



THE GIFT
OF TONGUES

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THE GIFT OF TONGUES

What It Is and What
It Is Not



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Chapter One

In the last commission given by our Lord Jesus Christ to the apostles in St. Mark 16:15-18, He said unto them, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues. . . . They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” The Emphatic Diaglott says, “new languages.” Webster says, “other languages.” Let us not love in tongue [language], but in deed and in truth. Many articles and tracts have been written about the “unknown tongue,” vainly endeavoring to prove that the “unknown” means a speech or language that no one, not even the speaker, understands. Now if we can find any Bible proof for the above statement, well and good, but if not, we had better leave it alone.

Now to the law and testimony, “I will gather all nations and tongues [languages];” “Thou hast redeemed us out of every tongue, [language] people and nation.” Moses said, “I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue.” All through the Bible, tongues stand for languages or speech. Now our God is an intelligent God, and He wants His people to be intelligent; He gives us no commands that we cannot understand; neither has He left any promises on record that are incomprehensible to the human mind.

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Now let us go back to the commission again (verse 15), “Go ye into all the world and preach,” (to proclaim, to publish in religious discourses). They were to preach the gospel (glad tidings) to every creature, nation and tongue. Now as all these apostles that received this command were Galileans and spoke the one language of the Hebrews, therefore, they were told to tarry in Jerusalem until endued with power from on high, which would enable them to preach to, or teach every nation, tongue or people. “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4)—*the act of uttering words, pronunciation*. We here give a few quotations from the Emphatic Diaglott, Acts 2:4, 6, 8, “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance . . . the multitude came together, and were perplexed because everyone heard them speaking in his own language . . . and how do we hear each one in our own language in which we were born?” “We hear them speaking in our own tongues the great things of God” (verse 11). So we see clearly there is no such thing taught in the second chapter of the Acts as the unknown tongue that no one, not even the speaker, understands. Then where, pray tell me, do our modern Tongues brethren get a foundation for their doctrine? I have searched the Scriptures faithfully, and fail to find anything on which to build a theory of that kind. The word “unknown” in the 14th chapter of 1st Corinthians and 2nd verse, which is in italics, is supplied by the translators. The Emphatic Diaglott says, “For he who is speaking in a foreign language is not speaking to men, but to God;” for no one listens, neither can the “unknown” be found in the original Greek, from which our King James’ Bible was translated, “and with the former translations diligently compared and revised.” Speaking in tongues was a gift set in the church for a useful purpose. The remarkable gift or phenomenon manifested on the day of

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Pentecost marked the initial work of the Holy Ghost in setting the church in order.

Some are making an attempt to draw a distinction between the gift of tongues and speaking in tongues—that the gift of tongues is under the control of the individual possessing it while speaking in tongues is an uncontrollable overflow of exhortation. Let us see if we can find any Bible proof for the above assertion. Not a thing can we find in favor of such a theory, but against it. In James 1:26, we read, “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.” According to the above Scriptures, a man who cannot, or does not, control his tongue has a vain religion, and has deceived his own heart. Gifts of the Spirit and manifestations of the Spirit are the same; for there is no way possible in which tongues can be manifested except by speaking (uttering or pronouncing words). Speaking is to exercise the gift.

It is said by some, according to 1st Cor. 14:4, that God gives us a phase of tongues for private use in order that one may edify himself, and then they try to prove by the 14th verse that the speaker himself does not understand. The Emphatic says, “For if I pray in a foreign language my Spirit prays, but my understanding is without fruit.” What is the fruit of my understanding, my prayers, preaching or exhortation? Is it not the good my hearers get out of it? If I preach (prophesy), pray or exhort in a tongue (language) which my congregation does not understand, would it be fruitful? No, not to my congregation. Why? Because they would not know what I said, therefore, could not say, “Amen.” But I could be edified if talking to the Lord, because I would know what I was talking about; otherwise it would not be prayer—prayer to God—petitioning Him or asking Him for something.

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If one prays in a tongue he does not understand, how does he know he prays? The 7th and 8th verses read thus, “And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?” If a person unskilled in any kind of music, picks up a violin and draws the bow across the strings without any attempt to play a tune, would it edify? Would you enjoy it? Would it be fruitful? Would you be any wiser after listening? “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?”

It seems to me that the next two verses in connection with the two just quoted, ought to be enough to settle the whole tongues question. “So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue [language] words easy to be understood [not something no one understands, not even the speaker], how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.” Is God pleased with people who speak into the air? And Paul was talking about real languages, too, but he forbids speaking to the congregation in languages they cannot understand; but, “by the tongue we should speak words to be understood.” And how could one do that except he understand what he is talking about? In the 14th verse Paul, in referring to speaking in an unknown tongue (“foreign language” in Emphatic Diaglott), said his understanding was unfruitful. Why? Look for the answer in the 16th verse. “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?”

It is very plain to be seen by the above quotation that the unknown tongue (or foreign languages) could be learned, for if the “unlearned” could not say, “Amen,” because he did not understand, surely the learned could say, “Amen,” because he did understand. So we clearly see why Paul speaks thus, “My understanding is

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unfruitful.” It is because, while he himself had an understanding of what he was saying, the “unlearned” person, who did not understand the language he might be speaking or praying in, could not possibly be benefited; therefore, “unfruitful.” The 18th and 19th verses I will quote from the Emphatic Diaglott, “I give thanks to God, speaking in different languages more than all of you, yet in a congregation I would rather speak five words through my understanding, so that [in such a way] I might also instruct others, than ten thousand words in a foreign language, [which he, in the 9th verse, calls speaking into the air,] unless we speak words easy to be understood.”

For another proof that the Bible nowhere teaches such a thing as an unknown tongue that no one, not even the speaker himself knows what he is saying, we will go to the catalogue of gifts recorded in the 12th chapter of 1st Cor., “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.” Now since the apostle Paul does not want the brethren ignorant concerning any of the spiritual gifts, we are expecting him to make it plain here in the following Scriptures. He starts out by saying, “. . . the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” So we are not expecting to find something that one would not know what he had if he had it, and, therefore, would not profit him while he did have it, or some unknown speech that he would not know what he said if he said it. “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 gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues [The Emphatic has it ‘different languages’]; to another interpretation of tongues [languages].” While I do not lay claim to a very liberal possession of these wonderful gifts, I do believe them all to be in the Church of God. And while I do not speak in different tongues, I do claim a little faith and some degree of the gift of discernment

Chapter Two

Modern tongues people claim all speak in tongues, as evidence of the reception of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, but the Bible says no. We will quote from the Greek and Emphatic Diaglott in 1st Cor. 12th chapter and 29th and 30th verses, “All are not apostles, all are not prophets, all are not teachers, all are not powers, all have not gifts of cures, all do not speak in different languages, all do not interpret.” There were multitudes of people at Jerusalem who believed and were filled with the Holy Ghost, but mention is made of only one hundred and twenty of those on Pentecost who spoke in tongues. The language of Jesus in the commission gives no more ground for believing or supposing that every individual believer should speak with tongues, than for believing they should take up serpents, or lay hands on the sick for healing, or cast out devils. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth, but did not speak in tongues.

There is no Bible for seeking the gift of tongues, except it would be for some other’s benefit. Some say they do not seek the tongues, but they will not accept of any experience as the baptism until the tongues come. Such a belief opens an avenue for deception, as they will not be satisfied with anything except it be accompanied by tongues, which makes it easy for the enemy to take advantage of them and give them a manifestation of muttering and jabbering

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which they readily accept as the real gift of tongues. Now where are the texts which prove that tongues must in every instance accompany the baptism? They are not in the Bible. They are to be found only in the deluded mind of man. We have record of three times only of the tongues in connection with the Holy Ghost, namely:

On the day of Pentecost,
At the house of Cornelius,
And at Ephesus.

But it is supposed by some that because three times we find they spoke in tongues when the baptism was received, that in every case they spoke in tongues when the baptism was received, but it was omitted. We prefer to base our argument on what is in the Bible rather than on what is omitted.

To illustrate, a certain good man went in a grove every day for secret prayer and for some time took a stone with him, putting it on a little pile of stones. Suppose after a while the little pile of stones ceased to grow as at first. Is there anything in that to prove the good man had quit going to pray in the grove? Not a thing. Why not? Because there is not an essential connection between the man and the stone. Now the fact that in three instances the speaking in tongues did accompany the Holy Ghost baptism, is no proof that tongues should accompany all baptisms. Jesus said of the Holy Ghost, “. . . when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . .” (John 16:13). And in the 17th chapter and the 17th verse, He said to the Father, “. . . thy word is truth.” And as the Holy Ghost and the Word always agree, “the truth,” therefore, is something that can be learned, is it not? If not, why not? As the Holy Ghost helps us to teach it and understand it. In 1 John 4:1, we are

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warned to not believe every spirit, “but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” I know of only one way to try the spirits, and that is by the word of truth that Jesus said the Holy Ghost would lead into, or explain to us, or cause us to understand, for that is just what Jesus meant.

Now, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20). In the 19th verse we read, “And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? . . .” Peeping and muttering mean indistinct, inarticulate talk, like the lowing of cattle, the bleating of sheep, or as Paul says, concerning inanimate things, “whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?” It would be unknown, “So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue [language] words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.” (I Cor. 14:9)

The Bible meaning of tongues, therefore, according to the Greek, the Emphatic Diaglott, or any other translation, even the King James, when we consider that the “unknown” is in italics, which signifies a word supplied and not translated, is languages.

Chapter Three

In 1 Cor. 14:21, tongues (foreign or national languages) is a prophesy of the gift of foreign languages. “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.” On Pentecost, those who would not hear accused the apostles of being drunk and those who would not hear (or believe) were mostly professors, but now, on the other hand, we will notice some who did hear (or believe). In verse 22, “Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not . . .” Now it was prophesied in the law (Old Testament) that God would as a “sign” speak to them that believe not (men of other nations and other languages) by giving the speaker the gift of languages of the people spoken to. We find this prophesy was first fulfilled on Pentecost (Acts 2). Those who spoke in foreign languages were all Galileans, speaking “. . . as the Spirit gave them utterance,” (verse 4). Utterance from Webster is the act of uttering words—not in peeping or muttering; but on this occasion it was in the languages of sixteen or seventeen nationalities present, perhaps more—“out of every nation under heaven” (verse 5); “every man heard them speak in his own language” (verses 6-12). They were all amazed at this sign, at this wonderful stupendous event. Now as this is the only place where it is mentioned “the Spirit gave them utterance” and this utterance being in real foreign languages of the foreign unbelievers who were

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present at that time, hearing and understanding all that was said, the gift of interpretation was not given nor needed, as interpretation consists of interpreting from one's own language into that of his foreign hearers.

To illustrate, at one time while preaching to a Swedish congregation in Iowa, one of the number could not understand me. Then I called a Swedish brother who could understand me, and I spoke a few sentences, then paused until he could interpret what I said to the unlearned man, and after hearing and understanding, with the tears coursing down his cheeks, he gave vent to his feelings by saying, "Yah, yah," or "Yes, yes." On the other hand if the gift of tongues (if it were the Swedish tongue) had been bestowed on me, there would have been no need of an interpreter. I see no reason for so much misunderstanding. There was no such manifestation on Pentecost as our modern tongues brethren are preaching and practicing, such as muttering, familiar spirits, clairvoyance, visions, St. Vitus dancing, jerking, and shaking. There was no sorcery, witchcraft, convulsions or charming enchantment, bewitching, soothsaying, jabbering, no hysteria, no falling down and wallowing on the ground with distorted features. These spirits almost invariably run to the 14th chapter of 1st Corinthians for support or foundation for their belief and endeavor to prove by it that the gift of tongues needs to be interpreted before anyone, including the speaker, can understand. Paul here only lays down regulations for praying, singing or preaching in their own foreign language (or other language) not understood by the congregation, which would make it necessary for an interpreter to interpret from the foreign language used into that of the congregation. "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue [the Emphatic Diaglott says, foreign language] edifieth himself . . ." (verse 4). Why? Because he understands his own mother tongue (language), otherwise, he would not be edified. ". . .

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he that prophesieth edifieth the church.” Why? Because he speaks in their own language, otherwise they would not be edified.

For further proof of this, read verses 5 and 7 to 13. The Emphatic Diaglott has it thus, “I am willing indeed for you all to speak in different languages, but rather that you should prophesy,” for greater is he that prophesies, (Why? Because the congregation understands), than he who speaks in different languages (his own foreign language or any other not understood by the rest), unless interpreted so that the congregation may receive edification (verse 5). We learn from this also that nobody is edified by hearing a foreigner speak in his own language not understood by the hearer. Of what good would I be to any congregation if I came speaking a language not understood by them? No good, absolutely none at all! It would edify no one. “Except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?” (verse 7). “It may be there are so many kinds of languages in the world, and no one is unmeaning. If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be to the speaker a barbarian (foreigner), and the speaker will be a barbarian (foreigner) to me.” (Verses 10 and 11, quoted from Greek). “Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue [foreign languages, Emphatic] pray that he may interpret” (verse 13 from his own mother tongue into that of the congregation so they may be edified). For if I pray in a foreign language my spirit (myself, my own understanding) is praying, but my meaning is un-intelligible to others (verse 14). This is not, in our opinion, the gift of tongues, as it was not given for use in praying to God, but as a sign to unbelievers (verse 22).

We find according to the above named Scriptures that for the space of one hundred years we have record of only three cases of the gift of tongues, and none of interpretation. Why? Because the

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gift of tongues is a God-given ability to speak in foreign languages, enabling one to speak or preach in the language of his foreign hearers, which needs no interpretation, but speaking in one's own language is not the gift of tongues, and should one preach in his own tongue to the unlearned as in the 14th chapter of 1 Cor. an interpreter would be necessary. In the 18th verse Paul says, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." This means "I speak in foreign languages, or perhaps in more foreign languages than any of you." We have no proof that he did or did not have the gift of tongues, as hundreds received the baptism of the Holy Ghost where there is no mention of tongues, but as he was an apostle of the Gentiles of many different languages, he, no doubt, had use of foreign languages, which he might have learned even before he was saved, as he was a learned man. But as he is not speaking especially of the gift of tongues here in this 14th chapter, but rather of the abuse of what they did have, whether a gift once bestowed, their own language, or a learned language, so it is immaterial in this case whether Paul's tongues were the gift or learned, as tongues mentioned in the Bible always means languages. So one can readily see there is a difference between the gift of tongues (or languages) and other languages learned by study.

Now let us notice briefly the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd verses of this chapter. "If therefore the whole church [universal of many languages] be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues ["foreign languages" from the Greek], and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad [crazy]?" (verse 23). Why? Because they could not understand the language used. If this is the gift mentioned in verses 21 and 22, and Isa. 28:11 and 12, and demonstrated at Pentecost (Acts 2:4), they were certainly abusing it instead of using it in the way it was intended as a sign as at Pentecost. For that was understood by every

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nationality present there that day. This kind mentioned in the 23rd verse makes people who are unlearned say ye are mad, but that manifested on Pentecost was for a sign, not to them that believe but to them that believe not.

For proof of this read the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses of the 2nd chapter of the Acts: “Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together [a multitude of all nations of unbelievers], and were confounded because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak, Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?” and thus the prophecy was fulfilled according to Isaiah 28:11, 12 and Joel 2nd chapter.

And the result of this meeting where the gift of tongues was so wonderfully manifested will be found in the 41st verse of the 2nd chapter of Acts: “. . . and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” This is the true gift of tongues and was used to convince the unbelievers, while prophesying (or “preaching,” from the Greek) is for the believer. It matters not what tongue we speak in, if it is the tongue or language of our hearers we are preaching or prophesying, but if a number of ministers of different tongues or nationalities come together in one place as at Corinth and insist on speaking in their own tongue that the congregation does not understand, they are neither preaching, prophesying, nor speaking with the gift of tongues; as the gift of tongues was always understood by the hearers as on Pentecost, at Caesarea and Ephesus, and no one is receiving any benefit but themselves, for they are either speaking alone to God or speaking into the air.

Chapter Four

I once attended a meeting held by the modern tongues people and occasionally they would jabber some incomprehensible something they called “unknown.” Well, they rightly named it, and it sounded like this, “kiuka, kioka” repeated over and over. This is what they got when they received the baptism. I asked them what they said but they did not know. I asked them to tell me how they instructed their converts to get it, but they could not, or did not, tell me, but I listened when they had a young man down on the floor flat on his back and they were urging him to say, “The blood” as fast as he could until he began to stutter, and then the ministers sprang to their feet, saying, “He’s got it!” Sometimes they would repeat, “Glory, glory,” until their tongue would seem to get twisted and then they would begin to jabber. Oh, that God could open the eyes of these poor, deluded souls! Right in the beginning the serpent got the tongues from Satan and there is no end of the trouble that has come from it ever since. It is a fact that many of the dear modern tongues people believe that everybody who tries to correct them are of the devil. Paul says, “. . . though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8). We should be warned by this not to accept everything that claims to be the Holy Ghost or an angel from heaven. Remember the language of Jesus in John 8:44: “. . . [Satan] is a liar, and the father of it.” Then again in 1 Kings 22:22:

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“. . . [a spirit] said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.” He mixes enough truth with error to deceive the people and makes them believe they have the Holy Ghost when sometimes actually they are devil possessed.

A certain woman in a little town where I used to live told another woman in the tongues faith that she need not be surprised if she doped with one of their ministers, as she intended to obey her Holy Ghost in whatever he told her to do. Sometime after this she saw her awful deception, which rarely occurs, and had to have hands laid on her and her “Holy Ghost” cast out. Another woman in the same town who claimed to get the Holy Ghost, left her husband, went wild on the streets and had to be locked up in jail until she had mind enough to behave. O dear readers, God is not the author of confusion. Beware of false spirits! “Let all things be done decently and in order.” We find among these people, missionaries who claim to have received their baptism according to Acts 2:4 before going to foreign fields, but somehow they always have to learn the language of the people before they can preach to them without an interpreter. Now if they received it as on the day of Pentecost, would not the results be the same? They were all Galileans and spoke the Hebrew tongue perhaps, but after receiving the Holy Ghost they spoke in all the different languages of the different nationalities represented there that day.

I have met people of the modern tongues movement who claim that Satan also gives some people the tongues, and they are unable to tell the difference. I think right here that the gift of discernment would be real beneficial, for if they cannot tell the difference between the genuine and the false, one might think he had the Spirit of God and yet be possessed with a Satanic spirit. 2 Cor. 11:13-15, “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming

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themselves into the apostles of Christ; and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light; therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.” Some will say, “But look at the miracles they are doing, is not this sufficient proof that these modern tongues people are right?” No; emphatically no! Now turn to Rev. 16:13, 14; “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of devils, working miracles.”

The word “unknown” in 1 Cor. 14:2 is not in the original Greek from which King James’ Bible was translated. The Emphatic says, “Foreign languages.” “Tongues” stand for languages all through the Bible. “Utterance” in Acts 2:4 is the act of uttering words, pronunciation, and manner of speaking. “As the Spirit gave them utterance,” this was the gift. They prophesied in about sixteen different languages, no interpreter was needed. “Prophecy” in 1 Cor. 14:3 is to speak unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort. “Understanding” in the 19th verse is intelligence between two or more persons, agreement of minds, unity of sentiments. From Webster “intelligence” means information communicated, intelligible, capable of being understood. Paul’s “own understanding,” others could not understand so that he taught them by his “voice” (his language) verse 19. Adam Clark quoting Bishop Pierce says that “spirit” in this 14th chapter is from the Greek words “own understanding” and the word “understanding” from the Greek “understandability.” For if I pray in a foreign language my spirit (myself, my own understanding) is praying, but my meaning is unintelligible to others (Greek). Verse 14 “unfruitful.” I will pray with the understanding (understandability by others). Also the Holy Ghost speaks through us (Mark 13:11).

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The words of the Holy Ghost were understood. Luke 3:22 and 12:12. Salvation the only theme, John 7:38, 39. They tarried for “power,” Acts 1:8, to utter, to declare, to speak, to express, to explain the gospel to about sixteen different nationalities, (Acts 2:4-8). The Holy Ghost always speaks intelligently. For proof, read Heb. 3:7, 8; 1 Pet. 1:12; and 1 Cor. 12:3.

There are only three places mentioned in the New Testament where they spoke in tongues when they received the Holy Ghost and each time their utterance was understood. About A. D. 33 at Pentecost about sixteen different nationalities heard and understood. At Caesarea, eight years after, those six Jews heard the Gentiles speaking in tongues (languages) and magnify, exalt, extol and praise God in the language the Jews understood—hence, their own language. At Ephesus, fifteen years after the second occurrence, when they received the Holy Ghost “they spoke in tongues and prophesied.” From Webster “to prophesy” is to instruct in religious doctrines; to interpret or explain Scriptures on religious subjects, or to exhort. No interpreter was needed in either of these three places.

1 Cor. 14:10 reads thus: “There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world and none of them is without signification.” All have their meaning, all understood by the speaker. The Emphatic has it: “Many kinds of languages.” Now the Bible teaches that there is such a thing as the gift of tongues (“different languages” from Greek), but for some reason it is hardly ever heard of any more, but as God gives all these precious gifts to us “to profit withal,” where it is needed, He will still give it to those He can trust with it, but if He does, it will be to benefit someone. I believe the last Bible evidence we have of the gift of tongues was at Ephesus in Acts 19, about twenty-three years after Pentecost. The gift of tongues is another language given to us and does not have to be learned. It is

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given us as a sign and the speaker knows what he is talking about, hence, is able to prophesy, to instruct, and to proclaim the glad tidings as at Ephesus in Acts 19; Acts 2; and Acts 10. It is a fulfillment of Isaiah 28:11, 12 and Joel 2, and was the qualification necessary to go into all the world and prove to the unbeliever and the unlearned the mighty power of God to save from all sin. The mother tongue (language) is given to us to express our desires and converse with those of our own language. Foreign languages (foreign to us) are those which may be learned, so that we may converse with, or preach to people of other tongues (or languages), and are not signs like the gift, as it was not learned, but God-given.

—G. E. Harmon

Errors in Modern Pentecostalism

That this is an age of many counterfeit religions, we must admit, and of which the New Testament writers have given us definite warning. 1 Timothy 4:1.

Dear reader, let us turn to the Bible and see if their teachings and spirit, especially the tongues-evidence theory harmonizes with the Word and Spirit of God.

Error 1. Speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance (Acts 2:4) is different than the gift of tongues of 1 Cor. 12, 14. There is no distinction in the two expressions, for both refer to the same thing. True speaking in tongues of Acts 2:4 is a manifestation of the Spirit as implied by the words, “as the Spirit gave them utterance.” The fact that the true tongues are given of the Spirit necessarily means they are a “gift” of the Spirit. In the 12th chapter of 1 Cor. both expressions are used interchangeably and speak of the same spiritual gift. We read, “To one is given by the Spirit . . . divers kinds of tongues,” (verses 8, 10) referring to the gift of tongues. Then in verse 30 we read, “Do all speak with tongues?” This also refers to the same gift, just as the “gift of miracles” and “workers of miracles” are equivalent expressions. We understand that this distinguishing theory was introduced in the year of 1900 by C. F. Parham. The early church never taught it, for it is a strained interpretation to uphold the tongues- evidence theory.

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Error 2. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is in every instance attended by the initial physical sign of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. The Scriptures nowhere teach that speaking in tongues is required as evidence that the Holy Ghost is received. If you can, quote us one direct Scriptural requirement on this point. In 1 Cor. 12:30 Paul asks, “Do all speak with tongues?” No, is the implied answer, for in the preceding verses he had explained that there were “differences of administration” in the manifestation of the Spirit, meaning that the Spirit does not manifest Himself through the same particular gift in every person, “but the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” 1 Cor. 12:7. You know that all are not apostles, all are not workers of miracles (verse 29), neither do all speak with true tongues. Speaking in tongues, which could only be “as the Spirit gives utterance,” is only a manifestation or gift of the Spirit in common with other special gifts. According to this error, the Holy Spirit is denied unless He chooses to manifest Himself in a certain manner. The Holy Ghost Himself is the satisfactory evidence. “Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness” (Heb. 10:15). “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit,” Rom. 8:16. If the reception of the Spirit must be evidenced by an outward physical sign, surely one’s conversion should be determined by a special sign in all cases. Since such is not true, then there is no necessity of that particular witness for the baptism, or for any other special work or favor from God.

On the day of Pentecost the first disciples exercised the gift of prophecy, as well as the gift of tongues, when they received the Holy Ghost. Also, the twelve disciples at Ephesus prophesied when they received the Holy Ghost and spoke with tongues (Acts 19). Therefore, the special gift of prophecy should be given preference if either of the gifts were to be accepted as the evidence of the reception of the Holy Ghost for “greater is he that prophesieth than

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he that speaketh with tongues” (1 Cor. 14:5) and Paul further exhorts, “Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.” (Verse 1).

Error 3. “We receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost just like they did on the day of Pentecost” (Acts 2). Do the modern tongues people manifest the same signs as then? Let us notice more closely the Pentecostal scene. The first outward sign was the coming of “a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting;” the second outward sign was, “There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. The third outward sign, “began to speak with other tongues [languages] as the Spirit gave them utterance.” The modern movement does not reproduce these signs as claimed in the above error. They discard the first two, and emphasize the last. However, the first sign is just as important as the last in this particular scene, being only a literal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy at the ushering in of the Holy Spirit dispensation. The manifestation of tongues which people generally receive today is not languages as spoken on the day of Pentecost, but only a false gibber through Satanic power or nervous derangement. Therefore, in no sense do they reproduce the Pentecostal outpouring. No hint is made at this Pentecostal scene that the disciples spoke in unknown tongues, nor to God alone, neither did they need an interpreter, but these languages were spoken direct to the people of different nations and were given specifically for the purpose of spreading the gospel to various nations through prophecy or preaching, a special gift which they also received at this time. The Bible gift of tongues is a language and is given as an aid to prophecy when needed.

Evidently the disciples on this occasion did not talk in different languages a few minutes only, for the incident was noised abroad

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and the multitude representing different nationalities came together, and each “heard them speak in his own language,” (Acts 26) which no doubt continued the greater part of the day, each disciple talking in order, Peter’s sermon being recorded in this chapter. If speaking these various languages was the only evidence that they had the Holy Ghost, then when they ceased to speak the apostles could have rightly concluded that they had lost the Holy Ghost. How inconsistent! Our Pentecostal friends would endeavor to satisfy us with a momentary evidence, but thank God, the infilling of the Spirit is not dependent upon transitory evidences, for the Holy Spirit in the heart is the abiding evidence Himself.

Error 4. That one should “tarry” for the baptism of the Spirit, evidenced by the speaking in tongues. Jesus commanded the disciples to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49). We know that this refers to Pentecost (Acts 1:8). To fulfill Old Testament type, the Spirit would not be given until “the day of Pentecost was fully come” (Acts 2:1). This tarrying applied only to the disciples before Pentecost, meaning for them to await that special time. On that day, we find them in “one accord in one place,” and they were “sitting”—denoting no physical exertion. Tarrying is not needed so much now as meeting the conditions for the reception of the Spirit. Divine operations are spiritual and are wrought in the heart by faith. Eph. 2:8. Faith is receiving where there is no sight or physical evidence, for faith is “the evidence of things not seen.” Heb. 11:1. “He that believeth . . . hath the witness in himself.” 1 John 5:10. By faith the Holy Spirit is received. Gal. 3:14. Therefore, faith is omitted when one looks to the physical evidence as the goal, and one is not satisfied until he receives the “tongues.” Under such conditions of tarrying, physical exertion and omission of faith, wonderful opportunities are afforded the devil to give counterfeit tongues or spirits. 1 John 4:1. It is easy

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for the devil to counterfeit physical manifestations of the Spirit, and this alone makes the theory unreliable. Then, too, no allowance is made for counterfeit manifestations, many of which the Word of God directly condemns. People who are demon-possessed very often speak in tongues. To my knowledge, a number of persons have escaped from the tongues movement, and in order to get Bible salvation they had to have the devils cast out by the power of God. In fact, in every case where they had sought and received the delusion of tongues, the power of the devil had to be broken before they could get salvation. This is a warning to beware of this supernatural power of the devil.

The tongues movement, through this supernatural delusive power, has ensnared a multitude of people. Lying wonders are performed by them. It is also a refuge for those who receive not a love for the truth.

Dear reader, you who believe these theories, be honest with yourself, and seek deliverance from the enemy of your soul.

—L. D. Pruitt

