

Apostolic Teaching

Concerning

Tongues

by

WM. F. RADFORD

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction -----	7
CHAPTER I The Corinthians' Need-----	9
CHAPTER II Gifts and the Spirit-----	12
CHAPTER III Each Member of the Body Essential--	17
CHAPTER IV Each Member in Its Own Place-----	24
CHAPTER V The More Excellent Way-----	27
CHAPTER VI The Way That Marks Progress-----	32
CHAPTER VII The Excellence of Prophecy-----	38
CHAPTER VIII The Uncertain Sound-----	43
CHAPTER IX Paul's Estimate of the Tongues-----	49
CHAPTER X Exhorts to Observe God's Order-----	56

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INTRODUCTION

We believe it is safe to assert of every man who knows, or would know, the "more excellent way," that he believes that Apostolic teaching is the voice of God; that he regards the Bible as the one valid depository of spiritual truth, to which must be referred for decision every aspect of truth concerning which there may be diverse opinions; and that he does this with a fixed belief that there is no heresy but has been forestalled in Scripture, either directly or indirectly, by the Holy Spirit, through the Apostles and the prophets, no perplexing question or condition but has been foreseen and provided for, nothing false that can endure if submitted to its authority, nothing true but that the same authority substantiates.

Therefore, he will be led to inquire, What has God spoken in respect of spiritual gifts, wherewith the teachings of modern "Tongues" may be judged? for by authoritative Scripture teaching alone may these claims be justly approved or condemned. Is there definite Apostolic teaching in support or refutation of their claims?

We can affirm that there is, and that a compilation of all the evidence will establish that Scripture nowhere presents Apostolic authority for their claim of apostolicity; but that, on the contrary, there is definite teaching by the Apostle Paul concerning spiritual gifts, in which the gift of tongues is purposely singled out and dealt with in terms that refute their every claim to the utmost.

This teaching is to be found in the 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters of 1 Corinthians. Nowhere else in Scripture is

the subject referred to in the form of teaching. Neither is it necessary, for the matter is fully considered and disposed of with a finality that admits neither a recall nor a revision.

The gift of tongues is mentioned several times in The Book of Acts in an incidental manner, and generally in connection with the gift of prophecy, but these instances as recorded contain no hint of teaching. For the Acts of the Apostles was written by one who was not an Apostle, and as its title specifies is a record of Apostolic acts. And although much is assumed by modern "Tongues" from these instances, yet assumption is no acceptable alternate for direct teaching, and in the face of authoritative Apostolic statement has no place. Yet, as will be seen, a false conclusion, drawn without logical warrant from the above-mentioned instances, and which is directly opposed to Apostolic teaching, is the cornerstone of the modern "Tongues" movement.

Since we must admit that the 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters of 1 Corinthians contain inspired Apostolic instruction concerning spiritual gifts in general, and the gift of tongues in particular, (for the Apostle himself declares that they are the commandments of the Lord,) then it becomes mandatory, that as lovers of the truth we consider the subject by their light, and abide by their decision.

THE CORINTHIANS' NEED

CHAPTER I

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.”

With these, the opening words of the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul prefaces the only Scripture, and therefore authoritative teaching concerning the gift of tongues, both as to the order of the gift, and its value in relation to other gifts of the Holy Spirit. The importance of this teaching as it affects a believer in Christ is conveyed in “I would not have you ignorant!” For spiritual ignorance, above all other forms of ignorance, is dangerous to the soul’s welfare, and a powerful weapon in Satan’s hand against the growth and even the very spiritual existence of both the individual and the church; inasmuch as it is coexistent with, and as it were, a by-product of carnality: and we have Paul’s word for it that these Corinthians were “yet carnal.” By the Apostle’s statement spiritual things can be understood only by those that are spiritual, and the “yet carnal” believer, being by reason thereof in a state of spiritual ignorance, is peculiarly open to deception, and in his ignorance would both misconceive and misapply spiritual gifts. For this cause they were in need of careful instruction concerning the gifts which, as Paul states elsewhere, they were “zealous of.”

Moreover, as a direct result of being “yet carnal” a general state of confusion was pervading the Corinthian church regarding many other things also beside spiritual gifts, and it would surely help to understand the need of

Paul's emphatic teaching concerning tongues if we made a brief review of conditions there as exposed by his epistle.

We find, in the first chapter, that it had been reported unto him authoritatively that there were contentions among them. They were at loggerheads, even thus early dividing into sects. They were glorying in men. "Every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos," etc. Here is a disclosure of all-pervading carnality, as shown by universal division. We note its varying workings in this church.

In the third chapter he writes boldly, "And I, brethren, 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 men?" Not being possessed of the Spirit they could not be led by the Spirit.

In chapter five we learn that it was commonly reported, the is, it was town talk, that there "is fornication among you," of a flagrancy that almost forbids mentioning, "and ye are puffed up," rather than humiliated by the presence of this flaunting sin. Carnality is immune to holy sensibility.

In chapter six we are informed that they wronged and defrauded one another, and were at law against each other in secular courts. "Ye are yet carnal" begins to appear a mild charge against them, until we consider that carnality is that "old man," the body, the prime factor, of sins.

Chapter seven finds them at sea over the marriage relation, and presumably loose all along the line in that connection. Also they were muddled over circumcision. A muddy vision goes with the carnal mind.

Then we find, chapter nine, that they questioned Paul's apostleship. "Am I not an apostle?" he asks. "Mine answer to them that do examine me is this." Corinthian churches do not love apostles of holiness.

Chapter ten is strong teaching on separation from idolatrous worldly associations, and applies fully to the supremely carnal Corinthian churches of today. Carnality walks hand in hand with worldliness.

Chapter eleven, along with other matters, church suppers. For these typical church members made a practice of coming together, "not to eat the Lord's supper, but their own supper"; a practice which He utterly condemns, but which the denominations of today treat with carnal disregard, as they do all His other teachings.

Chapters 12, 13, and 14 reveal them as subverting the order and value of the gifts of the Spirit, to the confusion of the whole work, requiring three entire chapters of drastic teaching by the apostle to restore the situation in the Lord's interest. Carnality has little or no conception of spiritual values.

Then chapter 15, climax of all, denying the resurrection, which is the foundation of our hope, and only ground of faith, as the apostle clearly states. Such a denial is the strong tower of complete apostasy. Can we marvel that Paul devotes the contents of three chapters toward counteracting the misinformed zeal which had seized upon this grossly carnal people?

No other church occupied the low spiritual plane of these Corinthians. No other church is reproached with being "*yet* carnal," and then stands revealed in this epistle so shot through with carnality as to perfectly justify the reproach. Therefore, no other church needed so much this teaching concerning spiritual gifts, seeing they would not be so liable to subject them to carnal misuse.

With this digression we will again take up the apostle's counsel.

GIFTS AND THE SPIRIT

CHAPTER II

“Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.” Several things are to be noted in this statement: first, that formerly they were Gentiles, and as such, through lack of instruction could offer a valid excuse for being carried away by dumb idols, “even as ye were led,” a picture of the helplessness of the blind. Spiritual ignorance is the stronghold of idolatry, of which the worship of images, or “dumb idols,” is the grossest form. But idols need not necessarily be of a material nature. Scripture which is wrested by those who are self-blinded because of rejected light, or by those who by reason of carnality, “see as through a glass, darkly,” may, and oftentimes does, result in the idolizing of the false. It is possible to so exalt some portion of truth as to give it an artificial value that effects the destruction of the whole truth. This is Satan’s chosen method of Scripture treatment.

It is a commonplace that even what is intrinsically good is oftentimes used to serve a bad purpose. The Bible itself becomes a snare to the insincere. The brazen serpent, by the virtue of Christ speaking life to the dying, became a dumb image, a mere “piece of brass,” to idolatrous Israel. And Christendom’s adoration of Christ is quite as futile. For while Israel adored the symbol as being itself the life, Christendom seems to regard Christ, the Life, as but a symbol. This will find an application as we consider the attempted exaltation of a minor spiritual gift to a point where it assumes the functions of an idol. But the apostle now calls them to remember that

when they were Gentiles, a synonym for sinners, ignorance bound them to idolatry, thus contrasting their former slavery with their present liberty. Spiritual ignorance is sin's home atmosphere, wherein it attains to hot-house growth. The Church is born out of it, and can not by any possible chance endure in it.

"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 the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Sinners, who despise the name of Jesus, use that name as a curse. Another class of men accept Jesus Christ in a formal way, and are accounted Christians throughout so-called Christendom. But Paul in this verse sets one impossibility over against another. The first is beyond contention. It is impossible for any man speaking by the Spirit of God to call Jesus accursed. But on the other hand, it is equally impossible for any man to say, and by this Paul means, say experimentally, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. That is, the presence of the Holy Ghost within a man is the sole evidence on which that man can testify that Jesus is his Lord, the Lord of his life, a confession on which alone one can rightfully claim to be a Christian. Therefore, the gift of the Holy Ghost is essential to one who would be a Christian. So-called Christianity not being established on this fundamental truth is ignored and set aside and declared to be an impossibility. And experimental knowledge is imparted by the Holy Ghost, "which is given unto us." Thus the evidence of the presence of the Holy Ghost within us is not by any of His gifts, but by Himself. This is beautifully amplified in the following chapter.

So the thing vital to men is not that they shall worship something as God, or that they should receive a gift as a sign that they have received the baptism with the Holy Ghost, but that they should know experimentally that Jesus is their Lord. Not that they should *recognize* God

by outward manifestations, such as "tongues," but they should *know* Jesus as Lord by a revelation of the Spirit of God within. For "*to recognize*" is not synonymous with "*to know*."

In these days there is a "Tongue" cult which proclaims the necessity of the gift of a "tongue," as a sign that one has received the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Therefore, they seek the gift of "tongues" to that end, and thus would subvert both the comparative importance of "the gift," and the specific purpose for which it is bestowed.

Not holiness, not the preaching of the gospel, but "tongues." We have heard one of their preachers declare that he had got far beyond holiness preaching, for he had received "tongues"; and it was apparent that he had neither holiness nor a God-given tongue. And another, who upon invitation to preach the gospel in a certain mission, replied, "I have got beyond that, and am now preaching higher things. "Tongues" were thus declared to be "higher" than holiness. In other words, he virtually taught, "Without tongues no man shall see the Lord." But if one has received the baptism with the Holy Ghost he will not thus extol "tongues," but he will assuredly magnify the Lord. For Jesus himself declared, "He shall speak of me."

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; "And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all."

Here we find the trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit, working in unity. Each separate gift of the Spirit is pronounced to be of equal authority as announcing the Giver. They are all of "the same Spirit." The "same God" worketh all in all; that is, all the gifts in all the people. No gift is pre-eminent in this particular, though we shall find them differing in use and value. Paul reiterates this fact in these passages, "differences of administrations, but the same Lord"; "diversities of oper-

ations, but the same God." Even thus early are we put on guard against any other spirit asserting the pre-eminence, or super-eminence of any gift as being the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The declaration is unequivocal, and is strengthened by repetition, "same Spirit," "same Lord," "same God." First then, the baptism with the Holy Ghost, and secondly, Holy Ghost gifts, but no gift being in and of itself exclusive evidence of the baptism. There is a world of separation between the gift of the Holy Ghost, and Holy Ghost gifts.

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."

Not for show; not that men may get away beyond the gospel, but for profit withal; that is, as a profitable addition to the gospel. It is inconceivable that the Holy Ghost should bestow universally a profitless, or unedifying gift. On the contrary, they are given to every man, or in every case, for general and not for individual profit. Not to accomplish the intention of the Holy Ghost is to miss the aim of the gift, and impeaches its genuineness. With this in mind we shall the better comprehend Paul's dwelling upon and belittling of the gift of tongues.

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing, by the same Spirit; (The repetition, "by the same Spirit," is not to be passed unnoticed. It is evidently intentional, as though resenting the suggestion that some of the gifts were of negligible authority, or that some gave stronger evidence of being of Holy Ghost origin, and for that reason possessed a special value.) To another the working of miracles; . . . to another divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues." "To another," that is, not the same man. Spoken in connection with the gift of tongues, this passage is in itself alone a complete refutation of the basic modern "tongue" claim. No gift, according to this plain

apostolic statement, is bestowed upon all. Not the same gift, but the same Spirit. In the face of this declared distribution of gifts, any spirit that assumes to bestow upon all men the same gift can not be the Holy Spirit. Likewise, any teaching that encourages all men to seek the acquirement of the same gift as the sole evidence of the baptism is openly anti-apostolical. The controversial style of Paul's teaching affords evidence that he is opposing a prevalent or growing contrary belief, and this will be more noticeable as we proceed.

“But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”

Not as some might teach, giving to every man the same gift. That is, not as men might will, but “as he will.” He again emphasizes the fact that the gifts are all by “that one and the selfsame Spirit,” a form of speech that would indicate that some doubted whether gifts so varying in quality could be of the same Spirit; or were teaching that the less noticeable manifestations did not necessarily betoken the gift of the Holy Ghost. What follows explains the Holy Spirit's wisdom in dividing His gifts, and exposes man's folly as it might be manifested in seeking all the same gift.

EACH MEMBER OF THE BODY ESSENTIAL

CHAPTER III

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.” Or, the body of Christ.

The Holy Spirit is preparing a spiritual body, the Church, and from its very nature this body must be perfect; a body of absolute balance and beauty. For the purpose of illustration Paul is about to compare the natural body and its members with this spiritual body and its gifts. And we are to see that every gift goes to make a member of this perfect spiritual body.

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

All. Not one left out. Every Spirit-filled man has been baptized by the same Spirit; they have all drank into one Spirit, and thus all have equal evidence that they are of one body. Each and all have received the baptism with the Holy Ghost; and the purpose of the baptism is to unite all believers into one body. No congregation of men can be truly called a body until they have passed through this unifying process, the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Only thus can the separate and diverse members be made to function harmoniously, and until this is brought to pass there can be no body. Carnality means disunity, and carnality must be baptized out by the Holy Ghost to remove disunity. A church in which there is carnal disunity instead of Holy Ghost harmony is a fragment of the valley of dry bones. And it will remain dis-

jointed and spiritually lifeless forever, unless God by His Spirit assembles and unites these loose members into one body, clothed with life and holy harmony of action, and having a perfect distribution or balance of gifts, which answer to members.

“For the body is not one member, but many.”

That the body consists not of one member only, but of many, is so obvious that it would seem that there must have been a line of teaching that was disregarding this fundamental fact, and was pursuing a scheme that could but end in the production of a body with but a single member. For in Paul's teaching from this point, we must bear in mind, a physical member of the human body is analagous to a spiritual gift. Therefore, the natural body “is not one member, but many,” being the statement of a universally known fact, is to be applied thus: “The spiritual body is not one gift, but many.” This second truth should be as obvious as the first. There is no body, either physical or spiritual, but is of many members. This appeals to any rational mind as something that can not be gainsaid. Then how irrational to strive for a body so abnormal, so unright as to be all one member. This has a parallel in a church which might exploit altogether the acquiring of one particular gift. But if the gift have the showy nature of a “tongue” it might well appeal to an assembly that is imbued with Corinthian carnality.

“If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?”

In view of what has been said before there is but one application for this. For questions such as these and others that follow are excusable only on the ground that they are put to expose a prevalent absurd line of thought, and consequent teaching, that was opposed to common sense, or sound reason. For these questions are each of them an appeal to common sense.

A modest gift might seem by contrast less desirable to the natural man than a more showy one, and might be said to not possess equal evidence of being of the Spirit, and this would lead to the neglect of the one and a universal desire for the other; to the extent that finally the one would be declared not of the Spirit, and consequently not of the body, because it did not possess the openly miraculous nature of the other; as the foot and ear do not possess the higher attributes of the hand and the eye. Yet, as we know, all are equally of the body, yet of differing values, agreeing to differences of administrations, and diversities of operations.

Substituting gift for member then, which is in line with Paul's teaching, "If any saint shall say, Although I am greatly blessed, and have surely received a gift from God, yet because I have not received the gift of a tongue I can not have received the baptism with the Holy Ghost," is he therefore not of the body of Christ; more especially since Paul has declared, "By one Spirit are we *all* baptized into one body, and have been *all* made to drink into one Spirit?" Is he not, regardless of "tongues," surely an essential member of the body of Christ? Paul's questions, rightly applied, result in a wide-open exposure of the "tongue" absurdity. Of course it is clearly impossible for one member to say truthfully of itself or any other member, "You are not of the body," except that member be artificial. And we can testify that artificiality has been the prominent and dominant feature in every modern "tongue" which we have yet heard.

"If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?"

And if the whole body spiritual were a "tongue"? for example, for this is the sense of the question. It is certainly a kindergarten stage of Christian experience that requires to be addressed by questions like these.

“But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”

The natural body, though but a secondary affair, yet is a type of the eternal body of Christ. Since God has set the members of the physical body to function with such balance and precision and harmony, what must we expect of the body of Christ? We do not hear men presuming to improve on His handiwork on the human body. Even sinners sing praises to the human form divine. It is God who set, or established, the members, every one of them. He set them unaided, and He set them right. So right as to please even Him; so balanced that the hand can not say to the foot, “I have no need of thee.” Even the thought is incredible. God having set the members as it pleased Him, they can not be reset except at His displeasure; they are not transferable. Remember that this teaching is altogether intended to apply to the spiritual gifts that make the spiritual body.

“And if they were all one member, where were the body”?

The answer to this is, “There would be no body.” Therefore, there would be no Church, there would be no body of Christ, if there were but one universal gift, and the whole scheme of salvation from beginning to end would be wrecked, as thoroughly as would the plan and purpose of the human body, had it but one member.

“But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye can not say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.”

The eye can not say this of any member, because God has so set all the members as to make one body. However much they may differ in value, yet the body would not be harmoniously complete or balanced if deprived of the least of its members. Admitting the supremacy of the head over the feet, we must also admit the dependence of the head upon the feet. Yet who would contem-

plate for one moment replacing the head by the feet? So we can no more subvert the order of the gifts of the Spirit, which go to make the Church which is the body of Christ, than we can subvert the members of our physical body. "The eye *cannot* say," "head *cannot* say"; we can neither dispense with them nor underrate them. Indeed, as we shall see, the seemingly greater must even defer to the lesser. All this has its parallel in a teaching that magnifies the importance of a certain gift to an extent that dispenses with every other. This would fit both an ancient, or a modern "tongue" delusion, which by its exclusive devotion to attaining the gift of "tongues" virtually declares of all the other gifts, "I have no need of thee"; and thus would make a church, or spiritual body, of but one gift. No other gift of the Spirit could be so successfully misemployed for this purpose as "tongues," and it is this very thing against which all of Paul's teaching in these three chapters is aimed.

One gift "cannot say", or by assumption imply, regarding any other gift, "I am sufficient without you." A professedly "tongue" (?) gifted man cannot say to one who has not received a "tongue," "You are not of the body of Christ by Spirit baptism, because you have not the gift of a "tongue." Since Paul has declared that "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit", then no "tongue" man has a right to say, neither can he claim apostolic sanction for saying, that "tongues" are the sole evidence of the baptism with the Holy Ghost, because he directly belies apostolic teaching and authority. For "he *cannot* say," in its full intention mean, "He is forbidden to say."

But if he still would assert his dogma, then he would in effect demember the body of Christ. For he virtually claims for "tongues," that it is all there need be of the body of Christ, thus making a body of but one member, or gift, instead of a body of many members, as it pleased God to make it. By exalting "tongues" to this degree he

degrades all the other gifts correspondingly, even to the point where they cease to possess any value. This is so true that we do not hear the other gifts mentioned among the "tongue" devotees. But compare genuine apostolic teaching:

"Nay, much more [quite the contrary of the modern 'tongue' view,] those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, [those members which 'tongues' despise, and deem altogether superfluous,] are necessary." And the sense here is that they are so necessary that they are indispensable.

"And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon those we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness."

That is, although the feet do not possess the superior qualities of the head, yet we do not cut them off as undesirable. For, if they are not attractive, still they are useful, and being feeble, that is, defenseless, we encase them in armor which adds to their comeliness, and also gives them honor, and they repay us by proving good servants to the whole body. So with necessary care and attention they fill the office for which God set them in the body. But if they should essay to take the place of the head, they would unbalance and upset the body. This applies equally to the body of Christ should there be any misplacement by undue exaltation of gifts.

"For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having bestowed more abundant honour on that part which lacked."

"That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another."

God has tempered the body together by an equalizing process, so that each member seems extremely necessary to every other member. Self-interest prompts mutual self-care, and safeguards perfectly against self-mutilation. This teaching applies, as is intended, equally to the spir-

itual body, the Church, and attaches specifically to any maltreatment of its spiritual members, or gifts, which must result in separation, or schism; which as applied to the natural body answers to self-mutilation.

“And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”

For one member, or gift, to reject another by word or implication, “I have no need of you,” is then as if one should mutilate his own body by cutting off the rejected members, which is the antithesis of “having the same care, one for another.” For the purpose of the members in having the same care one for another, is that all may avoid suffering. Thus the members spontaneously form a league for mutual defense. The pain we feel in some humble member of the body effectually subdues our present interest in any pet member. If we have this care for our physical body, then how much more should we cherish the Church, the body of Christ?

EACH MEMBER IN ITS OWN PLACE

CHAPTER IV

“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

Here we have the application of the foregoing teaching. Every member of a body, whether physical or spiritual, is a particular member, or gift, having a well defined use, though within varying limits of value. There is no autocratic member, for all are indispensable, and each one's claim of membership is equally unassailable.

“And God has set some in the church, [some members, as he set the members of the physical body,] first, apostles, [it is important now to note the order, God's order of setting,] secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that [fourthly,] miracles, then [fifthly] gifts of healings, [sixthly] helps, [seventhly] governments, [eighthly] diversities of tongues.”

These are the gifts or members, which are all baptized into one body by one, (that is, “the same”) Spirit, “as it hath pleased him,” that is, God. As God has set the members in the physical body in an untransferable order, so has He set the gifts in the Church, the body of Christ, in an equally inviolable order. Then to pray for and expect to receive the gift of a “tongue” as the exclusive sign of the baptism with the Holy Ghost is astoundingly unscriptural and unapostolic.

Paul, as we notice, does not limit himself to a mere mention of the gifts, but enumerates them in their order. In that order we find that the gift of tongues is relegated to the eighth and lowest place. This order is the same

that Paul has adhered to from the beginning and is given here obviously of purpose. Here is the order in which God has set His spiritual gifts in the Church. This being their order of rank, it also must be their order of importance and value. Who is it that would reverse this order, and give to tongues their modern autocratic prominence? It is the body of Christ. Who would dismember it? Who but the Adversary, ably seconded by these modern Corinthians, who are "yet carnal, and walk as men"?

"Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?" "Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?"

Obviously, No. Then why pursue a course that is obviously opposed to the will of God? It was a matter of common knowledge to these Corinthians that all were not apostles, nor prophets; nor did all speak with tongues. And this obvious answer is by itself a most complete refutation of modern "tongues." But again, why this series of questions, with a repetition of "all" in every question, and to which there could be but the same answer, except there was among them a teaching or a persuasion, that it was necessary that some particular gift should be possessed by all. The "tongue" heresy is evidently of old.

This series of questions exposes the absurdity of the claim that any gift of the Spirit is the sole evidence of the baptism with the Holy Ghost. But if certain schismatics teach that all must speak with tongues, then it is equally in order for others to demand that all shall be apostles, and prophets, and teachers, and healers, and miracle workers, and so on. In short, that each member of the church shall possess all the gifts. So Paul asks, "Are all apostles? are all prophets?" etc.; the equivalent of asking, "Are all eyes? are all ears? are all hands, or feet?" etc. In short, is each member of the body endued with the attributes of all the other members? For if this were so, then the eye could truly say of the ear, "I have no need of thee," since it would also possess the distinctive

attribute of the ear; and likewise the head of the feet, and vice versa. But God has not so set, ordained, or endowed the members in the physical body; therefore, we learn with equal certainty from Paul's lesson that He has not so set the gifts in the Church. The claim that "tongues" is the sole evidence of the baptism with the Holy Ghost, and exclusive devotion to that one gift, carries with it the imputation that all the other gifts are valueless. In all this we find modern "tongues" directly opposed to apostolic teaching, and to God. But Paul's questions forever rule out "tongues" as being *the* evidence, and we are to find later that they may not be even *an* evidence.

"But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way."

Having named the gifts in their order, then we can but conclude that this is their order in relation to value and desirability, and therefore the order in which they are to be coveted. According to apostolic rating "tongues" comes eighth, being last on the list, an eighth rate gift, the least to be coveted or desired, and this is abundantly emphasized by the apostle later on.

When he assumes to show them "a more excellent way," we are not to infer that there may be several ways of salvation or even more than one way; but that there is a more excellent way to demonstrate the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church, or in the individual, than the "gift" way. For any gift thus far mentioned can be at best no more than circumstantial evidence, for they all are susceptible of diabolical imitation. Therefore, while we pass over into the thirteenth chapter, we do not pass out of, but into the very heart of, his teaching "concerning spiritual gifts." The thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians is not an interpolated, idealistic essay on love, but a pertinent continuation of his subject.

THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY

CHAPTER V

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.” “And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.”

“Though I speak with tongues . . . and have not love.” Here is introduced the possibility that “tongues” may not be of holy origin, for they are set over against “love,” which we know of certainty to be of holy origin. And it is possible to have the one, and not the other. If we have the gift of “tongues,” or of “prophecy,” we perforce know that we have them as something that came to us from without. “Have not love” is a form of speech that indicates that “love” also is something that we may have, or have not. Therefore, “love” also is something that must come to us from without, and like “tongues” and “prophecy” in the form of a gift. It does not read “love not,” but “have not love.” Without this “love” we are nothing. Then if we are nothing without “love,” we are no part of the body of Christ. It follows then that we have not “been baptized by one Spirit,” into that “one body”; that we have not received the baptism with the Holy Ghost. So “tongues” are not surely *an* evidence of that baptism.

The limit of human philanthropy, expressed to the extent of "bestowing all our goods to feed the poor," may not be an expression of pure love for men. Martyrdom, by burning at the stake for "my faith" may not be an expression of pure love for God. This "love" of Paul's then can be nothing less than perfect love, "*the* love of God." Then, "the love of God, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us," is the sole remaining proof of the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Without this love all other so-called "evidences" combined are worthless. But this "love" is not mentioned by Paul in his list of the gifts of the Spirit, because it has a higher significance. It is inseparably associated with the Holy Ghost: so that he who has received the gift of this, God's love, must have also received the Holy Ghost. Perfect love is the proof. Then, to "have not love" is to have not the Holy Ghost. So, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love," may also be properly rendered, "and have not the Holy Ghost." Love is infinitely greater than an external "sign," for it is internal proof; and it gives the assurance that is the very soul of evidence. No multiplicity of "tongues" can impart heart assurance. Therefore "love" needs no "sign" for supporting evidence: it is absolute proof in itself. That one seeks a gift as a "sign" is in itself a sufficient sign that he lacks the assurance of "love." "Signs" do not assure present, personal salvation, but "love" is both full salvation, and its progressing means, as we shall see.

"Love suffereth long, and is kind."

"Tongues" are not inherently long-suffering, nor are they always kind if you in person express a doubt of their genuineness.

"Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." In an early chapter we read that these carnal, "tongue" pursuing Corinthians were "puffed up rather than humiliated," while a flagrant, publicly known sin was in their midst. "Tongues" also in these days, as we know, vaunts itself

exceedingly, and is alarmingly puffed up. It is distinctively a "tongue" movement, composed of what is everywhere known as "the tongue folks." In the physical an enlarged tongue denotes a deranged system. And apostolic teaching discloses very clearly that the modern "tongue" system is fatally out of order. Of which more later.

"Doth not behave itself unseemly."

"Love" being inseparable from God, can not be conceived of as being out of harmony with Him. But we are to see that the indiscriminate use of unknown "tongues" in the church is indecent, and disorderly. It is unseemly behavior; and Paul's claim for "love," that it "doth not behave itself unseemly," is made aforethought to contrast with what he is about to charge against "tongues."

"Seeketh not her own." There is no element of selfishness in "love," neither can it be acquired for a selfish end, however persistently sought for. But "tongues" are sought after as a personal possession, and for personal glorification, rather than general edification.

"Is not easily provoked."

For it is salvation. But modern "tongues," as we know from first evidence, is easily, and often very much provoked, and can not brook even apostolic opposition.

"Rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices with the truth."

"Tongues" rejoices in its perversion of apostolic teaching, which is iniquity; therefore, can not rejoice in the truth of apostolic teaching.

"Thinketh no evil." "Beareth all things." "Believeth all things." "Hopeth all things." "Endureth all things."

The fruit or outcome of "love," to which "tongues" can afford no assistance. They are among the evidences of salvation.

"Love never faileth," in any soul need or emergency. We find that it embraces all that is claimed for "full salvation." Then perfect love is full salvation. Thus it is

a far "more excellent way," for it is an incomparably more excellent gift.

"But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."

These gifts fail, cease, vanish—they reach the limit of their value to us ere the great day of our emergency. But "love" is full salvation. Moreover, "love" is of God. Shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us, it betokens, God with us. And so we can say not only that love is of God, but more intimately still, God is "love." "Love" is integral with the Holy Ghost. And, like John Wesley, we can say, "The best of all is, God is with us." Better than knowledge, better than prophecy, or tongues—best of all, "love." For God, love, never fail-eth.

"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

From the preceding context we have learned that "love" alone is "that which is perfect." Perfect love is the working power in spiritual perfection, being both full salvation, and the means of spiritual progression. We have it plainly from the apostle that these Corinthians were "yet carnal, and walked as men." They were spiritually imperfect, for they possessed as yet only natural wisdom. They knew only in part, for carnality is inseparable from obscurity of spiritual vision. Self-love, which is the antithesis of perfect love, is seated in carnality, which promotes the showy, the spectacular, that in which the carnal nature, "the old man," pre-eminently delights. "Tongues," because of their susceptibility to display, would be the choice of the naturally wise from among the gifts. But with God natural wisdom is the synonym for foolishness. As no gift can impart or inspire spiritual perfection, neither can it impart that knowledge which is so necessary to our well being. But "love" is perfect, and does

impart the satisfying knowledge that is voiced in the apostolic expression, "we know." And "when that which is perfect is come," that is, perfect love, with its clear revelation of spiritual things to the man who by its coming is freed from carnality, then "that which is in part," that is, that partial, or imperfect knowledge of spiritual truth and values, due to carnality which obscures spiritual vision, and prompts carnal desires and choices—"when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part is done away." Carnal murkiness is "done away" by love's bright light, as moonlight obscurity is done away by the clear, compelling light of the risen sun.

THE WAY THAT MARKS PROGRESS

CHAPTER VI

“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”

This is a continuation of the thought of the preceding verse. In the third chapter of this epistle Paul addresses these Corinthians as follows: “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.” By this we learn that carnal, or unperfected believers are likened to babes in Christ. In truth, carnality is that residue, sin, which prevents the babe in Christ from ever advancing out of babyhood and into spiritual manhood. The “spiritual,” then, can only be taken to mean the mature, or perfected believer. Spiritual maturity can not be attained by growth, for perfection is not a growth, but in “love.” Consequently time is not a necessary element, as in growth. So perfection, or spiritual maturity, can be only by the operation and impartation of the Holy Ghost.

Leading up to the reason that Paul gives for not being able to speak unto them as unto spiritual, we find him asserting that “spiritual things are spiritually discerned,” and, “we speak wisdom among them that are perfect,” and, “we have received the Spirit of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of him”: that is, that we might have a true knowledge of spiritual gifts.

So then, only those have spiritual knowledge who have first received the Spirit of God: who have been spiritu-

alized by the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Therefore, to apply, "When I was a child," or carnal, "my speech was carnal, my understanding was carnal, my thoughts were carnal. But when I became a man, or spiritual, by the baptism with the Holy Ghost, I put away childish, or carnal, things." Then a carnal Christian, being but a babe in Christ, can have but a childish understanding of spiritual values. Being still held in the natural, he highly esteems and greatly desires the things that please the natural. A child is amazed at light, but has no understanding of it. He is attracted by unusual sight and sounds, by the glittering and the colorful. A rattle is a perpetual delight. These are its concepts of real values, which if it remains a child it will never get beyond. Being but a child also the carnal believer will be drawn to the most spectacular, the showiest of the gifts of the Spirit, so he will be taken up with "tongues," to the exclusion of those of a higher order. For although it is eighth in standing, it is undoubtedly first in pretension, and in affording opportunity for display.

So, "when I was a child," etc., is a part of his teaching concerning spiritual gifts, of which they had a carnal misconception, due to their not being established in the "more excellent way" through deliverance from carnality. Carnality is unholiness. Spirituality is holiness, and is obtained in the baptism with the Holy Ghost. The thirteenth chapter of 1' Corinthians is a holiness chapter. Its "love" is perfect love. To be "spiritual" is to be perfected in love by the baptism with the Holy Ghost, by whom this love is shed abroad throughout our being, purifying our affections and desires, supplanting carnality, and maturing the child of ignorance into the man of understanding. He has been told to covet earnestly the best gifts. He sees that an unknown "tongue" is as a rattle to a child, and he puts it away as a thing unsuitable to a man, and seeks values of a higher standard.

"For now we see as through a glass, darkly, but then

face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

Taking this as a continuation of his line of thought, and it can be used primarily only in this connection, it is but a following up of his teaching. He is speaking of two epochs in spiritual experience. "For now," that is, when we are carnal, we see things indistinctly, or as through a glass darkly, because carnality obscures our vision. "But then," or when we are spiritual, "face to face," or seeking as with nothing between us. Seeing as through a glass darkly we think we see God in events. We believe we identify the Holy Ghost by unusual manifestations, such as "tongues." But this seeming knowledge is far from sufficient for our need: for "tongues" can be at best but circumstantial evidence, and the case demands certainty.

For example, we notice a man in a throng wearing a hat which seems familiar, and by it we think we recognize a friend, but as we draw near we find that we are mistaken. We see another man who by his dress and carriage we think surely must be he, and we accost him with confidence, but again we are mistaken. For the third time we see a man identical in outward appearance with our friend, but our former experiences have shaken our confidence; so we move about until we obtain a view of his face, and behold, it is indeed our friend.

A man's face is the one visible and unassailable evidence by which he may be immediately identified. It is prior, and superior to every other form of evidence. Indeed, it is more than evidence, it is proof. He can not be identified by his hat, or his clothing, or his manner of walk. But his face is inseparable from himself. It is *he*. By his face we know him, and we can not know him by any extraneous thing. His face establishes his identity in every place and circumstance the world over. A face to face knowledge of men is of universal importance in the transaction of affairs between men. Even the pho-

tograph of a man's face alone serves as an introduction to the man himself, while a photograph of the entire figure of a man with his face averted would be deemed an absurdity as an introduction to the man.

Now, "tongues" do no more identify the Holy Ghost than does a hat the man, for neither of these can be more than circumstantial evidence. To know the blessed Holy Ghost He must be identified as a man is identified, by a face to face revelation. The apostle is testifying as to the infinite superiority of "love" over all combinations of gifts or other excellences. But another apostle declares that God is love. And this word, "God is love," is not merely the statement of a fact: it is the proclamation of a discovery.

In the baptism with the Holy Ghost we receive the Spirit of God consciously, as love. When this affusion of pure love enters, occupies, and purifies our being we know that we are having an introduction to God. This knowledge is the inseparable accompaniment of perfect love, and carries with it an assurance that is equal to the perfectness of that love. In that baptism God comes into our whole being and reveals Himself to us personally and intimately, as face to face, and like the apostle, we discover that God is love. This is apart from and superior to all other, or circumstantial evidence. It is direct proof. God has identified Himself to us by Himself, as the only way in which that identification could be made. And we have never the shadow of a thought of such a thing as the need of a "tongue," or any other gift, in support of this glorious identification; not a whit more than we need a man's hat to help us to identify the man's well-known face.

Thus we can only identify the Holy Ghost by Himself, and not by such things as he may clothe Himself in. For, as said before, clothing can not identify, for it is susceptible of misuse by wrongful appropriation. Without this face to face identification of God, the Holy Ghost,

all other so-called evidences are comparatively worthless; with it they are positively useless. Satan can ape God by gifts of "tongues," and otherwise appear to man's entranced vision as an angel of light, as Scripture has foretold that he shall, but he can not reveal himself to any soul in the character of God. *God alone is love;* and as *love* He introduces Himself to us as One coming to take up His abode in us, in accordance with His promise, bringing the assurance of eternal life, and a perfect equipment for the life that now is. For we know by Paul's description of its perfectness that "love" is full salvation, or holiness; the proof of "that sanctification, without which no man shall see the Lord." Before His coming, being spiritually imperfect, we see but imperfectly, or as through a glass darkly. Lacking spiritual discernment, we also lack assurance, and all our knowledge is impregnated with uncertainty. By love's coming we know Him by His name, as He knows us by ours, "We know as we are known," that which nothing could be more descriptive of the certainty of our knowledge.

"And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

We have already heard it apostolically declared that "tongues shall cease." But these three abide. Therefore, either of these is greater than "tongues." And the greatest is love. As far greater than "tongues" as a man is greater than his apparel.

In review, we may confidently assume that since he undertakes to show them a more excellent way, it is evident that they were as yet ignorant of that way: else there were no need to "show," or expound it to them. That they *were* in ignorance of this way, the "more excellent way" of perfect love, is borne out by his words to them earlier in the epistle. "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." "For ye are yet carnal." "Howbeit," he says, "we speak wisdom among them that

are perfect," perfected in and by love. These Corinthians being yet carnal obviously could not be counted among them that are perfect, or spiritual. But his teaching is designed to instruct them in, and lead them into, this "way" of perfect love, which infinitely excels the way of any inferior gift.

And now, having made sure of the imperishable gift of love, having received the Spirit of God in the baptism with the Holy Ghost, what other best gift shall we covet, not for salvation, but for the service of the hour?

THE EXCELLENCE OF PROPHECY

CHAPTER VII

“Follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.”

In other words, pursue the more excellent way, and covet to prophesy. Not follow after, or covet, “tongues.” Prophecy is the first named among the gifts, after apostleship. It is therefore right to assume that it is the first in desirability; and so it is declared here to be. And why? The answer follows, extended and exhaustive.

“For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.”

It is not for this that they may speak unto God, that men in these days seek “tongues,” but that may enjoy carnal exultation in spreadeagling their gift before their fellows. The fact that “no man understandeth them” is no bar to their joy, but the rather enhances the value of the gift, in their view. For they have the immature understanding of the “babe in Christ.” They get carnal pleasure from the gawd and glitter, the mere rattle, and the atmosphere of mystery and wonder that attends. Mystery, Babylon, confusion.

“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.”

Here is value that can only be associated with the love that seeketh not her own.

“He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.”

We can readily understand from this why prophecy

comes first, and tongues eighth in Paul's list of the gifts. And we clearly see also why the coveting of "tongues" bespeaks a weak understanding of spiritual values, the feeble conception that is due to carnality. We see the element of selfishness in the desire for a gift that will bring personal glory to the recipient alone. While the unselfishness of prophecy is shown in that it edifies the whole body, the church. Therefore, perfect love would covet prophecy; carnality would as inevitably covet "tongues."

"I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying."

In this passage Paul again separates and grades these two gifts. We want to notice here that a message in a tongue is not the equivalent of a testimony: the gift of a tongue is not the equivalent of the gift of prophecy. While it is mentioned in Acts that "they spake with tongues and prophesied," it is not intended as a statement that they prophesied in tongues, an assumption that is virtually the foundation stone of the modern "tongue" delusion. In no instance is it said that they spake and prophesied in tongues. "They spake with tongues and prophesied" indicates two distinct gifts, "tongues," and "prophecy." That these gifts are distinct one from the other is repeatedly taught in this epistle, and notably in the above verse. They are not to be associated as one gift, or as having the same office or value. "They all spake with tongues and prophesied" does not imply that they all prophesied in tongues, but that some spake in tongues, and some prophesied, and possibly some did both. They all did either one thing or the other. Paul's teaching regarding the littleness of tongues, which he further emphasizes as he continues, should make this clear to all. So "tongues" was not the sole evidence of the baptism with the Holy Ghost, even on those occasions

mentioned in Acts, which modern "tongues" is wholly built upon, for the gift of prophecy is also mentioned in connection with tongues, and must therefore be equally valid as a witness to the baptism. But Paul both here and in all his teaching places tongues far beneath prophecy in value. "Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he also interpret"; and interpretation, as we notice, is also a separate gift. And it takes "tongues" and "interpretations," combined, to approach respectively near in value to the gift of prophecy. And, as we shall see, "tongues" alone is allowed virtually no footing at all inside the church, for reasons which the apostle gives in abundance.

"I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied." It is perfectly understood that he is not speaking against tongues, but against their undue exaltation or misuse. And a universal coveting after tongues betrays either infantile ignorance, or brazen disregard of apostolic authority, together with a false conception both of the purpose and relative value of the gift, which presages with certainty their misuse, were they to be had under these conditions. But such a contingency is impossible. However, modern "tongues" false claim for "tongues" as sole evidence of the baptism with the Holy Ghost, makes a wide open entrance for the deluge of Satanic counterfeits which are certainly upon us.

In the above verse Paul conveys the suggestion that the interpretation is a necessary complement of a genuine tongue.

"Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you, either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?"

In short, "except I speak something that you will understand and profit by." What peculiar profit can be derived from a message spoken in a "tongue," that renders it superior to the same message spoken in the common

language? God is not the author of this mode of indirect communication. And Paul is about to explode the claim of its value to either the church or the world as a "sign." Revelation, prophesying, knowledge, and doctrine, are four forms of communication, which appeal directly to the hearer's intelligence, rather than to a carnal love of the miraculous.

Paul's life attitude as a Christian is expressed in "what shall I profit you." We can not imagine him exploiting for vainglory an incomplete, and therefore profitless gift. He was the advocate of perfection. He made it the heart of his present teaching, as we have seen. He was no "prelate, or apostolic delegate, clothed in purple," or in a multiplicity of impressive "tongues." A "tongue" meant nothing to him except as a vehicle to convey the gospel in the simplest and most direct manner to his hearers. And an unknown "tongue" he classes with the dead languages, and not to be used in addressing the living.

He came to these Corinthians "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." And his "speech and his preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power." Therefore, he did not speak to them with "tongues" as a demonstration of the Spirit. Why not? For this reason, "that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." That is, that their confidence should not be based on some miraculous manifestation, some supernatural display, which is universally acclaimed with wonder by carnal, "sign" craving wisdom, but on love, the unvaunting, holiness working, power of God. He was determined not to know anything among them, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified, not even "tongues." For he "was in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling," lest he should fail to present the gospel with a clearness suited to their minds. And in his second epistle to this people he expressed a fear lest their minds should

be corrupted "from the simplicity which is in Christ." Compare this man with those other men who expect to convert sinners by means of the display of an amazing something which is beyond their comprehension.

THE UNCERTAIN SOUND

CHAPTER VIII

“And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sound, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?”

As a pipe or harp is designed to make meaningful sounds termed music by which men may be edified, so a “tongue” is designed and given that it may convey truth to its hearers by distinctive sounds. Not sound, but sounds. Distinctive sounds make speech, but speech is profitless without corresponding knowledge. Crashing the keys of a piano, or slashing the chords of a harp, regardless of time, method, or harmony, is analagous to speaking in a “tongue” that is unknown to the hearers. “How shall it be known what is piped, or harped,” or spoken? As Paul says, “what shall I profit you, except it be by knowledge?” As these things are designed for the impartation of knowledge by distinctive sounds, then failure to carry out the purpose for which they are designed automatically reduces them to silence.

“For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle?”

Another nut for “tongues.” A strong figure of speech. We picture an army at rest. The enemy stealthily approaches. In alarm the trumpet blares, but it is no known signal. It might well be some amateur trying his hand. Again it blares, agonizingly discordant, ridiculous. Everybody laughs, the laugh of relaxation, for it conveys no hint of danger. A trumpet that gives an uncertain sound can be nothing but ridiculous. Again in

prolonged wails and shrieking discords, the trumpet es-
says a final warning, but the army is convulsed with
laughter, and rolls helplessly on the turf. The enemy is
upon them. The trumpet gave an uncertain sound, and
defeat, disgrace, death, ensues.

Notice, first, the trumpet, as the instrument of the
sound; secondly, the importance of the sound, as a known
signal; and, finally, the importance of the trumpeter, as
one who shall be able to make the trumpet intelligible to
its hearers, and we draw the lesson that God has no non-
qualified trumpeters in His service. The Spirit does not
give tongues to those who are devoid of knowledge in
their use. Whence, then, all this present day unintel-
ligible, non-interpretable, wholly absurd, gibberish? Fur-
thermore, the Lord is at war with sin. A prayer and tes-
timony meeting is potentially a battle ground, and not a
religious church entertainment.

“So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words
easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is
spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.”

“Faith cometh by hearing,” that is, the hearing of that
which is understood by the hearer. Our understanding
can only respond to distinctive sounds. It is the neces-
sary medium through which God must reach the hearts
of men by the Word. Any method that ignores this fun-
damental principle thwarts God’s purpose, and is of dia-
bolical origin. Every Spirit-led man feels in every fiber
of his being the need of studious simplicity of speech,
that the truth may be presented clearly. That the Holy
Spirit will never draw needy men to hear what to them
is incomprehensible is not debatable.

“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the
world, and none of them is without signification. There-
fore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be
unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh
shall be a barbarian unto me.”

“So many kinds of voices,” not sounds. Many sounds have no significance, but every voice signifies something that may be understood if properly interpreted. But without this mutual understanding we are as barbarians one to the other. “Barbarian” is a figure that represents the farthest remove from kinship. God purposes, through His Son, to make all men brethren; members not merely of the same tribe, but connections of the same family, by one Father. But Paul here teaches that speaking in unknown “tongues” nullifies God’s purpose, and possibly thwarts it to the uttermost. Instead of attraction, repulsion. In place of brethren united in love, barbarians, alienated by difference of speech from communion, or communication, having no element of union, essential enemies. We are taught in the account of the original Babel that God destroyed the unity of the race by means of unknown tongues. It is an irrevocable law that the same means can but effect the same result. Again we see the need of a sanctified understanding of spiritual gifts in general, and the gift of “tongues” in particular.

“Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.”

Here was zeal without knowledge, for being zealous of spiritual gifts they were apparently strongly inclined toward, if not making a dead set after “tongues.” This was a display of ignorance which the apostle is striving to correct. “Excel to the edifying of the church”—indirectly this is a repetition of the command, “covet to prophesy.” Not, “excel in speaking with tongues.” Seek not your own, but another’s benefit, for “Love seeketh not her own.” And prophecy is the most valuable gift for the edifying of the church, which is the most important work a member of the church may engage in; and as we shall see, it is also the most potent agency, under God, in the salvation of sinners.

“Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.”

As the gifts are bestowed upon "every man," or, in every case, that "we may profit withal," and as speaking in an unknown "tongue" is not only profitless, but an absolute damage to Christ, then the interpretation is a vital complement of a "tongue." It is a modern "tongue" assumption that a "tongue" is divine although it may lack the divine complement. The incompleteness of modern "tongues" in this respect is added proof of their spuriousness. We may declare then that the interpretation is the necessary complement of a genuine "tongue"; and if there does not appear, not at a future date, but simultaneously with the "tongue," its interpretation, we may safely conclude that the "gift" is spurious. It is a counterfeit by Satan, intended for show, and not for profit. And the interpretation is God's protection against these counterfeits which Satan is sure to flood us with.

"For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful."

Innumerable false religions are purposely made inscrutable, and obtain and retain adherents through the mystery that inheres in things which are not understood. "Babylon, mystery, mother of harlots," is descriptive of faithless and fruitless churches that ensnare souls by confusion of the mind, and the power of spiritual mystification. True religion is in harmony with reason, and finds a response in a good understanding.

Salvation is by spiritual, moral, and mental enlightenment, and can never be the outcome of confusion. We notice that Paul speaks much of understanding, the necessity of applying the thinking powers to this matter of "tongues."

"What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."

"What it is then?" is the question that would most naturally be asked of the apostle regarding the application

of what he had just written. And he answers by saying that he does nothing without the consent of his understanding. God says, "Come, let us reason together." There is a wise purpose to be served through His gifts; and a proper use of reason, in harmony with a correct condition of the heart, will preserve men against following after useless or profitless gifts. We are to act intelligently, and not blindly, like as when we "were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as we were led."

Thus Paul can say, "I will pray with the understanding also." That is, "I will not only pray, but I will also know what I am praying about." "I will not only sing, but I will understand and approve what I am singing about." Paul would not indorse some heretical sentiment set to harmony even by singing it. And the tone of his statement indicates that if he can not understand what he is singing and praying about, he will cease to pray and sing. Applied to his teaching on "tongues" it can only mean, "If I cannot understand what I speak in tongues, I will not speak in tongues at all." He would not will to know what it was not the Lord's will that he should know. His attitude makes a "tongue" nothing at all without the interpretation, and therefore not to be exercised alone before unintelligent hearers: and this he explicitly commands later on.

"Else, when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified."

And therefore thy effort is wasted. The Holy Spirit is not the author of a revival of Babel. He bestows his gifts for edification, exhortation, and comfort; and confusion is not their habitat, but peace. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all," therefore, not even that phase of darkness known as obscurity, which is the nat-

ural home of the doubtful, and therefore the dangerous.

In view of Paul's accumulated specific teaching against the misapplication of the gift of "tongues," the success of Satan in the modern movement is to be marveled at.

PAUL'S ESTIMATE OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES

CHAPTER IX

"I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all:"

This is a passage that is used by "tongue" folks in a separated, wrested Scripture way to persuade their hearers that Paul therein indorses their view of the importance of the gift of "tongues," when as the context proves, he made this statement not as an indorsement of "tongues," but as a prelude to showing the comparative unimportance, the relative littleness of "tongues," as compared with "prophecy." It is actually a part of what follows. When used in this separated manner it is a dangerous part-truth, as it nullifies the whole, and is exploited only to encourage a false conclusion. We will quote the complete passage.

"I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church [and note that this is where modern "tongues" exclusively exercise their "gift,"] I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."

This declaration of the apostles belittles unknown tongues to the disappearing point as compared with prophecy, and we must bear in mind that Paul was not given to extravagant statement. To analyze, he sets the relative value per word between a common language testimony, and an unknown "tongue," at two thousand to one in favor of the former. In another form, allowing fifty words to a "tongue" outburst per meeting would per-

mit a "tongue" performer to be heard in two hundred gatherings; and Paul's five-word testimony, given in three seconds, would accomplish more for God than all the others combined. How much more we can not say, but Paul says, "I would rather" speak five words intelligently than ten thousand words nonsensically. "Ye shall speak into the air," he warns these "tongue" lovers: in other words, "ye are wasting your ammunition." And Paul would rather shoot one bullet into the mark than ten thousand into space. This is perfectly intelligible to a rational mind. Again, this statement alone is a refutation of "tongue" claims. Moreover, he spoke with divine wisdom when he used terms so radical: five times anything is infinitely better than ten thousand times nothing. And this is precisely and consistently Paul's attitude, that an unknown "tongue" is nothing. For a "tongue" must be either known, or made known, ere it can be of any profit.

He was the apostle to the Gentiles, and as such was equipped with an exceptional array of languages, whether bestowed or acquired. And he thanked God for this equipment, not, be it known, because of their value as "signs," or because of the distinction it gave him above others, but because they enabled him to do what was dearest to his heart—preach the gospel to others for their edification. For a gift, or a talent with Paul, was not as to Paul, but "to you."

"Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit, in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."

Like children, the Church should know nothing of malice, but in matters that pertain to the understanding, we should not be classed as know-nothings. We recall that in the previous chapter he wrote these words, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things." This he wrote in connection with the coveting of gifts. Now, after much instructive reason-

ing, by which he has a right to conclude that he has supplanted their ignorance with knowledge, he exhorts them as above, "Brethren, be not [or, no longer,] children in understanding." He has demonstrated that the coveting of "tongues" rather than "prophecy" betokens the immature knowledge of a child. He has a right to believe that he has made this clear to even the most feeble mind.

"Be men." "When I became a man, I put away childish things," that is, playthings. An unknown tongue is but as a plaything to a child. It is a toy, something to amuse, a means of entertainment, a child's wonder. "In understanding be men." So let us put away the things of play for the things of business. And "prophecy" is distinctly for business, the King's business.

In this verse we notice the tone of a command. Childhood can not continue indefinitely. We may not remain carnal forever. An apostle, as the mouth of God, is not merely a suggester, but his teachings have the force of a command. He has "shown" them a "more excellent way," and a child of God has no option. To be, or remain a son of God, he must choose the best. This is an irrevocable spiritual law.

"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."

It is claimed for "tongues" that they are "signs," where-with the world will be convinced of the imminence of God, and be persuaded to believe the gospel, but here the Lord explicitly declares to the contrary. "For all that ['tongues'] will they not hear me, saith the Lord." This then refutes their claim. Nothing but a desire for vain-glory can prompt the seeking of this gift as an end. There is but one ground on which we are allowed to covet the gift of "tongues," and this comes into view in the following verse:

"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."

Tongues were first given at Pentecost, when many nations were gathered at Jerusalem. And the reason for the gift is manifest, for it is recorded that these nationalities heard the gospel preached "every man in the tongue wherein he was born." This, then, explains the purpose of the gift, that men may hear the gospel in a language which they understand, therefore their native tongue.

Notice, that "tongues" are a sign "*not* to them that believe," therefore *not* bestowed for use or entertainment in a church or congregation of believers, but "to them that *believe not*": and these are found outside the church, generally speaking among the heathen of that particular language. So "tongues," even when genuine, are not to be classed with prophecy, which is specifically for believers, and therefore thoroughly at home in the church. If you have a "tongue" which is being used childishly as a means of display for the wonderment of your "church," and which does not take you out to preach the gospel where that "tongue" is understood, then your "tongue" is certainly not a gift from the Holy Ghost.

Notice also, that "tongues" being a sign to them *only* "that believe *not*," can be *no* convincing form of evidence to them that believe, consequently *not* a "sign," and not at all proof of the baptism with the Holy Ghost. As taught in the previous chapter, love only is that proof. Seeking for "tongues" as a "sign," or further evidence, indicates infallibly the absence of that convincing love. Again, a "tongue" is not a "sign" to them that understand not, and therefore can have no value for Christ in an ordinary church assemblage. For without a knowledge of the language men can neither, accept, reject, nor profit by a gospel message.

"If, therefore, the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come

in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?"

It is a modern assumption, as we said previously, that the universal gift of tongues would be powerfully instrumental as a "sign" toward the salvation of the world: that such a demonstration would convince sinners of the presence of God in the Church. In view of what Paul has written here this claim is puerile. For Paul intimates clearly that though a united church should gather in one place, and all spake with unanimity in tongues, yet this would but persuade the hearers to unanimously agree that the church in its entire membership had "gone crazy." "Will they not say that ye are mad"? "With man of other tongues, and other lips will I speak unto these people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord." And still it is claimed to be apostolic to affirm what the Lord explicitly denies. When a "movement" sets forth teaching that directly conflicts with apostolic teaching that movement is, without contradiction, not of God.

"But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all, and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth."

Thus we see that prophecy effects the exact result falsely claimed for "tongues." Prophecy both edifies the church, and converts the sinner. Universal prophecy convinces the sinner that God is in the church. Universal "tongues" as thoroughly convinces him to the contrary. Prophecy shows the sinner that *he* is all wrong: universal "tongues" convinces him that *you* are all wrong, yea, that you *all* are wrong. Prophecy thus serves God's will: "tongues" entirely thwarts it. This is a full reply to, and complete indictment of, modern "tongues."

"How is it then, brethren? when ye come together every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a

tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation?"

This is a picture of a meeting in Paul's day genuinely conducted in the Spirit. Not, notice, every one of you hath a "tongue," and nothing else. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man, or in every case, to profit withal. This results in a diversity of operations, whereby each man has a part that is not a repetition of every other. Therefore, to quote with its true meaning, Every one of you hath *either* a psalm, etc. Not all having the same gift, nor any one gift supreme or exclusive, but the Spirit dividing to every man severally as *He* will, and not as any man or number of men may will: to the end that the church may receive all around edification, or spiritual education. And as we know, an all around education is not acquired by devotion to a single branch of study.

"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." "But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God."

Here are two death blows to modern "tongues"; first, that at most but three tongues are allowed at one meeting, and that with an interpreter; and secondly, without an interpreter, none at all. They are to speak by course, or in regular order. It is emphatic that there is to be but one interpreter to the three "tongues." The reason is obvious. An interpretation can not precede, but must follow the "tongue," being a necessary complement, and really the completion of the message. That it may be known whether there is an accredited interpreter present the interpretation must immediately follow the first "tongue." Any delay affords opportunity for fraud, and impeaches the genuineness of the gift. And if an interpretation does not thus follow the first "tongue," this can only be taken to signify that the Holy Ghost has not inspired any one with an interpretation, which is a true

indication that he did not authorize the "tongue." This virtual repudiation of the first "tongue" is also to be taken as a command to discontinue speaking with "tongues" forthwith. No excuse is allowed for further experimentation with "tongues" in hope of disclosing an interpreter: this matter has been settled by the first essay. There is no interpreter, therefore there can be no genuine "tongue." "Let him keep silence *in the church.*" Obedience to this command would wind up the modern movement.

Speaking with "tongues" without an interpreter is forbidden. Not every "tongue" *may*, but every "tongue" *must* have an interpretation. So it is an unavoidable conclusion that every genuine "tongue" *will* have an interpretation. Speaking in "tongues," without regard to interpretations is beyond question out of order, sure evidence of unruliness, and results in confusion. And Paul commands in the Spirit when he forbids speaking with "tongues" in such cases. Therefore, we shall look in vain for real salvation among those who flout these apostolic injunctions. "If there be no interpreter, let him keep silence *in the church.*" But he may use his "tongue" where it is understood, and therefore needs no interpreter.

"Let the prophets speak, two or three, and let the other judge."

Yes, let him judge how far better a gift than "tongues" is "prophecy," how much more edifying to testify in the common language, which all may understand, than to speak with a "tongue" that is foreign to speaker and hearer.

"If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For we may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted."

Prophecy being for edification, exhortation, and comfort, then we may all prophesy one by one, that all may be edified: but we may not all speak with "tongues" for that is madness, and madness is not at all edifying.

EXHORTS TO OBSERVE GOD'S ORDER

CHAPTER X

“And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.”

Prophecies, or testimonies, can succeed only as they appeal to minds that are not confused, and to achieve that end must be delivered in rotation, in an orderly manner. For this reason the spirits of the prophets are submissive to rule. And although the Holy Spirit inspires all prophecies, yet the prophets themselves are in a manner also subject to one another. For a genuine prophet is governed by the purpose for which God has endued him, that souls may be inspired and strengthened, and sinners brought to God. Thus God's work is forwarded without confusion.

“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.”

The spirit of the modern “tongue” devotee is not subject to God, whose will is so clearly revealed in this apostolic teaching. For a universal coveting of unknown “tongues” denotes a state of rebellion against God's commands as they are voiced by the apostle. Rebellion precludes the thought of peace, and introduces confusion. A rebellious condition brought about by disobedience of God's command obviously can not have God for its author. For God being the author of the peace that distinguishes all churches of the saints, it follows then that an assembly in which confusion usurps the place of peace can not be a church of saints. It can only be at best a

mixed multitude of carnal believers, and sinners en masquerade.

“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.”

In a previous chapter (11) he has laid down rules of conduct for women who pray or prophesy. But according to the laws and customs of the place and time it was considered scandalous for women to be forward in ordinary public discourse. Paul terms it “a shame.” Their newly acquired liberty possibly may have caused them to ignore these laws and customs, which would cause resentment among outsiders, and result in damage to the cause of Christ. On the ground “I will eat no meat, lest I cause my brother to offend,” we should submit, if necessary, to the loss even of all our privileges for the benefit of Christ.

“What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?”

This abrupt interjection would indicate that some among the Corinthians seemed to take the attitude that the Word of God was original with them; that they considered themselves the sole depositories of some special truths. This is a characteristic that finds its perfect counterpart in the modern “tongues” movement, which is much puffed up over its original and exclusively owned “tongue” wisdom. And taken in connection with his sharp handling of “tongues” throughout his teaching it seems to be directed against an ancient schismatical movement identical even to this feature with the modern one. The carnal believer is always especially dogmatic over any false article in his belief. So we are not surprised that modern “tongues” which of all the world boasts to be apostolic is found of all the world the contrary.

“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual,

let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.”

Not Paul’s advice, but “the commandments of the Lord.” Thus he gives to this teaching the utmost authority. We know that among these heterogeneous Corinthians there were some who doubted his apostleship, and thus questioned his authority. We find him asking (chapter 9), “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free?” and saying, “Mine answer to them that do examine me, is this,” etc. Now, he takes the opportunity to assert his apostleship by boldly declaring his teaching to be the voice of God. No doubt but that this “tongue” teaching was to meet with opposition. We notice specific commands scattered throughout, and those parts which correct previous misunderstanding or misuse also command by virtue of the knowledge they impart. Therefore, he can speak of all that he has written as “the commandments of the Lord.”

The gift of “tongues” is not the equivalent of the gift of “prophecy,” neither does a “tongue” attest a man’s spirituality. “Love” alone spiritualizes, for it is the equivalent of the Holy Ghost. And “love” will inevitably lead one to covet the gift of “prophecy,” for “love seeketh not her own” glory, but another’s benefit. Therefore, it is inevitable that one who is really a “prophet,” or “spiritual,” *will* acknowledge that the things which Paul has written are the commandments of the Lord. The acknowledgment is set forth as a test or demonstration that one who thinks himself a prophet or spiritual is not deceived in his thinking. Should any deny the authority of Paul’s teaching, they are neither “prophet” nor “spiritual,” with all that that includes. In short, your spirituality, which is your righteousness, gets its proof from your acknowledgment that Paul has written upon the Lord’s authority. And the only acceptable acknowledgment of the authority of these commands is obedience thereto.

So then it is a commandment, God speaking, that you should covet to prophesy, rather than to speak with "tongues." Do you acknowledge it by obedience, or are you following after "tongues"? It is a command that if you speak with "tongues" you must pray that you may also interpret. Do you obey it, or do you treat it with contempt? It is also commanded that if there be no interpreter, whether you have one, or many, "tongues" you are to keep silence in the church. Are you silent? Where indeed do we find obedience to this command in the modern movement? And how could it enforce an obedience that would be suicidal? Their universal disobedience, however, annuls all claim to spirituality or Holy Ghost authorship. A man may think himself to be "a prophet or spiritual" on the ground that he is "tongue" gifted, but obedience to these commands alone can justify his thinking: and disobedience is at the peril of the soul.

"But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."

We recall that he begins his teaching on spiritual gifts with the opening words of the twelfth chapter, "Now, concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." And now, in finishing up his teaching, he writes, "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." This links together as one teaching, or command, all that he has written since he stated his purpose in writing it. For three complete chapters he has labored to enlighten them, even, one might say, to the point of exhaustion. He has carefully removed every excuse for ignorance. He has instructed them by illustrative appeals to their understanding, and by specific statement that "tongues" is eighth, last, and least in value among the gifts; that it not only has no priority as evidence of the baptism with the Holy Ghost, but that it may be even no evidence at all. He has charged them in the clearest terms to "follow after" love, and commanded them to covet for service the gift of "prophecy," which he has demonstrated to be incomparably superior to "tongues."

More, he has declared that unknown "tongues" are a menace to the Church to the extent that he has forbidden their use. And now he sums up, "If, after this great light from heaven itself any man can profess ignorance of spiritual gifts, let him be ignorant." He washes his hands of that man's blood, for his ignorance must perforce be willful since honest ignorance is no longer possible. "Let him be ignorant." Offer him no further instruction, for we can not add light to perfect light. His will is fixed. Like Ephraim he is inseparably joined to his idols. Let him alone. If he will not listen to the Lord, what hope have we that he will listen to another?

"Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues."

Having previously commanded the church to covet the best gifts, and demonstrated that "prophecy" is incomparably the best, then to be apostolic we must inevitably covet to prophesy; and we must as inevitably not exclusively, or even preferably, covet "tongues." Yet forbid not, a negative permission, to speak with "tongues," if they are apostolically acquired and therefore genuine; but forbid absolutely the speaking with any and every "tongue" that has been acquired by devotion to this modern "tongue" heresy, for they are not apostolic, and therefore can not be genuine.

"Let all things be done decently and in order."

To magnify the gift of "tongues" has been plainly taught by the apostle to be a breach of God's orders. To speak with "tongues" indiscriminately is a brazen disregard of the Lord's commands, and an exposure of willful ignorance which is tantamount to spiritual indecency, and is shocking to pure spirits. Except all things are done as the Lord commands they can not be done in a decent or orderly manner.

Speaking with unknown "tongues" is, as we have seen, but negatively permitted, and at best under almost prohibitive restrictions. How antipodal is this truly apos-

tolical teaching to the modern anti-apostolic coveting after spurious "tongues." Covet "tongues," though there be never an interpreter. Covet to speak with unknown "tongues," although the whole world should account you mad and be repelled from Christ. Covet "tongues," though you waste your existence speaking into the air. Covet "tongues," although you disobey Christ, who commands you to covet to prophesy for the edification of His blood bought Church. Covet "tongues," which charge you with being out of the Spirit; which convict you of spiritual indecency and disorder. Be willfully ignorant, and expose your spiritual nakedness before God and men.

Yea, covet the forbidden thing, as did Eve, and show the same contempt for the Lord's commands as did she.

In the face of Paul's illustrative teaching concerning spiritual gifts is modern "tongues" apostolic? It is a sufficient answer to reply, Yes, if Satan is an apostle.

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