holy life by constant dependence on the Lord Jesus and how we may be relieved from worry and strain by committing our way to Him. He has revealed to us the beauty of living in unity through the Spirit and how our united prayers help one another. He has shown His love for the weak saint and the backslider. He has given us the bright hope of escaping the terrible Tribulation soon to come upon this earth and of meeting Jesus in the air when He comes to take His people.

We thank God for these blessed truths. Many people suffered and died that we might have this heritage. We praise Jesus our Lord who died on the cross and arose again to defeat the power of Satan and bring us eternal life.

Isaiah received a new vision of the kindness of the Lord. He said, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation" (Isaiah 12:2). Then he told of the joy and praise that God will give His people. He told of the Savior who was to come with the good tidings of peace; he told Jerusalem to sing and prophesied that all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. (See Isaiah 52:7-10.) He followed with a description of the lowly and suffering Savior with His marred visage and how He carries our griefs and sorrows. He saw the final triumph of the meek and gentle Messiah. Our hearts rejoice as we read this beautiful description of our Jesus. (See Isaiah 52:13-15; 53:1-12.)

Jesus revealed the Father's love for sinners and backsliders in the parables of the lost sheep, of the lost coin, and of the prodigal son. (See Luke 15.) In the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (tax collector), he revealed that God hates pride and loves a humble, contrite person. (See Luke 18:9-14.)

A lawyer asked Jesus to tell him what the greatest commandment is. Jesus said we must love God and we must love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:35-40). Jesus explained what real love for our neighbor means in the story of the good Samaritan who helped a wounded man on the road to Jericho. A priest and a Levite passed by the poor, injured stranger, but the despised Samaritan had love in his heart for humanity. (See Luke 10:30-37.)

Paul said, "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way" (I Corinthians 12:31). Our knowledge of Bible doctrine, our experience, our gifts and blessings are of no avail if we lack divine love. We must keep the compassion, which Jesus gives, within our hearts. It is easy to get hard and critical. We live in violent, deceitful, and troublesome times. But one day Jesus will come, and our earthly troubles will be over. Then we shall be glad for the little acts of kindness and the encouraging words we gave our neighbors and friends. We do not know the load of sorrow our fellowman is carrying. But we can direct him to the great burden bearer, Jesus, as we have the opportunity.

A spirit of revenge is hurtful and unwise for anyone, especially for a Christian. It is better to suffer wrong than to plot vengeance, even though the one who wronged us might prosper. Our Father knows all, and the right will win in due time. (See Matthew 5:43-48; 6:9-15.)

Jesus said, "These things I command you, that ye love one another" (John 15:17). Peter wrote, "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (I Peter 2:17). Jude said, "Keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21). John declared, "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (I John 4:11). The world's spirit is greedy, hard, and possessive; Jesus shows us a more excellent way, even the way of the cross, which leads to life and peace.