

# “Tongues of Fire.”

## THE GIFTS AND THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

A Spurious Text.—Faith Healing, Miracles, Unknown Tongues.—The Purposes They Served.—Strong Delusions, Counterfeits Foretold.

*You cannot afford to miss this!*

FROM all parts of the world, but especially from the Pacific coast, come reports of what its friends call a fresh Pentecostal blessing—an outpouring of the holy Spirit, etc., and what its opponents call a religious insanity. The movement is amongst so-called “holiness people” of various sects and parties—“missions,” as their meetings are generally styled. People who have been seeking and claiming “divine healing” seem to be among the most susceptible. Amongst these are some who give evidence of deep sincerity and a superficial knowledge of God’s Word. Though generally swift to speak and slow to hear, they, through indolence or fear, neglect systematic study of the divine message. They seem to come under the head mentioned by the Prophet, “My people perish for lack of knowledge.”—Hosea 4: 6.

Reports of the movement in various directions seemed so absurd that we declined to believe them, supposing that since they were sent out by the secular press the facts must surely be misrepresented. Now, however, the “flame,” as it is called, has reached Pittsburgh, where at one of the Christian Alliance Missions we have an ocular demonstration of this delusion.

What we see here corresponds well with the general reports from elsewhere. The meetings are “belaam:” everything is confusion, prayers to God yelled or groaned or barked,—yelped. Now and then some one “gets the blessing” and falls in a trance-like condition on the floor, to remain rigid, perhaps, for hours. Another begins to talk some sort of gibberish interspersed with English. Another in a different guttural mumbles and then gives an interpretation in English. These are said to have the “unknown tongues” of Pentecost; but we remember that foreigners present did recognize those tongues as *bona fide* and got a gospel message from them.—Acts 2: 8.

The people in attendance pay little heed to what is uttered by these “tongues” and their interpretations. Some are simply curious and attend as a free show; others are too engrossed with their desire to have a trance or an “unknown tongue” to do anything else than groan their prayers to God for those “gifts,” as evidences of His favor. Frenzied hugging and kissing and rolling on the floor (reported from elsewhere) are amongst the evidences that these poor people are surely under some spirit influence. And it certainly does not appear to be “the spirit of a sound mind.”—2 Tim. 1: 7.

### EVIL WORDS FROM EVIL SOURCE.

It is quite true that there was confusion at Pentecost, caused by so many speaking at once in foreign languages; but nothing in the record implies insanity or fanaticism: nor could we expect either from such sound logicians as their writings show the apostles to have been. On the contrary, our experi-

ences corroborate the declaration of St. Paul, that the operation of the holy Spirit of God in our hearts and minds has been favorable to the development of greater soundness of mind, by reason of our heed to the Word and its wisdom, which cometh from above. A WATCH TOWER reader in Los Angeles, Cal., writes that a neighbor woman got this so-called gift of tongues, and that a reputable Chinaman hearing her, said that he understood her quite well—that she spoke his dialect of Chinese. Pressed for an interpretation he declined, saying that the utterance was the vilest of the vile.

In our judgment, the facts justify the conclusion that these “flames” are of an unholy spirit, of Satan: that he is now producing a poor counterfeit for the deception of a class whom he cannot reach through Spiritism, Christian Science, Hypnotic New Thought nor Higher Critic Evolution theories.

Is it asked, Why would the Lord permit Satan to delude honest souls? We reply, that he has permitted “doctrines of devils” these many centuries amongst the heathen (1 Tim. 4: 1), some of whom doubtless are also sincere. The time for the binding of Satan is not yet—though we believe it is very near. (Rev. 20: 2.) Doubtless Satan realizes better than we can how the binding or restraining is coming, and is actively manoeuvring to avoid it; while God, on the other hand, is willing to permit his activity because it can now serve a purpose—a sifting work—which must reach and touch every class and condition of professed Christians everywhere;—to test and prove them. Thus we consider this one of the many delusions of our day. Mark the Apostle’s forceful words respecting this day of trial with which this age ends and the next is ushered in. He says: For this cause “God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie.” Why? “That they [who fall] all might be [thus] condemned”—be manifested as not right, as out of harmony with God—as unfit to be of the “Bride” class. But why so? “Because they received not the truth in the love of it,” but “had pleasure in untruth.”—2 Thess. 2: 10, 12.

In other words, the “Present Truth” has been sent hither and thither throughout the bounds of Christendom that, like as a magnet would attract all the particles of steel within the radius of its influence, the Truth might attract all the Israelites indeed, for further schooling and ripening, preparatory to their “change” to Kingdom glory. Meantime, the Lord allows Satan to organize various human agencies, those not of His “very elect,” that such may fall farther and farther from the Truth, until finally none will “stand” except the elect, and they “on the sea of glass mingled with fire.” (Rev. 15: 2.) All others are to fall more or less, though some will subsequently be rescued from the catastrophe—“saved so as by fire.”—1 Cor. 3: 15.

## AN UNINSPIRED RECORD.

We here quote from Pastor Russell's discourse of February 3, 1907, as it was published in the *Pittsburgh Dispatch* and other journals, from the text: "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; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."—Mark 16: 17, 18. The speaker said:

I have chosen this especial text for two reasons: (1) Because it is the one most frequently quoted by those who advocate the thought that all Christians should be known by the peculiar gifts it specifies, and able to speak with unknown tongues, to cast out devils, to heal the sick, etc. (2) Because I wish the more pointedly to call to your attention the fact that these words are not a part of the original Gospel by St. Mark. It is well known to all critical students that St. Mark's Gospel closed with the sixteenth chapter and eighth verse. From the ninth verse to the conclusion, as shown in our common version, was an addition to the original manuscript. This is demonstrated by the fact that these verses are not found in the original MSS. of the New Testament. The oldest Greek MSS. and the most authentic every way, are known as the Vatican MS. 1209, and the Sinaitic MS.—both written somewhere near the year 350. Neither of these contains verses nine to twenty, including our text. The earliest Greek MS. containing these verses is the Alexandrian, the date of which is credited to the fifth century. It seems rather remarkable to us, therefore, that there should be amongst scholars any who would use the words of our text as though they were of divine inspiration or apostolic authority.

However, the conclusions based upon these words deserve our consideration every way, because of the fact that the Scriptures clearly show that our Lord and the apostles and some members of the early Church did possess many of these gifts of the holy Spirit, and did exercise them somewhat after the manner described in these interpolated words we have taken as our text. We, therefore, invite your attention to what we believe to be the Bible teaching on the subject of the "gifts of the holy Spirit" and the "fruits of the Spirit."

## THE "GIFTS" IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

That our Lord ever spoke in unknown tongues is not stated; but that He did cast out demons and heal the sick and awaken the dead is recorded, and also the fact that He sent forth His disciples clothed with power and authority to do the same things is also declared. We are to notice, however, that although Jesus did many wonderful works, they are expressly stated to have been for signs—"These things did Jesus, and manifested forth [beforehand] His glory"—the glorious work of His Kingdom, which is to completely liberate mankind from the thralldom of sin, sickness, demons and death, in proportion as the laws of the Kingdom shall be obeyed. We are not, then, to understand that it was the divine will in our Lord's day nor since that all sickness should be cured by divine power, that all demons were to be cast out, etc., but rather that just a sufficiency of this kind of work was to be accomplished to give evidence of the change of dispensation—to testify to Jesus and His disciples—to authenticate their ministry and teachings as divine.

Nor were these healings merely performed upon those who were converts to the Lord—upon those

who had accepted Him as the Messiah, had believed in Him and had become His disciples. On the contrary, the miracles recorded came not to those who were the Lord's disciples, but to those who were pronounced sinners. As an illustration, take the case of the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda. Its five porches were continually crowded with the sick, as we read,—“In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, the blind, the halt, the withered.” Yet, to only one of these did the Lord address Himself, saying, “Rise, take up thy bed and walk, and immediately he was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.” And that this man was not a believer in Jesus is evidenced also by the narrative, for we read—“He that was healed wist not who it was that had healed him.” That he was not a saint is also testified by the narrative, for we read that Jesus later said to him—“Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more lest a worse thing come upon thee.” (John 5: 3, 13, 14.) Other evidences in the same line might be given, but are unnecessary.

After our Lord's death, resurrection and ascension came the Pentecostal blessing, the baptism of the holy Spirit. As an evidence or witness to this baptism, but not a part of it, were gifts similar to those which Jesus had exercised, and these were generally distributed amongst all believers at that time, as we read that a measure of the Spirit was granted to every man in the Church to profit withal—for his profit and for the general advantage of the cause with which all were identified—the establishment of the Church. The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 12: 4-31), clearly indicates that the holy Spirit operated in the early Church. Some had the gift of tongues, others a gift of healing, others a gift of interpreting tongues, etc., while some had several tongues or languages at their command, and some, notably the apostles, apparently enjoyed all of these gifts. The Apostle exhorted the Church in general to not only covet and desire these gifts, but to recognize a distinction between them—that some were preferable to others. The Apostle says, “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?” “Covet earnestly the best gifts.” The Apostle suggests further that one who had the gift of tongues should pray that he might also receive the gift of interpretation of tongues.—1 Cor. 12: 29-31; 13: 13.

## THE USE AND VALUE OF THOSE "GIFTS."

The Apostle distinctly foretells the discontinuance of these "gifts," saying, “Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.” (1 Cor. 13: 8.) He clearly intimates the reason for the discontinuance to be that the Church would gradually come into a more developed condition, in which these gifts would no longer be necessary, but give place to a higher, nobler and more certain manifestation of the indwelling of the holy Spirit. He says, “We know in part and we prophesy in part, but when [as] that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.” He illustrates this by saying, “When I was a child I spake as a child and understood as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” (1 Cor. 13: 9-11.) We have not yet reached the standard of perfection and full membership in Christ, and shall not reach it until our change in the First Resurrection; but as members of the Lord's body, His Church, His Ecclesia, we properly have

made progress from the infantile condition at the beginning of this age. This is in harmony with the Apostle's injunction that milk is for babes and strong meat for those more developed, and that it is our duty, as the Lord's followers in the School of Christ, to grow in grace and knowledge and love.

These “gifts” in the Church had prevailed for several years at the time the Apostle addressed the saints at Corinth, whom he exhorted that they should desire the best gifts. He found them, like children, interested chiefly in speaking with unknown tongues, and gently reproved them for considering these a high attainment and evidence of great favor with God. Not that he discouraged the speaking with tongues, for, as he explained, he could thankfully say that he could speak with more tongues than they all; but he did wish them to realize that they might have these gifts and yet come very far short of being acceptable to the Lord. He would have them understand that the “fruits” of the Spirit were a higher manifestation and better testimony than the “gifts.” The “gifts” were miracles, tongues, interpretations, etc.; the “fruits” were faith, hope, joy, love. When exhorting them to desire the best “gifts” he added the suggestion respecting the “fruits” of the Spirit as still better, saying, “Yet show I unto you a more excellent way”—an evidence of divine favor far beyond that of the “gifts.”

To demonstrate the better value of the fruit of the Spirit, love in the heart and in the life (with its concomitants of joy, peace, kindness, etc.), he gave an illustration, saying, Though I could speak with the tongues of men and with the angelic tongues also, if I were devoid of love, it would indicate that I had become like sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal: As a brass horn will make a noise when it is blown, yet have no appreciation of itself, so some possessing the miracles, gift of tongues, etc., might exercise these in a perfunctory manner and be lacking of the real Spirit of the Lord and His Truth. The power to work miracles might be there and operate through them, and yet they might have no more relationship to it than the cymbals have to the power which strikes them. Taking the still higher gifts of prophecy and understanding of mysteries and knowledge, and even rising in the scale of attainment to the position of mountain-moving faith, all these, as the Apostle declares, would amount to nothing unless the fruit of the Spirit were developed, namely, Love. These various gifts might serve a purpose, but without Love the purpose would only be for others, and not a blessing to the individual himself.

Progressing still further in his comparison, the Apostle shows that even generosity is not sufficient, for though he were generous and self-sacrificing to the extent of giving all his goods to feed the poor and yielding up his body to be burned in his faithfulness to the Lord, yet should he not develop the great fruit of the Spirit, Love, he could have neither part nor lot with the Lord in His Kingdom, and all these other gifts would profit him nothing as respects membership in the heavenly Kingdom, as a member of the body of Christ. Therefore, he concludes that “Love is the principal thing”—far beyond all gifts, however honorable and useful they may be. Progressing in his argument, he shows that while the gifts would depart, this grace, this fruit of the Spirit, would continue—continue down to the end of the age—yea, and go far beyond into the eternal future. Referring to the “fruits” of the Spirit, which he desired them to cultivate and to es-

teem as preferable to the “gifts,” he says—Now these abide, faith, hope, love, but the greatest of these [the most important of all] is love, for love never faileth. It will not only be the essential quality without which we cannot gain an entrance to the life eternal and the heavenly state, but it will continue throughout all eternity to be the quality or characteristic of all that shall enjoy divine favor forever.

#### THE PROFIT OF “GIFTS” IN THE CHURCH.

A little reflection will make clear to us the value, yea, almost the necessity of the gifts to the Church in its infantile stage. The Apostle explains the character of their religious gatherings: they met and one had a psalm, another a prayer, another an exhortation, another a hymn, another an unknown tongue, another an interpretation of that tongue, another a gift of prophecy. Their meetings were thus made interesting, entertaining and profitable. The prospect of messages coming from the Lord through unknown tongues, and the prospect of getting an interpretation of these also, would draw the believers together and maintain their interest and help to give them food for thought and discussion. They had no Bibles at first: the New Testament was not yet written; the Old Testament, written on parchments, was not only clumsy to handle, but very expensive, and the synagogues which could afford a complete copy were considered very fortunate, and these copies were kept with great care and merely read from on the Sabbath day in the hearing of the people who attended. The early Church, cast out of the synagogues, were really without any particular source of instruction except as they could call to mind the preaching of the Lord and the prophets as they had heard them in early life; and hence this provision of the Lord for the gifts of prophecy and understanding of mysteries and communication through unknown tongues and the interpretation of the same, were all designed to teach them their dependence upon the Lord and to draw them together for mutual instruction, and show them that the Gospel message was not given to them individually but collectively as a Church. All these good offices were well served by the gifts, and in due time the believers were taught to look beyond the gifts and to cultivate the fruits of the Spirit.

Gradually the New Testament grew—the four Gospels, the Epistles of Paul, Peter, John, James, etc.—and with this growth of written instruction the necessity for the gifts proportionately died away. They were not necessary as at first for the establishment of the Church nor for its instruction. It is quite in harmony with this that in general the Apostolic epistles of the New Testament make comparatively little reference to the “gifts” of the Spirit, but persistently counsel the putting away of the filth of the flesh and the cultivation of the fruits of the holy Spirit. No intimation is given anywhere that the Lord's people were to expect a repetition or continuance of the Pentecostal blessings, tongues, etc., but rather that they were to go on toward perfection—the perfection which will only be attained in the resurrection, but for which resurrection they were to be prepared by the cultivation of the fruits and graces of the Spirit. We are to notice carefully that the one baptism of the holy Spirit which came upon the believers at the first was nowhere promised to be repeated, and that it was separate and distinct from the “gifts” which at first accompanied, but which subsequently were to give place to, the fruits and graces of the Spirit, and did give place to these.

“OPPRESSED OF THE DEVIL.”

The Scriptures do clearly teach that Satan had much to do with the bringing in of mother Eve's temptation, which led up to father Adam's disobedience. He is justly in the Scriptures styled “a murderer from the beginning.” Indirectly he is the murderer of the 20,000,000,000 of our race who have already gone down into the tomb. Indirectly, at least, all sickness, pain and sorrow may be thus traced back to him. He had still more to do with us through beguilements and temptations of our weakening flesh. He has led the majority of our race from bad to worse, mentally, morally and physically. For it should be recognized that sin in its every form is death dealing—every sinful and impure thought has its reactionary effect upon our minds and bodies, tending to produce therein weakness and disease—dying conditions.

Naturally and quite properly the inquiry comes, Is not the Lord Jesus still interested in releasing all those “oppressed by the devil”? Like the Heavenly Father, he surely “changes not;” hence he is still interested in the release of our race from the power of sin and death, and of “him who hath the dominion of death, that is, the devil.”—Heb. 2:14. And if so, should not we expect that the healing of disease and expelling of demons would be still the Lord's work throughout this age—irrespective of the fact that now His Church has been established in the world upon a good footing, and has no need of the “gifts” for instruction, having instead in the hands of all the Bible of both the Old and New Testament? We answer, Yes—undoubtedly all this is true. Why, then, is it asked, should not the same healing of the sick progress now? Why should not this be one of the main duties and privileges of all believers, after the manner of their Lord and the apostles?

We reply that while the Lord proposes a great work as the Good Physician in the healing of the diseases of the world, mental, moral and physical—while He proposes that ultimately this shall be accomplished on a much larger scale than anything which He did at the first advent, yet the time for this is not yet. What Jesus and His apostles did in the beginning of the age, as we have already seen, affected only a very small fraction of the world—only a very small fraction indeed of those with whom they were in contact. The real work of healing and restitution, according to the Scriptures, belongs to the future, to the Millennial age, to that epoch which will follow the second advent of our Lord—to His work as the Prophet, Priest and King in the lifting up and blessing every way of all who are of the millions whom He redeemed with His precious blood. The work of this age is not a restitution work except, as already noted, in the early Church it was a foreshadowing of coming good things. The work of this Gospel age is not a work of healing and restoring mankind.

The times of Restitution have not yet come, and will not come, as the Apostle points out, until the second advent of our Lord. (Acts 3:19-21.) Now we are in the time when work the very reverse of this is in operation—a sacrificing work. All will admit that our Lord did not use His healing powers on His own behalf, but that, on the contrary, He sacrificed, laid down, His life in the service of truth

and righteousness; that in three and a half years He so spent His vitality—when “virtue went out of Him and healed them all”—that at the time of His crucifixion He was very weak, as evidenced by the bloody sweat and the fact that He was not able to bear His own cross as did the others in the procession. All will admit that the apostles did not use their powers for their own restoration, nor have we any record of their ever praying for the healing of themselves or for each other to be healed of disease. Even when Trophimus was sick, nigh unto death, the Apostle makes no intimation of prayer for his healing; and when Timothy had dyspepsia, instead of praying for his restoration to health, or sending him a blest handkerchief or napkin, the Apostle wrote him respecting his diet, “for thy stomach's sake and thy often infirmities.” (1 Tim. 5:23.) All must admit, then, that the healings were done upon those outside the Church, and evidently were for a time only, and would constitute no basis that the Church should expect miraculous intervention on behalf of its members. Quite to the contrary, these were all exhorted to lay down their lives, to seek not to spare them, save them, which implied not praying for their deliverance from those diseases or ailments which came to them as the result of their self-denials, services, self-sacrifices. Rather they were to delight in these, while exercising a reasonable prudence and care, which would make the most of all earthly advantages as a part of the stewardship to be used in the service of the Master.

“LOVED NOT THEIR LIVES.”

Not only are believers exhorted to present their bodies living sacrifices in the service of the Lord and to lay down their lives daily, hourly, on behalf of the brethren—in their interest, in carrying blessings to them—but additionally we are told that the ones who will gain the prize, those who will make their calling and election sure, will not be those who prayed for and gained restitution of the things they had consecrated to the Lord's service, but those who spared not their lives even unto death. These overcomers shall inherit all things, sit with their Lord in His throne in the Millennial Kingdom, for they are followers in His footsteps. He prayed not for Himself, healed not Himself, and was not healed by others, but on the contrary said, “The cup which my Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?” and who also invited His followers, saying, “This is my cup, drink ye all of it.”

We see, then, that in the Lord's order restitution to physical health and strength was not intended either for Jesus, the Head of the Church, nor for the Church, His body, but for the world. We see also that the time is not yet come for the bestowment of this blessing upon the world, but that it delays until the sacrificing of the Church with her Lord shall be accomplished—until the Church glorified, sharers of the heavenly Kingdom with the Redeemer, shall shower the blessings of restitution, health, mental, moral and physical, everywhere, throughout the earth, granting to all the fullest opportunities to come back, to be released from the power of sin and death and from all the dominion of the great Adversary, who will then be bound for a thousand years that he may deceive the nations no more until the thousand years be finished.—Rev. 20: 2, 3.

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