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The Stated Clerk of the Assembly, Dr. Thomas H. Law, and his gracious help-meet, Mrs. Law, were unflinching in their attention to the arduous duties connected with Dr. Law's office.

Rev. J. D. Leslie, D. D., the efficient Permanent Clerk of the Assembly, again demonstrated his ability to handle the business of his office with rapidity and accuracy. Within an hour after the adjournment of the Assembly each year, Dr. Leslie turns over to the Stated Clerk the complete minutes of the proceedings of the Assembly.

The Scotch-Irish character of the members of the Southern Presbyterian Church is revealed in the fact that there were twenty-one commissioners whose names bear the unmistakable mark of identification—"Mc" or "Mac."

EDITORIAL NOTES.

A full report of the proceedings of the General Assembly in Birmingham, Alabama, now in session, will be published in the "Christian Observer." Dr. David M. Sweets is attending the Assembly to prepare the report. He is assisted by Rev. John R. Herndon. In this issue will be found the proceedings up to Monday morning. The proceedings in full will be published in a separate supplement with our issue of May 30.

The honor of presiding as moderator of the Birmingham General Assembly was conferred on Rev. John M. Wells, D. D., pastor of the First Presbyterian church of Wilmington, North Carolina. Dr. Wells is a native of Jackson, Mississippi, a graduate of Southwestern Presbyterian University, Clarksville, Tennessee, of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, and is pastor of the church that stands at the head of all Southern Presbyterian churches in gifts to benevolences. This church celebrated its centennial last month, and had secured the promise of President Woodrow Wilson to make the principal address. On account of the demands of the national crisis President Wilson was not able to attend. Rev. Joseph R. Wilson, D. D., father of the President, was pastor of this church for several years and the President was a member of the church in his boyhood.

Dr. Wells was licensed by Chesapeake Presbytery on June 13, 1893, and was ordained by Lexington Presbytery on October 29 of the same year. For a part of the year 1893 he was stated supply of the Buena Vista church in Virginia, and later became its pastor, serving there until 1896. In the latter year he became pastor of the Second church, Staunton, Virginia, which he served until 1901, when he accepted a call to the First church, Wilmington, his present pastorate.

Durant, Oklahoma, was selected as the place of the next meeting of the Assembly. The contest between Durant and New Orleans was keen, but characterized by good feeling. Durant pleaded for the meeting on the ground that it would assist our Home Mission work in Oklahoma. New Orleans laid claim to the meeting because 1918 is the centennial of the beginning of Presbyterian preaching in Louisiana and the centennial of the birth of Dr. B. M. Palmer, first moderator of the Southern General Assembly.

Rev. J. Wilbur Chapman, D. D., LL. D., evangelist at large of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., (Northern), was elected moderator of the General Assembly of that Church, meeting in Dallas, Texas, on May 17. Two other candidates were nominated for the moderatorship—Dr. Harlan G. Mendenhall, of New York, and Dr. John B. Rendall, president of Lincoln University, Lincoln, Pa. The vote was: Chapman, 590; Rendall, 139, and Mendenhall, 121. Dr. Chapman is a native of Indiana and is fifty-eight years of age. He is a graduate of Lake Forest University (Illinois) and of Lane Theological Seminary, was ordained to the ministry in 1882, and has held important pastorates in New York and Pennsylvania. For a time he was executive secretary of the General Assembly's Committee on

Evangelistic Work, but for the past several years he has devoted himself to the holding of evangelistic meetings in all parts of the country, achieving unusual success in this work. He has held many meetings in the South. Dr. Chapman is also the author of a number of devotional works which have wide circulation, his best known works being "The Surrendered Life," "Spiritual Life In the Sunday School," and "Present Day Evangelism." Dr. Chapman has a summer home at Montreat, N. C., and attends the conference on Evangelism held there in August each year.

The Birmingham Assembly will go down in history as most remarkable in this respect—not a single judicial case was before it. No appeal, no complaint, no form of judicial procedure, claimed attention at the hands of the commissioners. This is a record rarely, if ever, written of a General Assembly, and indicates that peace abounds throughout the borders of our Church.

The Birmingham Assembly was the largest in number of accredited commissioners in the history of our Church. Two hundred and seventy-two commissioners were chosen. More than three hundred persons were in attendance, including commissioners, clerks, secretaries, editors, members of committees, etc.

Rev. Albert Sidney Johnson, D. D., pastor of the church in which the Assembly is in session, is proving himself a princely host. With his unflinching courtesy, his thoughtful kindness, and his gracious consideration for the comfort of every one, he has won every heart and is characterized as the ideal host. He and the excellent committees who have so ably assisted him under the general leadership of Mr. John B. Weakley had worked out carefully all the details connected with the assignment of commissioners to places of entertainment and providing for every need of the commissioners.

The ladies of the South Highlands Presbyterian church are serving each day at one o'clock, in the Sunday school room, a delicious lunch to the commissioners of the Assembly. This is a difficult task on account of the large enrollment, but the gracious, hospitable service of the ladies gives no indication of the labor necessary to prepare and serve so many hungry men. The charming, cordial character of Southern hospitality can find no better exemplification than is given by these good people of Birmingham.

Not a single ex-moderator was among the commissioners elected to this General Assembly. Dr. C. W. Grafton, the retiring moderator, occupies a solitary niche in the present Assembly as he joined the "Ex's" Thursday afternoon.

Four ex-moderators are among the visitors to the Assembly—Rev. John F. Cannon, D. D., Rev. C. R. Hemphill, D. D., Rev. W. W. Moore, D. D., and Rev. W. McF. Alexander, D. D. Each of these is a member of one of the permanent or ad interim committees of the Assembly.

The thoughtful sermon preached by the retiring moderator, Rev. C. W. Grafton, D. D.,

THE KNEELING CAMEL.

BY ANNA TEMPLE.

The camel, at the close of day,
Kneels down upon the sandy plain
To have his burden lifted off
And rest to gain.

My soul, thou too shouldst to thy knees
When daylight draweth to a close,
And let thy Master lift thy load
And grant repose:

Else how canst thou tomorrow meet,
With all tomorrow's work to do,
If thou thy burden all the night
Dost carry through?

The camel kneels at break of day
To have his guide replace his load,
Then rises up again to take
The desert road.

So thou shouldst kneel at morning's dawn
That God may give thee daily care,
Assured that He no load too great
Will make thee bear.

Mid-Week Prayer Meeting

BY REV. JOHN M. VANDER MEULEN, D. D.

THE PROMISE OF PENTECOST.

Topic for Wednesday, May 30, 1917.

Suggested Scripture: Acts 2:2-4.

Pentecost is a Greek word signifying fiftieth. The event commemorated by it is supposed to be celebrated fifty days after Easter. Hence the name. As Easter occurs at the time of the Passover so Pentecost occurs at the time of another of the three great Jewish festivals, the "Feast of Weeks," which was the feast celebrating the harvest and bringing the first fruits thereof as a symbol of devotion and dedication to the Lord. So these two celebrations, Easter and Pentecost, are historically connected with two of the three great Jewish feasts.

In the early Church Pentecost began presently to be celebrated as a Christian festival. Easter was in honor of the Second Person of the Trinity; Pentecost in honor of the Third Person. The English name of the festival is Whitsunday, the name being derived from the custom of baptizing persons on that day and clothing these candidates for baptism in white. In both the East and the West the practice prevailed of decorating the churches on that day with evergreens and flowers, thus giving the festival a touch of its ancient Jewish custom.

There was a still more inner touch of appropriateness at that first Pentecost in that the "first fruits" of the great harvest of the Kingdom were then and there brought in and dedicated to the Lord, "three thousand souls," which were an earnest of the millions more that were to follow in the harvest of the coming centuries.

The leader of this meeting may, if he will, make use of any or all of these facts. And it would impress on his congregation the significance of this festival if through certain decorations the idea of the "firstfruits" was represented.

Coming to the thought of the passage and the event of which it is a partial record we may notice first, "The Conditions;" and secondly, "The Manifestation and the Meaning of the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit."

I. The Conditions.

1. **The Human Conditions.**—These seem to have been two. They are indicated in the fourteenth verse of the first chapter, "These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer."

(a) **They were of one accord.**—We are convinced that the present divisions of Christendom are even more due to sins of the heart than to sins of the head. If one could root out denominational pride and self-seeking from those who hold denominational honors, and root out suspicion, the outer divisions would begin to melt away under the inner unity and warmth of heart. Convinced we are, too, of another thing, that were this to begin we should see an outpouring of God's Spirit on His Church. Nothing so invites the descent of God's Spirit on His Church as that the brethren of it should "dwell together in unity." As the psalmist of the one hundred and thirty-third Psalm put it, "it is like the precious ointment upon the head" of the high priest and "as the dew of Hermon," both of which, the ointment and the dew, are symbols of God's Spirit.

(b) **"They continued steadfastly in prayer."**—There is the second condition. Jesus had expressly in parting promised to send the Holy Spirit, but He had also previously said that the Holy Spirit was to be given in answer to prayer, Luke 11:11. He had there stated, too, that this prayer would have to be real prayer, importunate, persevering prayer. The disciples here had fulfilled the condition. "They continued steadfastly in prayer." And thus the blessing came.

2. **The Divine Condition.**—There seems to be indicated also a condition from the divine side. Jesus seems to point to that in John 16:7 where He says: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you." Of this passage Dr. Marcus Dods says: "The withdrawal of the bodily presence of Christ was the essential condition of His universal spiritual presence." This does not seem to us to touch the point in question. Sadler seems to us to be nearer a truth when he says: "The departure of the Son, and the coming of the Spirit was needful to the complete manifestation of the Ever-Blessed Trinity." But we freely confess that our Saviour here is touching on a mystery that is too deep for us. It shows us that on which Calvinism has always insisted, that this universe is not man-centered but God-centered and that there are reasons in the divine economy for facts both in nature and grace over and above all reasons that are founded merely in the psychology of man.

The divine condition had now, however, been fulfilled. Jesus had ascended and it needed merely the fulfillment of the human conditions to bring down the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

II. The Manifestations and Their Meaning.

The physical manifestations were two, "a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind" and the appearance of "tongues parting asunder, like as of fire," and sitting "upon each one of them."

1. The former manifestation, the sound as of wind, seems to us to have symbolized the supernatural origin of the Holy Spirit. It reminds us of the words of Jesus: "The wind bloweth where it will, and thou bearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Here is something that is not man-made or man-controlled. It is therefore well symbolized by the wind. Many elements of nature man has learned to bring into subjection to himself. But the wind is perhaps the most outstanding of the common elements in nature that are beyond his ordering. It is for him to trim his sails and his windmills to it.

Now in our human endeavors after souls we are often apt with all our machinery to think that it is all a matter of human method and human psychology. What the Church needed to have impressed on it from the very beginning of its evangelistic endeavors to win the world for Christ is the need of the supernatural, divine Spirit for the regeneration of souls. To get the Holy Spirit is above all human device or command. It is like the wind which seems to blow where it listeth. Our only way to get the Holy Spirit, therefore, is to fulfill His conditions, which are the ones mentioned above. What we must learn firmly to believe is that regeneration is His work and that He must co-operate with us if we are to win souls. God never meant that it should be a merely human work. He meant that in every such endeavor we should, like the disciples, first "with one accord continue steadfastly in prayer," till the Holy Spirit comes in regenerating power.

2. The second manifestation, that of the cloven tongues of fire, seems to us to symbolize the part of human agency in the winning of the world. Jesus had said to His disciples: "Ye shall be My witnesses." The tongue is both the instrument and the symbol of this. It is not merely or chiefly through example, it is through the tongue that men are to be told of and won to Christ. The emphasis on example has been overworked, if by that is meant our daily life. A right-minded man will see so many flaws in his daily life that he will be or ought to be glad of a chance to neutralize its effect by telling his unconverted neighbor: "My desires and aims to be a Christian are far better than my example might lead you to believe. But what you and I need a Saviour for is precisely to forgive and fill up what is lacking in our example. Will you not accept Christ?"

Now such witnessing for Christ is in itself the evidence that the Holy Spirit has come down upon us with the gift of tongues. It will be especially so if it be at all evident that the tongue is a tongue of fire, of burning interest and earnestness.

Such a tongue is the result of the empowering of the Holy Spirit. And that too must come to a man as the result of prayer for it. Sometimes after a sufficient season of such prayer it may come as it did here, "suddenly." That is within Christian experience, not only of the apostles here, but in the experience of other men. Sometimes it may come gradually. But what happened to these unlettered disciples is what will happen to any man who will obey the conditions. No matter how unlettered he may be, he will receive the gift of a tongue to witness for Christ.

And these two things, the new birth of souls and the gift of a witnessing tongue in any church are the two characteristics of every Pentecost.

Louisville, Ky.

There must be internal force and external stimulus. A rose will not flower in the dark and a fern will not flower anywhere.—Holmes.

Young People's Societies

BY REV. WM. M. ANDERSON, D. D.

CONFIDENCE AND HOW TO GET IT.

Topic for the Week Beginning June 3, 1917.

Neh. 6:1-16.

DAILY READINGS.

M., May 28. Joshua's confidence. Num 14:1-10.
T., May 29. A song of trust. Isa. 12:1-6.
W., May 30. Men of faith. Heb. 11:1-10.
T., May 31. Do right and trust. Dan. 3:8-25.
F., June 1. Confidence through prayer. 2 Cor. 12:1-9.
S., June 2. Confidence by obedience. Exod. 14:13-31.

Nehemiah is a good example of a man who had confidence, and we learn enough about his life and work in his book to know how he got it. He was a man of deep convictions, lofty purposes, and a great ambition to serve. He was a statesman, a law-giver, a soldier, a leader, an architect, a builder, with a firm conviction in his call. Having put his hand to the plow, he did not turn back.

He met great opposition in his enterprise of building again the walls of Jerusalem; but persisted until his task was finished. He felt that God had called him and assigned him to his work and that it must be done; and that he could do it. The strength of a man is determined more by his strength of purpose than by strength of muscle. If one is doing God's work, one may know that God will take care of him. "Be not dismayed whatever betide, God will take care of you."

It is well to keep in mind in whom our confidence is placed. First of all it must be placed in God. This will require that we be in line with His purposes. It will further require that we receive from Him a divine will to our task. Without this our self-confidence is in vain.

When we have placed our full confidence in God, we have a right to have confidence in ourselves. "One man with God is a majority." As we practice obedience, we gain confidence. If we persist in trying to do certain things in the line of service we will grow in our confidence regarding that duty. For example, if we resolve to testify for Christ when the opportunity comes, we will become bold and confident in our testimony. Custom will overcome timidity. If we resist temptation, and continue resisting the same temptation we will gain confidence in Christ's power to help us, and gain in our own strength.

Christian life is a growth, a growth both in grace and in knowledge. We become confident of our confidence. It has been said, "The only way to learn how to do a thing is to do it." As we trust, our trust will grow; as we serve, our power of service will increase; as we work, our ability to work will become greater.

Many men have begun with a lack of confidence and grew as their efforts were put forth. Demosthenes failed at first, but came back from the ocean beach and controlled Athens with his eloquence. "The first speech made by Congressman Hobson after his return from Cuba was a failure. He had no message. Now, when he speaks, for example, on prohibition, he rivets attention. He has a message that gives confidence."

Confidence is the realization of the fact that God is with us in our work and that we cannot fail. If any band of personal workers in any church should start out to win men to Christ they would succeed. If any number determine on the growth and development of the Sunday school, the Sunday school will grow and develop. If any number of people determine to increase the attendance of the night service, the attendance would grow. When you start to do anything for God, get it clear in mind, that you are doing it for Him and then take with you the confidence that you shall succeed.

Confidence gives one boldness, and insures success. The lack of confidence predicts failure. Confidence does not arise from self-exaltation. If one has gained expert knowledge, he will feel his confidence strengthened. One cannot put forth his best effort until he has some confidence.

It is not hard to exercise confidence when God leads us to do an easy thing that we really like to do; but when He tells us to do something difficult and in the dark and does not explain why, we must have confidence in Him to make the attempt.

Quotations.

What, my soul! see thus far and no further? When doors great and small
Nine and ninety flew ope at our touch, should the hundredth appall?
—Browning.

Endeavor to be the finest equipped, mentally, for the work that is to be done, whether you are chosen to do it or not, and keep on, and on, and still on, finding your joy in the work, in the benefit it is to yourself, in the power it is storing up within you.
—George Wharton James.

Man's wisdom is to seek

His strength in God alone,

And e'en an angel would be weak

Who trusted in his own. —Cowper.

Luther was once found, at a moment of peril and fear, when he had need to grasp unseen strength, sitting in an abstracted mood, tracing on the table