

GLOSSOLALIA IN CHURCH HISTORY

by

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The earliest evidence of glossolaly in post apostolic days is that of the Montanists in the second century. They introduced a new kind of prophecy which Eusebius says was "contrary to the traditional and constant custom of the Church".¹ The prophet claimed to fall into a trance or ecstatic transport. "Moved by the spirit he suddenly fell into a state of possession as it were, and abnormal ecstasy, inasmuch that he became frenzied and began to babble and utter strange sounds".²

Montanus taught that under the dispensation of the Spirit, whom the Lord had promised to His Church, a fuller revelation was now to be expected. He regarded himself as the organ of the Paraclete and, charged with this new revelation, he delivered it in strange utterances, which led some to take him for a man possessed by an evil spirit and others to revere him as an inspired prophet.³

Two women, Prisca and Maximilla, who had become the disciples of Montanus entered into the movement with an enthusiasm that seemed almost fanatical. We have no means of ascertaining, however, the number of converts. While at first the Montanists remained within the Church it soon became apparent that their teaching was incompatible with the doctrines of the Church. Synodical action was taken by the leaders of the Church in Asia Minor and the movement became separated from the Church. It fell into the hands of lesser men and, under the leadership of Themiso, degenerated towards laxity.⁴

Driven from Asia, Montanism found a second home in Africa. Tertullian became their most distinguished convert. Developments were all in the direction of rigorism and this proved to be the major attraction for Tertullian. Ecstatic utterances did not occupy a major role in the separation of Montanists from the Church. In Africa they had disappeared by the end of the fourth century and elsewhere by the sixth century.

During the period known as the Middle Ages there appeared groups, which, though reactionaries to Medieval Catholicism possessed little evidence of ecstatic tendencies. Owing to persecution and the lack of authoritative records little is known about the practices of such groups.

In the period of the Reformation, however, there emerged several leaders possessed with a zeal for spiritual activities which placed them outside the main stream of Lutheran and Calvinist churches. These leaders attracted followers who, in some cases, constituted a considerable force and perpetrated fanatical activities quite foreign to Biblical standards.

1. J. Stevenson, *A New Eusebius*, London, 1957, p. 108.

2. *Ibid*, p.108.

3. B. J. Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*. Oxford, 1922, Vol. 1. p.281.

4. *Ibid*, p.285.

Thomas Muntzer, one of these leaders, in his Prague Manifesto, speaks of the bestowal of the sevenfold gift of the Spirit as the goal of redemption. Among the gifts is the reception of direct instruction from the Holy Spirit in the form of vision, dream, ecstatic utterance, or inspired exegesis.⁵

Among the Camisards, who resisted the efforts of Louis XIV in the 17th century to convert them to Roman Catholicism, were evidences of ecstatic phenomena, including speaking in tongues. "An infectious ecstasy seized people of all ages and of both sexes. They heard supernatural voices, they spoke with tongues".⁶

IRVINGITES

It is when we come to the movement associated with the name of Edward Irving that we find more emphasis given to glossolalia. Irving was a graduate of the University of Edinburgh and trained as a minister of the Church of Scotland. In 1819 he was assistant to Thomas Chalmers at St. John's, Glasgow. When thirty years of age he was ordained in 1822 as minister and appointed to an outpost of the Church of Scotland in Hatton Garden, London. He became popular as a preacher and attracted large audiences so that the Scots congregation in London moved to larger premises in Regent Square. Irving came under suspicion regarding his teaching on the doctrine of the Incarnation. Alexander Scott, who was assistant to Irving, not only held similar views regarding the Incarnation but insisted that the exceptional gifts of the Spirit, manifested in the Apostolic Church, were a permanent endowment of the Body of Christ, restrained only by the faithlessness of later Christians.⁷

This teaching was propagated in Scott's native district in the West of Scotland. Mary Campbell, who was an invalid, in 1830 became the subject of spiritual manifestations which her friends claimed as a reappearance of the tongues spoken of in the New Testament. Shortly afterwards "the power", as it was termed, was manifest in a family in Port Glasgow. James and Margaret McDonald, brother and sister, spoke in an unknown tongue, and the latter was raised from sickness at the word of the former.⁸ On receipt of a letter from the McDonald's, Mary Campbell rose from her bed, and apparently restored to health, continued to speak with tongues with which was associated the gift of prophecy.

Interest in these phenomena became widespread in Scotland and Irving regarded them as a baptism of the Holy Spirit and Fire. He prayed for a similar baptism in his church and the gifts appeared among the members of his congregation. As a result there was so much chaos in the church that the Kirk session took action and the matter was brought before Presbytery. The doors were eventually locked against Irving and the greater part of his congregation, and thus his connection with the Church of Scotland was severed.

Irving never really proved a leader among the group who became popularly known as the Irvingites. The official name which they adopted was "Catholic Apostolic Church". Church government was in the hands of

5 G. H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, London, 1962, p.49.

6. G. Anderson Scott, "Camisards", *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, Vol. III, 1932, p.176.

7. J. G. Simpson, "Irving and the Catholic Apostolic Church", *Ibid.* Vol. VII, p.424.

8. Simpson, *loc. cit.*

apostles, prophets, bishops (called angels), evangelists, priests and deacons. It spread to Europe and North America. In 1862 there was a split when Bishop Schwarz of Hamburg was excommunicated for proposing the election of new apostles. Under Preuss and Schwarz the New Apostolic Church was organized and now has branches in Canada, England, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, France, Australia, South Africa, and South America.⁹

In Australia there are some thirty churches, which have been established by German migrants, with two apostles located in Queensland and Victoria. They emphasize the necessity of gifts of the Spirit which include prophecy, visions, dreams, divers tongues, songs of praise, wisdom, discrimination of spirits, the power of healing and performing wonders. The chief apostle is located in Frankfurt, Germany.

A considerable number of Pentecostal groups emerge as a consequence of the revivals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In America they sprang up and flourished on every side. In its contemporary form Pentecostalism had its beginnings in the 1870's when the first "prophetic conferences" protested against the declining interest in Biblical prophecy, perfectionism and adventism among the major denominations. At first there was a protest within the denominations, but by 1900 it was becoming quite popular to split off and form a new sect with titles emphasizing the emphasis on holiness or Pentecostal enthusiasm.¹⁰

Under the division "Pentecostal Assemblies" in America there are listed no less than ten different groups. At least two hundred independent religious bodies in the United States bear the name Church of God in one form or another. In spite of differences between them they hold in common doctrines of justification by faith, sanctification, baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues and a strong emphasis on the premillennial second coming of Christ.¹¹

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

The largest of the Pentecostal bodies is that known as Assemblies of God which was founded April 2-12, 1914. As a result of the late nineteenth century revivals, regular prayer meetings were held in many areas throughout the United States and many other countries. Bible conferences were held and much was written about the condition of the Christian Church.¹² In some of these groups there were manifestations of ecstatic phenomena and in particular the speaking with other tongues.

One of the most influential of these groups was that of the Azusa Street Mission of Los Angeles. Among those who went forth from this mission were Mrs. Rachel Sizelove who took the news to Springfield, Missouri; C. H. Mason, co-founder of the coloured Church of God in Christ; William Durham who initiated the discussion of the "finished work of Christ" which affected the doctrinal position of the entire Pentecostal Movement; G. B. Cashwell who spread the teaching in south-eastern U.S.A.; and E. Fischer who founded the Upper Room Mission in Los Angeles.¹³

9. Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, 2nd ed. Abingdon, 1956, p.164.

10. William G. McLoughlin, Jr., *Modern Revivalism*, New York, Ronald Press, 1959, p.465.

11. Mead, op. cit. pp. 73ff.

12. *Early History of The Assemblies of God*, published by Public Relations Department, Springfield, 1960, p.5.

13. Loc. cit.

Discussions took place at different times and places between leaders of various Pentecostal groups. Towards the end of 1913 a call was addressed to "the Pentecostal Saints and Churches of God in Christ" to meet in council in the Grand Opera House, Hot Springs. This meeting took place in April 1914, and the Assemblies of God came into being with an elected governing body of twelve men "to act in all necessary matters on behalf of this General Council as a Home and Foreign Missionary and Executive Presbytery during the ensuing year, or until their successors are appointed".¹⁴

The headquarters of the Assemblies of God was later moved to Springfield, Missouri, and this is also the location of the International Headquarters. In Springfield there is the Gospel Publishing House and the Central Bible Institute. The weekly periodical, *The Pentecostal Evangel*, has a wide circulation and a prosperous church press produces books, tracts and other religious literature.

The Assemblies of God have made tremendous advances since they became organized in 1914. They have established churches in Britain, Australia, and in the countries of South America. In their Statement of Fundamental Truths there are sixteen articles, No. 8 of which reads: "The Baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4). The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues (I Cor. 12:4-10, 28) but different in purpose and use".

APOSTOLIC CHURCH

The Apostolic Church claims to be "a body of believers who joyfully dare to stand for first-century Christianity, its faith, its practices and its government".¹⁵

Its origin dates back to the Welsh Revival in 1904-5. The effects of this Revival spread to many parts of Britain and many people in the different denominations received a great spiritual awakening. In some cases there were manifestations of the different phenomena associated with the Pentecostal movements in other parts of the world. Those who received this experience stressed all the fundamentals of evangelical Christianity but they also believed in the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit. Among the gifts of the Holy Spirit that were manifested were the voice gifts, divers kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues and the gift of prophecy.¹⁶

Among these Pentecostal groups there arose a division concerning prophecy. Some did not see any need for prophetic utterances in the church. Some could not see the need for apostles. However there was a considerable number who contended for church government by apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, elders and deacons. It was thus that the Apostolic Church, which insisted on such government, came to exist as a distinct Pentecostal group.

It was in the village of Penygroes in Wales that D. P. Williams became a leader in the Pentecostal revival and which also became the headquarters of the movement. Similar groups had their assemblies in Hereford, Bradford

14. *Ibid.*, p.9.

15. Thomas N. Turnbull, **What God Hath Wrought.** (A Short History of the Apostolic Church), Bradford, The Puritan Press, 1959, p.11.

16. *Ibid.* p. 15.

and Glasgow. Contact was maintained between the various sections and gradually a Constitution was drawn up which was ratified by a General Council held at Bradford in February 1937. Each of the areas was to be linked with three places, Penryoes (Headquarters), Bradford (Missionary Centre), and Glasgow (Finance Centre). In Penryoes the Bible School was established in 1933.

After the initial growth there has been a period of consolidation when attention was given to teaching. At the same time there was an extensive missionary programme and the message of the Apostolic Church was taken to many lands. When the work of the church in any country is considered large enough and mature enough to look after its own affairs, then a National Council is formed in that country; the link with the Missionary Committee is severed and a new connection is established direct with the General Headquarters at Penryoes. This has already taken place in Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, Canada and the United States of America.¹⁷

In Australia there are thirty churches and a similar number in New Zealand. Mission work is carried out in several European countries and in India. It is in Nigeria, however, that the most remarkable progress has been made. There, the country is divided into six areas with a total of eleven hundred and twenty-four churches.

From this brief survey it will be seen that during the past century there has been a development of the Pentecostal movement, with its emphasis on tongues, outside the sphere of the historic churches. Once there was evidence of unusual phenomena there was an element of discomfort within the established church community, and the result was a severance in the fellowship. In some circles the practice of speaking in tongues was regarded as being the work of the devil and therefore should not be countenanced within the church. With the excitement and somewhat extravagant utterances of those who claim to be baptized with the Spirit, one can readily understand why there would be little sympathy. Many within the churches gave little consideration to the significance of the growth of Pentecostalism, and were quite content to remain undisturbed within the more sedate and balanced structure of the historic denomination.

However that state of affairs no longer obtains. The movement is now within some of the major denominations. In the U.S.A. the charismatic revival is to be seen in the Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Baptist churches. Some 2,000 Episcopalians are reported to be speaking in tongues in Southern California; 600 in the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood; in the entire state of Montana only one Lutheran pastor has not received the experience of speaking in tongues.¹⁸

In an article in "Christian Life" magazine (November 1963), the Rev. Robert Rice, writes that the charismatic revival "has broken out in the most unexpected and unrelated places; giving new dynamic to high Episcopalians in northern inner-city parishes, and evangelistic drive to Southern Baptists of the deep south. Dozens of colleges, university, and theological seminary campuses, from east to west coasts, have seen their share of this new charismatic break-through".¹⁹

17. *Ibid*, p.59.

18. Frank Farrell, "Outburst of Tongues", *Christianity Today*, Vol. VII, No. 24.

19. Quoted in article "Tongues, Healing, and Spiritual Gifts," *New Life*, Melbourne, Dec. 19, 1963.

Associated with the Melbourne Chapter of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International is a number of Christian men from Anglican, Baptist, Church of Christ and Methodist churches. One clergyman of the Anglican Church in a Melbourne suburb claims that some thirty or more congregations in his communion know what it is to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and Fire, and have found a new power in their lives and in their witness.²⁰

So great has been the growth of Pentecostalism that the former President of Union Theological Seminary, Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen regarded it as a third force that had to be reckoned with. Such appreciation has not been shared by all the leaders in the ecumenical movement, but the appearance of ecstatic phenomena within the denominations makes it imperative that some form of dialogue will have to be embarked upon so that relationships can be clarified.

It is not easy to evaluate this phenomenon that has attained such proportions in recent years. When one reads the claims that are made by writers within the movement regarding the work of the Holy Spirit, there is need for caution in advancing criticism. It is true that some claims are simply fantastic and are not worthy of serious consideration. On the other hand in some of the writings and also in personal contact with leaders there is manifested a seriousness that cannot be ignored. In Geelong the leader of one of the Pentecostal groups attended a conference of ministers, and discussed the distinctive features of his church in a most cordial and brotherly fashion.

The history of the phenomena associated with the claim that there has been a baptism of the Holy Spirit, reveals that there are extensive gaps that are somewhat perplexing. From the first century to the nineteenth there have only been small, spasmodic manifestations of glossolalia. Has the Holy Spirit not been active for long periods? Did some of the great leaders of the past such as Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Carey, Hudson Taylor, C. H. Spurgeon, fail in their response to the promptings of the Holy Spirit?

If the New Testament charismatic gifts were to be perpetuated in the Church then one must conclude from history, that the Holy Spirit in some measure has failed in His ministry in the Church. The extravagant claims of Pentecostal groups, however, must not lead us to conclude that what is happening today is exactly the same as in Corinth. The Holy Spirit is sovereign and can manifest His power in the Church in different ways. The fact that we do not know exactly the nature of the gifts in apostolic days should prevent the conclusion, that, because of the gaps, the present phenomena must be regarded as psychological or hysterical. While in some groups there is what has been described as a warm-up technique, which can produce psychological phenomena, no such practice has been used in some of the Protestant Episcopal congregations in the U.S.A. There are other gaps in history such as the lack of pure biblical doctrine in the church during the period of the Middle Ages. God's ways are not our ways and to expect uniformity in His purposes for His Church is an approach to history that is unjustified.

Because of the growth of the phenomenon of tongues within the diocese, Bishop Pike of California referred the matter to a Commission consisting of a theologian, a New Testament scholar, two psychiatrists, a priest-anthropologist, one who has completed doctoral work in the field of parapsychology, two

20. Loc. cit.

parish priests (one of whom speaks in tongues), and a Canon-to-the-Ordinary and Canon Residentiary of the Cathedral Church. From the report of this group of scholars the following points are noteworthy.

1. Glossolalia is a psychological phenomenon which has been known over many, many centuries quite apart from any particular religious orientation; in its more extreme forms it is associated with schizophrenia. Within the Christian dispensation it has appeared from time to time as identified with the work of the Holy Spirit. Its existence is attested in Acts and the Epistles of Paul as one of the many gifts of the Spirit.

2. Proponents of this movement are right that our Church is in need of a greater sense of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the here and now and a greater resultant zeal of the Mission of the Church, for a change in lives and for a personal testimony to Christ.

3. According to doctrine, liturgy and polity the normative vehicles for the Holy Spirit in the Church are the reading and preaching of the Word, and the administration of the Sacraments. This reference to the Word and Sacraments and the programme of the Church is not meant to deny that the Holy Spirit may express Himself in other ways in the life of Churchmen, including glossolalia.²¹

Making allowance for extravagant claims we are warranted on historical grounds to conclude that Pentecostalism, with its emphasis on tongues and other gifts of the Spirit, must be regarded as a Protest movement. Deadness has permeated the churches as a result of the inroads of liberalism. There has been a movement away from the authority of Scripture and there has been a declining evidence of power in preaching. In some places the emphasis has been on gymnasias, tennis, cricket, bowling alleys and even swimming pools. Ritualism has been receiving a more prominent place in churches where simplicity was the keynote in the order of service fifty years ago. With formalism there has been a tendency to coldness. The glow of real burning Christian love is not in evidence. No longer would the heathen world be constrained to exclaim, "How these Christians love one another!" We can be perfectly orthodox in all our beliefs and at the same time be tragically deficient in the fruit of the Spirit which specifies love as its first ingredient. As the Holy Spirit moves within the Church, must we not be prepared for unusual happenings? When you see the evidence of joy and the warmth of the enthusiasm in some Pentecostal groups, one must stop and think carefully before rejecting the implication that here is a rebuke to both liberal and orthodox deadness.

Not only do we see Pentecostalism as a protest movement against deadness, but we see also a protest against unsanctified living. Sometimes it is impossible to distinguish between the church and the world. Discipline has ceased to be regarded as a mark of the Church and libertinism is defended by some who claim to be members of the church. While, again, we do not condone the perfectionism of the Pentecostal groups nor their tendency to nominalism, we must see here a reaction which should cause the historic denominations to some self examination. Has the doctrine of sanctification been taught? Is God speaking to the churches in such a way as to remind them of His command, "Be ye holy, for I am holy"? T. N. Turnbull, the historian of the

21. James A. Pike, Pastoral Letter, *Pastoral Psychology*, May 1964, p.56ff.

Apostolic Church writes, "The Church must uncompromisingly stand for holiness and purity, and keep out of it the many evils that would invade the Church today".

The last word on the Pentecostal movement has not been spoken. We have endeavoured to look at it realistically. Perhaps as the different groups become more and more organized we shall be in a better position to discern what is true and what is false. In the meantime we would wholeheartedly endorse the opinion of Dr. Philip E. Hughes when he writes, "Christians should pray earnestly and expectantly that the Acts of the Holy Spirit may be powerfully manifested once again in the Church of our day through the lives of those who profess the name of Christ. The Christianity of the New Testament, with its fullness of power and joy and grace and its imperturbable peace in the face of adversity, is a reality, not a fantasy, and is meant to be reality for us now no less than it was a reality for those believers in the first age of the Church. Only to the extent that it becomes a reality will the Church recapture its true effectiveness, its relevance, and its dynamism".

SPEAKING IN TONGUES TODAY

by

Prof. K. Runia

From the historical survey in the preceding article it is quite clear that, from the historical point of view, the occurrence of pentecostal phenomena is rather rare and obscure. There are even centuries, which show a complete blank. Only in this century can one speak of a wide-spread, even world-wide Pentecostal Movement. Yes, today it is the fastest-growing part of the Christian Church and no 'organized' church can permit itself the luxury of ignoring it. All churches have to define their own position regarding this movement and evaluate it in the light of the New Testament. In this last and final article of this issue we shall make an attempt at such an evaluation. We do this by taking up the question which we asked, but left unanswered, at the close of the second article: Were the charismata (and in particular the gift of tongues) meant for the Apostolic Church only or for the Church of all ages?

1. FOR THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH ONLY?

At this very point the ways of the Pentecostals and the other Christians part. All Pentecostals claim that the charismata were destined for the church of all ages. Their whole spiritual life and also all their literature is based on this very assumption. W. F. P. Burton, e.g., writes that "the Lord Jesus started off the Church as He intended it to go on".¹ He challenges A. S. Loizeaux, who had denied this in the book "Think on These Things", with these words: "Let me . . . challenge you, brother, to produce a single Scripture to show that the early church was to be endowed with miraculous spiritual gifts but that later these gifts were to be withdrawn. You cannot find such a Scripture, while I have shown you from Matt. 28 and Mark 16 that our Lord started off the Church as He intended it to go on"² Donald Gee devotes the whole second chapter of his book "Concerning Spiritual Gifts" to the refutation of arguments, which non-Pentecostals often adduce against the Pentecostal claim.³ It must at once be admitted that many of these arguments are extremely weak. But the refutation of weak arguments is not yet proof of the contrary opinion! According to Gee, however, such proof is not necessary. He opens his second chapter, entitled: "Are Spiritual Gifts for Today?", with this statement: "Why not? The burden of proof surely lies with those who say 'No', rather than with those who say 'Yes'. There is nothing in Scripture, reason or experience to make us believe that the gifts of the Spirit are not for today — every one of them."⁴ And at the end of the same chapter he states: "There are absolutely no valid reasons why the church should not today be fully enjoying the possession of and experience of every gift of the Spirit."⁵

1) W. F. P. Burton, *Signs Following*, 1952, 1.

2) *Ibid.*, 4

3) Donald Gee, *op.cit.*, 9-13.

4) *Ibid.*, 4

5) *Ibid.*, 5

Most non-Pentecostal scholars, however, assert that these charismata were not meant for the church of all ages. There may be some difference of opinion among them as to how long the period of miracles, etc., lasted, but there is general agreement that these special gifts are no longer available to the church of today. We mention a few names. W. Graham Scroggie, though admitting that there is no definite Scripture proof that tongues ceased at the close of the apostolic age,⁶ yet believes that "Church history witnesses, by its silence, that from the beginning these inferior gifts (namely tongues and their interpretation) have tended to become inoperative".⁷ R. C. H. Lenski writes: "These miraculous gifts (including tongues) served their purpose in attesting the presence of the Spirit at a time when such attestation was needed. Hence it was transient and disappeared when the church grew to such proportions that its very presence and power attested the Spirit's presence within it".⁸ No one, perhaps, defended this view more vigorously than B. B. Warfield in his book "Miracles, Yesterday and Today". He admits that "the Apostolic Church was characteristically a miracle-working church", but then goes on to say: "This peculiarity . . . belonged . . . exclusively to the Apostolic age — although no doubt this designation may be taken with some latitude. These gifts were not the possession of the primitive Christian as such; nor for that matter of the Apostolic Church or the Apostolic age for themselves; they were distinctively the authentication of the Apostles"¹⁰ According to Warfield, this was still the view of the Reformers and their successors, but gradually it gave way, especially in England, to the view that they still continued in the post-apostolic period. In Warfield's opinion this is not only contrary to the facts of history,¹¹ but also ignores the scripturally attested "inseparable connection of miracles with revelation".¹²

2. THE ANSWER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is not an easy matter to settle this question conclusively. The difficulty lies in the fact that there is no passage of Scripture that clearly says that these gifts were only for the Apostolic Church. On the other hand, there are passages, which exhort the believers earnestly to desire the gifts (I Cor. 12:30; 14:39; cf. also 14:1, 5). It is quite understandable that those who are caught by the Pentecostal idea, regard the matter as settled. Does not Scripture itself teach us to seek these gifts? In actual fact, however, the situation is not as simple and straightforward as the ordinary Pentecostal thinks. Just as in the case of infant baptism, it will not do to quote a few texts and then to conclude that the issue is settled. We have always to read the single passages, also those regarding the gift of tongues, in the light of the WHOLE New

6) W. Graham Scroggie, *The Baptism of the Spirit and Speaking with Tongues*, n.d., 43.

7) *Ibid.*, 44

8) R. C. H. Lenski, *Comm. on Acts*, 63.

9) B. B. Warfield, *op.cit.*, 5

10) *Ibid.*, 6. Note that Warfield here refers to miracles, but his argument concerning charismata would be along similar lines.

11) *Ibid.*, 11f., 17f.

12) *Ibid.*, 25. Cf. also on p. 27 his appeal to H. Bavinck's emphasis on the completion of the canon. He quotes among others these words of Bavinck: "Truth and life, prophecy and miracle, word and deed, inspiration and regeneration go hand in hand in the completion of special revelation. But when the revelation of God in Christ had taken place, and had become in Scripture and church a constituent part of the cosmos, then another era began".

Testament. As soon as we do this, we find the following interesting and striking data.

(a) Speaking in tongues is particularly related to Pentecost and the period immediately after. In all instances it occurs, when a group of people is added to the church. In Mark 16 it is part of the 'great commission'. In Acts its only exception is the situation at Corinth, where it is related to the ordinary worship of the church.

(b) But — exactly in the epistle to this congregation the apostle Paul puts severe restrictions on this phenomenon, just as on the other lower gifts. Speaking in tongues is not forbidden (I Cor. 14:39), but it is not exactly encouraged either. Again and again the apostle turns the scales towards the higher gifts, in particular to the gift of prophecy (14:1, 5, 19, 39), while the more excellent way is that of Christian love (chapter 13).

(c) All this is in perfect agreement with the fact that throughout the whole New Testament there is a continual **shift** from the extra-ordinary to the ordinary. This is very evident in what we read about the offices. At first the emphasis is on the extra-ordinary offices: apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, etc. But rather soon we find that the apostles appoint 'ordinary' office-bearers (cf. Acts 14:2; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 20:17, 28; etc.). Initially these ordinary offices too were, most likely, strongly charismatic, as Rom. 12:6-8 and I Cor. 12:28ff. seem to indicate, but gradually the charismatic aspect seems to become less prominent and in Paul's last epistles, the so-called Pastoral Epistles, all stress is laid on the 'ordinary' nature of the office. On the lists of requirements for office-bearers (I Tim. 3:2ff., 8ff., Tit. 1:6ff.) the charismata are not mentioned at all.

(d) We further observe that in the New Testament as a whole, much more stress is laid on the **fruit** of the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:22 — also a 'nine-fold' fruit!) than on the gifts of the Spirit. There is an essential difference between these two terms. Donald Gee distinguishes them as follows. 'Fruit' is a natural outcome, by a process of steady growth, of a principle of life **within**. 'Gifts' are given by the generous action of someone **without**. They come immediately from without.¹³ He then goes on to say that the two do not exclude one another, but are rather meant "to balance one another".¹⁴ Yet he must admit that "the greatest thing of all is increasing likeness to Christ, and that it is a huge mistake to think that 'gifts' can take the place of 'fruit'". He further also points to the fact that the gifts are only for **this** dispensation.

We believe that Gee's distinction is correct and valid. We also agree with him, when he says that the superiority of the 'fruit' does not exclude desiring the gifts. We have seen that Paul indeed urges the Corinthians to desire the charismata. Yet we believe that Gee and his fellow-Pentecostals do not give sufficient weight to the Pauline restrictions, in particular those on speaking in tongues. We also believe that the 'interruption' of the argument from chapter 12 through chapter 14 by chapter 13 is of greater significance than the Pentecostals are willing to admit. Particularly relevant is 12:31b, "I will show you a still more excellent way". Of course, we may not lose sight of the fact that chapter 13 itself is followed by the renewed exhortations:

13) Donald Gee, *op.cit.*, 65.

14) *Ibid.*, 67

“earnestly desire the spiritual gifts” (14:1b). But exactly this constant going forward and backward between exhorting and cautioning proves that for Paul the gift of tongues is of secondary importance. He does not dare to forbid the exercise of this gift (is it not a gift of the Spirit?), but he does not want to encourage it either. It also is to be noted that he does not speak of it in any other epistle. But when he speaks of love and the other fruit of the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:22), there is no warning for caution, but there is the unrestricted urge to be completely filled with this love. And this is true, not only of I Cor. 13, but of all the epistles.

In this same connection we must also point to the fact that the possession of the gifts (and this applies to them all) is no evidence of deep and advanced spirituality. It is a sad but striking fact that no congregation is so severely admonished by Paul as this church, which boasts of so many spiritual gifts. In I Cor. 3:1 Paul openly writes: “I could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ”.

(e) There is further the remarkable fact that the New Testament says so little about the nature of these gifts that we (and the Pentecostals as well!) do no longer know what some of them were. Leon Morris draws the following conclusion from this fact: “It is important that we should realize that these doubts and obscurities exist. The early Church knew quite well what all these gifts were. They exulted in the exercise of them. But, in view of the fact that they disappeared so speedily and so completely that we do not even know for certain exactly what they were, we must regard them as the gift of God for the time of the Church’s infancy. They did not last for very long, and in the providence of God evidently they were not expected to last for very long. In those early days there was the outpouring of the Spirit of God to supply every need of the infant community. And some of those needs were not our needs”.¹⁵ A little further he says: “Even the gift of ‘tongues’ comes under this heading. Despite the confident claims of some, we cannot be certain of exactly what form the gift took in New Testament days. We cannot feel that the Spirit of God would have allowed this state of affairs to develop and continue, if the gifts were so important”.¹⁶

(f) Finally, there are the results of the study of church history. We do realize that this point is of a different nature from the foregoing. History as such, also church history, can never provide conclusive evidence concerning the rightness or wrongness of a spiritual reality. Yet it is undoubtedly striking that the history of the church can tell us so little about this phenomenon. There are a few sects who claim to have experienced the gift of tongues, but in the church itself we do not find it after the apostolic age. The great leaders of the church, church fathers such as Ambrose and Augustine, reformers such as Luther and Calvin, revivalists such as Wesley and Whitefield, have not experienced it. Donald Gee’s explanation: “according to your faith be it unto you”,¹⁷ does not really solve this riddle. Of course, as a general rule we fully accept it. Everyone does receive according to his faith. But this does not mean that we can reverse the statement and say that those who do not have these gifts do not have enough faith. Such a reversal is too sim-

15) Leon Morris, *The Spirit of the Living God*, 1960, 63/64.

16) *Ibid.*, 65/66

17) Donald Gee *op.cit.*, 12/13.

plistic.¹⁸ In addition, it does not sufficiently take into account the gift-character of these charismata. Surely, you may desire them, you may pray for them, but it is the Spirit who sovereignly decides (cf. I Cor. 12:29, 30). On the day of Pentecost it even happened completely unexpected. Likewise it occurred to Cornelius and those in his house. In these cases it was an immediate, unasked-for action of God almighty. Why then did it not happen in the days of the Reformation? Why not in the days of the great Revivals? Here Gee's solution is altogether insufficient. The only conclusion possible seems to be: apparently God did not deem it necessary.

If the question is asked: why were they not necessary? we can only give some tentative suggestions. There is perhaps a connection with the completion of the canon as suggested by Bavinck, Warfield and many others.¹⁹ Miracles (and also miraculous gifts) and revelation are closely related. There is perhaps also a connection with the missionary situation of the church. At any rate it is striking that, if one hears of special signs and miracles, they nearly always appear to have happened in a missionary situation, i.e., the situation of the Book of Acts and, to a certain extent, also of the young church at Corinth. Finally, there is perhaps also a relation between the gifts and the degree of maturity of the church. When the church becomes more mature, the gifts are no longer indispensable for the maintenance of her faith. Then the church grows, by the indwelling power of the Spirit, in faith, hope and love, and thus produces the fruit of the Spirit.

3. SATANIC COUNTERFEIT?

If the picture as given above is correct — and we believe it is — how then are we to explain the present-day Pentecostal Movement with its claim of a renewed gift of speaking in tongues? Is it all satanic? Is it all the work of the dark powers of the abyss?

Some non-Pentecostals seem inclined to explain the strange phenomena in this way. Their argument is simply as follows: If it is not of God, the Holy Spirit, then it must be of Satan, the spirit of darkness. At first glance this argument seems to be strong and water-tight. It is a simple and straightforward either-or. Yet many others do not feel satisfied by it, although they find it hard to refute it. Personally I am not satisfied by it either. I believe that this solution is too simple and does no justice to the complexity of life. Life is often more complicated than our straightforward, watertight white-black schemes would suggest.

The Bible has an open eye for this complex nature of man's life and history. It quite often shows us that there is more than one dimension in one single event. When Moses, e.g., hit the rock instead of speaking to it and yet the water began to flow, whose work was all this? Was it of the devil? Was it of God? I think we must say: both were in it. Satan in the sinful aspect, God in the miraculous aspect. Another example is the census ordered by David. Striking is the dual light falling on this event from II Samuel 24:1 and I Chronicles 21:1. The greatest example of all is the suffering of our Lord. In it we see not two but even three dimensions, often in one and the same moment. There is the sinful human dimension of Caiaphas,

18) Cf. a similar reversal by the so-called faith-healers, when people are not healed by prayer!

19) B. B. Warfield, *op.cit.*, 27f.

Pilate, Herod and the Jews; there is the satanic dimension (Judas invaded by Satan, etc.); there is the divine dimension, the divine 'must' which is behind it all, behind Caiaphas (cf. John 11:49ff.), behind Pilate (cf. John 19:11), etc.

In the same way we can distinguish several dimensions in the Pentecostal Movement (just as in many aspects of the churches and their history!).

(a) The phenomena may be purely human, merely psychical. We should remember that similar phenomena are found in other religions. William Sargant has shown this convincingly in his interesting but dangerous book 'Battle for the Mind', especially in the chapter on "techniques of Religious Conversion".²⁰ In many primitive religions rhythmic drumming, dancing, etc., is used to bring people in an ecstatic mood, and once a person has been in such a mood, it seems to be very easy to revive the experience. Here we immediately think of the techniques often employed in Pentecostal circles, especially the so-called 'tarrying meetings'. Cyril H. Maskrey, a former Apostolic pastor, supplies the following information: "These tarrying meetings are . . . conducted in an atmosphere which can impart a tremendous amount of psychic suggestion in continuous singing, loud cryings and exhortations accompanied often with hand pressures upon the head and shoulders of the seeker. Quite often the helpers, who either kneel or stand alongside, speak in tongues themselves, and at intervals exhort the seeker to loosen the tongue and give the Holy Spirit liberty to work. Any form of words other than English that may come forth under these circumstances is accepted as being the evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. . . . This kind of thing has special appeal to the emotional and temperamental".²¹

Unfortunately Dr. Sargant goes so far as to explain the whole event of Pentecost with its accompanying phenomena, too, in a purely psychological way.²² It is all a matter of psychology—and a very one-sided one at that!²³—and there is no place left for the Holy Spirit. That is why I call this a dangerous book.²⁴ Yet I do believe that his explanation holds for many of the Pentecostal phenomena of today. Pent-up emotion, hypnotic atmosphere, self-hypnosis, automatic speech, etc., they all go far to explain the facts. The

20) William Sargant, *Battle for the Mind*, 1960, 79-107.

21) Cyril H. Maskrey, *The Pentecostal Error*, 1953, 5.

22) W. Sargant, *op.cit.*, 104ff.

23) Prof. O. L. Zangwill, Professor of Experimental Psychology at the University of Cambridge, when reviewing Sargant's book in the *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, commented on Dr. Sargant's use of the Pavlovian theory as follows: "Yet he (Dr. S.) appears to have accepted Pavlovian theory en bloc with insufficient regard for its very real difficulties. Few neurophysiologists brought up in the post-Sheringtonian climate have found it possible to take Pavlov's theories as opposed to his facts—seriously. They do not cohere with the body of Western neurophysiological knowledge". Cf. for theological criticism: M. Lloyd Jones, *Conversions, Psychological and Spiritual*.

24) Cf. M. Jeeves in an article published for the Melbourne University Evangelical Union, Second Term, 1961: "Dr Sargant's book has spread into the hands of a very wide lay audience and as a result has not only sown seeds of doubt, uneasiness and scepticism on the subject of human responsibility, but has undoubtedly convinced many people that religious conversion is 'nothing but' a simple Pavlovian conditioning process". Prof. Jeeves explicitly denies (emphasis his!) "the scientific validity of much of the basis from which Dr. Sargant later extrapolates to his study of religious experiences." He does not say, however, that the book is without value. "I personally believe that it is in some ways a most valuable book and I welcome its appearance but at the same time I am sorry that it has given such a biased view of some of the things which it has sought to put across in the name of science."

same is true of much of the so-called 'faith-healing', as this is practised in our day.

(b) The merely psychological explanation, however, does not fully satisfy. Is there not more in it? Is there perhaps a satanic element as well? At this point, of course, one has to be very careful! One might ascribe to Satan that which actually comes from and belongs to God! Satan is the master-deceiver and we must always be careful that he does not persuade us to attribute God's saving work to himself and so close our eyes for God's grace (cf. Matt. 12:24ff.). On the other hand, we may be sure that Satan is always trying to influence spectacular movements such as that of the Pentecostals, and use them for his own purposes. He was definitely also at work at Corinth! (cf. II Cor. 11:14). Being the 'ape' of God (Luther) he always tries to destroy God's work by satanic imitation. And I believe that in certain respects we indeed can clearly see his hand in the Pentecostal Movement of today. It is he who turns them against the church and so breaks the walls of Zion. It is he who sows the many seeds of discord among these groups, which have already split up into many fragments (especially in America). It is he who so often accompanies the 'gifts' with pride, strife, etc. It is undoubtedly also his work that in all these movements so much emphasis is laid on these external phenomena.

(c) We are, however, still not fully satisfied. Is there not a third dimension? We may never forget that God still can use these movements in His divine plan with the world. God can 'strike straight with a crooked stick'! The whole history of the church is full of examples. Yes, I am afraid, there would not be much left of this history, if God did not act in this way. We should further remember that the Pentecostals are usually correct and sound in the other doctrines, such as the Trinity, the Christology, the Atonement, etc. From nearly all Pentecostal pulpits Jesus is preached as the only Saviour, who died for the sins of His people. Passages as Mark 9:38-40 and Phil. 1:15-18 are very relevant here. Of course, they are not the full truth. At times the Bible is sharp as a knife, viz., when the foundations of the Christian faith are undermined. Cf. Gal. 1:6-9; I John 4:1-3; II John 7-11. We may not play the one series of passages off against the other, but have to honour them both.

Sometimes I wonder, whether God does not use these spectacular methods with a view to the special character of our day. People's minds have become dulled by all the stimuli of our modern world. Spectacular things seem to be necessary to arouse people from their lethargy. Besides, is this perhaps the way to reach people of a certain mental and emotional structure? It is really hard for us to say which means can be tools in God's hand. Of course, this is not meant as an apriori plea for the good right of all these phenomena. The fact that God can 'strike straight with a crooked stick' does not make the crooked stick itself straight. We still believe that Pentecostal Christians seek the solution of the problems of present-day Christianity in the wrong direction. We also believe that much harm is being done to many simple believers. It is further striking to see how many people turn away from these movements after the first enthusiasm and emotionalism have cooled down. And yet we must also admit that many have found their Saviour in this way. Here too we must confess: His thoughts are higher than our thoughts and His ways are higher than our ways.

4. GLOSSOLALIA AND CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP

Can one speak in tongues and at the same time be a member of a Reformed (Presbyterian) Church? This is a difficult question, which we can only answer on the personal level. We know of no Reformed Church that has taken an official decision on this point. Personally, however, we can see no reason why a person speaking in tongues should not be a church-member. We should never make the church too narrow. The church is not a club of like-minded people, but the Body of Christ, a Body characterized by unity but at the same time also by variety. Paul has emphasized this, precisely in connection with the charismata (cf. I Cor. 12:4ff., 14f., Rom. 12:6ff.). Accordingly there should be place in the church of today for people who claim the gifts of speaking in tongues, healing, etc. At the same time, however, there are some conditions which have to be met.

(a) These persons are not allowed any more than others to disturb the order and peace of the church. God is a God of order, as we read in I Cor. 14:33 and 40. In fact, this is the whole line of Paul's argument in this chapter dealing with the charismata. Those who received these gifts have to practise self-control and self-restraint, and if the church deems it necessary, they have to be silent (14:27f.).

(b) They are not allowed to make their own experiences normative for all the others. For example, they may never say: If you cannot speak in tongues, you are not a real, Spirit-filled Christian. The New Testament does not know such standards and we must never go beyond Scripture in our demands upon others.

(c) They may never contradict the confession of the church, e.g., by demanding rebaptism for themselves and commanding it for others; or by propagating their views in such a way that the confession is violated; or by accusing the church of having a fore-shortened Gospel, because it does not accept the necessity of all these special gifts for our day.

At the same time the church must remember that it may never quench the Spirit (cf. I Thess. 5:19f.²⁵). The church should not be too ready to condemn. As long as the above-mentioned conditions are met, the church can do only one thing: apply the standards of I Cor. 12:3 and I John 4:1f.

It may be that personally the other church-members cannot appreciate these spectacular things, but personal appreciation is not decisive.²⁶ Decisive is that God's work is being done in our midst, that God's Word is being preached and believed, that the Holy Spirit is at work and that God's Name is glorified.

5. A CHALLENGE

Our final remark is that we should never forget that the Pentecostal Movement also means a challenge for the 'organized' churches. Maskrey, who once belonged to this movement, says: "Why do so many people become interested in the Pentecostal Movement? One of the main reasons is because of the worldliness and spiritual dearth in the churches and the general lack of vital, inspired ministry. One of the best answers to the challenge of Pente-

25) This text refers to one of the charismata, viz., that of prophecy. Cf. Leon Morris, Tyn-dale N.T. Comm. on Thess., ad locum.

26) Cf. De Kerk en de Pinkstergroepen, *Harderlijk Schrijven van de Generale Synode der Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, 1960, 42.

Ecstasism is to see that our own house is in order, and that we have our spiritual fires burning".²⁷ Indeed, we are not really finished with the Pentecostals, if we have refuted their claims of charismata in general and glossolaly in particular. We are not really finished with it, until we too are filled with the Spirit. Although disagreeing with their specific Pentecostal idiosyncrasies, one cannot but feel ashamed when one reads of their joy. In a letter which I received some years ago, a Baptist who claimed the Pentecostal experience wrote: "I know too many people now, myself included, whose spiritual experience has been transformed, who have been given the gift of tongues and who are not rushing into heresy, frenzy, or fanaticism but who love the Lord in a way they never did before. . . . We want to be filled with the Spirit — we also have to step aside and let Him do it in His way." How do we 'non-Pentecostal' Christians compare with this? Do we still feel the challenge? We should never forget that it is a direct scriptural commandment: "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). And it is immediately connected with joy! "Singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father".

But there is still more. Personal, individual joy is not the highest purpose of being filled with the Spirit. In fact, it is one of the shortcomings of the Pentecostal presentation of the work of the Spirit that the gifts are "considered more as signs of God's grace toward the individual than the instruments in the service of those who lack these gifts".²⁸ In our self-examination as 'organized' churches we are not allowed to neglect this aspect. On the contrary, we have to ask ourselves: "What did we do with I Corinthians 12:14? Where do we show to the Pentecostals, and to the world around us, that we grow up in every way into Christ, to the mature manhood?" Indeed, we may and must tell the Pentecostals that their attempt to revive and imitate the gifts of Corinth is a failure. But this does not mean that we can simply ignore these chapters and act as if they are not in the Bible and have no meaning for us in the 20th century. H. Berkhof rightly says: "We have to rediscover the meaning of the variety of the spiritual gifts. We are not to copy the situation in Corinth, let alone that on the day of Pentecost. We have to interpret the gifts in the light of Paul's teaching into the patterns and needs of the life of today. In order to achieve that, we have a long way of common thinking and praying before us. On that way we must be willing to learn as much as we can from the Pentecostals. In our congregational life we must start with the strong conviction that every one who loves Christ has to make a specific contribution to the growth of our common life. Gifts of simple service in seemingly little details are as much needed as gifts of administration, social activity, and teaching".²⁹ This is a great and difficult task indeed. In fact, the church has hardly started with it. But it is an inescapable task. It is only on this way of thinking and praying together that God will grant us "the solution of the many problems with which we now wrestle: the role of the laity, the common testimony in social and political matters, the missionary power and missionary structure of the congregation, the visible unity of the church."³⁰

27) C. H. Maskrey, *op. cit.* 6.

28) H. Berkhof, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 1964, 93.

29) *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.* Cf. *De Kerk en de Pinkstergroepen*, 664ff.

30) *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*