

A Twentieth Century Delusion!

In 1901 a Charles Parham exhorted a group of Bible college students at Topeka, USA, to experience the same events as described in Acts 2. After some days, one lady, Agnus Ozeman*, spoke in what was thought to be a *known* language. However, it was in fact an ecstatic *unknown* tongue - a counterfeit of Acts 2:6-11. This was later proved by linguists and *accepted by Parham*. This counterfeit experience spread to some of the other students including a black man, William Seymour.

In 1906, Seymour, after being banned from a Nazarine holiness church for preaching 'heresy', began meetings at 312 Azusa St, Los Angeles. The work grew quickly but Seymour requested Parham come to assess possible extremes and excesses. Parham avoided this invitation for some time but did eventually travel to Azusa St. to find: *'hypnotic influences, familiar spirit influences, spiritualistic influences, mesmeric influences and all kinds of spells and spasms, falling in trances, etc. All of these things are foreign to and unknown [to the Apostolic Faith [Pentecostal] movement] outside of Los Angeles, except in the places visited by the workers sent out from this city.'* (1) Parham later denounced the movement as a case of *'awful fits and spasms'* and of *'holy rollers and hypnotists'*. (2) This account was backed up by the newspaper Los Angeles Times, (April 18th.,1906, P.1): *'Meetings are held [at] Azusa St...and the devotees of the weird doctrines practice the most fanatical rites, preach the wildest theories, and work themselves into a state of wild excitement in their peculiar zeal...And the night is made hideous in the neighbourhood by the howlings of the worshippers who spend hours swaying forth and back in a nerve-racking attitude of prayer and supplication. They claim to have the gift of tongues and to be able to comprehend the babble.'* Another source stated: *'Our missionaries have been stationed at Los Angeles during the whole history of the tongues movement, and have watched it closely from the very first outbreak in Seymour's meetings; and truly, conditions have been such that it would be impossible to publish the things that have occurred there. The familiarity between sexes in the public meetings has been shocking, to say the least. Hell has reaped an awful harvest and infidelity has become more strongly rooted on the Pacific Coast than ever before.'* (3)

The Azusa St mission was closed in 1911.

Parham was later involved in heresies and scandals including being charged with the act of homosexuality. However, he consistently denied the unknown tongue experiences were from God and stated they were counterfeit. Despite this, the experience which gained a foothold at Azusa St. had already spread to many parts of the country and a new doctrine of a *subsequent* 'baptism with the Spirit' with the evidence of unknown tongues became rooted in the new Pentecostal movement that was formed from it. This new teaching was never a part of the historic faith once delivered to the saints, nor the church fathers, nor thereafter for 1900 years.

Today this teaching has gained much ground in mainline churches as Scriptures are wrenched from their moorings to fit an experiential phenomena.

I once read an advert in the *New Life* newspaper which read: *'What is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit '? An address was given to receive information. The pamphlet I received was typical of the clever but false teaching often associated with 'The baptism with the spirit'. The pamphlet expounded the idea that the 'promise of the father' (Lk.24:49; Acts 1:4,5, etc) was the 'Baptism with the Spirit' as a subsequent experience. However, the book of Acts shows clearly that the 'promise' was the Holy Spirit Himself coming systematically and chronologically to the Jews in Acts 2, the Samaritans in Acts 8, the Gentiles in Acts 10 and to the 'uttermost parts' in Acts 19. What many fail to realise is that none of these groups of people had ever received the indwelling Holy Spirit prior to these events! All were first time experiences in receiving the promise of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This was the 'Baptism with the spirit' - the Holy Spirit who could not come until after Jesus ascension and glorification, (Jn.16:7).*

The pamphlet went on to teach : *'The Baptism is the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon us'*. The 'us' is supposedly modern day Christians. However, the people in Acts 2,8,10 and 19 had *not previously been indwelt*.

How can the Holy Spirit today come a second time when we already are indwelt by Him as the temple of the Holy Spirit? To expect a second work of the Holy Spirit from *outside* is actually more occultic than Christian. We are not here denying a 'filling' with the Spirit, but that filling is done *from within* by the *already indwelling* Holy Spirit, (Eph.5:18). The whole teaching of the Baptism with the spirit as a *subsequent* experience ignores the historical and unique giving of the 'promise' - the indwelling Holy Spirit. This 'promise' was the coming of the Holy Spirit for the first time in history to indwell those who would believe. Each group in Acts 2,8,10,19 *heard the Gospel*. In Acts 2 they *'repented'*. In Acts 8 they *'believed'*. In Acts 19 they *'received'*.

The pamphlet then went on to add error to error by connecting *unknown* tongues as evidence of this so called *subsequent* experience. However the tongues in Acts 2,10 and 19 (no tongues are mentioned in Acts 8) were *known earthly human languages*, (see Acts 2:8-11). To escape this fact the pamphlet says there are *known* tongues of men and *unknown* tongues of angels, quoting 1Corinthians 13:1. However, in every Bible instance Angels always spoke *known* languages that were *understood* by the hearers!

The tragedy of this false teaching is that sincere Christians are seeking something the Scriptures *never* offer. This seeking denies the already existent indwelling Holy Spirit and His work of sealing and filling in their lives. It opens the door to occultic activity.

There is also today much confusion in teaching that equates the 'filling' (Eph.5:18) with the 'baptism with the spirit', which occurs at salvation (1Cor.12:13). The filling is a *continuous* control by the Holy Spirit - who is *already within* us. We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. We are never commanded to be baptised with the Spirit! It is not a matter of seeking more of the Holy Spirit but rather the Holy Spirit having more of us! How it must grieve the Holy Spirit when we seek something to come *upon* us when he already *indwells* us!

The turn of the Twentieth Century saw a massive delusion with new teaching on the Holy Spirit. May we rest in the 'promise' that is given to us 'by faith' when we 'believed', (Gal.3:14,22).

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(See the articles 'Baptism with the Spirit' & 'Pentecostal/Tongues Roots - The Amazing Facts' on our website at http://taministries.net/?page_id=131;

or

The book 'Tongues & The Baptism With the Spirit' by this author. listed in the Resource list on our website at http://taministries.net/?page_id=109

*Agnus Ozeman was a 30 year old unmarried '*holiness enthusiast*' from Nebraska. She had already had this ecstatic experience prior and had a reputation of wandering around the country seeking the mystical and sensational.

(1) '*The life of Charles Parham*' by Sarah Parham, P.168.