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ERRORS IN BELIEF
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01 -- THE GIFT OF TONGUES

We do not for one moment question nor deny that there is such a gift, for the Scriptures plainly state that there is. One might as well deny all the gifts of the Spirit as to deny the gift of "tongues." But I desire to point out some of the errors concerning the present day teaching in the movement known as the "Tongues Movement." It is well to remember that all fanatical movements have some truth; but usually it is distorted truth, and distorted truth is error.

The first error is that of giving an undue emphasis and prominence to the gift of "tongues;" putting first what God put last in the order of the gifts. In I Cor. 12:28, we find the numerical order of the gifts, given, doubtless, according to their relative value; and the last mentioned is "diversities of tongues." We commit a grievous error when we put last what God puts first, or first

what God puts last. We must learn to leave truth in the place and order that God puts it, for God puts first things first and last things last.

This is why I do not make use of the term "the four-fold gospel." Says one, "Do you not believe in the four-fold gospel?" I would answer, "Yes, I believe in a hundred-fold gospel." "Then why object to the term 'four-fold'?" Because it places the subject of divine healing and of the second coming on an equality with the subject of pardon and sanctification -- as though of equal importance. While I am a glad witness to divine healing and rejoice in the glorious hope of his coming, I am persuaded that it is infinitely more important that men should be saved and sanctified than that they should be healed of physical ills, or accept our view of our Lord's return. And yet the multitude will seek physical health before they will holiness of heart.

The second error of the "tongues movement" is in the teaching that all may have, and should have the gift of tongues. After enunciating the gifts, Paul raises the question, "Are all apostles; are all prophets; are all workers of miracles; have all the gifts of healing; do all speak with tongues?" (I Cor. 12:29-30). Of course, this is just another way of saying that all do not have the same gift. And no one would teach that all should be apostles, or that all should be prophets, or teachers, and yet when it comes to "the gifts of healing" and "tongues", it is urged that if one was just right and living up to their privilege, all might be healed and all should speak with tongues. This we deny, and insist that it is wholly unscriptural. As well urge that all should be "apostles" and "prophets" as urge that all should speak with tongues.

It should be remembered that all the gifts are in the sovereignty of God, and that "all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as HE will." I Cor. 12:11.

A third error is that of insisting that speaking in tongues is the necessary accomplishment, and evidence of the Pentecostal experience. This is as though the sun in the solar system needed a tallow dip [candle light] to prove it is in the neighborhood. The Holy Ghost bears his own witness, and can do so in ten thousand different ways. One might as well insist that unless "there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind," and the "cloven tongues of fire" were visible, and all the other phenomena of the historic Pentecost were present the Holy Ghost had not yet been received. Not only so, but it is not said in the second chapter of Acts that they spoke with "unknown tongues," but with "other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." This is different from the "gift of tongues", in that there was no interpreter necessary on the day of Pentecost, "because that every man heard them speak in his own language," and this was the amazement of the multitude as they exclaimed, "How hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born." The exercising of the "gift of tongues" always requires an interpreter, and is positively forbidden and prohibited in the church when there is no interpreter. "If there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church." I Cor. 14:28.

A fourth error is in the assumption that the "gift of tongues" is an evidence of advanced spirituality and superior piety. We would insist that all the gifts are on this side of the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians; that after enumerating all the gifts, the Apostle Paul says, "And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way," and gives then, the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians, thus indicating that Perfect Love is "more excellent" than any of the gifts. While evidently the

Corinthian church had the "gift of tongues," it may be well to note that this church gave the apostle more trouble than any other church in the New Testament; that they had "divisions;" had gone to law "brother with brother;" had misused the sacrament of the Lord's supper; had among them gross immoralities, such as was "not so much as named among the gentiles;" and evidently had misused the gift of tongues which called forth the restrictions of the 14th chapter in the exercise of that gift. He said of them in the third chapter, they were "yet carnal;" and "babes in Christ." So the "gift of tongues" among them did not prove advanced spirituality and superior piety.

A fifth error is in supposing that any sort of a mysterious gibberish or jargon -- though not understood by themselves or anyone else -- is the "gift of tongues". The falsity of this claim has been disproved by numbers who have sincerely supposed they had the gift of tongues and gone to the various missionary fields to find they could not speak so as to be understood by the natives at all -- though they were sure before going the Lord had given them the language and called them to those fields. Indeed, there have been exceedingly few, if any, of real authenticated cases of the gift of tongues in these latter days. It should be remembered that Satan can manipulate our vocal organs just as certainly as he can any other part of our being, as in the case of witchcraft, sorcery, spirit-rapping, etc., hence we need to heed the injunction, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace."

I do not seek the gift of tongues, first, because I have that which is "more excellent," and would not know what to do with the gift of tongues if I had it. Second, because the command is, "Covet earnestly the best gifts," and the gift of tongues is not the best, "for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret." (1 Cor. 14:5). With Paul, "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." "Follow after charity and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." Why should I seek that which is inferior as to its usefulness, when I am exhorted to "covet earnestly the best?" Third, I do not seek it because I could not exercise the same without an "interpreter," and I cannot afford to carry one with me for the business. Fourth, because if I should speak in tongues without an interpreter, and without regard to the restrictions placed upon the use of this gift, I should appear as "a barbarian" and as "mad" to them that heard me -- even as many who have claimed to have this gift in these days. Fifth, because if I seek it for a month and obtain it, and die tomorrow, it would be of no longer use to me. "Whether there be tongues, they shall cease." I Cor. 13:8. I prefer to seek that which "abideth" [Charity] and is "the greatest."

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02 -- SOME ERRORS CONCERNING DIVINE HEALING

That God is able to heal the sick without the use of remedies, and physicians, we think no one will deny. All agree in saying he can. And that he has thus healed the sick, without interposition of medical aid, in all ages of the world, is in like manner beyond question, and is confirmed by competent witnesses. This writer has himself been thus healed, and has personally witnessed the healing of many others.

However, we are persuaded that in much of the teaching in modern times -- concerning the subject -- there is a serious error. Wrong premises must invariably lead to wrong conclusions. In order to meet these errors let me first state the premises in the case as taught by some. First they say, "Healing is in the atonement," and cite Matthew 8:17 in proof of this statement. Second, they will refer to the ministry of healing that Christ performed while he was upon earth, and quote Hebrew 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." And third, they will insist that he is no respecter of persons, according to Acts 10:34. And therefore, since healing is in the atonement, and he has healed others, and is the same forever, and is no respecter of persons, therefore all should in like manner be healed.

We think if this argument proves anything it proves too much. Might not a person just as well reason that since Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead on the fourth day, and seeing he is ever the same, and no respecter of persons, all might thus be raised from the dead on the fourth day: or since he turned water into wine at the wedding in Cana, he should turn water into wine at every wedding. Not only so, but Matthew 8:17 says he not only "bare our sickness" but "took our infirmities," thus proving that the atonement covered our "infirmities". Then why not put the same emphasis on "infirmities," as well as on "sicknesses"? Would not the same logic prove that we should be delivered from all "infirmities," seeing it is in the atonement, as well as healing? But who would dare to teach that we should thus be delivered from all physical and mental infirmities.

We fully believe, and readily admit, that the atonement includes and provides for the body as well as for the soul, and that because of the atonement we shall have resurrection, and glorified and immortal bodies; but we do not believe that we should all receive the same today. In fact we believe all the effects of the fall of man have been covered by the atonement, and that all blessings and blessedness we enjoy today both spiritual and temporal, are directly and indirectly provided by the atonement. But evidently, some things provided by the atonement are bestowed arbitrarily according to the sovereign will and purposes of God; that while the atonement provides me a glorified and immortal body, I may not claim and possess the same today, seeing it is not yet fully due; while I have the check (promise) for the same I may need to wait until the morning of the resurrection before I can have it cashed.

But perhaps the most serious error lies in the failure to distinguish between the grace of faith, and the gift of faith. By "the grace of faith" we mean the faith that has to do with salvation. By "the gift of faith" we refer to the faith that comes in the realm of gifts. Where the case is equal, in all logic, the greater must necessarily include the lesser. It would be impossible for a man to have ten dollars and not have five dollars. All will admit that the saving and sanctifying of the soul is greater -- of greater value and of greater importance -- than the healing of the body; that while a person might reach heaven through a sick or diseased body, no one could hope to reach heaven with an impure, of sinful heart. Hence, if the case were equal, faith for the saving of the soul, which is the greater, would necessarily include the healing of the body, which is the lesser; and that whosoever did not have sufficient faith to be healed of all bodily ailments could not have sufficient faith to save his soul. Here is the peril in this line of reasoning, seeing there is absolutely no escape from the logic of the argument. To reason thus would bring darkness and condemnation to many saintly souls.

But the case is not equal, according to the teaching of the Scriptures; and this is exactly our point. We would insist that healing for the body is not in the realm of saving faith, but in the realm of the gifts, and the gift of faith. If this were not true, why should there be "gifts of healing"? There would be no necessity for this special gift if it already existed in the grace of faith, as all who are saved would have it. Seeing the case is not equal, a person may have faith for the saving and sanctifying of his soul which is the greater and not have faith -- the gift of faith -- for the healing of the body, which is the lesser. Someone will refer us to James 5:14 and insist that here is healing for all. Yes, providing someone is able to pray the prayer of faith. Herein lies the secret. If God sees fit to bestow the gift of faith, so as to enable some one to pray the prayer of faith, the healing is assured. But we doubt that anyone can pray this "prayer of faith" without the "gift of faith."

Another error in the modern teaching on this subject is that all may be healed, at any time; that since Jesus never refused healing to anyone while on earth and seeing he is ever the same, all may be healed today who will call upon him. This teaching overlooks the statement in the Scripture, that all the gifts are bestowed arbitrarily, according to the sovereign wisdom and purpose of God, "Severally as he will." I Cor. 12:11. Hence, in praying for healing, we need ever to say, "If it be thy will," whereas there is no occasion to say, "If it be thy will, when praying for salvation, since he has said, "Whosoever will." In enumerating and speaking of the gifts, including "healing," I Corinthians 12:28-29, Paul raises the question, "Have all the gifts of healing?" This was simply another way of saying, all may not have this gift, even is all may not become apostles, or prophets, or be endued with the power to perform miracles. So we conclude that while all may and must have faith for the salvation of the soul, or be lost, all may not have the gift of faith for the healing of the body, and yet be guiltless, and the soul be saved. Therefore, the essential thing is not healing but salvation. While salvation is a duty, healing at most, is merely a privilege.

That some persons have the "gift of healing" and "the gift of faith" for healing, we are most happy to believe; and we are persuaded that many more might have various gifts, including healing, if they would but "covet earnestly" (I Corinthians 12:31) with an eye single to the glory of God.

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03 -- A MORE EXCELLENT WAY

After the Apostle Paul had mentioned all the gifts, enumerating them according to their relative value and importance, -- including the "gifts of healing" and "tongues," -- he says, "Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way." I Cor. 12:31. Since this is the last verse in the twelfth chapter of first Corinthians, it is evident that he is referring to the "charity," or perfect love, of the thirteenth chapter as the "more excellent way."

It is always well to remember that all the gifts are this side of the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians; and that although a person had the "gift of tongues," so as to "speak with the tongues of men and of angels;" and though he had "all faith" so that not only the sick might be healed in answer to his prayer, but that he might "remove mountains;" and though, because of his sincerity and devotion, he would sacrifice his all, and even die the death of a martyr, by giving his "body to

be burned," yet it "profiteth nothing" so long as he does not have "charity," which is none other than the pure, perfect love of God in his heart.

The plain implication and inference is, that a person might exercise some of these gifts and have no grace at all; and that in comparison with the perfect love of God in the heart these gifts are as nothing; and that these gifts are not an evidence of advanced spirituality, as some teach, seeing perfect love is better; and that although some of these Corinthians evidently had the "gift of tongues," and were zealously contending for the gifts, they were "yet carnal." I Cor. 3:3.

Not only are these gifts of less value, because of less importance, but because at the best they are only temporary and transitory. For "whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall pass away;" whereas, this perfect love, -- "charity" "abideth," and "never faileth." If a man had the gift of healing, and obtained perfect health today, and our Lord should come tomorrow the matter of health would be an indifferent matter. Or if he should seek ever so long and ever so earnestly for the "gift of tongues," and then should die tomorrow, his gift would be of no longer use to him. But the pure, perfect love of God in his heart, according to the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians, will "abide" and continue forever. Yet multitudes seem more eager to possess some of these gifts than to have a pure heart, filled with perfect love.

While we should "covet earnestly the best gifts," we should place them in the order the apostle placed them, when he said, "Follow after charity, (perfect love) and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." (I Cor. 14:1) That is, first of all "follow after," or obtain the grace of perfect love -- "charity" -- in a pure heart; then "desire spiritual gifts; but desire such gifts as are calculated to make you most efficient and useful in the kingdom; and with that object in view desire "rather that ye may prophesy." "For greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying." I Cor. 14:1, 5.

Any and all of the gifts are bestowed arbitrarily, in the sovereign purposes and will of God, "dividing to every man, severally as he will," (I Cor. 12:11) So that all may not have the same gift; and they are of value only as they minister to the edification of the church, and tend to salvation, They are never given for display or for personal gratification. When Jesus healed the palsied man, he said plainly it was "that (in order that) ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy) I say unto thee, arise, and go thy way into thine house." Mark 2:10-11, But in the narrative concerning the rich man and Lazarus, Christ himself well nigh discounted the value of "signs" for the salvation of others. For when the rich man prayed that so great a sign, or miracle might be given as the raising of Lazarus from the dead to warn his five brethren, "lest they also come into this place of torment," it was said to him, "if they hear not Moses and the prophets neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Luke 16:31.

We would insist that he who has obtained the grace of perfect love according to the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians not only has that which is "more excellent" than any of the gifts, but he has the best -- the very best -- there is. There is nothing better in this world nor any other world. And when a person knows -- positively knows -- that he has the very best there is, he may be pardoned if he does not take down the lane after every long-haired man, or short haired woman,

that comes to town with some new "discovery" -- even though he should claim the gift of "miracles."

Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and GREAT commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Matt. 22:37-39. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." "All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Rom. 13:10; Gal. 5:14) And in writing to his son Timothy, Paul said, "The end of the commandment is charity (perfect love) out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned; from which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling." I Tim. 1:5-6. Whether this term, "the end of the commandment," has reference to the objective, or the terminus, we would insist there is nothing beyond "the end."

Hence we see that Mr. Wesley was right, when he said in his Plain Account, "When you are asking others, 'Have you received this or that blessing?' if you mean anything but more love, you mean wrong; you are leading them out of the way, and putting them upon a false scent. Settle it then, in your heart, that from the moment God has saved you from all sin, you are to aim at nothing more, but more of that love described in the thirteenth chapter of the Corinthians. You can go no higher than this, till you are carried into Abraham's bosom." The ground of "a thousand mistakes is, the not considering deeply that love is the highest gift of God -- humble, gentle, patient love; that all visions, revelations, manifestations whatever, are little things compared to love; and that all the gifts above mentioned are either the same with, or infinitely inferior to it If you look for anything but more love, you are looking wide of the mark -- you are getting out of the royal way."

Not only is perfect love -- "charity" -- the most important and the "more excellent," because it is the only thing that "abides," but because it is the one thing essential. Every one will admit that a person might reach heaven who has not had sufficient faith for physical healing, nor exercised the "gift of tongues," but no one can reach heaven without this divine love in a pure heart, called "charity."

All true Christians have love, but all true Christians do not have "perfect love" which "casteth out fear" (I John 4:17-18) and enables them to measure up to this standard set forth in the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians, where "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. CHARITY NEVER FAILETH. " (verses 4-8) Indeed, we do not believe that any one can live up to this standard who has not received the second work of grace, in which his heart has been cleansed from inbred sin, and his love made perfect, subsequent to regeneration. "If ye fulfil the ROYAL LAW according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well." James 2:8.

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THE END