

THE GIFT OF TONGUES.

By Rev. E. P. Belew.

That the Bible teaches a gift of tongues, or languages, is evident to the close observer of its pages. On the day of Pentecost the disciples spoke languages to which, before, they had been aliens; and no one can doubt its coming from God, because they spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. In other words, they were inspired of God so to speak. As to the genuineness of this language, we have the testimony of those who heard them, "How hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" (Acts 2:8.)

When Peter went to the house of Cornelius at Caesarea and preached the Word, they were baptized with the Holy Ghost and spoke in other tongues and magnified God. Again, those converts whom Paul found while passing through the upper coasts of Ephesus were given the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues and prophesied. Also, the gift of language is catalogued in the apostle's letter to the Corinthian church, and may be had today by those to whom God pleases to give it. In fact, I believe that many do have this gift of language in their own vernacular. The fact that some with poor advantages can speak the English language more fluently than others with greater advantages seems to evince supernatural aid. While this gift is not to be discredited, yet, according to the teaching of the apostle Paul, it is one of the least, if not the least. Hence, the great blunder of esteeming and teaching it to be the greatest.

But the question to be considered is, Do all who receive the Holy Ghost speak in tongues? 1 Corinthians 12:30 settles that beyond cavil. There the apostle says, "Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" A negative answer is presupposed in each of these questions. Therefore, his own answer would be "no" to each question. Besides, we are not wanting for accounts in the Bible where persons received the Holy Ghost without speaking in tongues. For instance, those who were converted in Samaria under Philip's preaching received the Holy Ghost through the instrumentality of Peter and John, but nothing is said about their speaking in tongues. Also, Jesus himself, on the bank of Jordan, received the Holy Ghost without speaking in tongues. Those who advocate the theory that all who receive the Spirit speak in tongues say that those at Samaria spoke in tongues or Simon the sorcerer would not have wanted to buy the gift. Away with such interpretations! They are utterly without the support of the Scriptures. To maintain their position means to say that Jesus and the best men who ever lived never had the Holy Spirit.

It is an easy matter to show why they spoke in tongues on the day of Pentecost. Jerusalem was filled with people who had come to the Feast of Pentecost. Many of them, doubtless, had never heard of Jesus, and, in all probability, would never have another opportunity of doing so. And as the apostles could not speak their language it was very necessary for God to bestow upon them the gift of language, so that they could convey the gospel message to that

vast crowd of people. As to those at the house of Cornelius, God might have given them this gift, as they were Gentiles, to show that He is no respecter of persons. Those at Ephesus not only spoke in tongues, but prophesied as well. Dr. Adam Clark says the meaning of the Greek seems to be that they taught the people the doctrines of the Christian religion in those languages. So you can see very easily that each time when God prompted to speak in tongues, there was a good cause for it. You rest assured that God never moves people to do things for pastime.

Likewise, today, if there is need of a language, we may look for divine assistance. But what do we need with Spanish or some other foreign language with which to speak to American people? To use the phraseology of the apostle Paul, would we not be as barbarians to them? Paul says in the church he would rather speak five words with his understanding, that by his voice he might teach others, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. While heaven abounds and superabounds in gifts and graces, there is none to waste where they are not needed. Therefore, all need not expect to speak in tongues, however replete with the Holy Ghost they may be. Now, if we are to adhere rigidly to Pentecost, we must demand the sound as of a rushing mighty wind and the cloven tongues like as of fire. Who can cite an instance?

The facts of the matter show conclusively that the present "tongues movement" is not of God. Their unscriptural teaching is explicit to the student of God's Word. They claim that speaking in tongues, is the Bible evidence of the gift of the Holy Ghost. We have shown by the Bible that persons did receive the Holy Ghost without speaking in tongues, but the fallacy of the doctrine can be seen more plainly by noticing that they exalt signs above fruits. Jesus taught that we should know people by their fruits. Who, seeing a tree filled with apples or oranges, would stop to examine its bark to determine what kind of a tree it is? But fruits count nothing to the tongues of people. You must jabber, or you haven't the Holy Ghost. Their stronghold is in the last chapter of Mark, where Jesus says, "These signs shall follow them that believe, In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them." Note that the Holy Ghost is not mentioned in the whole chapter. Jesus is here giving the commission to preach the gospel to all the world; and knowing the difficulty, He promises help in languages and to give safety in ordeals through which they would have to pass.

For instance, when Paul had been shipwrecked and landed on the Island of Melita, he kindled a fire and a viper came out of the sticks of which the fire was built, and fastened on his hand, and he shook it off without harm. But, suppose that Paul had begun to see how many of these reptiles he could handle. Every sensible person knows what the result would have been. Now, if people begin to seek tongues the result will be equally disastrous. We are nowhere commanded to seek the gifts. The fact is they are not to

be sought, and are not all promised to one person. The Spirit divides them every one as He will. If any of the gifts were to be accepted as the evidence of the Holy Spirit, wisdom or knowledge, something that would help folks to exercise common sense and judgment would, in my estimation, be greater evidence than speaking in tongues. But, the truth of it is, none of the gifts is to be accepted as an evidence of the Holy Ghost. He, the Spirit himself, bears witness with our spirit. Thank God! That sounds much better than depending on some phenomenal demonstration, which can be counterfeited, and is without the approval of the Scriptures.

Again, the tongues people discriminate between the gift of tongues and speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. This is a distinction unsupported by the Word of God. Sanctification is by them made an almost meaningless thing. Recently, one of their preachers told me that sanctification was doing the will of God, and could not be hinged on an altar blessing. Of course, man has to do the will of God to get sanctified and to remain sanctified; but he who obtains the blessing will at some altar make the necessary consecration and receive it as a second definite work of grace.

The doctrinal divisions among these prove that their theory is sophistical. Some of them don't believe in holiness at all, and some of them believe in the third blessing; holding the baptism with the Spirit as a separate and distinct work of grace. They say that the disciples were sanctified before Pentecost, and on that day received the baptism. They say that Christ pronounced them clean. What if He did say, "Ye are clean through the word?" That was spoken proleptically, and was fulfilled on the duty of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost descended and eradicated sin from their hearts and endowed them with power for service. Hence, sanctification and the baptism are practically the same thing, and take place simultaneously. But the remarkable part is that those who do not believe in holiness speak in tongues just the same as those who do believe in holiness. While we holiness people may see differently on non-essentials, yet on the fundamental doctrines, such as regeneration and sanctification, we are one. Thank God for the answer to Christ's prayer for unity!

Another evidence of their false theology is the absence of genuine language. In one place where these people were a certain fellow was told that his language sounded like the Spanish language; and upon going to a Mexican who spoke the Spanish language, he was told that not a word could be understood. Then some one told him it sounded like the Hungarian language, and he went to a Hungarian with like results. Also some of their language, so-called, was referred to some of the best linguists in Los Angeles, Cal., and they could find no definite language. These things should open the eyes of intelligent people. The languages spoken on the day of Pentecost were genuine and readily understood. How different from that which is called language by the tongues people today!

Then, too, the way in which seekers are

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