

**SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS ON  
SELECTIONS FROM THE ACTS  
AND EPISTLES, TENTH SERIES, NO.  
1-10, SEPTEMBER, 1881 - JUNE,  
1882; LESSONS I-XLIII**

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**GEORGE FISK PIPER**

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ON SELECTIONS FROM

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*Prepared by  
George Fisk Piper*

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PRICE, TWENTY-FIVE CENTS.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THIS volume is simply what its title indicates,— a series of Sunday-School Lessons on Selections from the Acts and Epistles. The first half of the book is mainly historical ; the last half chiefly practical. Both portions will be found interesting and profitable in proportion as teachers and scholars give them study and thought. Neither portion will be of much use if teachers and scholars come to the class without preparation.

G. F. P.

Boston, May 22, 1882.



# SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS.

Tenth Series.  
No. 1.

SEPTEMBER, 1881.

Lessons  
I-IV.

## LESSON I.

### THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

Acts II. 1-13.

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Father, let thy Spirit holy  
Come this day unto my heart;  
Make me loving, pure, and lowly,  
And thy precious truth impart.

**GOLDEN TEXT:** If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.—LUKE xi. 13.

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1. What three great feasts did the Jews observe at Jerusalem every year?

*The feast of the Passover, the feast of Pentecost, and the feast of Tabernacles.*

2. At which of these feasts was Jesus put to death?

*At the feast of the Passover.*

3. What took place at the feast of Pentecost, fifty days after?

*The disciples of Jesus felt the influence of the Holy Spirit as they never had before.*

4. What is the Holy Spirit?

*It is the Spirit of God.*

5. Has this Spirit always been in the world?

*Yes, it has always been in the world, and it has always acted to some extent on the hearts of men.*

6. Who had more of this Spirit than any one else who has lived on earth?

7. How can we gain more of the Holy Spirit?



1. How many apostles did Jesus choose?
2. Which of them proved to be a bad man?
3. What became of him? Matt. xxvii. 3-10; Acts i. 18, 19.
4. Who was chosen to fill his place, and in what manner? — Acts i. 15-17; 21-26.
5. What three great feasts did the Jews observe at Jerusalem every year?
6. What account can you give of these feasts?
7. At which of these feasts was Jesus put to death?
8. What is said to have occurred at the next feast of Pentecost? Acts ii. 1-4.
9. What do you understand the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, to be?
10. What is the difference between Unitarian and Trinitarian views of the Holy Spirit?
11. Has the Holy Spirit always been to some extent in the world?
12. Can you give any reason why its influence was felt in a remarkable degree not long after Jesus left the earth?
13. What account is given of "speaking with tongues" on the day of Pentecost? 5-13.
14. Will you mention some of the explanations which have been given of this account?
15. What, in your opinion, is the true explanation of it?

**NOTES.** Acts ii. 1. "And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place." — Revised Translation. "And on the day of Pentecost they were all together in one place." — Noyes. "The Holy Spirit is given not to the contentious and ungodly, but to those who dwell together in unity, and continue in supplication and prayer."

2. *And it filled all the house.* "It" refers to the sound, not to the wind.

3. *Cloven tongues like as of fire.* "Tongues parting asunder, like as of fire." — Revised Translation. "Tongues of fire distributing themselves." — Noyes.

4. *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." — Revised Translation. The words "ghost" and "spirit" formerly had the same meaning, but the word "ghost" has become restricted in its meaning, and is not now applicable to the spirit of a living person, or to the spirit of God. "I see no warrant

in Scripture for the very common impression that the Holy Spirit was now first given to the church. The same language here employed is used respecting Elizabeth, Zacharias, and John the Baptist, and the Old Testament repeatedly makes mention of the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of the prophets and others."—Abbott. "The human heart is never empty. In the same proportion in which it is delivered from the love of self and of sin it is filled with the Holy Spirit."

6. *Now when this was noised abroad.* "And when this sound was heard the multitude came together."—Revised Translation.

9-11. *Parthians and Medes.* In the enumeration of countries the writer begins in the northeast, and proceeds to the west and south. We have no doubt that he believed and meant to convey the idea that on this occasion some of the disciples spoke in one language or dialect and others in another, so that everyone present, from whatever country, heard the gospel in his own mother tongue. Whether the report on which the writer relied was in all respects correct is not so clear.

**THE JEWISH FEASTS.** Of the three great feasts annually observed by the Jews, that of the Passover commemorated the deliverance of their forefathers from bondage in Egypt, that of Pentecost the ingathering of the harvest, and that of Tabernacles the dwelling of the Israelites in tents during their sojourn in the wilderness. All males upwards of twelve years of age were required to go to Jerusalem to attend these feasts. The feast of Pentecost began on the fiftieth day after the Passover. It is called by Christians Whitsunday, and is the seventh Sunday after Easter. It commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Acts ii. It is called *Whit-Sunday* because baptism always has been administered to large numbers on that day, and in early times those who were to be baptized appeared at church in *white* garments.

**THE HOLY SPIRIT.** Unitarians believe that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, — not a person distinct from God, but his influence acting on the hearts of men to reprove, restrain, enlighten, and guide them. Trinitarians believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity, and that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God. For statements of the Unitarian doctrine of the Holy Spirit see Metcalf's "Letter and Spirit;" Eliot's "Doctrines of Christianity;" Peabody's "Lectures on Christian Doctrine;" Farley's "Unitarianism Defined."

**SPEAKING WITH TONGUES.** Several explanations have been given of the "speaking with tongues" on the day of Pentecost. (1) That the apostles spoke many languages, being miraculously empowered to do so on this occasion and on this only. (2) That the gift of speaking foreign languages was now permanently bestowed on the apostles to fit them for the missionary work in which they were to engage. (3) That a miracle was wrought on the hearers instead of on the speakers, the apostles speaking in their native tongue, but the hearers each hearing in his own. (4) That the

apostles did not speak with other tongues, but people from different countries spoke their own language and were mistaken for the apostles speaking foreign languages. (5) That the other tongues with which the apostles spoke were not foreign languages, but the utterance of inarticulate sounds in an ecstatic state of mind.

The apostle Paul in 1 Cor. xiv. alludes to "speaking with tongues" as one of the gifts possessed by some of the early Christians. It was not, however, the gift of speaking foreign languages to which he refers, but an indistinct utterance of prayer and praise, addressed to God, but not understood by men unless interpreted to them. It edified the speaker but not the church, and was by no means highly esteemed by the Great Apostle. We incline to the opinion that it was this gift that was exercised on the day of Pentecost, and that the account given in the Books of Acts was derived from an inaccurate tradition of what took place. For a discussion of this subject see Neander's "Planting and Training of the Christian Church;" Schaff's "History of the Primitive Church;" Noyes' "Theological Essays;" Commentaries and Bible Dictionaries.

**HINTS TO TEACHERS.** The youngest scholars should be expected to learn the verse of poetry and Golden Text at the head of the Lessons; those somewhat older, say from nine to thirteen, the answers to the first set of questions; those still older the answers to the second set of questions. The topic of chief importance in this Lesson is the Holy Spirit, but older scholars should not be allowed to go over it without fixing in mind the remarkable events to which it alludes,—the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the "speaking with tongues." It should be remembered that one object of this series of Lessons is to call attention to some of the leading events in the history of the early Christian Church.

"In order to lead the scholars up into some conception of the spirit of God, turn their attention to the spirit that is in themselves. Then take up familiar examples of men and women, and let the scholars work into an idea of the spirit that has lived in them, and the influence that has gone out from them. From this they may be helped to grasp some small conception of the holy and all-pervading Spirit of God. Familiar examples will suggest themselves. Girls and boys catch the spirit of others. Show how great men have brought others into their way of feeling, thinking, and acting, and thus have impressed themselves upon the age. Let the scholars see what it is to have the spirit of Paul, of Luther, of Howard, of Washington. From this ascend as high as you can into the idea of a man filled with the spirit of God."

**REFERENCES.** Neander's "Planting and Training of the Christian Church" (Bk. I. Ch. I.); Miltman's "History of Christianity" (Bk. II. Ch. I.); Schaff's "History of the Apostolic Church" (pp. 208-214); Renan's "Apostles" (Ch. IV.); "Bible for Learners" (Vol. III. Bk. II. Ch. II.); Commentaries and Bible Dictionaries.