

Glossolalia and Faith Healing

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Of writing books and papers there is no end, also in writing books about Charismatics. This paper is not intended to be an exhaustive study of the terms or of the movement, but rather a reply such as a pastor might make to a Christian who is concerned about this movement. The movement is called a great religious revival. It may be, but it is not a Christian revival. This we would demonstrate from Scripture.

It is not our intention to go into great detail as to the genuineness of the miracles or the speaking in tongues. Some think miracles cannot be genuine if the miracle worker is a false prophet, therefore if we can find a natural explanation or prove fraud then we have proven the prophet to be false. It is also based on the idea that the devil cannot perform miracles. Yet in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 7, v. 22, Jesus uses the word *dunamis* (power work) to describe the activities of false prophets. In 2 Thess. 2:9 these lying signs and wonders are called *terata* (astounding things). We call attention to the magicians Jannes and Jambres of whom Scripture says concerning the rod becoming a snake, changing water into blood, and bringing forth frogs, "and they did so," that is they did as Moses did. It is maintained by some that apparent miracles are delusions of the devil. Yet would not such delusions also be a form of miracle? It is this writer's opinion that Satan has a limited power to perform miracles. In Mark 8, we are told the demonized man of Gadara was able to break fetters and chains. This certainly required more than human strength. We could also mention the example of King Saul and the witch of Endor, of the destruction of Job's property and children. But truly in judging the whole movement it is of no great importance if the miracles are truly works of power or pseudo-miracles. The matter is to be judged by its fruits. The fruits according to Matt. 7 are not the piety, the calling on the name of the Lord, the casting out of devils and power works. These were done also by true prophets. It is their fruit which obviously must mean their doctrine.

It is this writer's opinion also that the Glossolalia of Scripture were not of two kinds, but only one; that is, the tongues were human languages understood by those who spoke in that language. Acts 2:4 "They began to speak in other tongues." The hearers said, v. 11, "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

We take a brief look at how these facts were used in Scripture. Mark 16 tells us these signs and wonders were the work of the Lord confirming the Word. Even Jesus used them for this purpose. In Luke 5 Jesus says to man sick of the palsy, "Man, thy sins be forgiven thee." The Pharisees rightly reasoned "Who can forgive sins but God only?" Jesus answered, "Whether is it easier to say, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' or to say, 'Rise, take up thy bed and walk?' But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (He said unto the sick of the palsy) *I Say* unto thee, 'Arise, etc.'" And immediately he arose up for them. Many of the miracles of Jesus were performed in such a manner that they attested to the power of His word. He healed the Centurian's servant by a word, raised Lazarus from the dead by His word. His miracles were to confirm and attest to the fact that God's Son, the promised Savior had at long last arrived. Thus He told John's disciples that the miracles foretold by Isaiah and performed by Him, demonstrated that He was the One who should come. See also Acts 2:22, Peter speaking "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." When Jesus sent out the twelve (Matthew 10) He said, "Preach saying 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils, etc." Thus these miracles were to demonstrate to the Jews to whom the disciples were sent that the promised Savior had arrived to establish His kingdom.

After His ascension the signs and wonders likewise affirmed to the Jews that the preaching concerning Jesus was true. Peter points this out in healing the lame man in the temple, Acts 3:6, 12, 16, 18-20. Even the enemies admitted a notable miracle had been done (v. 16). They did not forbid miracles, however, but forbade them to preach about Jesus whose verity it proved (v. 18).

Further, the tongues were to achieve the same purpose. They had the added purpose of demonstrating that God's Kingdom was open to all. Thus the Samaritans, after they had heard Phillip preach and had seen the miracles he did, believed and were baptized. Then Peter and John were delegated to check the matter out. The Samaritans too received the Holy Spirit, though we are not specifically told how this was demonstrated. Soon after that Peter was given the vision declaring the unclean to be clean and was directed to go to the home of Cornelius the Gentile. There he said (Acts 10:34) "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons ... the word which God sent ... preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all); That word, I say, ye know," v. 43. "Whosoever believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins," v. 44. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on them which heard the Word, v. 46. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God." We read in Ch. 11 "brethern that were in Judea heard that Gentiles also received the Word of God ... they ... contended with him." Peter told them of the vision. Then he said to them v. 15-18 "As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the Word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. For as much then as God gave them like gift as he did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?" The sign confirmed the word and settled the matter. "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God saying, 'Then God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.'" Thus they learned from the sign that Jesus meant it when he said John 3:16, Matthew 28:19, Mark 15:17. Again in Acts 15 in the dispute with Christian Jews who thought circumcision was necessary, Peter said, "God made choice among us that Gentiles by my mouth should hear the Word of the Gospel and believe And God which knoweth the hearts, bare witness, giving them the Holy Ghost even as He did us."

The gift of tongues was to verify and confirm the Word among Gentiles who had been wrongly taught. In acts 19 we see Paul discovering twelve men who thought they were disciples, but had been mis-instructed. 'they were ignorant of the Holy Spirit and wrongly instructed as to John's Baptism. Now Paul re-instructs them in the way of truth and they were baptized. We then read v. 6 "When Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues." Again the sign was to back the truth and saving power of the Gospel. In Berea where they had the Scripture and checked the teaching of Paul against the Scripture we read of no signs confirming the Word. Evidently they were not needed.

The devil also knows the purpose and use God made of these signs and wonders. We read in II Thessalonians 2:9-10 that he intends his lying signs and wonders to move people to follow falsehood. He would have us believe that his words too are confirmed by miracles.

Scripture requires no more confirming. We are bound by the Savior to believe on Him through the Word of the Apostles and Evangelists, John 17:20. Their word has been amply confirmed. To insist on more signs to confirm the Word is to betray not a strong faith, but a lack of faith in the Word.

This writer has never read or heard of an Charismatics speaking of these signs as confirming the Word. Rather they are used to confirm the faith of the practitioner. It is to demonstrate most of all to himself that he is a truly born again and saved believer. But mostly it is to demonstrate the strength of his faith, not the power of God's Word. The Charismatics contend that the established churches are cold, lifeless, and lacking in zeal and power. To a certain degree this is true. Even Timothy needed to be encouraged and stimulated to use the gifts God had given him for the building of the Kingdom. We question the great love they profess, Jesus said John 1:23, 24 "If a man love me he will keep (that is, guard safely) my words ... He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine but the Father's which sent me." We shall demonstrate shortly that keeping the Savior's and the Father's Word, is not an outstanding characteristic of the love they claim. Jesus likewise said the Spirit "will guide you into all truth: ... "He shall glorify me" ... "He shall take of mine and shall shew it unto you." The Holy Spirit they claim to have, directs to himself and to the believer. Where then is the love of Jesus they profess? As to their zeal in comparison to the mainstream churches, zeal is no mark of the truth, nor service to God. Jesus said Matthew 23:15, "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made you make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." St. Paul says of his pre-conversion self "concerning zeal, persecuting the church," (Phil. 3:6). Of his countrymen he said, "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not

according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God," Romans 10:2,3. This description fits well many of the Charismatics. As to the power of the Holy Spirit to witness, that the Charismatics are powerful witness is certainly true. But Jesus said, Acts 1:8, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me." While there is a witnessing in this group of what Jesus has done in them and an urging by them to give oneself to the Savior, to submit, to believe, to claim God's promise, the witness leans heavily on what, joy, prosperity, and success has become theirs since the Holy Spirit took control of their lives. It is more of a witness to Jesus or the Spirit in me, than Jesus for me and my salvation.

Now let us apply God's Word in judgment and see if this charismatic movement is of God. Let us see if it is truly Christian revival.

1. It is not a mark of a more mature Christianity, as is claimed, but rather a mark of a weak or absent faith to insist upon these gifts. How diligently they seek a sign of their own conversion, how earnestly they seek and pray for the sign of tongues and of healing: How they rejoice at the signs. Yet Jesus says, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign," Matthew 16:14. And again with marked sorrow He said to the nobleman and with the plural "Ye" places His indictment upon all the Jews, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe," John 4:8. The insistence upon signs reflects a lack of trust in God and His Word even though the accusation is made that non-charismatics lack the faith to claim all of God's promised gifts if they do not clamor for a sign from heaven.

2. Their healing activities reveal great pride, and their insistence upon tongues reveals spiritual arrogance in spite of their disclaimer. Is it not pride to "claim," and if you listen to their urgings it really is a demand that God give to them these so-called gifts of the Spirit when God says "But all these worketh the selfsame Spirit, dividing (that is apportioning) to every man severally as He wills." The only person we know of in Scripture who insisted he receive the special gifts of the Holy Spirit was Simon, of whom Peter said, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee," Acts 8:21,22.

3. While it may seem an act of humility when many of them reveal a rather sordid and notorious past, and when they say how they were unsaved, or unfulfilled members of mainline churches, yet the inference is clearly, "I may not look like too much now but you should have seen what I once was! See how far I have come." Sometimes it almost seems they vie with one another as to who had once sunk the lowest. This is no echo of St. Paul who is apologetic for speaking of his past, and who speaking of his present says, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," Romans 7:18. Scripture says, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that *He* may exalt you in due time," I Peter 5:6. We are to let God do the exalting and not we. How easily Satan can lead us to turn vices into virtue and deceive us into thinking we are humble when we are boasting.

4. It is pride to insist upon healing of an individual at a given place or manner. God is *not* our servant. He is not the genie of Aladdin's lamp that needs only to be rubbed into service by prayer and can then be ordered to do man's will. He says, "I am God and there is none else ... My counsel shall stand, and I will do My pleasure," Isaiah 46:9,10. Are we to say "All things work together for good to them that love God" - except illness? Are we to say "In all these things (except illness) we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us"? Romans 8:28, 37. Cannot the chastening hand of illness also be used by God to make us mere than conquerors? Is the removal of illness the only victory God can give? Are we to argue with God when He says. Hebrews 12:5,11, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord"? Do we not want to partake of His holiness and have the peaceable fruit of righteousness? Or do we only want it without the pain and discipline it may require? Should not the Christian rather trustfully tell the Lord that he trusts the love, the wisdom, and the power of the Lord to give healing if it is good and right? Wherever did God give any man the right to demand an earthly blessing? Did Jesus promise healing to all that we have the right to demand or even expect it?

5. This group also betrays great irreverence toward God. They complain of the joylessness of the mainline churches and point to the joyous shouts of their assemblies. Did Peter, James and John shout for joy in

the presence of the glorified Jesus? Yet they said “Lord, it is good for us to be here,” Matthew 17:4. This irreverence or lack of awe and respect betrays itself most of all in their handling of God’s Word. Historical events in Scripture are reapplied to themselves in a very individually restricted manner. They will quit their God-given profession and start traveling and justify it by saying Abraham did the same. Yet Scripture says “No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,” II Peter 1:20. Yet, they feel free to twist Scripture and thereby justify their personal private materialist, unscriptural decisions on selected verses.

6. Scripture says, “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my Word,” Isaiah 66:2. Yet they boast that under their banner of the Holy Spirit of truth is producing God-pleasing unity and oneness in spite of a vast range of differences in doctrines. Jesus says, “If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed,” John 8:31. He says, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you,” Matthew 28:20. Scripture bids us “Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them,” Romans 16:17, and by ignoring doctrinal differences they drive away sincere Christians. They tell the world it is not important to be faithful to God’s Word. He may be manipulated or ignored as man pleases. Since the Word is not full and final authority for them, they show disrespect, disregard and disobedience to God and use signs intended to confirm the Word to be confirmed in their own pride and arrogance.

7. Further marks of arrogance are their dependence upon much speaking. Much is made of the long insistent prayer of hours, days and even weeks and months to pray the Spirit and His “gifts” into their hearts. We see no example of such praying for the Spirit in Scriptures. Why should the Spirit be so reluctant if these are gifts every Christian may claim? Why must the supplicant be so insistent and persistent to get the Spirit? The answer is often given that the supplicant is not yet ready for the Spirit and must prepare himself by prayer and a changed life. But is not the cleansed heart and changed life itself a product of the Holy Spirit? Rather do the words of Jesus apply here: “When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard of their *much speaking*,” Matthew 6:7.

Much more could be added, for instance, that the very 14th Chapter of I Corinthians of which they make so much, tells the women to be silent and not to speak in the church (v. 34), yet they have many women preachers and healers. This chapter urges the speaking of tongues be used by two or three and only under certain conditions, (vv. 27, 28). This too is ignored. Yet the Apostle in that same chapter says, “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord,” v. 37.

Why should any true believer in the Christ of Scripture, the Savior of sinners have anything to do with such a movement? Is it not through ignorance or weakness of faith? The Christian knows that in his flesh is no good thing, that his carnal mind is enmity against God, that by nature he is a child of wrath, that out of his heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, false-witness, blasphemy. He knows he daily sins much and deserves nothing but God’s wrath, His temporal and eternal punishment. He knows that while we were yet enemies Christ died for us. He knows that his God suffered hell and death for him. So great is His saving love! He knows that even now his righteousness are as filthy rags. Yet God has made his life a spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God by Christ Jesus. He knows the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed him of all sin. He knows Christ died for him to present him to Himself, as holy, blameless, without spot or wrinkle. His God has made him and calls him a saint, a holy person. God has snatched him from slavery to the devil, and made him a member of God’s own family, a personal prized possession of God. The very righteousness of God Himself has been made his. He is a citizen of heaven by declaration of God Himself, God has made him the salt and light of the earth. The world exists and is preserved for his sake. Only he can by the power of the Spirit begin to use the creation and life God gave him as God intends it to be used. He has been made co-ruler, and co-judge of men and angels. He is the apple of God’s eye. For him and his good, Jesus Christ rules heaven and earth. The very angels of heaven were created to care for and protect him. He has been made a co-worker with God, a personal ambassador of the forgiving God to a hell-bound earth to pronounce forgiveness and peace, What wealth! What honor.” What priceless purpose in life, what marvelous privileges are made his. And all this in spite of his

frequent failures, his weaknesses, his ingratitude, his lovelessness and indifference. Yet knowing all this, God continues to love, forgive, care for and bless him for Jesus' sake!

Then why should he seek charismatic signs, yet besides, unless he doubts these promises of God, and adds yet to all his other sins the sin of calling God a liar, and refuses to believe God's covenant of mercy, His promise in Baptism. To yet insist on being saved after Jesus said, "It is finished," and St. Paul by inspiration saying "All things are of God who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ," II Corinthians 5:18, is to place the lie on God's Word or at the very least, betrays a weak and wavering faith. Now he still insists all this means nothing unless he has an emotional experience, or the gift of tongues or of healing: Is this not great weakness to say the least, to seek and insist upon yet more evidence of acceptance with God!

If God thus loves the Christian in Christ, should not the Christian trust this God to work all things for his good, to give him all that is necessary for life and salvation? Should he not then thank God for all things both pleasant and unpleasant, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord," Job 1:21, and "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," Job 13:15. Should he not believe the Savior, that he *is* in a state or condition of blessedness, a good relationship with God even though he sees himself a beggar in God's eyes, for God has given heaven. He *is* blessed of God when he mourns, when he permits himself to be trod on by others without seeking revenge, when he sees his many failures and longs for a more righteous life, when he is persecuted and reviled. Believing this, should not his faith be rather revealed in this way, "Thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, 'In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength,'" (Is. 30:15) and "the joy of the Lord is your strength," Nehemiah 8:10. And where did he get all these marvelous blessings? From the Word. And where did he learn to trust that they were his? "Faith cometh by hearing," Romans 10:17. And what shall he do when faith and joy begins to wain? Shall he go to the charismatics? "As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby, if so be ye have tasted that the hard is gracious," I Peter 2:2,30. If we lack faith love, and zeal, it is because we have not gone to the Word, or we no longer accept the Word as the everlasting truth.