

“. . . Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error”

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THE RESURGENCE OF THE TONGUES MOVEMENT

Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor

For quite some time a considerable number of people have directed their inquiries to our office concerning the current expansion of the Tongues Movement. It is understandable that the resurgence of this movement should cause not only a deep concern, but also a confusion in the minds of some people. Perhaps the most unexpected development is the strong emphasis of the tongues movement by segments in ritualistic and confessional bodies. This is particularly true within the Episcopal Church. It has penetrated other denominational bodies, too, and doubtlessly the tongues movement will continue to spread.

Since our agency is especially adapted for studying and evaluating religious phenomena, we are devoting this entire issue of *The Discerner* to the Tongues Movement. We are featuring a few well prepared articles, each one of which deals with some specific phase of this rather involved subject. The writers, whose articles appear in this issue, are well known students of the Scriptures as well as widely appreciated Bible teachers. Their approach is both comprehensive and illuminating. Readers who are perplexed will do well to read the entire issue. The editor believes these discussions should clear up many points with reference to the present-day tongues movement. This Issue is an honest

attempt on our part to evaluate the current literature as well as the open claims of those experiencing a new Pentecost as it were.

What has contributed to the resurgence of this kind of teaching which advocates speaking in tongues as a means of demonstration and verification of a baptism of the Holy Spirit? Unquestionably, the great perils of our time, and the lack of security have created a deep desire of many people in finding some special assurance through some kind of dynamic experience. These frustrations and disappointments, due to the prevailing conditions in Christendom, have led many sincere people to seek adequate means of comfort. Truly there is prevalent among many a deep-seated craving for assurance and comfort, and they feel the answer is in the experimental satisfaction which seems to be found in the tongues movement. Furthermore, the current development has come about through an appalling deficiency in the understanding of doctrinal truths as well as the dispensational teachings of the Word of God. Surely if people were well-anchored or grounded in Scriptural truth they would not lose their balance and hence be carried away by a movement which seeks to reproduce another Pentecostal experience.

It is distressing to witness how these modern promoters of the

tongues movement will select only the *one* among the many gifts mentioned in the New Testament, and give it an emphasis out of all proportion to the other gifts, particularly so when the gift of speaking in tongues receives the least emphasis especially in the Pauline writings. This procedure by these people not only manifests a deficient knowledge of doctrinal and dispensational truth, but it borders on recklessness in the handling of the Word of God. Those who are well taught and anchored properly in the Word accept the glorious positional relationship of believers in Christ rather than relying on some dramatic or emotional experience. There is no short-cut to spiritual power and divine assurance. A complete trust in the full efficacy of Christ's redemptive work should constitute the foundation to a full spiritual satisfaction. And a life committed fully and unreservedly to the Lord will produce both joy and power of the Holy Ghost. An important leader in the current tongues movement said he was convinced another Pentecost is coming and that it already had begun. To expect another Pentecost is the same as to expect a second calvary, and hence for the Son of God to die again. Pentecost was once and for all. Since that day the Holy Spirit is ready and willing to infill every believer to the fullest measure. There is no need to seek out some special pattern of experience in order to obtain the fullness of the Holy Spirit. It is the total yieldedness and committal to the Lord which is the step of primary importance, and not some strange demonstration as, e.g., speaking in tongues.

With the establishment of the New Testament Church and the

completion of the written revelation, the more extra-ordinary demonstrations (present at the introduction of the church age) were no longer needed. The raising of people from the dead did not extend beyond the apostolic age, neither did the extraordinary power of healing. Paul's writings serve as the best commentary in confirming the above assertions. The New Testament does not even hint that the gift of speaking in tongues is a sign of superior spirituality. This claim seems to come up almost continually among those who currently are advocating speaking in tongues. There is a disservice to the cause of Christ whenever certain verses are wrenched out of their context and given an exposition which is Scripturally unwarranted. Paul refers clearly to the gift of tongues in I Cor. 14:21-22 "In the law it is written, with men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe." The writer cites Isaiah (28:11-12) to illustrate the particular reason for such a sign. Obviously this does not apply today. The modern exponents of the tongues movement fail to recognize the many rules of limitations set forth in conjunction with this particular gift of speaking in tongues. The current over-emphasis of speaking in tongues and physical healing reveal a gross misunderstanding of New Testament teachings. Sweeping generalizations are extremely harmful when applied to key doctrines of the Scriptures.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE "TONGUES" MOVEMENT IN OUR TIME

Rev. George Darby

The New Testament church numbered amongst its members those who possessed the power of speaking with tongues, i.e. of giving utterance to words of prayer or praise which were unintelligible to the hearers until interpreted and translated by someone supernaturally qualified for the task. Both the "tongues" and the ability to interpret them were included by Paul in the "charismata" or spiritual gifts which he listed in I Corinthians 12:7-11, 28. In the 14th chapter of the same epistle, he deals with some of the *problems* which the possession and exercise of these gifts had created in the church at Corinth where they were especially in evidence.

Since the close of the New Testament era there have been periodic manifestations in the life of the church, of what some claimed was a revival of this gift. The days of the Wesleys furnish a few instances of this sort.

Early in the nineteenth century, a brilliant young preacher of the Church of Scotland, Edward Irving began to preach the imminent return of Christ. Coupled with this teaching was an insistence that the gifts of the Spirit should be received and expressed as fully today as in the time of the apostles. The doctrine found its practical consequence when some of Irving's flock began to speak in tongues publicly. As this phenomenon spread through the congregation it was accompanied by scenes of wild excitement, so that Irving was hard put to it to prevent rioting. The London Presbytery of the Church of Scotland summoned the pastor to trial, found him unfit

for his position and deposed him from his charge. The doors of Regent Square Church were locked and the congregation turned into the street. This was all but the end of Edward Irving's ministry.

It was also the beginning of a new denomination, the Catholic Apostolic Church, more popularly known as Irvingites. This body has continued until the present time, although since the death of the last "divinely called apostle" in 1901 the number of its followers has been drastically reduced. The New Apostolic Church which seceded from the parent organization in 1865 is a somewhat more vigorous body and claims to represent more correctly the original teachings of Edward Irving himself. It gives creedal recognition to such gifts of the Holy Spirit as prophesying, speaking with tongues and divine healing.

The Irvingite movement may be said to be the source of modern sects which emphasize the "charismata" and particularly the gift of "tongues." Those sects have multiplied greatly within the past fifty years, mainly on the American scene.

Near the end of the last century the left-wing elements of the Holiness Churches in the United States formed themselves into the Pentecostal Holiness Church. The distinctive doctrines which they espoused include three distinct works of grace culminating in Holy Spirit baptism and speaking with tongues, divine healing, and the imminency of the second advent.

Early in the present century a man named A. J. Tomlinson, of Cleveland, Tenn. led a movement known as the "Latter Rain." It

aimed at a revival of "glossolalia" or speaking with tongues. Such was the response to Tomlinson's teaching that a number of independent Churches of God came into being across the country. The movement was marked by extreme emotionalism and an insistence upon sanctification as a second work of grace, together with the gift of "tongues." Because of strong rivalry between leaders, the Churches of God were plagued by repeated schism and split into well-nigh innumerable factions. In all of their various forms they retain basically the same doctrinal emphases and are the principal exponents in America today of the "tongues" teaching.

Probably the largest single denomination committed to the "tongues" doctrine, although not with the extravagant emphasis found in other groups, is the Assemblies of God. This body was formed in 1914 and has become one of the fastest growing church organizations in the United States. Its affiliation with the National Association of Evangelicals gives its teachings tacit acceptance by many non-Pentecostal Christians.

The impetus of a glamorous personality was added to the "tongues" movement in 1918 when Mrs. Aimée Semple McPherson founded in Los Angeles the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. Her striking appearance and dramatic ability drew large crowds to hear her preach and Angelus Temple of which she was the "pastor," became an internationally famous religious centre. Despite the fact that Mrs. McPherson's name was linked with several scandals, her followers increased in number and in 1927 the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel was incorporated as a denomination, with Mrs. McPherson as President. The organization

experienced considerable growth both in the United States and by means of missionary effort, in foreign lands also.

The most recent, and in some respects the most aggressive effort to promote the "glossolalia" phenomenon has been provided, not by a denomination but by a laymen's group known as Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, with headquarters in Los Angeles. (Why do all unbalanced religious groups gravitate to California? Or do they originate there?) This organization publishes a monthly magazine called the "Voice." (Not the I.F.C.A. publication.) The paper deals almost exclusively with the experience of what is called "the baptism of the Holy Spirit." The necessary and infallible sign of this experience is to speak in an unknown "tongue." According to the articles found in the "Voice," wide acceptance of its teachings results wherever its testimony reaches. Certainly the photographs and statements published would indicate that many pastors and clergymen, as well as lay Christians from many of the major denominations are receiving the "baptism" and speaking with tongues. The movement stresses "interdenominationalism," and the breaking down of sectarian barriers. When the FGBMFI held its Annual Convention this past fall in Seattle, Dr. Billy Graham was invited to speak and his photograph and address were published in the "Voice" the following month.

One of the surprising features of this modern "tongues" movement is its infiltration of the old line denominations. Episcopalian, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Baptist ministers are among those whose testimonies regarding their "baptism" have ap-

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WHAT'S WRONG WITH "SPEAKING IN TONGUES"?

by Rev. Roy E. Knutson

One of the phenomena of the apostolic church of the first century, reportedly being repeated today, is that of "speaking in tongues." Once confined to a particular group or denomination, these ecstatic utterances are now being heard in many and varied places—including such staid groups as the Episcopalian and Lutheran churches. Evangelical periodicals and the secular press repeatedly give prominent space to the claims being made for the manifestation of this *charisma*, or "spiritual gift."

The result of this publicity, plus the supposed shattering of long-standing denominational barriers through the widespread claims for this "pentecostal experience," has left many Christians in a state of bewilderment. In addition, the dearth of solid Bible exposition from our pulpits today on this vital matter has fostered this attitude of confusion. Few people have a real assurance of their own personal salvation. Multitudes of well intending, sincere, spiritually hungry Christians are looking for a new experience to bolster their tottering faith. And for many, the experience of "speaking in tongues" is encouraged, and sought, as the "needed blessing for these last days."

Concerned Christians are asking: "What shall we say to these claims?"; "Is this phenomenon real?"; and if so, "What's wrong with speaking in tongues?"

Basically there is nothing "wrong" with the New Testament experience of "tongues." This supernatural manifestation is prophesied of in the

Old Testament (Isa. 28:11), and listed in I Corinthians 12 along with the other Holy Spirit-imparted gifts. Three times in the book of Acts the occurrence of "tongues" is mentioned (Acts 2, 10, 19). And so to state that something is "wrong" with this gift, as such, is to deny or deplore it, which no thinking believer would do. With full New Testament support, it must be declared that "speaking in tongues" is both Biblical and proper.

However, a careful study of the Bible with regard to this phenomenon reveals that there IS something "wrong," not with the gift itself, but with its manifestation, or exercise as it's witnessed today.

Firstly:

**Speaking in Tongues is Wrong
If Encouraged for Everyone**

One prominent leader in the "tongues movement" insists that EVERYONE can receive this gift, and then proceeds to give this instruction for all earnest seekers:

"Tell the candidate to open his mouth wide and breathe in as deeply as possible, at the same time telling God in his heart, 'I am receiving the Spirit right now by faith.' Absolutely insist that he shall not speak a single word of his natural language. Then when you see the Spirit moving on his lips and tongue, after he has taken several deep breaths, tell him to just recklessly begin speaking whatever sounds seem easy to speak, utterly indifferent as to what they are. That is faith . . . I think you can see now that if a man cooperates, he will move

his lips and tongue to follow these promptings, and if he will lift his voice and begin to speak the words which result from these movements, he *will* be speaking in tongues." (J. E. Stiles, *The Gift of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 105-6, 117.)

Regardless of such claims, the Bible proves that "speaking in tongues" is a Spiritual gift, *sovereignly* bestowed by the Holy Spirit "as He will" (I Cor. 12:4-11). NOWHERE in the Scriptures is any one individual ever encouraged to seek this gift. To the *entire church* at Corinth, Paul said: "Covet earnestly the *best* gifts" (I Cor. 12:31), which in this context refers to "prophecy," or the Spirit-directed declaration of the Word of God (cf. I Cor. 12:28-31, 14:3-12), rather than some ecstatic utterance in "tongues." In I Corinthians 12:30, Paul asks a most pointed question: "Do all speak with tongues?" Obviously anticipating a negative answer, he proves that this is NOT a gift intended for all, but only for those whom the Holy Spirit has selected. There is no room left for self-choosing regarding spiritual gifts, for the Holy Spirit acts in free sovereignty "dividing to every man severally as He will" (I Cor. 12:11). The *pneumatika*, or "spiritual gifts" referred to in I Corinthians 12 are designed to implement Christian service, and the manifestation of a particular gift is *solely* dependent upon the individual whom the Holy Spirit has selected to receive it (cf. Rom. 12:4-8). It cannot, therefore be encouraged for everyone.

Secondly:

**Speaking in Tongues is Wrong
If Interpreted as a Proof of
Spiritual Maturity**

J. E. Stiles claims that "speaking with tongues helps keep us always

conscious of the Holy Spirit within us. . . . It will vitally affect the way we live, and cause us to be more Christlike" (*The Gift of The Holy Spirit*, p. 32). We would wish this to be true, but already we've seen that "speaking in tongues" is a *sovereignly* bestowed gift, and *not* an experience guaranteed every believer in Christ. Thus it can be readily seen that those who have this gift are *not* necessarily the "more spiritual" Christians. God is not a respecter of persons that He would grant to one a gift that would make him more spiritual than his brethren. The Heavenly Father's desire is that *all* his children should mature and "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). But this is not the same as, nor can it be equated with, the gift of tongues.

It should be observed that the only New Testament church that is reported to have used this gift was the one at Corinth. And of this group, Paul wrote:

"I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. . . . For ye are yet carnal, for whereas there is among you envying, and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as (unsaved) men?" (I Cor. 3:1, 3.)

He also reminded them that they should grow spiritually and "be not children in understanding" (I Cor. 14:20), even though they were privileged of God to "come behind in no spiritual gift" (I Cor. 1:7). Therefore it cannot be maintained that the experience of tongues is a sign of spiritual maturity, or else the Corinthian church would certainly *not* have been called "carnal." In spite of these facts, it is the repeated experience of this writer to meet those who claim "greater power," "new zeal," and "real spiritual ad-

vancement" because they have experienced speaking in tongues!

Many "tongues" advocates have been made aware of this contradiction and have attempted to explain it by stating:

"The gifts of the Spirit lay upon the possessor an added responsibility to live a holy life, but sad to say, he does not always live up to his responsibilities" (J. E. Stiles, *Ibid.*, p. 123).

And so the scriptural position is supported that the gift of speaking in tongues is not a proof of spiritual maturity, in spite of the claims of some of its supposed recipients.

Thirdly:

Speaking in Tongues is Wrong If Claimed to be the Sign of the Baptism of The Holy Spirit

The almost universal point of agreement between the various groups who practice this phenomenon is the claim that "speaking in tongues" constitutes the "sign" or proof of having received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

It will readily be granted that the early disciples at Pentecost did speak with "tongues" when the Holy Spirit came (Acts 2:1-4). It should be noted however that these "tongues" were *natural* languages of that day, and not some ecstatic utterance that needed interpretation (Acts 2:5-11). In passing, it should also be observed that even those of the "tongues movement," who undertake foreign missionary work, must study the native language before any ministry is attempted. This was not the case at Pentecost. Perhaps Acts 2 should be studied again before it is quoted as authentic proof for today's manifestations!

When Cornelius and friends received the Gospel message and the accompanying ministry of the Holy Spirit, it is clearly stated that they

"spoke with tongues and magnified God" (Acts 10:46). Likewise, the Ephesian disciples "spoke with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:6) when they received the Holy Spirit. These are the only occurrences of speaking with tongues in the book of Acts and on each occasion the supernatural utterances were coupled with an initiatory experience of the Holy Spirit's indwelling and baptizing work. How then can it be stated that speaking in tongues is NOT the sign of the Baptism?

A careful examination must be made of the contexts of each of these three passages in order to find the answer. In each case where tongues were displayed (Acts 2:1-36; 10:34-48; 19:1-7), there were *Jews* present who entertained some doubt concerning the validity of the Spirit's presence in others. This is an important observation, since Paul states in I Corinthians 14:21 that:

"In the law it is written, by men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that they will not hear me, saith the Lord."

The law, we know, was given to Israel (Rom. 9:4), and in the passage just cited, the gift of tongues is stated to be a specific sign to *that* nation. In the next verse (I Cor. 14:22), Paul states that the sign of speaking in tongues is for UNBELIEVERS. Following Paul's logic, we conclude that these "unbelievers" are Israelites. Now notice, in the *very next* verse, (I Cor. 14:23) the Apostle warns them against the use of tongues in their assembly when UNBELIEVERS are present! If "tongues" are a sign to "unbelievers," why not use the gift when they are around? The only sensible answer is that Paul is referring to GENTILE UNBELIEVERS in

verse 23 who would think the Corinthians "mad" if they witnessed the ecstatic utterance called "tongues." So we conclude, with Paul, that speaking in tongues is not a sign for *all*, certainly not for Gentiles, but for *unbelieving Jews* (cf. I Cor. 1:22). Hence it *cannot* be claimed as the universal sign and necessary result of having received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

To further prove this, Paul, in this same book, told the Corinthian believers that they had ALL received the baptism (I Cor. 12:13), but he questions whether "ALL speak with tongues" (I Cor. 12:30). Obviously expecting a negative answer, he *erases* the erroneous concept that speaking in tongues is the necessary sign of having received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Fourthly:

**Speaking in Tongues is Wrong
If Not Practiced According to the
Rules Laid Down in Scripture**

The rules for the manifestation and regulation of this gift are clearly set forth in I Corinthians 12-14. Here, Paul warns against "uncertain sounds" (I Cor. 14:2-9) and insists that "all things be done decently and in order" (I Cor. 14:40). Six rules are given in these chapters. Each one will be briefly stated and explained.

First: Tongues speaking must acknowledge the Lordship of Christ.
Paul states:

"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (I Cor. 12:3).

Unspeakable evil sayings have been reportedly heard in some "tongues meetings" by those who could understand a foreign tongue which was being manifested. While

these occurrences are rare, yet they are a direct violation of rule number one!

Second: There must be an interpreter.

From I Corinthians 14:5 we learn that the person speaking should himself interpret his "tongues" utterance. He is encouraged to pray that he might interpret *his own* speech (v. 13) and also instructed to keep silent if there is no interpreter available (v. 27,28). This assumes that he knows *beforehand* whether or not such a gifted individual is present.

Third: Tongues should be exercised in the presence of unbelievers.

Tongues are definitely called "a sign to unbelievers" (I Cor. 14:22). This was the case at Pentecost (Acts 2) and at Cornelius' house (Acts 10:45). However, as already pointed out, the "unbelievers" must be JEWISH, those who "require a sign" (I Cor. 1:22).

Fourth: No more than three persons must exercise this gift at any one meeting.

I Corinthians 14:27 says:

"If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or AT THE MOST by three, and that by course; and let one interpret."

It has been witnessed by this writer personally that this plain rule is violated as often as any in a "tongues meeting." Yet God said; "At the most by three, and let one interpret."

Fifth: Women are not to speak with tongues in church.

In a context that deals exclusively with tongues, Paul states:

"Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under

obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (I Cor. 14:34,35).

There is *not one* Bible example of *women* ever exercising this spiritual gift, yet a large number of those who "speak in tongues" today are of the female sex, in *direct violation* to God's word!

Sixth: The gift must be governed by love.

To speak in some heavenly language, or "the tongues of angels" (I Cor. 13:1) without "love" is *worthless*, the Bible declares. This was the problem at Corinth. They needed more of the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22,23) than the "gifts of the Spirit," and this is the same problem today.

Paul claimed that these rules are "the commandments of the Lord" (I Cor. 14:37), and thus are to be obeyed — explicitly.

We would never "forbid to speak with tongues" (I Cor. 14:39) but

from the foregoing Biblical conclusions we are forced to say that "speaking in tongues" as usually experienced, and witnessed today is *unscriptural*, and therefore *unwarranted*.

A WARNING

Satan, the master deceiver, has duplicated *everything* that is genuine in the spiritual realm, including Christ. He will not hesitate to *substitute* some counterfeit experience, conjured up by an emotional meeting of sorts, for the realities of a Spirit-filled, fruit-producing life in Christ. The Bible *must* be our sole guide in matters of *faith* and *practice*. Any belief or manifestation *not* in accordance with the Divine revelation is nothing less than a fraudulent counterfeit of Hell!

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

"Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21).

THE BIBLE

*For feelings come and feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving.
My warrant is the Word of God;
Naught else is worth believing.
Tho' all my heart should feel oppressed
For want of some sweet token,
There is One greater than my heart,
Whose word cannot be broken.
I'll trust in God's unchanging Word,
Till soul and body sever;
For tho' all things shall pass away,
His Word shall stand forever!*

THE PLACE OF TONGUES IN GOD'S DISPENSATIONAL PROGRAM

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In the early years of the church's history there appeared a phenomenon known in Scripture as the "gift of tongues." That there was such a gift can scarcely be denied by one who believes the Bible to be the Word of God. However, the explanation of its presence and its relation to the contemporary church is a matter of considerable debate. Many groups place considerable emphasis upon the gift and its use, and recent years have seen an increase in those who claim to possess it. Numerous errors concerning this gift are to be found in the church today.

Much of the error concerning the gift of tongues stems from a misunderstanding of the place of tongues in the over-all program of God. A clear grasp of dispensational principles of interpretation will greatly aid the student in seeing the divine intent for the gift of tongues and how this intent was accomplished. The decline in the last few years of strong periodicals and authors presenting the dispensational viewpoint has perhaps contributed in some measure to the rise of emphasis in some quarters upon a miraculous gift of tongues.

I. The Dispensational Program of God

Basic to the discussion is a proper definition of the term *dispensation*. Three Greek words are employed in the New Testament which could be translated, "dispensation" or "Stewardship." The basic word, *oikonomia*, has reference to "the management of a household," and the "office of administrator (stewardship)" (*Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon*).

At least four fundamental ideas are associated with a stewardship as it is viewed in Luke 16:1-8. These are: (1) responsibility, verse 1; (2) accountability, verse 2; (3) temporality, verse 2, and (4) reckoning, verses 2-3. With these things in mind a dispensation might be defined as a period of time during which God tests man according to some specific revelation of His will. Bible students must rid themselves of the notion that the only program God has is the personal salvation of individuals. As important as this is, God also has other ends to accomplish. He has purposes for Israel, for the nations, and for the church.

That the gift of tongues was an unusual sign or manifestation seems evident to all. It must be remembered, however, that signs and miracles are quite largely confined to specific areas of Scripture and to particular time periods in God's program of revelation. There are three main periods of miracles recorded in Scripture. They are: (1) the period of Moses; (2) the period of Elijah and Elisha, and (3) the period of Christ and the apostles. In each period there was a reason for the appearance of miracles. In the case of Moses, God wished to demonstrate to the people that he was the divinely-appointed leader of Israel and qualified in every way to lead them out of Egypt. Miracles wrought through Moses amply demonstrated this divine recognition. Later in the history of God's people, there came a time of great spiritual apostasy. So great was the apostasy that even the priesthood was not

longer a pure channel for the revelation of God's will, so it became necessary for God to raise up prophets with special power to urge the people to return to the worship of the true God. These prophets—Elijah and Elisha—needed an unusual witness from heaven that they were sent from God and such they received, when empowered to work miracles. Again when Messiah appeared upon the scene of history, His Person, claims, and teachings were authenticated by the miracles which He worked. His followers, and the infant church which they constituted, were also in need of supernatural testimony as to their origin and such testimony was given by God's gracious provision for miracle-working power. In other words, in each period where it was deemed necessary God accompanied the revelation of Himself by signs and wonders which attested the truth of such revelation.

Sadly enough, not all seem to grasp the significance of these great periods in which miraculous manifestations appeared. Some castigate the present-day church because it is not experiencing the same manifestations and chide it for a lack of the fulness of the Spirit. This is based upon a misunderstanding of God's purposes. While God desires His church to enjoy the fulness of His power in this age, this does not mean that the presence of this power will be accompanied by the exact external signs which accompanied it in the beginning of the church age.

Not to be overlooked at this juncture is the fact that the miracles which were so abundant at the beginning of the age of grace gradually tapered off and vanished as the age progressed. This is evident from a study of the New Testament. In

every age there have been those who have maintained an apostolic doctrinal position and have been spiritual people, and yet they have experienced no display of miraculous signs such as characterized the early church. Does this mean, as some allege, that the present church simply lacks the spirituality and earnestness which would provide an atmosphere for the display of these gifts, or is their decline part of the purpose of God?

If the gift of tongues, along with other gifts, was primarily given to substantiate the gospel message and its messengers, then there remained no more need for its display following the completion of the New Testament. In the early days of the church age when no completed, authoritative New Testament canon was available, preachers claiming to speak for God had need of miraculous powers to demonstrate the validity of their claim. Now, with the written, final, "thus saith the Lord" available to the world and open to the inspection of all, the special signs are discontinued.

II. The Place of the Gift of Tongues in the Dispensation of Grace

Primary in the consideration of the problem is the purpose for which the gift of tongues was given. To particularize the more general discussion which has preceded it, it is necessary to look at the Scriptures themselves. Paul, in I Corinthians 14:21-22, sets forth the purpose of the gift of tongues:

In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people: and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying

serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

In citing the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah 28:11-12, Paul seems to emphasize the fact that the gift of tongues was a special sign to the nation Israel that the message concerning the Messiah was true. This sign had relevance at the beginning of the age of grace to establish the witness to Israel. God had promised that he would speak to them with "other tongues" and at Pentecost, and in the days following, this is exactly what He did. However, there was no need for a perpetual repetition of this testimony. The early days of the church age were transition days. The gospel appeal was being pressed home to the Jews, as the vast majority of the first Christians were Jews, and the background of the early church was Jewish. It was not insignificant, therefore, that the sign of tongues should be directed in a particular way to the Jews. God having fulfilled His prophetic word, and having testified by this sign that the gospel preached was His gospel, withdrew the sign but left the gospel to be proclaimed to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The very first mention of tongues in the New Testament would seem to corroborate the explanation just given. The "tongues" that were miraculously given at Pentecost were "languages." A "tongue" was not an unknown gibberish, but a valid language spoken by peoples of the world. At the feast of Pentecost were gathered persons from various countries who spoke a variety of languages. In order that the gospel might be quickly spread to the world, God gave the apostles supernatural ability to preach in languages natively strange to them. That this was so is explained by the

Scriptural writer who records the reaction of the hearers:

And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born? . . . we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God (Acts 2:7-8,11).

A tremendous testimony to the gospel was born that day and many were saved through the message authenticated by a sign-gift. Peter applies this in a forceful way when he proclaims to the Jews who are gathered for the feast of Pentecost that the manifestation of tongues was a sign to them.

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:32-33, 36).

The "this" which was shed forth, was the gift of tongues and constituted a sign to the nation Israel that the Messianic proclamation was true.

The other instances recorded in Scripture where the sign of tongues was given can be understood in the light of the foregoing. When the gospel was preached for the first time to Gentiles it was necessary that the Jewish disciples have some token that this was proper and in the purpose of God. Their nationalism militated against a ready reception of Gentiles, and Peter protested that he had "never eaten anything that is common or unclean" (Acts 10:14).

But God taught him that nothing sanctified by the Lord was common or unclean, including Gentiles, some of whom were to be shortly knocking on his door. In order to demonstrate to Peter and his Jewish brethren that the gospel was to be offered to the Gentiles also, the believing Gentiles were given the ability to speak in tongues. The account reads:

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any forbid water, that these should be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? (Acts 10:44-47).

Peter and the others were convinced by the presence of the tongue-gift that the gospel was to go to the Gentiles.

The third instance in the book of Acts concerns Paul's original contacts in the city of Ephesus. Apollos had preceded Paul to Ephesus and had preached in the synagogue there (Acts 18:26), having a ministry to the Jewish community. He "mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ" (Acts 18:28). Apollos did not have as complete a

message as did Paul, who followed him into the city, and to authenticate Paul's preaching before the Jews of that city, God bestowed upon believers there the special gift and "they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:6).

The other passage in the New Testament which deals somewhat extensively with the question of tongues is I Corinthians chapter fourteen. In the church of Corinth, more than in any other apostolic church of which we have record, the gift of tongues was prominent. Considering the circumstances surrounding the beginning of the church there (Acts 18:1 ff.), and the prominence of the conflict with the Jews in the city, it seems interesting that a display of the tongues gift was more in evidence here than in other places. In his epistle to the church, Paul makes clear the facts that the gift does not demonstrate superior spirituality, nor is it to be construed as a major gift. Certainly it never was the sign of the baptism or filling of the Spirit.

Dispensationally, then, the gift of tongues played an important part in the transitional period between law and grace. It was a God-given sign to Israel that her Messiah had come and that the gospel concerning Him was authentic. As the age progressed the necessity for the accompanying sign vanished and the sign itself was finally removed.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF "TONGUES" — *Continued from page 5*

peared in the pages of the "Voice." Elsewhere in this issue of the "Discerner" will be found a doctrinal analysis and evaluation of the "bap-

tism" experience. Enough has been said in this article to indicate the pattern and progress of the movement in our time.

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PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*By Pastor "Mac" of Spiritual Clinic (KTIS), and Pastor of
Powderhorn Park Baptist Church, Minneapolis*

QUESTION . . . *Can you give me some reasons why God chose Pentecost for the descent of the Holy Spirit?*

ANSWER . . . Pentecost was one of the three great Jewish feasts, and held the central place between the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles, which signified the completion of harvest and the wilderness life in booths. It was dependent upon the Passover. It dated only from it, so that, were there no Passover, there could be no Pentecost.

I think that there are three good reasons why Pentecost should have been chosen for the descent of the Holy Spirit: (1) It was the Jubilee day after the Paschal Sacrifice and the Resurrection—the Day of joy, of freedom, and of proclaiming the good tidings; (2) It was the Day on which the giving of the Law took place, according to the new Covenant, "I will put My law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it" (Jeremiah 31:33); (3) It was the Day on which the Lord accepted by fire the offerings of the people, unworthy as they were: the first fruits of the great harvest, and ensured the possession of that harvest itself.

This is now the age of the Holy Spirit. There are several things to keep in mind. The Holy Spirit came to exert, not an occasional, but a permanent influence on the Church! Another great principle which we learn from Pentecost is that it was the day of the Installation of the Holy Spirit as the Administrator of the Church—He is the Lord of the Harvest! One other great principle to keep in mind is that Pentecost can never be repeated. The Holy Spirit is HERE! He came to abide. Nothing can be more contrary to the intention and teaching of the Word of God than to "expect a second Pentecost." I would just as soon look for a second Calvary. How did the reality of the Cross come into my life? By faith. How does the reality of Pentecost come into my life? By faith. We live in the Pentecostal age, and under the rule of the Holy Spirit. If you keep these principles in mind you will not be caught in some of the crafty teachings of men regarding the Holy Spirit and the age in which we live.