

**THE TRUE EVIDENCE
OF BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT**

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THE TRUE EVIDENCE OF BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT
AN EXAMINATION OF THE THEORY OF INITIAL EVIDENCE

1. The False Theory.

It is sad that to the hearts of so many good people baptism in the Holy Ghost is an unwanted experience. To their eternal loss the great truth has been obscured and discredited, or made undesirable to them by reason of false emphases, and presented upon wrong grounds. Most of these grounds have been laid as a result of mistaken ideas as to its nature and purpose. In itself this is bad enough, but it is not as bad as the ill-effects it has had on earnest souls. Great mischief has been wrought among countless numbers of honest enquirers, deterring them from entering into the full blessings of God. 'For', they say, 'if these people who claim to be baptized in the Spirit cannot even agree among themselves as to what it is all about, or what things a person may look for as proofs that it has taken place in him, of what use is it all?'

However unjustifiable it may be, this position is not beyond understanding, for one of the most unhappy features of the controversial issues raised is that all these theories seem to be advanced upon some sort of scriptural basis, which to the unconvinced is most confusing. More exasperating still, many of these theories have also been as well-argued as they appear to have been textually based, which only makes the matter even more perplexing.

Lest this article should become one more contribution to the bewildering maze of ideas at present befogging the issue, let us consider the fact that the Lord: (1) desires that we each have a true spiritual experience of the Baptism in the Spirit, and (2) has in scripture provided us with indisputable facts and sound logical reasons from which we may draw proper conclusions.

With this in mind, we will proceed to examine one of the theories concerning the Baptism in the Spirit as it is held and propagated in some quarters, namely the theory of the 'initial evidence'. Although during the course of this paper, reference will be made to counterfeit experiences, we shall not primarily be concerning ourselves with these. It is our purpose only to establish that which is genuine.

Simply and fairly stated, the theory of initial evidence is that the Baptism in the Spirit must at the time of the experience, or almost immediately following it, be accompanied by speaking words in a tongue completely unknown to the person baptized. This phenomenon is the sole initial evidence that the baptism has genuinely taken place.

The Gift of Tongues

There can be little doubt that many people when baptized in the Spirit do immediately, or very shortly afterwards, speak words in a tongue which is completely unknown to them. This is a miraculous phenomenon with enough scriptural evidence

to convince any but the most prejudiced heart that it is a genuine gift from God. It is also an indisputable fact that this experience is not only the initial outward manifestation resulting from their personal Baptism, but is for them also the gateway into the glorious realm of further spiritual gifts which until then they did not possess.

When viewed in context of the Acts of the Apostles, or earliest Church history, this is a most happy position to be in, and honoured is the church which is privileged to have such persons among its members; such an experience is quite genuine. A glance into Acts chapter 2 confirms the fact that the phenomenon did accompany the initiating outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. It is only when 'Tongues' is wrested from its true position, unwarrantably elevated to the position of initial evidence and given a significance never intended by God, that the mischief is wrought.

A Sign - not *the* sign

Honest men have no option but to believe and recognize that Tongues are a sign, and must be accorded the distinction in an official sense. But it must be allowed only as one among many; it must not be made to be the sign, as though no other existed. The tragedy and folly of elevating the gift to such an exclusive position is that instead of Tongues being enhanced and ennobled thereby, it has become unavoidably debased thereby. One of the objects of this article is to rescue and reinstate this precious gift to its rightful position in the Church.

No scripturally taught person would deny that 'Tongues' is one of several scriptural experiences which may accompany the Baptism in the Spirit, but neither would he admit that it is the one evidence which proves it has taken place. In fact he would not even allow that it is in any degree necessary to believe that Baptism in the Spirit need be accompanied by any manifestation of an outward nature at all.

To Them that Believe Not

To some this may at first seem a completely unacceptable premise, especially when in I Corinthians 14:22, Paul says quite clearly that 'tongues are for a sign' ; and indeed had he ceased there the objection might appear to be sustained, but he adds, 'to them that believe not'. Examination of this section of scripture shews that this statement ought not to be advanced in support of the claim for the theory of initial evidence, for it is quite plain that Paul never intended it should be put to this use. The following reasons may be acceptable as evidences of that fact:

(1) the indefinite and not the definite article is used here — 'a' sign, not 'the' sign:

(2) Paul is not here speaking of either an individual or group experience immediately following Baptism in the Spirit.

The apostle was speaking of the use of Tongues in the Church as an abiding sign given by God to convince unbelievers of God's presence, which is quite a different thing from an initial sign. Contrary to the reason stated here, in certain sections of the modern Church it is believers, not unbelievers who mistakenly demand Tongues before they will accept a person's experience as genuine.

They were Amazed

The error of this is nowhere more powerfully demonstrated in scripture than on the day of Pentecost itself. None of the men whose attention was caught by the use of Tongues then was a man in the street as we know him today. They were all religious unbelievers, Christ-rejectors. When the initial and initiating Baptism took place, the sign was given especially for their sake. They were all religious people, believing in God according to the Law, but not one of them was a Christian. Not one of them was looking or listening for Tongues as being the evidence of Baptism in Spirit: to anyone seeking truth for truth's sake nothing could be plainer than that. However, when they heard their own tongues being spoken, they were greatly impressed and enquired what they should do.

The obvious mistake which has been made is to insist that because this phenomenon occurred when those people were baptized in the Spirit, it is therefore scripturally established that God intends it to take place every time to every person who is baptized in the Spirit.

A False Assumption

Upon the supposition that the above assumption is true, it is not an uncommon thing to hear people asking if someone has had an Acts 2:4 experience, the implication being that unless the answer is 'Yes', then the experience is not valid. Even if it were true, such a postulation is very confusing to say the least, for there is very little present day evidence to shew that people now have an identical experience to that which took place then. Here and there it happens that the tongue spoken is recognized by a hearer, but the occurrence is comparatively rare, and certainly, whenever it may have taken place, it has never been in such profusion and diversity as upon the day of Pentecost. However, when a person's vital experience seems to be parallel with a scriptural verse of so great importance, it is very easy to think that must be the genuine experience, and that any variation from it must be wrong.

This kind of unwarrantable thinking, once accepted, provides hasty minds with ground for the development of the initial evidence theory. From there it is an easy step to promote the error into a tenet of faith and a received doctrine. Under such misapprehensions, many a true experience of Baptism in the Spirit has been wrongly labelled 'an anointing', simply because there has been no demonstration in Tongues. What is meant by that term is not very clearly defined. In fact it is not true. On the other hand, because some kind of incomprehensible verbal demonstration has taken place at the time, many a false experience has been erroneously called the Baptism.

Again because of this false assumption, many have laboured long in states bordering upon hysteria to produce some kind of sounds which may prove acceptable to those who pray with them, hoping that someone will pronounce the demonstration to be genuine. These occasions are often accompanied by feelings of great heat, or by physical contortions or deep breathings, all of which are self-induced and sometimes encouraged and extremely dangerous. So great is the state of confusion in which many churches lie to this day.

Lest the false should displace the genuine, it must be said that the glorious experience may be received to the accompaniment of a most blessed sensation of being enveloped in warmth, or flooded with joy, or consumed in love. These, as well as speaking with tongues, are all of them absolutely valid; the thing that is wrong is the

search for physical demonstrations and sensations. So surely as these be sought, stereotyped substitutes for the real baptism will become the accepted procedure.

They Spoke the Word with Boldness

Perhaps some clarification is needed on the point of the scriptural evidence which is claimed for the theory. It has already been suggested that what took place on the day of Pentecost, real as it was, cannot be regarded by sincere investigators as initial evidence. Plainly that which genuinely takes place in people's experiences today cannot be compared with it. Upon that occasion, although all the original Church members spoke with other tongues, there is no evidence to prove that the other 3000 did so, even though they were baptized within minutes of the first 120. This seems to provide evidence that the first experience was **initiating** evidence, and not a demonstration of **initial** evidence.

Passing on to Acts 4, we read that a number of others were also filled with the Spirit, but we find no evidence that any of them spoke with other tongues. Instead they all spoke the word with boldness, which is a very different thing. Of course it could be surmised that perhaps some of the words were in other tongues, but that would be nothing but wishful thinking.

And in Samaria

Later, when the Samaritans were baptized in the Spirit, the watching Simon Magus undoubtedly observed some kind of evidence, but if any verbal manifestation took place, it is not mentioned, and so must not be presumed. To say that Tongues must have been spoken is specious pleading of a gross order indeed, and weakens the case for initial evidence altogether. Likewise, when Paul was baptized in the Spirit (chapter 9), nothing further than the fact is noted. It could be that in accordance with Paul's later teaching in I Corinthians 14, Tongues did occur, but is not mentioned because it is not a sign to believers, and only Ananias, a believer, was there. There is no justification for such a gratuitous assumption though; it is more likely, and almost certain, that it is not mentioned because it did not occur.

To the Gentiles also

Cornelius and his household certainly responded with Tongues (chapter 10), but turning to chapter 16, we find no evidence that the Philippian did, neither is there any record of the recurrence of the phenomenon in the intervening chapters. However, in chapter 19, we find Tongues in evidence again at Ephesus, where it was accompanied by and bracketed together with prophecy. This latter information is most interesting and quite vital to those who originate theories. It seems to present us with no option but to accept that in this matter prophecy is at least on a par with Tongues, and should be promoted to the dubious importance of being accepted as a twin-proof with Tongues that the Baptism has taken place. Apparently, however, that is no more an acceptable proposition than it is a proven fact, so it must be rejected.

The Witness of the Scriptures

Having briefly reviewed the scriptures in these eight places, it at once becomes clear that there is not sufficient ground upon which to establish proof that the theory of initial evidence is correct. Upon those eight occasions: (1) only twice is Tongues mentioned as the sole demonstration of supernatural utterance related to the event, (2)

on some, no mention is made of any kind of utterance, (3) on at least one occasion two kinds of supernatural utterances are mentioned. It is therefore scripturally unconfirmed that speaking in an unknown tongue is the initial evidence of the Baptism. Instead it becomes more astonishing that such a theory could ever have been formulated, for it is obviously being propounded contrary to scripture.

Surely the scriptures must be received for what they are, rather than for that for which they are used. The historical sections of the New Testament supply us with facts about the Church; they are the records of what took place under the apostles' ministry. They ought to be accepted for what they are and not be distorted into grounds upon which to propound an erroneous theory of necessity on this subject. They set forth actualities which open up ground for possibility. They do not enforce necessity.

As Spoken by the Prophet Joel

Another fact ought also to be considered here, namely that, contrary to what is inferred from it, Joel's prophecy did not specify Tongues as the sign of the Baptism. Instead he repeatedly said that the gift which would be in evidence following the outpouring of the Spirit was Prophecy. Supposing that with proselytizing zeal we were to seize upon this inspired information and insist upon making Prophecy the initial evidence of the Baptism in the Spirit, what would be the result but absolute chaos? Should this unwarrantably legal attitude be adopted and 'the letter' be enforced, we should be driven to the prohibitive conclusion that very few people indeed are baptized in Spirit, for as we have seen, only upon one occasion is it mentioned in connection with the event, and nowhere is it advanced as proof, either then or now.

We could, of course, insist, with little conviction and as little expectation of it being accepted as conclusive proof as those who argue for Tongues, that Prophecy was in evidence at Samaria. However, it is useless to serve vanity, and no-one knows whether there was any outward supernatural utterance when the Samaritans received the gift of the Holy Ghost. Assumption passes beyond limit and becomes presumption and specious pleading, profitless and finally destructive of the case it purports to advocate if such means be adopted. We will therefore leave the realm of unsupported imagination and proceed on the basis of scriptural certainty and sober truth.

It may however be accepted as given fact that as a result of the original outpouring on the day of Pentecost, Tongues and Prophecy were combined as one in the initial utterance, for the tongues spoken then, though unknown to those speaking them, were plainly understood by the hearers. They were undoubtedly prophetic utterances in Tongues, and not what is popularly referred to as the Glossalalia. This accords with the spirit of the statement made later by Paul in I Corinthians 14:6, that speaking with other tongues can be by prophecy.

Sadly enough there are those who believe that because upon an occasion they spoke some words or syllables in an unrecognizable jumble — they are baptized in Spirit. Despite the fact that the phenomenon has never been repeated, and did not continue or develop into a definite tongue, those dear ones believe it to have been the initial evidence. Worse still, it is asserted that this is an Acts 2:4 experience and quite genuine. This is due to the erroneous ideas associated with the 'Glossalalia', which lead people to believe that it is possible, indeed quite normal, to have an experience as previously described.

To support this view by quoting Paul 'do all speak with tongues?' is indefensible, and in any case destroys the whole position. In pursuit of truth it must be fully understood and accepted that at times assumptions must be received as righteous premises upon which factual beliefs may properly be built. This is unavoidable, and if it is done with true humility in utter dependence upon God and with proper safeguards, there is no cause for fear.

He that Should Come

The validity of allowing assumptions as proper ground from which to commence searching for the acceptance of ultimate truth is furnished for us by no less a person than the Lord Jesus Himself. When John Baptist was cast into prison by Herod, the prophet sent two of his disciples to Jesus asking 'Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?' In answer to John's question, the Lord, without hesitation pointed to His many miracles, advancing these as proof of His claims, and telling John's disciples to go and shew their master what they had heard and seen. The Lord did not point John back to the well-established facts of His baptism and anointing in Jordan. Instead, as proof of His claims, He invited John to draw conclusions from reports based upon observation of works alleged to have been done by Him subsequent to that experience. John needed to be absolutely sure, yet the Lord expected him to believe upon the ground of assumption, based upon reports made by other men.

It is to be presumed that John accepted the Lord's works as evidence, for there is nothing said to the contrary, and well he might, for to do this is a proper and universally accepted method of establishing truth. Certain things may quite rightly be established as genuine and accepted as evidence if upon exhaustive examination it be shewn that they invariably eventuate in clearly definable ways, and produce consistent results which are unmistakably clear to those able to make correct judgements (I Corinthians 2:15).

A Man Named Saul

This method may be easily demonstrated from a thorough reading and correct interpretation of the biographical notes found scattered throughout the Acts of the Apostles concerning the life of the apostle Paul. By adding to these certain material gathered from his own writings, a clear picture emerges, upon which conclusions may be based. We know, for instance, that following his conversion to Christ upon the Damascus road, he was led into the city, later to be visited by Ananias, who brought to him the commandments for which he had earlier asked God. Upon receiving them, and accepting God's terms for his life and service, Paul was filled with the Spirit by the laying on of Ananias' hands; following that, he was baptized in water.

Now it is not directly stated in words that he was at that time baptized in Spirit, but it is absolutely right for us to assume that he was, 'He must have been', is the ejaculation which spontaneously springs to mind upon reading all the evidence given in scripture of his life and activities, for no-one could be an apostle apart from being baptized in Spirit. Again in the same way as there is no direct statement that he was baptized in Spirit, neither is it stated that he spoke in tongues at that time. Nevertheless we know from his later writings that he did speak with tongues, for he says so himself.

How then do we resolve the issue of initial evidence with reference to Paul? Simply by allowing the fact that according to the principle demonstrated above, although it is

logically true to assume that he was baptized in Spirit at Damascus, it is fallacious to believe that he spoke in tongues upon that occasion. The reasons for this conclusion are as follows: 1) there is no documentary evidence to prove it, 2) there are no scriptural grounds upon which to correctly assume it.

In such cases as these, presumptive evidence may only be allowed if founded upon submissions gathered from scripture recorded subsequent to the act and which may be reasonably assumed to be correct. By the application of this method we conclude that, although it is correct to assume that he was baptized in Spirit, it would be an unwarrantable assumption to assert that Tongues was the initial evidence of that Baptism.

Paul came to Ephesus

Turning to the Ephesian visitation, we find that all twelve spoke with tongues and prophesied. It could just be true that this is a repetition of what took place at Pentecost, and that the tongues were prophetic utterances. In this case 'and prophesied' should be understood to imply that they spoke with tongues 'and did so in prophetic vein'. We must also allow the possibility that every one of the twelve men baptized in Spirit at that time did actually speak in tongues and prophesied as two distinct exercises in that order. If this premise could be guaranteed to be true, it would appear to be almost solid proof of the theory of initial evidence, but again no-one knows with certainty what happened there, so speculation about it is quite useless.

Were this attempted with a view to providing evidence to support the claim, the exercise would only demonstrate the fact that in cases where self-convincement is the sole aim, any person normally selects what he wants to believe according to preferences or prejudices. Righteousness and honesty compel us to remain neutral and speak only of possibility or speculate about likelihood in the matter. We must not seek to make beliefs stand upon arguments lest dogma dethrone reason, in which case we become slaves to carnal minds, and doctrines become chains.

It could, of course, be stated with a certainty almost amounting to infallible proof, that both upon the occasion when the Spirit was poured out upon the Jews in Acts 2, and the Gentiles in Acts 10, no utterance beside that of Tongues was in evidence, for this phenomenon alone is mentioned. More than that, it was the fact that the Gentiles spoke with Tongues which convinced Peter and his party of the genuineness of the outpouring, and that Cornelius and those with him had actually received the gift of the Spirit.

This seems to be of great significance, even though it is almost certain that there was a great difference between the kinds of Tongues being manifest upon the two occasions. With such an array of seemingly irreconcilable facts before us, how is it possible to arrive at a definite conclusion about the Baptism which is acceptable to all? Attempting to discover the correct answer to this question, let us pay attention to the historic reasons for the Baptism.

I Will Confound their Language

On the day of Pentecost God did two epochal things: (1) He inaugurated an era, (2) He almost certainly commemorated an anniversary. The outpouring marked the giving of the Law to Israel at Sinai upon their deliverance and departure from Egypt.

Beside this, Pentecost was also the antitype of God's judgement which was passed upon the people at Babel some 500 years previous to the Exodus.

Upon this latter occasion men had attempted to build a tower which should reach up to the planetary heavens, with the result that God came down in judgement and confounded their intentions by confusing their speech. This characteristically lenient punishment had the effect of causing them to scatter over the face of the whole earth, gathering together into the nuclei of different national groups. Naturally as well as compulsively and all unknowingly, they fulfilled God's intention that men should replenish the earth, for, as may be expected, according to ability to understand each other they separated from those whose speech they could not understand.

If the implications and significance of these great historical events be thoroughly grasped, the scriptural background and reason both for the gift of Tongues and also for the different kinds of Tongues spoken on the day of Pentecost may be seen. The giving of the Law at Sinai was epochal; it was the unique occasion when the Covenant which God made with Abraham was confirmed to the nation. The Feast of Pentecost following the Passover was also ordained of God to become an annual Feast. It is quite possible that God's judgement at Babel was meted out upon the same day centuries earlier also, but in the absence of factual records it is better only to admit its likelihood.

In Their Own Tongues

However, whether this be just conjecture or no, we do know that on the day of Pentecost God again came down in great power as at Babel. This time, however, He did not come in judgement and punishment. He came in blessing, because the righteous Man had ascended from the lowest hell to sit down with Him on His right hand in the heavenlies. In response to this, at Jesus' request and according to the pre-arranged plan, God poured forth the Holy Ghost without measure. This was done so that in Him Jesus may baptize His expectant followers into His Body and thus commence to form the Church. At the same time by that process and also of necessity He wrote the law in each member's heart. He also gave the Holy Spirit to each one of them and thus sealed to them the Covenant.

One of the results of this was that at least 3000 people, probably more, of different races and language groups saw and heard uneducated men speak of the wonderful works of God in tongues they had never learned. The miracle, though accountable, was phenomenal, inaugural and therefore unique.

To the Uttermost Part of the Earth

Some years later, upon the occasion when the Lord inaugurated the Covenant with the Gentiles so that they also were brought into the kingdom, He gave them a somewhat similar experience. Their initiation was not absolutely identical with that which happened to the Jews though, for although they spoke with Tongues, it is not recorded that the listeners understood what they were saying. Peter and his party went to Caesarea, knowing exactly that it was to use the keys of the kingdom, he was the officer of Christ, sent by Him to the Gentiles that they might officially be brought into the Covenant.

This was to be more than a local blessing; far beyond that, it was to be the occasion when the door of faith was opened unto the entire gentile world; it was to be an inaugural event. For this reason, although it is to be presumed that every single person spoke with tongues, Peter and the men with him were not so much concerned about the particular experience of individuals. They did not take tongue-speaking to be the sign of any particular person's baptism in Spirit, so much as the sign that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, had received the Holy Ghost. As at Pentecost, tongues at Caesarea was the inaugural sign of the commencement of the era of witness unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8).

God had initiated the last stage of the plan to fulfil the promise made to Abraham, 'In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed'. This was a sectional inauguration, the Gentiles' Pentecost; God, in His grace, was now moving on to reach the rest of the vast world of mankind. His bowels were sounding out to the scattered language groups as yet unreached by the Spirit. It was for this reason therefore that, as had already happened with the Jews, Tongues were again in evidence. There is not the slightest doubt that Tongues was the initial evidence upon each of these initiating occasions, so there is no reason why it should not be heartily received as such.

The Initiating Evidence

By these things we have seen that it is reasonable to believe that (1) Tongues was an initiating or inaugural evidence, (2) they were given to mark epochal events rather than to be mistaken for an initial evidence of the Baptism in the Spirit. It is scripturally evident that upon the first outpouring of the Spirit upon both the Jews and the Gentiles, Tongues of one kind or another was the immediate outcome of the Baptism. We also see that, although Tongues-speaking was not regarded as confirmatory or evidential when the Baptism took place at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, it was certainly looked upon as such in Caesarea. This seems to be the very reason why God gave it, for it was by Tongues that Peter and his Jewish companions concluded that the Gentiles had received the Spirit.

When this is contrasted with other occasions when people were baptized in the Spirit following Pentecost, it becomes clear that Tongues did not excite the same amazement as at Caesarea. Tongues is specified here simply because the people speaking them were Gentiles. It had taken place when the Jews were baptized, so to Peter, the key man upon both occasions, Tongues held special significance; it was confirmation to him that the door of faith was open to the Gentiles. While fully accepting this perfectly genuine fact without disputation, there remains very much reason to reject the idea that speaking in Tongues was intended by God to be regarded by us as the initial evidence and sole proof that a person is baptized in the Spirit.

One of the worst errors made in Bible interpretation is to limit its great truths to the partial ideas held by the interpreter. This is a snare into which all are liable to fall. Another is to confine them to narrow sectarian doctrines, or to try to make the Book support specious denominational emphases. When on the day of Pentecost Peter used the phrase 'this is that', he definitely connected the events of Pentecost with Joel's prophecy, but it must not be thought that the baptism they experienced was limited to that of which Joel spoke; it was something more, much more than that.

The Transcendent Baptism

By far the greatest things that happened to men on the day of Pentecost were regeneration into life and constitution into a Body indwelt by Christ. These things were accomplished in them at an instant by Christ, who baptized them into His Church by identification with Himself in His death and resurrection. Simultaneously with this glorious experience they were initiated and entered into other states and blessings also, some of which are set out below:

- 1) I Corinthians 12:13 — 'In one Spirit they were baptized into one body and made to drink into one Spirit.'
- 2) Romans 6:3-11; Luke 12:50; Mark 10:38,39. They were made partakers of the one Baptism spoken of by Paul in Ephesians 4:4-6.
- 3) Acts 15:7-9. By receiving the Holy Ghost their hearts were purified by faith.
- 4) Romans 8:2-11. They were initiated into life in the Spirit where, by the operation of new laws, the fruit of the Spirit was brought forth.
- 5) John 14:15-20. They knew that Jesus was in the Father and they were in Jesus and Jesus was in them. Surely of all that is accomplished by that Baptism this is the dearest.
- 6) Matthew 16:18. They became the foundation members of the Church which Christ is building.
- 7) Acts 1:8. They received power to be witnesses unto the Lord Jesus.

A Greater Covenant

Of all the things that were initiated in the lives of the 120 on the day of Pentecost these are the most basic. It was the great inaugural day of the New Covenant when the Church of God was officially established on the earth in power as a company of new-born people; it was unique, historic. The things of which Joel spoke, though important, were not the most important things happening that day. He only spoke of that which could be seen and heard. Much, much greater and deeper than those were the things which could not be seen or heard; things as yet unknown by them, related more to eternity than to time, to God and Heaven more than to Men and Earth.

The Devastating Folly

Perhaps enough scriptural reason has already been given to convince hearts that the theory of initial evidence has been based upon assumption rather than proof; nevertheless we will consider some further reasons which also make its claims untenable. The first of these is the obvious folly of the theory. From the moment that anything is advanced as being the initial evidence of an event, a degree of infallibility is unavoidably accorded it. Resultantly nothing other than that particular thing can possibly be allowed as proof that the event has taken place. Worse still, however true a person's experience of the Baptism may be, without the so-called initial evidence, it is discounted and disallowed. It is the degree of infallibility engendered by the theory, which, beside creating great dangers, at once constitutes its greatest folly and demonstrates its utter falsity.

The theory of initial evidence does three things:

(1) it purports to invalidate every other claim to the Baptism in the Spirit, for it declares every other experience insufficient, and less than the Baptism, unless it be accompanied by Tongues:

(2) it declares this particular demonstration to be the only genuine evidence that baptism has taken place:

(3) since the Lord Jesus, speaking of 'the Baptism' said 'ye shall receive power', it confuses the whole issue, and leaves the impression that the 'power' is merely an ability to speak with Tongues. Thus the ability to use another tongue is substituted for power to be a witness to Jesus, who Himself did not speak with tongues in the accepted sense at any time in His life. If this is not plainly said, the implication is that the power of which Jesus speaks cannot be had by any person unless he speaks in Tongues. The psychological effect and spiritual impact of such claims upon untaught souls has been to lay them open for pseudo-baptisms, and in some cases wrong possession.

Two prevalent results of this are:

1) The self-inducement of some kind of demonstration in 'Tongues' on the part of the person being baptized in order to prove the genuineness of the experience he is supposedly undergoing.

2) The conditioning of a person for a demonstration in 'Tongues' spoken by an evil spirit either already resident within that person, or gaining entrance at that time.

Both of these demonstrations are deceptions: the first being self-induced is entirely human and soulish; the second being spirit-reproduced is devilish and psychic; neither is of the Holy Spirit nor genuine.

The Blinding Error

Because this kind of false manifestation is mixed up with that which is genuine, confusion inevitably reigns in the churches, causing a veil of misapprehension, unbelief and fear to hang like a pall over many hearts, obscuring and misrepresenting the truth. What is more, because in people's minds the gifts of the Spirit are connected with the Baptism in the Spirit, vast realms of power and usefulness which Christ bequeathed unto the Church have never been attained to by vast numbers of His truly born-again ones. It is sadly true that because Tongues is suspect, to many dear people all the rest is discounted and rejected.

Perhaps the degree of confusion which it creates is one of the worst features of the theory, for even deeper-rooted than the foregoing, it evinces the belief that they who so wrongly insist on it surely cannot themselves know what is the true Baptism.

Satanic Counterfeits

The second reason that makes the theory of initial evidence so untenable is its total illogic. Demanding Tongues-speaking as the initial evidence of the Baptism appears to prove great gullibility and ignorance, for speaking in Tongues in that manner for that reason can be plainly demonstrated to be false. Anyone who holds serious conversation with persons working among heathen tribes, may ascertain for themselves that during certain religious ceremonies involving special incantations

(frequently accompanied by gross bodily contortions and evil demonstrations), those taking part often speak fluently in tongues other than their own. No-one would think for a moment that those taking part were baptized in the Holy Ghost; on the contrary with one consent we would say that they were in the grip of Satan. How then can speaking with tongues possibly be the infallible proof of Baptism in Spirit?

Further to this, such reports as the following make it more certain still that speaking in another or an unknown tongue is not necessarily even an evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit: 'as we watched his whole face seemed to change, taking on the shape and features of a Chinese man; he began to speak in what seemed to be a Chinese tongue'. This was said by a Christian minister of his father who during his lifetime was a spiritualist medium. How then can it be possible for Tongues-speaking to be the certain proof that a man is filled with the Spirit? It would be quite illogical, beside being uncharacteristic of God to do such a thing. He would not so jeopardize the safety of the Church as to make something which the devil can so easily imitate the one infallible sign of such a fundamental experience.

Upon the testimony of both scripture and reason, as much as upon well-proven observation, to say nothing as yet of personal testimony, we conclude that initial evidence is not only an unproven, but also a dangerous theory. The scriptures so clearly shew that the Baptism in Holy Spirit is a simple, wise, logical, powerful and true experience, having no need of initial evidence as its bona fide.

2. The True Evidence.

Yet ... Not I

There are many scriptures which present to us what Baptism in the Spirit really is, and with what it is primarily concerned: a typical example of these is Galatians 2:20. Upon consideration of the statement in this verse we are driven to the astonishing conclusion that Paul here claims to be himself, yet not himself. He is quite sure he lives, he says, and he is equally sure that although he is alive, he is not his old self any longer, but an entirely new self. At the time of writing, if his claims are to be believed, Jesus Christ who had long since died and risen again and returned to heaven, was actually living in him. The outcome of this, as may be expected, was that he was now living by the faith of the Son of God, who was living in him. The claim is stupendous in all conscience, and the amazing thing is that upon examination, his life proves his claims to be true.

As We are One.

Now it is exactly this kind of life that God had always wanted for man, for it is His kind of life. Our God Himself has always lived in this manner from all eternity. He has had His being in trinity; that is, as three persons each indwelling the other two whilst still being Himself. This is an absolutely mind-baffling miracle to be sure. Perhaps more baffling still, from everlasting, God's desire was that His Son should personally live in many people other than just His own self and the Father and the Spirit. The Son had ever lived in His own conscious self, but beside that, God wanted Jesus to live His life in many people other than Himself.

To Live is Christ

This was the startlingly new concept of human/divine life for men, which, except upon the occasion in the upper room, God had kept unmentioned and totally unrevealed until Pentecost. During His earth-life rarely had Jesus even hinted at this, although He was the manifestation and example of it, Occasionally He referred to a life which, upon reflection, we see could be lived only upon this principle, but from Paul's testimony we learn that in him the miracle was consciously taking place.

Jesus Christ, so Paul claimed, was actually living in the person of Paul in Paul's body; that is, living him, so that Paul could live Christ. This is precisely what Paul claimed when writing to the Philippians, 'to me to live is Christ', he said so matter-of-factly. In the man Paul, Christ had being in a body other than the flesh-and-blood body known as Jesus of Nazareth, and He had being in it as though it was His own.

The Life I Now Live

It is evident that Paul with Christ had come to total realization of what Calvary's death and resurrection was all about; 'I was crucified' he said. He saw how God, by the Holy Ghost, had been able to make Golgotha permanent and available for all time, for all mankind, and he had experienced it. Entering wholly into God's will for him, the apostle understood what God had always wanted. Consequently he was able with sublime confidence to confess Christ as 'the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me'; he perfectly understood what it all meant. For his part he was not talking about something metaphysical, or hyper-spiritual; he was not living in some self-induced state or a mental elevation resulting from a new religious ideal or philosophy. He was talking right down to earth; 'the life I now live in the flesh' he said; that is plain, everyday, common-sense language; the man was living the life of Christ.

Similarly the Lord Jesus for His part had realized His purpose in Paul; He was in the man's flesh as though it were His own. This was the miracle for which God had planned and worked throughout the ages; how great a miracle can scarcely be grasped. However much He may have desired it, God could not have accomplished this, His fullest purpose for Himself and man, by any other means.

Vain Man's Idolatry

Earth's idolatrous philosophers have invented religious schemes propounding the myth of repetitive reincarnations for the purpose of self-improvement into some state acceptable to an unlikely god., but this is not what Paul is talking about. Jesus did not die in order to be released from the body of His first incarnation so that He might be born in the flesh again in some interminable and unexplainable cycle of reproduction by the natural process of procreation; this idea is as freakish as it is quite nauseous and impossible.

Vain man, idly speculating, conjures up such fleshly notions only because he rejects the fact of sin, which of course he must do, because it makes his theories unworkable and therefore preposterous. In any case, the scriptures show very clearly the impossibility of such an obnoxious idea by telling us that Jesus Christ was seen, heard and handled following His bodily resurrection from the tomb in which He had been laid. Moreover He once again did miracles on the earth before finally ascending bodily into the heavens, where He now sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high. But beside all this, God is original; His plan for mankind was far superior to that kind

of crude humanism. His wisdom is far too great to do anything that man may conceive or imitate or devils accomplish or counterfeit. What God did is unique. In the nature of things, if He wished to achieve His stated purpose, it was the only course possible even to Him.

The Divine Exclusiveness

At Jesus' conception the angel said to Mary, 'with God all things are possible' and in saying so said more than we may at first realize. With these confident words, the Lord commenced the opening phase of operations for personal redemption according to the plan He conceived in eternity. Thereby He introduced our hearts to the fact that there must be a place where a thing is possible only to God, conditioning us all to the realm of exclusiveness. Understanding this, the heart at once comes to rest; the degree of impossibility makes everything so safe; no-one but God could do it. Such a thing cannot be in any way counterfeited, either as to its substance, its accomplishment, its evidences or its fruit. It is this absolute exclusiveness which gives it such certainty, and precludes the need for dubious 'initial evidence', especially that which can be produced by both man and devil in psychological or psychic manifestation. Hereby the fallibility, frailty and falsity of the theory of initial evidence lies exposed.

Ye Shall Know the Truth

It must be accepted without reserve by all as indisputable truth that what God has accomplished in the Holy Ghost is unique and cannot be reproduced or copied. This is why 'Initial Evidence' is so plainly wrong; Jesus Christ is absolute Truth, and He did not speak in Tongues in any way which could be associated with or misconstrued as initial evidence. That man and devil throughout the ages have produced counterfeits of God's working in no way jeopardizes the fact that truth is absolute; it is this absoluteness which is its safeguard. No true saint of God is ever deceived long enough for the error to become heresy in him. He may be temporarily misled, but the Spirit of Truth soon rectifies the position. Everything God does by His Spirit, whether it be in conception or execution, is out of the reach of man and devil. Hallelujah!

The Transforming Miracle

The day of Pentecost revealed that God's perfect plan for man was Baptism in the Holy Ghost, Reviewing the historic occasion, we observe that the whole operation was carried out exclusively by God. Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godhead, immersed men and women in the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, unto the Father the first person of the Godhead. Seeing that He wanted a family/body of sons, there was no other way in which God the Father could possibly accomplish the miracle than by bringing them forth unto Himself by the Son in the Spirit. If He wanted sons of identical life with identical personality to His unique only-begotten Son, then that Son must live in them, and for Jesus to live in some body other than His own body of flesh and blood there was no alternative than to baptize that other person in Holy Spirit.

Can anyone think of or suggest any other way in which the miracle could be wrought? And if that were possible could anyone by any means produce, or provide from himself, the means whereby it could be accomplished? No! There is no other way. Such is the exclusiveness and purpose of this Baptism, that even God could not do otherwise than He did.

Into His Glorious Image

Yet, in doing this miracle, God had to preserve the human nature and distinct personality of the person in whose body His Son should have being and live, or else what is the purpose of the miracle? Although sin must be dealt with, and bondages broken and hearts purged, in the process of accomplishing this there must be no destruction of man's personality, for under heaven, man's personality is the crowning wonder of all God's glorious creation. Human personality is a wonderful thing; when totally free from sin and as like Jesus as God intended it to be it must be exceedingly glorious.

When God created the first person, He made him a living soul in His own image and likeness, that, in fellowship with his Creator-God, he should develop a most wonderful personality. God loved him then and although now he is a fallen creature God still loves him, and purposes in grace to restore all His sons to natural likeness to Himself, that God's glorious image may transfigure human personality once more, It would therefore have been utterly ruinous to His own plans if in process of regenerating man He obliterated his soul. Indeed the whole point of the Baptism is to preserve and restore it; for if He only ever wished to have one Son, why Calvary? If the cross was only revealed to us by God just so that it should be established in the earth as the greatest expression of His love for us, and later, having availed ourselves of its benefits, we were to discover that after all God's intention thereby was only to destroy and annihilate all human personalities other than Jesus, what kind of love should we think that to be?

Christ Liveth in Me

The cross was planned and endured by Jesus to the end that other men as well as He should be privileged to have and live the life of God in themselves as He in Himself, and in what better or more effective or more delightful way should or could this be accomplished than by immersing them in Holy Spirit? Only when and as a man is totally immersed in the Holy Spirit of God can the miracle of 'Christ liveth in me' be accomplished by God and acclaimed by man.

By this Baptism in God, by God, for God who created him, a man's personality can be preserved as being distinctly his own, and yet at the same time be the expression of another's, because, by virtue of that act and through the total and eternal immersion which that act inaugurates, that other actually lives in him. This fusion of two spirits, so that they become one spirit expressed as one soul in one body, can only become an actual fact as one indwells the other; it certainly cannot be accomplished by sincerest believing and sacrifice. This is the reason for the Baptism in the Spirit.

In this Baptism many things take place beside those which have been already mentioned. Therefore it is necessary for us to realize that although it is vital to us all, its importance does not lie in the initial experience of it, for this may be as varied in immediate conscious results as personalities themselves differ. This being so, conclusions about it may be difficult to draw and be very diverse the one from the other, therefore pontifical statements thereabouts will only bring confusion. The important things are the long-term results, the fruits which emerge in the life from miracles wrought deeper down in a person than levels of conscious knowledge or immediate powers of response.

A Life-long Miracle

There must be an initial experience, and in many instances this is so overwhelming and is accompanied by such glorious manifestations that many seem to think that there is little or nothing beyond it, whereas it is what it initiates more than that actual initiation which is far more important. God, by the Baptism, initiates a man into the results of the Baptism, which issue in the state of life which enables a man to say, 'Christ liveth in me'; he then knows and can claim, 'I live, no longer I'. The initiation has taken place and the lifelong miracle is now taking place.

This prolonged miracle of grace is accomplished in a man by the continued total immersion of self in the Spirit, whereby a man's whole personality is kept submerged in God unto total saturation with the Holy Ghost. By this means the Christ is formed in that man and may be said to live in him, and that person will then be able to say, 'I live no longer I, I live Christ; Christ is living in me; though it is not by I myself, it is nevertheless I myself by Christ Himself. This is how the new self consists; I and He; I-Himself'.

That, to a spiritual man, is logical. He sees that it is about the only way it could possibly be done, and that if there is such a thing as the Baptism in the Spirit, this is just about the effect it should have, and the state it should produce. He knows that, kept saturated with the Spirit, all can be possible in him. Also he sees that, besides direct promises, he has enough examples and illustrations in the scriptures to shew him how truly it all works.

Unto Identification

It is quite reasonable that if Baptism is by total immersion, it must be unto constant immersion with a view to saturation or impregnation; and what is more, because it is of Spirit and personality, it must also be unto identification. In other words its purpose and product is another person, living in another kingdom. There is no difficulty here; such an experience needs neither initial evidence in order to substantiate it to the person involved, nor yet to commend it to others. Which fact reveals the deeper confusion which reigns over this whole subject of the Baptism in the Spirit.

The real cause of all the trouble is the basic error in many people's thinking as to the purpose of God by the Baptism. All error, even as all truth, among men, arises in and issues from men's hearts; Jesus said 'as a man thinketh in his heart so is he'. Many ideas flit through a man's mind in the course of a day, but Jesus is not speaking of those. He is referring to what a man thinks with feeling and purpose, that which involves his whole self, what he means to think, or what he 'thinks up', as well as what he thinks upon; this kind of thinking reveals what he really is.

My Witnesses

Observation of and discussion with many people over a long period of time is sufficient to convince any investigator that most people who believe in the Baptism in the Spirit believe that it is for the purpose of imparting power for service, although the Bible nowhere says so. The idea is assumed from two observations: (1) the Lord forbade the apostles to go and preach the gospel to every creature and all nations until they were baptized in Spirit: (2) in their own experience people also find that they have no power to serve the Lord before their personal Pentecost. This appears to be

conclusive enough evidence, and if the Baptism is accompanied by speaking in Tongues, it seems to be more than proved that the power is for service of a special kind, namely with spiritual gifts. Thus the whole ground is laid in people's hearts for the propagation of the error.

An examination of the use of the word 'power' (Gk. *dunamis*) by Luke and Paul in the New Testament speedily reveals the error which has arisen from that kind of conditioned thinking about it. Luke records that the risen Lord said to His chosen ones that: 1) they must tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high, 2) they should receive power after that the Holy Ghost had come upon them. But He did not say that this was for service. Instead He distinctly said that this power was for a) clothing, and b) to make them witnesses unto Him.

Power for Life

Although we know that their future ministry lay beyond this empowering, He did not at that time mention either service or gifts, but He did speak of life as a result of power. In other words this power is first of all power 'to be' — or to live; then, having being as a result of the power, (afterwards in logic but simultaneously in effect) being clothed with power. The thought is power upon power, or 'being' first, clothing second. As always, the Lord was speaking with precision. He was not using inexactitudes, or speaking platitudes, nor was he being needlessly repetitive, as He would have been had He meant that this enduement and reception was equipment specifically for service.

Luke tells us that at a much earlier date the Lord had already given the twelve power for service, He 'gave them power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases.' Beside this, shortly afterwards He also gave to another seventy 'authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy', assuring them that in their consequent ministry nothing would by any means hurt them. At the same time He plainly told them (and us) not to rejoice about it, as though to imply that it was almost nothing, and by comparison with the fact that their names were written in the book of Life, neither is it, for to have one's name in the book of Life is a man's entitlement to the Baptism in the Spirit.

The Energizing Power

From such uncomplicated scriptures, except a man be of an obstinate, carnal mind, it must be confessed that on the day of Pentecost, none of these stood in need of either power or gifts for service from the Lord, for they already had them, plus authority also. Not only so, for a long time before He even died they had been sent out by Him specifically to preach and to use what He had bestowed upon them. That is indisputable Bible fact. What then was the real purpose of the Baptism in the Spirit? If it was not for service, what does it accomplish and why mention power? What is the power for?

Before these questions are answered, we will look at one or two Pauline usages of the word 'power' in Ephesians. In a striking passage in chapter 1, verses 15-23 he speaks of believing according to the energy of the strength of God's might, which He inwrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. Then he proceeds to tell us that we must receive the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in or for full knowledge of God, so that we may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward

who believe according to that standard of truth. Later, in chapter 3 verse 7, he develops this relationship of energy and power, saying that his ministry was what it was, as a result of, and according to the grace given to him according to the energy or inworking of God's power. In other words, he is saying that this power is energizing force.

Witnesses to Christ

Developing this teaching still further, he says in chapter 3 verse 20 that this power which is energizing us must give rise to thought and request unto God, who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the working of that powerful energy. All of which reveals that neither Luke nor Paul believed or wrote that power is specifically or exclusively for service or the operation of gifts in the sense that is unmistakably implied by the majority of the advocates of the theory of initial evidence. The people who knew by direct knowledge derived from experience and inspiration, reveal that power is primarily for inward energy and outward clothing. By the Baptism in the Spirit, a person is made a being of power, with a view to living a life and exercising a ministry which will make him a witness to Christ.

It may be optimistically said that all this must mean and surely implies that such a man is equipped for service. That is true, and that is just the point; but to say that a man has by a certain experience been equipped for service is not the same as saying that he has thereby been empowered to be a witness to Christ. The apostles are the scriptural examples of this; as we have seen, they had been equipped with power, authority and gifts for specified service during the Lord's lifetime on earth, but they were not witnesses to Him in the way He wanted. The Baptism in Spirit alone could supply the special power for that; entirely new power, not a further supply of the powers they already had.

Power to 'be'

The power a person receives upon being baptized by the Lord Jesus in the Holy Spirit is life-power, that is power to be, or to live in and as a member of His body, having His life. Until Pentecost the disciples only had working power, they did not have this power to be. After Pentecost, as may be expected, they still retained and used that working-power which they had received from Him prior to His death, but what was infinitely more, from Pentecost onward they had His life also; the new power to be witnesses to Christ had come.

Before that they could only witness to His works; they did this by repeating or reproducing them. This was an effectual way of witnessing to the fact that someone had sent them to do His works, and the Lord did not expect anything more of them then. They could not witness to Him by personality at that time, for they had not received His life, only an amount of His working-power for limited ends. He was with them, but not within them, He was outside them. He was their Lord and Master and Leader and many other things as well, and they were His disciples, apostles and servants, but He was not their head and they were not sons of God and members of His body. They were with Him in His service, but not in Him in His life, nor was He in them in their life.

Life in the Spirit

It will therefore be seen that although no-one ought to attempt to serve the Lord until he or she is baptized in Spirit, that Baptism is not specifically for service, nor yet for gifts for service. That people do receive gifts and have power to serve following their personal Pentecost is quite normal. Receiving the greater gift of Life in the Spirit, it is only reasonable that His lesser gifts should be included in, or the intention to give them be implied by, the greater. It is because this is so, that the mistake has been made. Moreover, believing the purpose of the Baptism to be power for the kind of service which includes operation of spiritual gifts, it was not a great step for some to believe also that one of those gifts, namely the power to speak in an unknown tongue, could reasonably be the initial evidence of the Baptism, especially when it accompanied the experience. God's bounty was mistakenly thought to be a new law of the Spirit and was therefore imposed on men as necessity.

Begging the question, it could now be asked how it is that men could have and operate gifts of the Spirit before they were baptized in Spirit. Such a question reveals how deeply ingrained into hearts is the error that distribution and use of gifts is the direct and specific reason for the Baptism, whereas they are only an indirect consequence of it. The answer is quite simply that they had and used them by the same power by which all the Old Testament prophets and miracle-workers had and used them long before Christ came.

Witnesses to the Risen Christ

Throughout history God chose to raise up and use certain men at different times for His sovereign purposes on the earth. He did this either by direct encounter, as with Abraham and Moses, who respectively were the great patriarch and the mighty mediator of the nation of Israel, or more frequently by an anointing at the hands of another which should enable them to work in power and authority for His glory on the earth. This continued in Israel and Judah in unbroken line until the time of Malachi, who it seems, as John Baptist after him, was a prophet who did no miracle.

Directly following John Baptist's birth, God came on to the earth personally as Jesus of Bethlehem, later becoming known as Jesus of Nazareth, who besides working Himself, also chose and enabled men to serve with Him in His kingdom. During His lifetime all service was rendered by them under His sovereignty; He was among them as the Anointed, and He did as He would, distributing equally to whom He chose.

That is how all the specially selected disciples were able to operate gifts before Pentecost, and it is still the way by which the elect of God may have and operate gifts to this day. The difference lies only in relationship and position; whereas of old the gifts and power were distributed equally among a group of persons who were then not of the body by experience, today they are distributed severally within the body of Christ and may operate in a person from the time he or she is baptized into it. It is true that gifts are empowerings for service, but this is only in order that the person should rightly witness to the risen Christ, whose life they now live and whose working powers they may now share.

A New Heart

At this point it may be profitable to append a personal testimony. Some thirty-five to forty years ago the Lord was graciously pleased to baptize me in the Holy Spirit. At that time I had no clear understanding of what that really meant. I knew that I needed

the Holy Spirit and that I desperately needed a new heart. However, I knew nothing of Pentecostal things; in fact by traditional belief I was against them, and at times derided the gifts of the Spirit, especially Tongues. However, in His mercy, in spite of my unwarrantably partisan attitude, the Lord enabled me to reach the point of faith where I asked Him to baptize me in the Spirit. This He did, giving me a clean heart and filling it with the Holy Ghost, sanctifying me wholly unto Himself, and making me an entirely new person. The experience was memorable, clear-cut and of infinite sweetness to this day. I did not then speak in other tongues, though certainly I received power from on high, and but for the need for brevity many are the anecdotes that could be added here in illustration of that fact.

And they shall Prophecy

It was not until many months later, whilst in a prayer-meeting, that I entered into the realm of spiritual gifts, and this is how it happened. A woman present first spoke in tongues in controlled spiritual worship and then spoke out in a tongue loudly. At the conclusion of the tongue I said 'Lord, tell us what that means'. Much to my astonishment and to the astonishment of all the people present, the sound of the letter 's' at the end of the word 'means' had not fully died off my lips, when a torrent of words flowed out of my mouth in a continuous stream, stopping finally as abruptly as it commenced. Following the meeting, a brother said to me, 'I didn't know you had the gift of interpretation, brother North', to which I made reply, 'if that is what it was, neither did I!'

At that point I had not spoken one word in another tongue. However, the new-found ability to interpret tongues continued with me all the week (and does until this day) in regular use. On the following Lord's day morning, whilst the usual service was in progress, the Spirit of the Lord moved me to open my mouth and speak as during the past days, only upon this occasion there was no message in tongues preceding it. Upon the conclusion of the meeting, which was mighty and precious, the same man, a fellow campaigner, said to me, 'I didn't know you had the gift of prophecy, brother', to which I replied 'If that is what it is, neither did I'. Again I add that at this time I had not spoken one word in another tongue.

They shall Speak with Other Tongues

After this I saw God do miracles of healing, but still could not speak other than in my mother tongue. Then one morning, when kneeling by my bed in prayer and worship, strange words arose within me which through an aching throat I finally uttered in His presence. I was not seeking a tongue; no-one but the Lord was there; I was not, as I remember, even thinking about spiritual phenomena, but I started to speak in another tongue. What then began has remained, increasing in volume and range, though I seldom give messages in tongues in meetings.

No Initial Evidence

To gather up the facts and state the order of the demonstration of the oral gifts in my own experience: it was first Interpretation of Tongues, second Prophecy, third speaking in Tongues. How then can it possibly be true that the Initial Evidence of the Baptism in Spirit is speaking with tongues, for with me that demonstration came last in order of expression of oral gifts. To quote that 'the exception proves the rule' is to repeat an outworn fallacy. Any exception to a rule is a demonstration of the fact that

what is generally accepted as the rule is wrong. That the gift in operation during or following Baptism in the Spirit is generally Tongues is without controversy, but the fact that there are many cases in which this is not so proves that Tongues cannot be stated to be the initial evidence of the experience. Sometimes other spiritual gifts operate before tongues. Sometimes, in fact many times, no supernatural demonstrations accompany the experience at all.

The Sweet Fruit of Jesus

In the end it is the fruit of the Spirit as recorded in Galatians 5:22 & 23 that is the proof or evidence of the fact that a person has been baptized in the Spirit and is living and walking in the Spirit. In these verses there is a ninefold statement of the virtues of Jesus, and it is most wonderful that these inner qualities of Jesus' life should become the fruit of the Spirit indwelling the child of God. It is gloriously true and so obviously right, although no-one who is familiar with scripture and Jesus after the Spirit would for one moment think of limiting the Spirit's fruit to such a small 'bunch of grapes', however sweet and wonderful they may be.

Perhaps only the major attributes of the personal life of the Lord Jesus have been brought out in this passage; but even that is doubtful, for there is no mention of tenderness, compassion, sweetness, loyalty and a host of other glorious qualities of the Life of Jesus which are the fruits of the Spirit's permanent indwelling and working in us also. Wonderful as this list may be, it is obvious that it is even so only selective, for most certainly it is not comprehensive. Clearly the apostle simply included the particular virtues which were necessary for him to complete his instructions to the Galatians, and by omitting to mention some of Christ's many other virtues, he does not mean to imply that they are in any way inferior, nor that only those mentioned may properly be called the fruit of the Spirit.

But to conclude the matter, it is sincerely hoped that sufficient has been said to enable every man to stand firmly upon scripture, reason and experience, while refuting the theory of initial evidence so that souls may be guided into truth and the flock be guarded from destructive error. We do not need to formulate or propagate theories, we need only walk in truth and let our light so shine, that men shall know that we live in fellowship with God in the Spirit, as He said.

G.W.N.

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