

"I Speak in Tongues

More Than You All"

G.-F. Rendal

*Translated from French by  
K Benson and V Dinsmore*

*"...they received the word with all readiness of mind,  
and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."*

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The reading of this book will help to enlighten those who are concerned and perhaps confused in the face of the flood tide of subjectivism which has burst upon the Church, carrying with it souls who are poorly grounded in experiences which are subtly labeled as being biblical. Two pitfalls are pointed out: The dangerous error of counterfeiting the truth in this manner; the chilling error of a dead orthodoxy.

Most of those who have preceded G.-F. Rendal in dealing with this doctrine of speaking in tongues have often dealt with it in a presumptuous spirit common to the doctrine's opponents. Their process of reasoning, drawing conclusions, and application of these to the problem at hand are all too frequently suffocating, incomplete, and prejudiced. Thus, they remain unconvincing or at least not convincing enough.

G.-F. Rendal approaches this doctrinal problem and deals with it from the inside out. He, as it were, takes a step back and looks at it both objectively and subjectively. He shows it to be an outdated, erroneous or fraudulent teaching.

Under his pen, the whole body of Scripture is convincingly shown to be harmonious.

It is highly desirable that pastors, those responsible in local churches, assemblies and bookstores, as well as editors of Christian periodicals, and teachers in Bible Institutes and Seminaries recommend this book so as to give it the publicity it deserves.

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## **Preface**

My wife and I had the joyous privilege of serving our Lord Jesus Christ for over 32 years on the Island of Martinique in the French West Indies. During the latter months of our missionary church-planting ministry there we learned of G.-F. RENDAL's book *I Speak in Tongues More Than You All*. After a careful reading of this unusual book we felt that we should do all we could to acquaint everyone possible with his treatment of every scripture text having to do with this question of speaking in tongues.

The modern-day teachings and practices erroneously based on these texts have sown untold confusion worldwide.

It is certainly no understatement to say that his treatment of this modern doctrinal aberration (his quotations of Augustine are refreshing) is the most complete, competent and convincing of any writing we had seen on the subject. Mr. RENDAL's fair, lucid and thorough examination of the subject, based on a background of personal knowledge and experience, deserves a wide reading.

As missionary church planters looking forward to further Gospel ministry in France, we delight to add our personal recommendation of this significant work, encouraging everyone who has any interest whatsoever in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, to examine this book with great care.

May God's rich blessing multiply its usefulness to untold numbers of people.

Rev. & Mrs. John WEEKS

## **Foreword**

How surprised I was when, the day after my conversion from the world to Jesus Christ, I found that supposedly stable, spiritual and dedicated people—people being used by the Holy Spirit for the salvation of souls—bristled at the mention of the gifts of the Spirit, especially that of speaking in tongues. I sadly listened to them run down the work that God was doing through those whom they ironically called "holy rollers". With the delicacy of a bulldozer plowing into a mountain they silenced any objections, like "the gift of tongues no longer exists" or "that was only for the apostolic period" with sweeping declarations which I considered to be dogmatic and hollow. I was more impressed with their conviction than by their arguments. For, to tell the truth, they did not defend their beliefs biblically. In their churches the subject of tongues was as taboo as sex or healing; they just did not talk about it, and that was that! It was as if they said with an air of superiority, "I know all that by heart..." (An ironic song known by the French which makes fun of the school "inspector" who wants to teach a lesson to those who know more than he does.)

I didn't dare discuss the subject with them because I was young, inexperienced and had little Bible knowledge. But as elementary as my knowledge of the Word was, I wondered how these people could miss the many texts in the New Testament which refer to speaking in tongues.

As for myself, even if I wanted to ignore them (which was not the case), I could not do so. I wondered how a small part of the evangelical world was able to play hide-and-seek with these passages. They might be ignored in preaching, but it was impossible in the reading and personal study of the Scriptures. To me they seemed to be everywhere in the New Testament.

To ignore them seemed as serious as ignoring the Apostle Peter in the Gospels. Had not Jesus said, "And these signs will accompany those who have believed in My name: they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents; and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mark 16:17-18)? Certainly all those who have believed unto salvation do not have to prove their faith by each one casting out demons or by all drinking a poisonous beverage or by all eating poisonous mushrooms without harm or by all speaking in tongues or by each one healing some sick person. But do we have the right to take away such a piece from the marvelous puzzle of the whole Bible picture? One day someone told me in all seriousness that it was satanic. Wow! I have learned that he has since modified his opinion. How can we ignore that so many Christians have had the experience of speaking in tongues and that they testify of having received great blessing? Can we pass over in silence, or try to hush the fact that in the world it is the Pentecostal Churches that are growing the fastest (except for Islam and perhaps Jehovah's Witnesses)? The work done among the gypsies of Europe is due to their activity, and it is remarkable. Did not the Apostle Paul, who has been called the greatest since the Great One, say, "I speak in tongues more than you all (I Cor 14:18)? This citation of the great apostle to the nations has been chosen as the title of this book.

## A MESSAGE FOR MEN?

I once came upon an interesting pamphlet. What a surprise to read from the pen of someone who wanted to be taken seriously....."the gift of tongues is no longer needed because we can learn languages in school!" (But what about the apostle Paul? Had he not been to the finest schools of his day?) Paul received this miraculous gift more than anyone else so that he could be understood by the many Gentiles of diverse tongues. For me, Paul's example immediately pointed out the weakness of this argument. During this time I had already delved into my Bible and had begun to know it a little better. How was it that Paul used the gift of tongues to teach when he himself taught that, "anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men..." (I Cor 14:2)? If speaking in tongues is limited to speaking to God and not to men, Paul would have been in flagrant contradiction with the Holy Spirit who had inspired him to write this conclusive text, "For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God" (I Cor 14:2).

This explanation seemed to me to be very weak, coupled as it was with insincerity, in the light of such clear truths. This explanation which explained nothing, made me suspicious of those who opposed speaking in tongues. Now I cannot speak to God except by praise or prayer; I cannot teach God; I cannot evangelize God. No one can exhort God and no one can prophesy to God.

### **There Is No Alternative**

Speaking in tongues is never a question of God speaking to men but of men speaking to God. The Holy Spirit cannot contradict Himself. Taking a good look at the day of Pentecost, there was no preaching in tongues, but "the proclaiming of the wonders of God" (Acts 2: 11). This praise to Jehovah

borrowed the tongues of pagan nations, and Jewish ears, accustomed to the languages of these countries from which they came, understood. Certainly this must have been a shock for all those Jews who had come to Israel, who believed that their Jewish tongue, the tongue of God's chosen people, was the only one that the "Good Lord" could understand. You see, their God was theirs alone, not everybody's God! Share Him with pagans? No way! But lo and behold, their Jehovah understood not only Arabic, Greek and thirteen other languages besides Hebrew, but, to top it all off, His Holy Spirit also spoke these tongues through the apostles and the disciples. In other words, praise coming from heaven returned there again after a dip in the sea of pagan tongues. Did this mean that the pagans with their barbaric languages were accepted by Jehovah on the same level as the Jews? And the gift of tongues, could it be a sign of this?

### **The First Tongues Movement**

Before going further I must tell you an anecdote in which my Bible knowledge was put to the test. I was with some devoted Christian brethren who were experienced in the faith. Each one knew his Bible well and our discussions often came around to theological subjects. The oldest asked a question, "Where do we find speaking in tongues for the first time?" The answers came spontaneously and in unison, "At Pentecost." We were so sure of ourselves! But no! It was at the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:7). I was a bit perturbed. Why hadn't I thought of that? Now I was really listening. I will never forget the explanation that followed. The diversity of languages at the Tower of Babel was a *judgment*. Now, in the Bible there is a principle of hermeneutics called "First Mention". That is to say, a truth mentioned for the first time in the Bible will keep that same meaning to the end. Along the way, this truth can take on more meaning, can be developed and become richer, but its first emphasis will not be lost. Was it possible that speaking in tongues carried with it an idea of judgment? This is, in any case, what the text confirms. The principal passage on speaking in tongues, treated by Paul in I Corinthians 14: 21, is found in Isaiah 28:11,13. Paul, led by the Holy Spirit, quotes freely the prophet Isaiah, "Indeed, He will speak to this people through stammering lips and a foreign tongue...that they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared, and taken captive." I then remembered that at the Day of Pentecost *tongues of fire* (Acts 2:3) came down on those who were present. *Tongues of fire...* and without a doubt, in the Scriptures, fire is a symbol of judgment. Even if fire has the effect of purifying, there is always an aspect of judgment associated with it. For an instant I held on to the idea that fire did not necessarily have to mean judgment because we often sing the beautiful hymn, "Clothe us with Thy power, and baptize us with fire ... !", quoting the exact words of John the Baptist, "He Himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matt 3: 10).

### **First Verification**

In order to have a clear conscience I looked more carefully at the texts of the Bible related to this hymn. Going through one after another I found that our hymnology is not always good theology. The Bible showed me that the baptism of fire is in opposition to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and that it is synonymous with condemnation. It is true that the four Gospels record what John the Baptist said. All four Gospels speak of the baptism of the Holy Spirit but only two of them mention the baptism of fire. As I carefully read the context, I discovered that there is a reference to the baptism of fire only in Matthew and Luke precisely because John the Baptist's opponents, or the Pharisees, were present. Fire is mentioned because of them. The Pharisees were absent in Mark's account and in John's account, so the baptism of fire and the judgment are absent as well. The explanation very naturally comes in the verse that follows, "He will gather His wheat into the barn (the baptism of the Holy Spirit), but He will bum up the chaff with unquenchable fire (the baptism of fire)" (Matt 3:12).

The first baptism, that of the Holy Spirit, is linked with the heavenly storehouse; the other, that of fire, is tied in with the idea of inextinguishable fire. A few years later the Apostle Paul, moved by the Holy Spirit, wrote the same truth in different words saying that the Gospel is "to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life" (II Cor 2:16). I must admit that this revelation did nothing but create more confusion. Then a new question came up. If speaking in tongues also carried the idea of judgment, then...

## **OF WHOSE JUDGMENT DOES IT SPEAK?**

I did not have an answer to this question, and it bothered me for a long time. Up until then the explanations that I had heard for speaking in tongues had to do with exhortation, praise, power, evangelisation and especially with the sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But associating speaking in tongues with judgment had never dawned on me. The problem began to clear up when, after reading in Proverbs 16:4 that God had made everything for His

own purpose, I asked myself, "What was God's purpose in the giving of the gift of speaking in tongues?"

It was certainly a great sign, but why this particular one? Why not, for example, the capacity to become invisible? Or the gift of being everywhere at once; or a permanent halo over one's head? In answer I thought to myself, that wouldn't make sense. And if there were no reason for speaking in tongues, that would be senseless too. But what could the reason be? It must have meant something to someone, *but what and to whom?*

After considerable thought, I had to admit that speaking in tongues was neither the refining of human vocabulary nor a more elevated form of expression. I had been told that when one speaks in tongues one outdoes oneself. One goes beyond oneself into a sublime state until he joins the angels with their celestial language. I thought that was marvellous. When my human words were no longer sufficient to praise God, the Holy Spirit would transport me to unattainable heights and give me speech that would put Shakespeare (Voltaire in the original), to shame! I was troubled, however, to think that my own speaking in tongues could be just the same as that heard around me.

### **Uneasiness**

Except for the ecstasy, there was nothing all that extraordinary about such a gift. The thing that often bothered me about what I had heard spoken in tongues was that it was always incomprehensible and that it did not really resemble a spoken language. Having studied several languages personally, I found that the sounds uttered were rather strange. I spoke about that to a qualified pastor who told me that it might be a dialect of some Indian tribes of South America, of the Matto Grosso, or of Central Africa. How did he know? I do not mean to sound irreverent but I wondered where in the world the Holy Spirit was taking us. It seemed just like too much to swallow. English (French in the original) is one of the richest, most wide-spread and most complete languages in the world. How could a rudimentary tongue with a vocabulary a hundred times more limited presume to express such exalted sentiments when English (French in the original) had proven insufficient? This obvious anomaly did not seem to bother my friend in the least. Ah! the simplicity of "just accepting by faith"! But I am not like that. I have to study things through for myself. Is that wrong, or could it be, in this case, God-given?

At any rate, I could not deny the supernatural side of speaking in tongues. We have been told that some people were able to express themselves perfectly in Pakistani without knowing a single word of that tongue. Or that others spoke in ancient Greek with such fluency and purity that even a college professor would be impressed. I had to admit that speaking in tongues was a supernatural phenomenon, but I still had not grasped its meaning or its import.

### **First Questions First**

I went to one or two retreats that were not Pentecostal, with the hope of finding an answer to my quest for the true reason for this gift, and also to find out why the others did not speak in tongues, why they refused this particular gift of the Holy Spirit. Once again I found no satisfactory answer to my questions. Everyone was woefully ignorant of the subject. When I asked about the *purpose* of speaking in tongues, I encountered the same lack of biblical teaching as I had met among those who do speak in tongues. The first group spoke in tongues without really knowing why, and the second group was not quite sure why they did not. No one was really able to help me in my search. Oh, everyone was brotherly and courteous with me, but my questions really irritated them like a buzzing fly on a muggy summer evening.

### **The Grass Snake**

One day I was flubbergasted when a veteran preacher, well-known in charismatic circles, told me that with his age and battle fatigue from so much preaching, all he needed was a few minutes speaking in tongues to restore him physically. He felt completely renewed in his body. He even spoke about it from the pulpit. Many swooned with emotion listening to him, without even wondering if the Bible allowed such an explanation of his experience. Worst of all, I too, for a moment, like a sheep easily led (following others blindly), was ecstatic along with my fellow-hearers who nodded in agreement upon hearing this error which was given out under the guise of being from the Gospel. But I quickly got hold of myself "There it is," I said after some thought, "speaking in tongues is now put among the array of pick-me-ups and other tonics used in treating the problems of old age!" A verse of the Bible came to mind, "and they will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths" (II Tim 4:4).

### **The Crusades**

I felt sad for these people of God: so fervent, but who were like sheep without a shepherd. I thought of the Crusades and the poor Crusaders-sick, dying and discouraged on their way to the Holy Land. Their leaders used to try to encourage them with all sorts of incredible tales. At one time, one of their monks pretended to have found the point of the spear that had supposedly, several centuries before, pierced the Savior's side. And there they go again, renewed for a few days in their quest ... like the poor flock that mistakes the voice of a stranger for that of their Good Shepherd. That day, what was said in the book of Acts became precious to me, "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

If the preaching of the great Apostle Paul was to be controlled by the Holy Scriptures, how much more are we responsible to try the spirits by

comparing what is said with what the Scriptures teach.

## THE TONGUES OF ANGELS

There was an important point that often bothered me. It was the interpretation that followed the speaking in tongues, for in the first century every time someone spoke in tongues there was to be an interpretation. The text is clear, "If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet..." (I Cor 14:28). In this matter I noticed a definite disobedience, more or less generalized, to the command written by the one who spoke in tongues more and better than anyone. His teaching was rarely applied. Would you believe that there were times when I would have almost preferred that the interpretation not be given? I was actually ashamed of the interpretation. At least what was not interpreted and not yet understood could pass as being inspired. But once the speaking in tongues was interpreted, it was what I understood that bothered me. Most of the time the interpretation was so poorly done that even a dunce would have blushed with embarrassment. The interpretation was almost always commonplace. I thought that that which was said in tongues could just as well have been said in English. In fact, the pastor or another Christian brother exhorted better in English than in tongues. If interpretation were really a gift of the Spirit, where was the promised elevation, the sublime thought, the transcendental truth? Here, on the other hand, were commonplace, run-of-the-mill, pat ideas that everyone had heard a thousand times. When Paul was caught up into the third heaven he heard inexpressible words, words that man is not permitted to utter (II Cor 12:4). I did not understand. I thought to myself, "It's like taking a glass of water and, before drinking it, separating the hydrogen from the oxygen. Then after this laborious process, you put them back together to make the water you would finally drink. Wouldn't it be simpler just to drink the water directly from the fountain?" Sometimes I thought that I must have been really ignorant to ask so many questions. After all, Paul did say, "Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues..." (I Cor 14:5). What more did I need?

### Tongues or Celibacy

All of a sudden I remembered that the apostle who said, "Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues ... (I Cor 14:5), also said, "Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am" (I Cor 7:7). That is to say, unmarried. (In the Greek the two expressions are identical.) It was at this point that I began to get worried. The same one who gave me the green light to speak in tongues, also gave me the green light to remain single! I wanted to follow the one but reject the other. It wasn't logical and I knew it. This may make you smile, but there is a definite theological implication behind Paul's two expressions and there was no way around it. Both commandments were given by Paul to the Corinthians in the very same letter. To those whom he says, "Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues..." he also says, "Yet I wish that all men were as I myself am..."-unmarried. (I realized how carelessly we overlook passages that bother us and cling to those that seem to teach our own beliefs.) We do mental gymnastics trying to reconcile the irreconcilable. Thus, it is a paradox that those who affirm that all should speak in tongues, nevertheless, by the same token, affirm that all should not remain single! By what principle of scriptural interpretation do people arrive at such unsound conclusions? Isn't it more honest to admit that all the Corinthians were not called to remain single and that neither were all called to speak in tongues. Paul accepts both of these ideas. On the one hand, all do not have the gift of celibacy (I Cor 7:7), and on the other hand, all do not have the gift of tongues. He answers his own questions when he writes-All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? ... All do not speak in tongues, do they? (I Cor 12:29, 30) To ask the question is to give the answer.

### The Language of the Angels

It was at this time that I asked a pastor how he explained the incomprehensible aspect of speaking in tongues. He answered that it might be an angelic message. "Poor angels," I thought. "Can't they speak any better than that? Is that all there is to the heavenly tongues of angels?" I was disappointed. I expected something better. I even went so far (God forgive me) as to think that if angels didn't speak any better than that, then I spoke better than they did! And what's more, I thought that if Shakespeare (Voltaire in the original) were in heaven (God rest his soul) the angels would have a hard time carrying on a conversation with him. He would probably send them back to school! No, frankly the pastor's explanation did not satisfy me at all. His answer seemed to be a dishonest way of avoiding a relevant question. But since the Bible does speak about the tongues of angels, I consented that it might be true. By faith I had to accept it, admitting that I could be wrong and asking God to forgive me for questioning the form of expression that He chose to give His angels. Who is to judge God's choice (Rom 11:34, 35)? Since this pastor quoted the Bible, I decided to see for myself what the Scriptures had to say on the subject. I hoped ever so slightly that what he said was true. But all I found was a new disappointment to add to the others. I discovered that, without exception, every time the angels spoke it was in comprehensible, contemporary human language, never a heavenly

tongue. The only reference I found to the tongues of angels was in I Corinthians 13:12, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels..." It made me sick. I felt that I had been duped by this distorted usage of the Scriptures. It is evident that in this passage Paul is using "though" or "if" as a hyperbole. Paul never had the knowledge of all mysteries since several verses later he states that he only knows in part (I Cor 13:12). Paul never gave his body to be burned. He never bestowed all his goods to feed the poor. Nor did he speak all the tongues of angels and of men. Paul makes it all the more evident that he could not speak the tongues of angels by referring to them as "words which man is not permitted to speak" (II Cor 12:4). He also uses the conditional mood with this hyperbolic "if". Even a child would understand this grammatical structure. How could a mature man, the shepherd of a flock, promote such an unfounded argument? I was stupefied. It was an isolated case, true, but this man was not just anyone, and I fear that many may have adopted his reasoning for their own, though in so doing, they would only be undermining their own position.

## TWO KINDS OF TONGUES

After all of the insufficient human explanations that I had heard, at last I had found a good scriptural one. I could accept the incomprehensible aspect of speaking in tongues because of Paul's statement, "for one who speaks in a tongue ... no one understands" (I Cor 14:2). Whew!

Thank you brother Paul. No more need to split hairs! So if men speak so poorly, even in tongues, it is not the angels' fault. Thank you dear Apostle Paul for reminding us in your own way that revealed things are for us and our children, and that hidden things are for the Lord (Deut 29:29). This text came just in time to ease my mind and let me breathe more freely. Certainly the problem was not resolved, but at this point in my search for the truth, this inspired verse, written by the very one who spoke in tongues more than anyone else, was like an oasis in my spiritual pilgrimage under the unbearably hot rays of contradictory opinions. So if I could not understand, there was no need to worry. What a relief! It was as reassuring as a mass in Latin and it had the same air of mystery which was not at all that unpleasant. I must admit that the adversaries of speaking in tongues were beginning to scare me. I may not have been 100% in agreement with the "charismatics" but I was at least 99% convinced that they were right. I hoped to regain the 1% that had been eaten away, not so much by those who were against speaking in tongues as by the blunders of those who were for it. This providential verse allowed me to join my Pentecostal brothers in believing that there were obviously two kinds of speaking in tongues—one, given on the day of Pentecost, which everyone understood (Acts 2:8), and the other, mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians which could not be understood (I Cor 14:2). I noticed, with a sigh of relief, that partisans of both sides were of about the same opinion on this point. The gift of tongues practiced by the Apostle Paul was not the same as the one experienced on the Day of Pentecost. Hallelujah! I was anxious to meet Paul in heaven, to shake his hand and thank him for writing those words. They allowed me to remain serene in my faith and firm in my position, for the vagueness in my understanding of this subject was in complete accordance with Bible teaching.

### A Burned Child Fears the Fire

This phrase from the Bible, "no one understands him", was a real windfall. So there were two kinds of tongues! But I had been so burned in the past that I could not simply accept things at face value. I decided to stick to my usual method. Since the Bible is our authority for Christian living and doctrine, I preferred to examine what the Holy Spirit had inspired. I wanted to verify whether there were really two kinds of tongues, or if the difference in these two texts was an apparent contradiction. It took me a while to begin this verification. I shuddered at the thought. There are a number of apparent contradictions in the Bible which cannot hold up under a serious, in-depth study of the passages involved. Here is how I went about it. I took a concordance and lined up *all* the verses that have to do with speaking in tongues. I found about thirty. Then I went to the Greek text. There I found that:

*First of all*, the French translations all conveyed the very idea expressed in the original text.

*And secondly*, in all these texts there was only one word for "tongues" and "languages". It is the same in every case.

So, it is evident that if the gift of tongues in the Epistles was a different "glossolia" than that at Pentecost, it should be seen in the Greek terms used. Such is not the case. Luke, the author of the Acts of the Apostles, used the same word in Chapter 2 as Paul uses in his letter to the Corinthians in Chapters 12, 13 and 14. If as I believed to be the case, the two speaking in tongues were different, Luke, who wrote the book of Acts after Paul had written this first letter to the Corinthians, would have at least shown it by using different words. There is no doubt that Luke was familiar with Paul's

epistle, for it circulated widely among the churches. Moreover, Luke was one of Paul's traveling companions. If the speaking in tongues mentioned in his book was different from Paul's, he would certainly have pointed it out to eliminate confusion, but he doesn't say anything about it. No, he uses the same word because he is speaking about the same thing. It is "glossa" in one case and in the other. The Greek text is explicit. This discovery put me at a loss. There were only two ways of interpreting it:

1 The Bible contradicts itself. A hypothesis which a Christian who believes that the Scriptures are inspired by God cannot accept.

2 There is only one kind of tongues, which creates the problem of explaining why Paul seems to contradict what Luke says.

Paul refers to languages which are as well-known as those mentioned by Luke. For he says, "a great many kinds of languages in the world" (I Cor 14:10). In Paul's mind, it is clearly a matter of human languages. And if these were languages from our world, why weren't they understood at Corinth just as they had been several years earlier at Jerusalem? Isn't God the same yesterday, today and forever? This is no simple problem. Through prayer, meditation of the Scriptures, and the Holy Spirit's help, the fog lifted. The solution was so simple and so evident that I wondered if I had really understood. I didn't say anything about it to anyone, but a few months later an American brother shared with me exactly the same thing that I had discovered myself. The fact that someone else had found the same explanation showed me that the Holy Spirit works today as He always has to guide those who are not satisfied with what others say, but who search the Word of God and meditate upon it day and night (Ps 1:2).

### **Pentecost Updated**

What exactly did happen at Jerusalem? All of those who were there understood these men speaking foreign languages which they had not learned. When the Holy Spirit was given, separate tongues of fire came down upon the the disciples (Acts 2:3). Each disciple, separately and distinctly, spoke one of the native languages of the different people present. Fifteen countries and peoples are mentioned, therefore fifteen languages are cited (Acts 2:9-11). They all understood, each one understanding the language from his own country. There was nothing complicated about it. There were fifteen peoples with fifteen different ears to understand. The speaking was supernatural but the reception was natural.

Let's suppose that there were fifteen Corinthians present the day of Pentecost with fifteen tape recorders and that each one taped separately what was being said and understood. Now imagine that these fifteen Corinthians went back to the church in Corinth and played these fifteen cassettes for the Christians who understood one or two languages at the most. They would inevitably arrive at the same conclusion as Paul: "no one understands". Obviously, because there was no one at Corinth to understand (I Cor 14:2). And if these fifteen cassettes were passed down to our day and were played in a church in New York, Paris or Madrid, the result would be the same. These fifteen languages which were so easily understood at Jerusalem would no more be understood today than they were in Corinth in the first century. On the other hand, imagine that we had been able to transport the whole congregation of Corinth to Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost. Of all that was said on that day, they would have understood what had been said miraculously in their own language, that is to say, in Greek; but they would not have understood anything in the fourteen other languages. Of course, if the Holy Spirit had chosen not to include Greek on that day, they would have understood absolutely nothing! And that is just what happened in their church in Corinth! They were speaking in other languages than Greek. No one understood, not because it was ecstatic language, but simply because it wasn't Greek. It was as inaccessible to them as an Englishman receiving a telephone call in Japanese.

Here I should point out that there is no question of an ecstatic language as some have suggested. This idea is as foreign to the Greek texts as it is to our modern versions. When Balaam's donkey supernaturally spoke by the Spirit it was not in an ecstatic, incomprehensible language to her master (Num 22:28). With intelligible words the "foolishness of God" (I Cor 1:25) made a mute donkey speak with a human voice in order to stop the prophet's folly (II Pet 2:15,16). Whether it be through His Word, His angels, His prophets, or even a donkey, God has always spoken in a comprehensible way. How could I go on believing that this God who made a donkey speak as well as a man could take hold of beings created in His image and move them to speak more poorly than a donkey?

### **What Does All This Prove?**

It proves that the speaking in tongues practiced by the Corinthians was not an ecstatic, unintelligible verbiage, nor an inaccessible angelic language, but languages as national and distinct as those heard in Jerusalem at Pentecost. And if, as Paul says, "no one understands," it is very simply because we do not have the fifteen ears to understand-no more than Paul or the Corinthians did. Looking at this a bit more closely I found that the Corinthians were not the only ones who did not understand the tongues spoken. On the day of Pentecost, without question, the tongues spoken miraculously by the power of the Holy Spirit, were the languages of the nations of that day. Many of the Jews present did not understand them either.

It is clear from Acts 2 that there were two groups of Jews present at the Feast of Pentecost:

1 Those who were visiting at Jerusalem from the fifteen nations named, to whom the languages other than Aramaic spoken in Jerusalem and Judea were known.

2 Those who were natives of Jerusalem and Judea (Acts 2:1) and did not speak or understand those languages of the fifteen nations spoken by the disciples and by the other group of Jews from those nations. These were the "others" of Acts 2:1, "But *others* were mocking and saying, 'They are full of new wine!'"

Therefore, the Jews of Judea who did not understand any languages other than the Aramaic spoken in Jerusalem and Judea, did not understand the tongues spoken at Pentecost. So they resorted to mockery, saying that the disciples were drunk! These Jews could have said also of this gift of tongues at Pentecost, "no one understands". Exactly what Paul said thirty years later to the Corinthians.

In summary, please note:

1 The Jews who were visiting at Jerusalem for the Jewish feast of Pentecost understood their own native tongues spoken by the disciples and were astonished, not knowing what to think (Acts 2:12), while those who understood only Aramaic cried, "Drunkards!".

2 After having addressed himself to God in a language other than his own, "speaking mysteries" (1 Cor 14:2), Peter then spoke to all those assembled, not in a foreign tongue, but in their own Aramaic tongue, explaining what was happening and also preaching Christ to them (Acts 2:14-36).

In these "mysteries" spoken in tongues, there was much more than simply misunderstanding due to their lack of comprehension of the foreign languages. There were great mysteries of the faith, mysteries of the wisdom of God (1 Cor 2:7). Those who spoke in foreign languages adored are the same God on the basis of these mysteries. These mysteries which every Christian extols today as he gives thanks to God. These mysteries were:

1 "God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself" (Col 2:2), the subject of inexpressible adoration.

2 "The mystery of godliness" (1 Tim 3:16). The mystery of God leaving His glory and returning thereto after manifesting Himself in flesh; things which angels desire to inquire into.

3 The mystery of the return of Christ (1 Cor 15:51,52) with the redeemed to say, "Amen. Come Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:20).

4 And above all, the mystery most prominent in the speaking of tongues, the mystery that the Gentiles (those of languages other than Hebrew) are fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the promise of Christ Jesus through the Gospel (Eph 3:6).

In this same line of thought, Paul, after having explained the mystery of the hardening of Israel and the salvation of the Gentiles (Rom 11:25), says that "God has shut up all disobedience that He might show mercy to all (Jews and non-Jews)" (Rom 11:31). Dazzled by this truth, Paul concludes in sublime adoration, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!" (Rom 11:33).

This mystery is such that the twenty-four elders in Revelation 5:8-10 go to their knees adoring and singing to the slain Lamb Who purchased by His blood men from every tribe and *tongue* and people and nation.

It is for this mystery that Peter and the others glorified God in foreign languages on the day of Pentecost which was the Inaugural Day of the salvation which God offered to people of all the earth. To those who did not grasp it, Peter gave, then and there, a clear explanation saying that the Lord would pour out His Spirit from that moment forward on all mankind (Acts 2:17).

That was the mystery of the Gentiles becoming fellow heirs with the Jews.

All this helped me to understand three things:

1 That speaking in tongues always has to do with living, spoken languages of the different nations of that time.

2 That if one is not careful, the phrase "no one understands" can easily become an umbrella for those who would have everyone believe that what is practiced in certain churches today is the same as what was practiced in the apostolic church since no one understands neither then nor now. An abuse of this phrase "no one understands" eliminates any means of verification and leads straight to uncontrollable counterfeit.

3 That Paul, in spite of the authenticity of the use of the gift of tongues in his time, would not allow it to be exercised unless it was followed by an interpretation; that the assembly of believers was not the place to exercise the gift (1 Cor 14:27); that it was better to remain silent or only speak to

oneself than to speak in tongues under those conditions (I Cor 14:28). With the Holy Spirit's authority Paul establishes the rules for the use of this gift and condemns any misuse of it-right at the time in church history when the "charisma" (gift) was fulfilling its purpose. The reason he writes, "I speak in tongues more than you all" (I Cor 14:18) is evident. His call to be an apostle to the nations-peoples of many languages-was constantly questioned by his Jewish adversaries. Thus he showed them that foreign tongues could praise the Jehovah of Israel as well as theirs. And to prove it, this liberated ex-Pharisee, with Jewish lips, proclaimed the wonders of the God of the Jews among the Jews in a pagan tongue! Wonders for some (the converted Jews and pagans), and fiery judgment for others (the unbelieving Jews infuriated with jealousy).

## THE SIGN AND ITS PURPOSE

I must now go back and take up the question which had puzzled me for so long and to which I had not found an answer. Certainly speaking in tongues was a sign, but for whom? Before I could find out for whom this sign was given, I found out for whom it was *not* given. As I carefully read the Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians again, I came across the declaration that it was:

### A sign, not to those who believe (I Cor 14:22)

I rubbed my eyes. Had I read this aright? Yes, I had. This sign was not for believers. For many years I had read this passage without really seeing it. Now I wondered how I could have missed it. No one had ever brought this teaching of the Holy Spirit to my attention. The Assemblies thought that it was a sign for believers; that they should seek this sign for themselves, and that above all it was the sign of having received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. At first this new-found passage intrigued me. Then it troubled me. So much so that I went to see several servants of God to ask them what this meant. Their embarrassed silence and muddled answers only showed me that they had never noticed this passage either, and that my questions left them without a reply. I was acutely aware of the risks involved. My confidence was shaken. And the battering ram which had shattered my beautiful building had not come from those who were against speaking in tongues, but from the Apostle Paul whom I so admired. A chain reaction set in. Other Bible verses, one after another, became clear. Naturally, if this sign had been for believers, Paul would have encouraged its use in the assembly of believers, but on the contrary, he discouraged its practice in the church (I Cor 14:19). It was outside the church that he spoke in tongues more than anyone else, but within the church he preferred five intelligible words to ten thousand words in tongues (I Cor 14:19). That is to say, he was two thousand times more against speaking in tongues than he was for it. No one had ever told me these things. At times I was furious with those who had hidden them from me, and angry with myself for straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel (Matt 23:23). Could it be possible that the others were right? "Get thee behind me Satan!" I firmly resolved not to budge an inch. I felt that my opinions were shaken, and I decided to attack the issue head-on. I was finished with second-hand explanations (John 4:42). I realized the danger of knowing doctrine only by bits and pieces on hearsay, or by "experiences" which supposedly have something to do with the subject. I discovered once again that I was totally unaware of the truth in the passages written in black and white two thousand years ago.

### Then for whom?

What put me on the right track was not so much the beginning of the phrase, "a sign, not to those who believe...", but the end of it, "but to unbelievers," (I Cor 14:22). I was looking for noon at twelve o'clock, but the answer was the preceding verse where Paul asks us to be mature men in our thinking (I Cor 14:20), quoting Isaiah, "By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers will I speak to *this people*." (I Cor 14:21). About which people was he speaking? The Jews. So it was a sign for the Jews, especially for the unbelieving Jews. It was for those Jews who did not want to believe in the salvation of the pagans (people of other languages), and who opposed it with all their might. Paul wrote of them, "hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved" (I Thess 2:16). Everything about this point became clear in an instant. At last I had discovered the purpose of this great sign! The entire Bible glowed with life and truth before my very eyes. The film of the Jews' fierce opposition against those who were not of their own race was projected before me.

### Jonah

I could see Jonah who detested "the tongues" (the Ninevites) to the point of disobeying God. He fled to Tarshish rather than take the word of salvation to them. He argued with God. He preferred to see that immense metropolis perish rather than saved. For him, the LORD was the God of Israel, and no one else; at any rate not the God of these barbarian heathens! In his spite he went so far as to cry out for his own death. If Nineveh lived, Jonah wanted to die! He reproached God for the very thing that is His glory-that He is the Savior of men from every tribe and nation. This spirit of resistance and unbelief increased throughout the centuries. *They* belonged to Jehovah and Jehovah belonged to *them*. It was a closed circle and all outside of it were cursed. Any attempt for a spirit of brotherhood or even tolerance of people of other tongues caused them to bristle with uncontrollable hate. Death to heathen tongues and to those who speak them! Daring to suggest that people with a language other than their own could benefit from the goodness of God was to risk death (Luke 9:49; Acts 22:21,22). They led the Lord Jesus to the brow of a hill to cast Him down because He said, "But I say unto you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah ... and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon..." (Luke 4:24-26). And provoking them to greater wrath Jesus added, "And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian" (Luke 4:27). In their eyes that was enough! He deserved to be put to death. Even the Samaritans, although they were closely related to the Jews, did not escape their racist hatred. One day when Jesus was refused entrance to a Samaritan village, His own disciples asked, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" (Luke 9:54). Jesus had to reply, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of" (Luke 9:54 margin). Later, after having received the Holy Spirit, these believing

Jews returned to those Samaritans asking not for heaven to baptize them with fire, but that they might receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15).

### **Even the Apostles**

This old idea was so engrained in them that the Jewish Christians had a hard time believing other tongues were included. When Peter was sent by the Holy Spirit to the home of Cornelius, and when all who were there were converted, all of the apostles did not see the event in the same light. Peter was reprimanded because he had preached the Good News to the Gentiles. He had to explain what had happened, how he had heard them speak in foreign languages in just the same way as they themselves had in the beginning (Acts 11:15). What a shock! The sign was for them. Here they had thought that their God could only accept Hebrew, and now His Holy Spirit was proclaiming His praises through the pagan tongues and peoples they had detested. With their heads still spinning from this revelation, they said to themselves with astonishment, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life!" (Acts 11:18). They could not get over it. The God of Israel was also the God of the Gentiles! They needed this sign in order to begin to admit it. But they were so hardened that they relapsed into their former way of thinking. It was second nature to them. A few years later this unfortunate state of mind showed up in the great Apostle Peter. We find the account in Galatians 2:11-14. It called for the intervention of an exceptional man, a contender for the faith like the Apostle Paul, to size up the situation quickly and stand up to them all (Gal 2:5).

### **Peter too!**

Paul had to reprimand Peter severely because of his two-faced behavior. He was all the more reproachable because he, more than anyone else, had been made aware of the universality of the Gospel (Gal 2:11-14). If the new Jewish converts were not ready to believe that salvation extended beyond Israel, what could be expected of the fanatic unconverted Jews? The experience at Antioch illustrates this very well. When the Jews saw the crowd of Gentiles listening and receiving the Word of God, they were filled with jealousy and resisted Paul, contradicting and blaspheming him (Acts 13:45). Jonah's attitude had come a long way! When they heard Paul and Barnabas say, "I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you should bring salvation to the end of the earth" (Acts 13:47-50), the Jewish leaders stirred up persecution against them and expelled them from their city. From Antioch Paul and Barnabas went to Iconium, where the opposition was worse. "Paul and Barnabas, GO HOME!" (Acts 14:5,6).

### **Moses told them so**

This was the literal fulfillment of the prophecy given 1500 years earlier, "So I will make them jealous with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation" (Deut 32:21; Rom 10:19). This violent aversion to the Gentiles came from a long way back. A chosen people they were, but they misconstrued the God-given meaning of their calling. Their entire history was that of a nation distinct and separated from other peoples, tribes, nations and tongues. But separation from the evil ways, the idolatry and the abominations of these nations did not mean that they should nurse hate, contempt, pride and superiority. They had become more Catholic than the Pope himself, going so far as to reject all that was not of, for, or by themselves, and to imprison their Jehovah instead of revealing Himself to others. So when God revealed Himself to the Gentiles, the prophecy was fulfilled to the letter, annoying the Jews greatly. This jealousy was seen in Thessalonica where the angry Jews took with them evil men to the populace who provoked gatherings and stirred up riots all over the city (Acts 17:5). All of that because non-Jews, people of another tongue, believed in the Jew's own personal God but in a different way. The whole situation went against their grain.

### **On the Fortress steps**

Things got worse when Paul returned to Jerusalem. What a thrilling account is given in the 22nd chapter of Acts! Paul the prisoner stood on the fortress steps, motioned to the crowd and asked to speak. As he speaks in Hebrew, silence falls upon the crowd. They all hold their breath waiting to hear what he has to say. Paul tells of his encounter with Christ on the Damascus road and of his conversion. The crowd hangs on his words. No one dares interrupt him. Motionlessly they listen to him speak of his past, of his titles, of his activities, of his zeal for the Jewish cause. He speaks to them about Jesus' appearance to him. He speaks to them about baptism, and still there is no reaction-not until he comes to this sentence: "And He said to me: I will send you far away to the Gentiles..." They listened until the word "Gentiles", but when Paul pronounced that word they raised their voices, threw off their cloaks and threw dust in the air saying, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!" (Acts 22:22). What caused them to explode like that? The idea that God could be the God of all mankind and of all tongues. That makes it easy to understand why God chose speaking in tongues to be the sign of this great truth, and why the unobtrusive phrase, "for this people" is so essential to understanding the purpose of tongues. Their unwillingness to believe that salvation was also open to the Gentiles drove the Jews to make a binding oath, swearing against themselves, that they would not eat until they had killed the Apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 23:12)-the one who spoke in the Gentiles tongues more than anyone else.

### **A Replay of Jonah**

Jonah had done the same thing. He had refused to obey the LORD and went out to sit on the east side of the city and pouted, waiting for it to be destroyed. And there, under his vine, Jonah lamented because the punishment did not come. There he was, totally preoccupied with his own gruesome expectations, wishing for the death of a nation that God wanted to save. Jonah, who reproached God for saving Nineveh, was the spiritual father of the apostles-yes, you read it correctly-the unbelieving apostles who reproached Peter because he had announced the Gospel to the Gentiles

(Acts 11:1-3). Unbelievable! Spiritually speaking, they were all hard of hearing. Peter was too, even though he had experienced the extraordinary events that took place on the day of Pentecost. In spite of the fact that he had spoken in tongues that day, he needed the vision of the sheet descending from heaven full of all kinds of unclean animals before he was ready to go to people of other tongues. The Lord had to speak to him three times before Peter could say, "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him" (Acts 10:34).

### Everyone?

Only after Peter received the vision did he pronounce the word *everyone* in a key phrase-one of the greatest of history. "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name *everyone* who believes in Him has received forgiveness of sins" (Acts 10:43). The words *every one* give me the opportunity to confess a 20-year old error. I had overlooked a very important aspect of John 3:16. This verse, known by millions of Christians the world over, hid a doctrinal truth that I had not suspected. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "For God so loved..." Who? ... *the world*. A Jew would never have said such a thing. Not Jonah, not Peter, nor anyone else. They all would have said, "For God so loved ISRAEL." Already at this early point in His earthly ministry the Lord announced the extent of His love-the entire world composed of tongues, peoples, tribes and nations. On Jesus' cross the reason for His condemnation was inscribed in three languages (John 19:20-Latin (the legal language), Greek (the commercial language) and Hebrew (the religious language). Without their knowing it, the authors of the title proclaimed the universality of the Gospel from then on. This title carried in it the seed of the Great Commission which rang out a few days later, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt 28:19), of all the tongues. The matter should have been closed. But I am a die-hard and I wanted to finish my investigations. It remained for me to learn...

## THE TEACHING OF EPISTLES

When John wrote his epistle he included this phrase which was so self-evident that, to me, it seemed superfluous, "...and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the *whole world*" (1 John 2:2). Of course! But it was not all that evident to the Jews. John, the apostle to the circumcision, (that is to say to the Jews), had to remind them constantly that God's forgiveness, purchased by Christ's death on the cross, was not just for them but also for all the tongues of the entire world. In his writings all the way through to Revelation, written 60 years after Pentecost, John insisted again and again on this point. Many times he spoke of a New Song in contrast with the Song of Moses. And what is the main theme of the Song of Moses? The relationship between the LORD (Jehovah) and His chosen redeemed people. He scarcely leaves this ground. It is the Old Covenant. And what are the words of the New Song of the New Covenant? "Thou wast slain and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and nation" (Rev 5:9). The Song of Israel did not go that far. This worldwide concept eluded Israel. To understand it, they needed an interior enlightening of the Holy Spirit and an exterior sign: speaking in tongues.

### A Mystery

I went back to listen to Paul, the teacher of the Church. He explained in his letter to the Ephesians that Gentiles and Jews form one body and together share the same promise (Eph 3:6). For us in the twentieth century there is nothing mysterious in this, but sharing the same promises with the Gentiles was an entirely new and unexpected truth for the Jews. They could not fully understand it without the help of this sign, speaking in tongues, for the Jews seek miraculous signs (1 Cor 1:22). The Jews, like Jonah, wanted men to be saved, but not all men and especially not the Gentiles; whereas, God wants all men to be saved (1 Tim 2:4). Paul repeated this truth in different words in his letter to Titus, reminding him that God's grace is the source of salvation for all men (Titus 2:11). It wasn't at all evident for the new Jonahs of the New Testament so Paul had to repeat it over and over again to convince them. Between them and the Gentiles they had built a kind of Berlin wall. Paul demolished this shameful wall full of theological watchtowers: first of all by speaking by the Holy Spirit the tongues of those who were on the other side of that wall, and then by teaching them that Christ is peace for those on both sides of the wall. He told them that Christ made of the two one and that He destroyed the wall of separation and hostility. His purpose was to create in Himself one new man out of the two, making peace and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross by which He put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to those who were far away (the Gentiles), and peace to those who are near (the Jews), for through Him both of them have access to the Father by one Spirit (Eph 2:11-17). Hallelujah! With ecstasy Paul exclaims, "To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ" (Eph 3:8).

Alas, not everyone shared the conviction of this man Paul who had been baptized by the Spirit to form one body with all men, Jews and Greeks (1 Cor 12:13). Their unrelenting opposition exposed them to the terrible baptism of fire. Paul wrote of them, "Hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved: with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost." (1 Thess 2:16). Yes, these foreign tongues, proclaimers of so great a Gospel, sign of a new and worldwide covenant, would become a fire for them, a fire of judgment. The wrath of God would set them aflame like the chaff that is thrown to the fire (Matt 3:12).

### The Purpose

To conclude this chapter, *the purpose of speaking in tongues* was very simply explained in a passage that I must have read fifty times more-the account of the day of Pentecost! It was all there. To the great question of these astonished people who wondered what in the world speaking in tongues meant, Peter answered simply with the Scriptures. He quoted the prophet Joel, "I will pour forth my Spirit *upon all mankind*" (verse 17), and "*every one... who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved*" (verse 21). Every one... all people... that is the answer! The purpose? To tell these stubborn Jews who come from all over the world that the Gospel was also for all people from all over the world. Thus Paul concluded, "So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers" (1 Cor 14:22). Led by the Holy Spirit, Paul gave, with irrefutable exactitude, the identity of these unbelievers, specifically naming the Jews, "By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to *this people...*" (1 Cor 14:21). In all the New Testament we find the gift of tongues used only in the presence of Jews to whom it was destined. Even when Gentiles spoke in tongues, the sign was for *this people*. It was for Jews and Jews alone, without exception. At this point I imagine that someone is asking, "But if the sign was for the Jews, why did Cornelius and those of his household speak in tongues?" The answer lies in the following passage. It was so that Peter could go back and tell his Jewish brethren who did not yet accept the Gentiles' right to salvation that "the Holy Spirit fell on them just as He did upon us at the beginning" (Acts 11: 15). When they heard this, they quieted down, and glorified God" (Acts 11: 18). This last sentence shows to what extent preaching grace to the nations had stirred up the unbelieving Jews. But speaking in tongues was for "this people" the irrefutable sign that their God accepted foreign peoples as well as the pure children of Israel. By this exclamation we see that they were forced to admit, first with amazement and then with wonder, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life" (Acts 11:18). Cornelius was the sign bearer, but the sign was for "this people".

It seems there is a famous man in the Far West, a cowboy (a sort of western version of Robin Hood) played by Steve MacQueen. This Jos Randal, up until then a suspect, was suddenly named sheriff in an emergency situation. But how could the county's citizens and especially the bandits, be brought to believe that his authority was not invalid, but, on the contrary, quite legal? The famous star, sign of his new calling and his good faith, was pinned on his chest.

In the same way Cornelius, with an unquestionable sign divinely "pinned" to his language (Acts 10:46), proved to unbelieving Israel that, Gentile though he was, he too had received the call to the heavenly vocation. He became a child of God just as did the converted Jews, as it is written, "He came to His own (things, possession, dominion), and those who were His own (the Jews) did not receive Him. But as many as received Him (such as Cornelius did), to them He gave the right to become the children of God" (John 1:11,12a).

The episode at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7), where twelve disciples suddenly spoke in tongues, is not an exception. These were not disciples of Christ, but Jews, disciples of John the Baptist who were baptized with his baptism which was for Jewish people.

So, believing in Christ, rebaptized in water in the name of Jesus, and baptized by the Spirit, they became one body (1 Cor 12:13) with the converted Gentiles to such an extent that the tongues of these Gentiles miraculously took over their own tongues to praise the God of Israel Who became, in their eyes, the God of the nations. They needed the sign of speaking in tongues to teach them the worldwide dimension that their Jehovah was now giving to His divine salvation.

## JESUS AND TONGUES

What surprised me the most was the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ, our Divine Example, never spoke in tongues. He had the Holy Spirit without measure, and all the gifts, though apparently not this one. He didn't seem to miss it at all. He didn't speak about it, nor did He seem to pursue it. But if

speaking in tongues is all that it is made out to be, and if it is as useful as I had heard, Jesus certainly would have needed it-He who prayed so much with weeping, who often fasted, and who preached salvation to the crowds, who wearied Himself healing the sick. This indisputable evidence of the total absence of speaking in tongues in the life of Jesus disappoints certain defenders of this doctrine to the point that, in order to save face, they are obliged to expose themselves to the twisting of the Scriptures to their own destruction (II Pet 3:16).

Here is what one says in an attempted answer to non-charismatics, "If Jesus Christ has never spoken in tongues it is because He was perfect, and being perfect, He had no need to edify Himself!"

To this skillful maneuver we answer by one simple question, "Why did the Lord, who was perfect, require that John the Baptist administer to Him the baptism of repentance since He had no need of repentance?"

He did it for us because we needed to know what was needful.

If, therefore, the divine Son of God never spoke in tongues it was because he knew that practically all of His Church would never have need of doing so.

If speaking in tongues had the renewing and restorative power that some believe it to have, Christ would have, more than anyone, needed it. He was often physically exhausted. So, why didn't Christ ever edify Himself by, speaking in tongues, I wondered? If speaking in tongues should be exercised in private, or among friends, why didn't He ever use it? Why didn't He pray in tongues when there were so many people coming to Him to be healed? Why didn't He link speaking in tongues to the casting out of demons if that were the best way to do it? Why didn't He sing in tongues when He climbed the Mount of Olives (Mark 14:26)? Why didn't He blend His voice with those of the angels when He saw them ascending and descending upon Him (John 1:51)? Why, I wondered, didn't He possess this gift? Why didn't He try to add this sign to the others for the good of His ministry?

Reading I Corinthians 12, I found nine gifts of the Spirit which are:

Wisdom

Faith

Healing

Miraculous powers

Prophecy

Discerning of spirits

Different kinds of tongues

Interpretation

Our Lord had, and used, all of these gifts except that of speaking in tongues and its clarifying corollary, interpretation. Had God deprived Him of this precious gift? Had God taken it away from Him? Was this gift outside of His grasp? Was He not spiritual enough to receive it? Had He not sought after it ardently enough? All of this is unthinkable and borders upon heresy. It is clear that Jesus Christ had the Spirit without limit (John 3:34). Since He had this gift, why didn't He use it? Simply because it was not necessary to do so... but *why not?*

Could it be that the people who were with Him had no need to see this sign, whereas they really needed all the others? Could Jesus really have the fullness of the gifts of the Spirit without having this one? Here, more than ever, my questions irritated those around me. I was some sort of "Jack-in-the-box" full of troublesome questions! They were just the kind that nobody wanted to answer.

Once again, I was reduced to calling upon God and waiting upon the Holy Spirit for an answer. The answer sprang out of the entire Scriptures and was in perfect harmony with the four Gospels.

### **The "Why" explained**

Jesus rarely left the confines of Palestine. His Gospel did not go beyond the lost sheep of the house of Israel. "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans" (Matt 10:6). His ministry was only to the Jews, and excluded foreigners because the worldwide aspect of His teaching was still hidden. There was not yet any question of "peoples, tribes, nations, and tongues." Nothing, or almost nothing, in His words would allow us to have an inkling as to international scope of His work in the future.

The sign of tongues, therefore, had no reason for existing yet, nor any reason to be manifested. Up to this point there was nothing to irritate the Jews and make them jealous of the grace given to the Gentiles, for they had not yet been brought into the picture. Jesus only mentioned speaking in tongues one time at the very end of His ministry, when He said in Mark 16:17, "They will speak with new tongues". It is highly significant to notice that He says it in the flow of the preceding phrases, "Go into *all the world*.... It is the famous "...to every creature" that evoked the gift of speaking in tongues. The narrow limits of Jewish nationalism were going to break open. But the Lord knew that "this people" would do everything possible to keep the Good News from being announced to other peoples and in other tongues. At that time He would give to "this people" by His disciples *the* appropriate *sign* that He himself in His wisdom never desired, nor had the occasion to use. Still in harmony with what has been said, the inverse situation is seen in the Gentile cities of Athens and Malta. They were outside of the presence of "this Jewish people" who fiercely opposed their salvation. There, speaking in tongues was no longer necessary, not, any more than it is today, for "the Jewish people" is no longer a force against the salvation of the world.

### **It is so simple**

The biblical explanation that speaking in tongues was a sign only for the Jews worried some of my best friends. They asked me, "How can you be sure that the sign was not for unbelievers among the Gentiles?" The answer is simple. Two events in the New Testament had the same significance: Peter's vision in Acts 10 which gave him the green light to visit the Gentile Cornelius (Acts 10:9-16), and the gift of speaking in tongues.

What was the meaning of the sheet let down from heaven full of unclean animals? What was the significance of these animals, unclean according to Moses' Law (Leviticus 11), which Peter would never have touched? Everybody knows. They represented all that was not Jewish, that is to say, peoples of other tongues. It is hard to imagine this vision being given to anyone but a Jew, for it was the Jews who needed to learn not to consider unclean those whom God had declared clean. Peter was personally edified by his vision which would in turn, edify others.

Speaking in tongues had exactly the same meaning. Peter, because he was a Jew and because of his natural unbelief in accepting the salvation of the Gentiles, needed such a vision. In the same way, other Jews who were also opposed to the salvation of the nations, needed a sign such as speaking in tongues. This sign, like the thrice repeated vision of Peter, taught them that their Jehovah's salvation (Acts 2:17,21) was henceforth for "whosoever", or "everyone", and for "all flesh", or all tongues. Some of my friends, who once thought that speaking in tongues was also for Gentiles, were confounded when I told them, "It is as if an English speaking person were to speak French miraculously by the Spirit right here. Would that prove to you that the Gospel could at last cross the Atlantic or the English Channel? Of course not! Everyone has known that for a long time. So the sign would be completely irrelevant for you." No, the Holy Spirit does not fight as a man beating the air (1 Cor 9:26). Peter's vision was not continually repeated. It was seen three times successively and then "the sheet was taken back into heaven" (Acts 10: 16). The same thing happened to the gift of tongues. As Saint Augustine clearly states, "... This happened to announce something, (that the Gospel was to be announced to the ends of the earth), then disappeared." (See St. Augustine Chap 9). Is it necessary to speak the Eskimo's tongue to establish the fact once and for all that they are clean in God's eyes? Hudson Taylor and all the missionaries with him never needed the sign of tongues to realize with apostolic amazement (Acts 11:18) that God also loved the Chinese, and that He accepted them as well as their language. Christians in the world today do not need Peter's vision, nor speaking in tongues, nor anything else of this nature to convince them of this great truth. It is no longer disputed.

### **Similarities**

I mentioned before that the vision of Peter and the speaking of tongues were one and the same thing. It must be understood that the contents are the same, only the presentation is different. Taking into account this difference of presentation, we discover between the two signs very remarkable points in common, which are not found in any other gifts of the Spirit.

1The vision was given to a believer but was directed toward his unbelief. Similarly, speaking in tongues was exercised by believers but concerned their unbelief.

2The vision was a sign for the apostles who did not believe in the salvation of those who did not speak the same language as they did. Peter's vision and Cornelius speaking in tongues led the apostles to say: "Therefore God has given them the same gift as to us: God has accorded repentance also to the Gentiles" (Acts 11: 17,18).

3The vision was repeated a limited number of times, but we are reminded of its significance each time we read Acts 10 and 11. Likewise, the speaking in tongues was limited by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 13:8), but we are reminded of its significance when we read the Scriptures.

4The vision was given for *this people* only. Similarly, the speaking in tongues was for *this people* only (I Cor 14:21).

5The vision confirmed to a Jew that salvation extended beyond the nation of Israel, and that the Gospel reached to all mankind. Thus, also, the speaking in tongues confirmed to the Jews that salvation went beyond them and that God poured out His Spirit on all flesh.

6The vision explained the universal and multi-lingual dimensions of the new preaching. So also, the speaking in tongues showed that the Gospel went beyond the supporter of *Israel only* and extended to *whosoever*.

7The vision was not continued, but was withdrawn into heaven. So also, speaking in tongues did not continue but was withdrawn.

8The vision was fully explained at the conversion of Cornelius. Likewise, the speaking in tongues is only fully understood in the light of the conversion of peoples speaking foreign and barbaric tongues, that is to say, pagans.

9The vision would be out of place in an assembly of believers who already believe in the universality of salvation. Similarly, speaking in tongues is not a sign for believers (I Cor 14:22), and is therefore out of place among them.

10Peter was personally edified by his vision. In what way? Only in the plain meaning of the vision. No other meaning can be retained. So also, those speaking in tongues were evidently edified within the meaning of the sign conveyed. Thus, the new idea was conveyed to them that the Spirit was poured out on all flesh, on all tongues, and "oh, mystery" that the pagans belonged to the same body and shared the same promises... (Eph 3:6)

11If the vision was repeated three times for Peter it is inconceivable that, once the message was understood, it should be repeated during the rest of his ministry. Speaking in tongues is conveyed to us three times in Acts 2, 10 and 19 for the apostolic and Judeo-Christian Church, until this was well understood, and *not beyond*.

The following argument leads to an absurd conclusion, as follows:

If speaking in tongues is still for our time, then the same applies to Peter's vision. If the first sign should be sought then should the second? But *who* in our present-day church, composed as it is of all peoples, nations, tribes and languages, needs to be told repeatedly by a sign that salvation is for all peoples, nation, tribes and languages?

In conclusion then, the vision of impure animals taught Peter the Jew exactly the same thing that the speaking in tongues conveyed to the Jews who were unwilling to believe it; that the way of salvation, the access to the God of Israel, was henceforth open to foreigners and barbarians whose language was miraculously spoken by the Holy Spirit.

Based on the unmovable rock of the Holy Scriptures, I maintain with the Apostle Paul that speaking in tongues, as well as Peter's vision, was for *this people* (I Cor 14:21). These Jews not only despised other tongues and refused to believe (I Cor 14:21) in their salvation, but also reached the height of their sin by hindering anyone from preaching to the Gentiles (I Thess 2:16).

### **A difficult Exegesis**

In I Corinthians 14:22 the Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, tells us that the sign of speaking in tongues was not for believers, but for unbelievers. Then he turns around in the very next verse and says just the opposite! On the surface it looks as though the Holy Spirit is contradicting Himself when He says, "if, therefore, the whole church should assemble together and all speak in tongues, and men unversed in spiritual gifts or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?" (I Cor 14:24). No one ever untangled this inextricable paradox for me. It is true that if the non-believers of verses 22, 23 and 24 are indiscriminately from Israel or from the Gentiles, the contradiction remains. But the problem disappears if you accept that Paul had two kinds of non-believers in view.

1The non-believers of verse 22 are identified in verse 21, "I will speak to *this people*, and even so they will not listen to Me..... They are Jews. The sign was for them.

2The others, non-believers of verse 23, the unlearned ones who do not understand, were men of the common people-and not of *this people*. In other words, they were Gentiles from the city of Corinth. The sign of tongues was not for them. That is what the Holy Spirit is saying here.

This exegesis erases the contradiction and confirms that the sign of tongues-obviously not understood by the Gentiles-was not for them but was

reserved for *this people*, the Jews, in order to bring them to believe that the Gentiles were grafted into the body of Christ which is the Church. Let me finish this paragraph by pointing out one more thing in verse 24 and 25. Here the gift of prophecy is used in contrast to speaking in tongues. Though it is destined to believers, it had the advantage of being understood by unbelievers as well because it was articulated in their own language. The result was profound conversions and troubled consciences, to the extent that some of the common people fell on their faces confessing that God was in their midst.

## **Blindness**

I have also noted with astonishment to what extent the Enemy blinds the spiritual intelligence of certain Christians on this point of doctrine which is so easily grasped. Recently I questioned three persons young in the faith and of a very low level of instruction. After this, I repeated the experience with three children of 8 and 9 years of age. I read to them very slowly the account of Peter's vision in Acts chapter 10. I asked them to tell me what they had understood. With several excusable hesitations all of them gave me the correct answers which can be thus summed up: *by the vision Peter understood that he could go and proclaim salvation to the gentiles.*

If those without instruction, as well as children without knowledge, have understood the import of the sign given to Peter, why are older Christians who claim to be animated by the Holy Spirit, Who is to "guide us into all the truth", incapable of grasping the import of this other similar sign which is that of speaking in tongues?

It should be noted that, in the expression, "speaking in tongues", the word "tongues", which explains it all, is found; while in Peter's vision, which means the same thing, the word "tongues" is not found. As I see it, only a spirit of blindness can take from their minds that which is self-explanatory.

Why have so many among God's people become incapable of grasping the explanations of the Holy Spirit, Who says to us, for example, that:

1. "one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God" (I Cor 14:2).
2. This sign was not for believers (I Cor 14:22).
3. This sign was for the unbelievers among the Jews (I Cor 14:21, 22).

These passages are easier to understand than is John 3:16 or Romans 3:23, and yet they do not understand them.

Dare I say that they do not want to understand them lest they be "converted and healed" of their error?

## **Why to the Jews only?**

In the face of my insistence to believe with Saint Paul that speaking in tongues, like the vision of Peter, was for "this people" (the Jews), someone asks with irritation, "Why to the Jews only?" Because the Holy Spirit teaches us in Romans 9:4 that to the Jews belong the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises.

The Savior came to them and for them first of all. The apostles were Jews. In fact, the Church at the beginning was Jewish. Everything was in Jewish hands. Now, the most favorably disposed among them, Peter being the first, would have kept themselves from sharing this marvelous Good News with foreigners whom they classed as being of barbarous tongues. Speaking in these detested foreign tongues, and the vision of Peter, have been the two signs by which God wished to convince *this people* (the Jews) of the universal character of the Gospel. He wanted by this means to lead them to believe this great mystery that in Christ Jesus the Gentiles (the tongues) were made one with them (the believing Jews) in one and the same body (Eph 3:16). Both signs meant *that* and *nothing but that*.

## **EXPERIENCES**

In my personal experience it was the Apostle Paul himself, who gave me such a hard time with his implacable, Spirit-inspired logic. But there were still two points of resistance in my mind: one a big blockhouse and the other, a tiny fort. The blockhouse was a line of the Scripture which left me a glimmer of hope that Paul's absolute "does not speak to men" might have been watered down, though ever so slightly, by his quotation from the Old Testament, "I shall speak to this people..." (1 Cor 14:21). I thought that since it was to unbelievers that God spoke by the gift of tongues, then the message must have been for men. My hope was short-lived, for my blockhouse was mined and it blew up all by itself. Of course God spoke to the Jews by this sign. But if the sign spoke to them, the words of this sign were for God, and God alone. One day an army general invited me to his office to speak to him about my faith. When I arrived, several people were already in the waiting room. I was the first to be called in. My interview was conducted with the general alone but my immediate entrance was a sign for the others of the honor bestowed on me. And so it is with the sign of tongues. Pagan tongues, having been granted this privilege, were henceforth admitted into the private chambers of the King of kings. It was to God only that they were addressed, but this gift was very significant for the others.

### **Lining it all up**

When I had only an immature understanding of the Bible, I was satisfied with vague opinions. I floated down the stream of commonly accepted ideas without taking the time to examine the Scriptures to see if what I heard was exact (Acts 17:11).

Taking the passage on Pentecost as a basis, I unthinkingly accepted the teaching that tongues were given to communicate a message directly to men. In this case, the foreigners had such diverse tongues that a linguistic miracle had been necessary for them to hear what God wanted to say. I had been told that one single language would not have been sufficient; therefore the miracle of tongues was necessary. But when I opened my Bible, I was shocked to discover that it was not the Gentiles who were in Jerusalem at Pentecost, but *Jews* (Acts 2:4, 14) who had come from other countries and who spoke Aramaic as well as their mother tongue! If it were just a question of preaching to men, why was it necessary to have so many tongues (verse 15), especially when it was evident from these verses which follow that one would have been sufficient? If we want to find a message for men, we should look for it in Peter's preaching, not in the speaking in tongues. The passage clearly shows that *everyone* understood what Peter said, not in tongues, but in *one language*. The fact that everyone understood Peter's tongue means that it was perfectly superfluous to add fifteen other languages. One was sufficient. What, then, was the reason for the fifteen others?

The answer which helped me to line up all these ideas was to be found in the inspired writings of Paul where he says, "...anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God." (1 Cor 14:2). In accordance with Luke's account in Acts 2, those men spoke to God in fifteen tongues to serve as a sign for the Jews (1 Cor 14:21), in particular those coming from the fifteen countries mentioned in the passage. *This sign* showed them that access to God was no longer their private prerogative, that the Lord no longer preferred Hebrew to barbarian tongues, and that they were no longer to consider unclean that which God declared pure (Acts 10:15).

### **My second Line of Defense**

At this point I tried to defend my little fort. I say "little" because it was outside the Bible. It was the fort of experience which, when you come down to it, is talked about now-a-days more than the Word of God itself. However, nothing is to be dealt with more prudence and wariness than experience. That is why I did not want to rely on experience as an argument in this book. It is too much like quicksand.

On my desk I have two kinds of books. The first kind, through a profusion of anecdotes, relates testimonies stacking up evidence that speaking in tongues is indeed a message addressed to men. The other, through a lot of counter-testimonies demystifies the whole affair. But in this area of experiences and anti-experiences, both sides are about equal. I will therefore stick with the principle "sola scriptura" (Scripture alone). Through speaking in tongues, prophecies have concerned me personally. Of course, I am not the only one who has shared this experience. Some can positively affirm that what was said was true and actually came about. Such experiences are undeniable. I have a friend who told me, "I heard a prophecy in tongues that had to do with me, and it came true!" We have all heard this kind of "truth". Since the prophecy was fulfilled, we assume that heaven has spoken. But can we really be sure? Heaven also speaks through the Scriptures and the Scriptures contradict this experience. Experience claims that the gift of tongues is heaven speaking to men, whereas the Bible says that it is men speaking to heaven (1 Cor 14:2). Who is right, God or experience? Job seems to have faced this dilemma for he says (in French versions), "I bent my will to the words of thy mouth." (Job 23:12). Experience! We find it everywhere in life, but it does not prove much of anything.

### **Even the Occult!**

You know, the horoscope is not always wrong! Millions of people are ready to testify to it. That is experience. In Marseille the walls of the chapel of Notre Dame de la Garde are covered with small plaques attesting to miraculous answers to prayer. That is experience. Jeanne Dixon has predicted some amazingly true happenings; for example, the assassination of John E. Kennedy. Do the crutches hanging on the walls of the grotto in Lourdes accredit the doctrine of Mary's intercession for believers? Divination can locate a lost object hundreds of miles away simply by holding a pendulum

over a road map. That is experience. And when a diviner diagnoses your illness without examining you, doesn't that prove the validity of the experience? Thousands of people believe and practice these things because the reality of experience hinders them from seeing the occult and divinatory side of them.

### **Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone)**

But, I kept reminding myself, it is in the light of biblical and spiritual experiences that our search for the truth takes place! "Thy Word is truth." (John 17:17) kept coming to mind. Once outside the Word of God, Satan can furnish all the experiences we want. He can easily disguise himself as an angel of light (II Cor 11:24) and tell us all kinds of truths. If we believe that wherever truth is found no matter how little, it is the Holy Spirit speaking, what must we think of Acts 16? There, in the city of Philippi, a young girl with an extraordinary gift of prophecy began to follow two men whom she had never met before. She cried out to anyone who would listen that these men were servants of God and were announcing salvation (Acts 16:17). That was experience too. But it was a demon speaking, and Paul had to drive him out. As long as this slave girl could utter these truths she was held by the spirit of error. It was not until she could not say anything more that she was in the Spirit of truth!

### **Pharaoh also**

Experiences! Pharaoh had all he could want of them. His magicians changed water to blood, multiplied frogs, and changed staffs into snakes (Exodus 7). It was true. It was genuine. True also were the experience and testimony of the women in Jeremiah 44:17,18 who claimed, "When we burned incense to the Queen of Heaven, we had plenty of food and were well off and suffered no harm. But ever since we stopped burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have had nothing and have been perishing by sword and famine..." Who can beat that? But what determines if something is true or false, our personal testimony or the Word of God? When God declares that he who speaks in tongues does not address men, must we renounce this part of God's Word or the testimony contradicting this Word? I was forced to make a choice between "experience" and the Bible. It was not easy, but I finally chose to side with the Scriptures and *against* these pseudo-testimonies. It is up to you who are reading these lines to make your own choice.

### **Not to Men but to God (I Cor 14:2)**

From there it was relatively easy to pass from doctrine to verification. With my mania to check out everything with the Scriptures, the opportunity was soon to be found. The guinea pig turned out to be one of my best friends, an enthusiastic pastor who invited me to preach several messages in his church. He told me about a woman in the church who, in a private conversation with him, had spoken in tongues. "In what she said," he explained, "I discerned a message for myself." The opportunity was ideal. I simply asked him, "How do you reconcile the idea of a message addressed to you personally with the biblical statement that 'For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God?' (I Cor 14:2) You are not God." It was like hitting him over the head. He was without a reply. He had just discovered a text that he had never seen before, or that he had never taken time to examine. I was embarrassed and felt sorry for him. I didn't tell him that these tongues addressed to men smelled of sulfur. I didn't tell him either that it was a trick or a hoax. I let him find out for himself that he was up against an obvious counterfeit. Everyone knows that, counterfeiting in other areas is liable to punishment. Is it less serious in spiritual things?

What should we think of all these experiences of tongues which express a prophecy or an exhortation or a revelation-that is to say, a message to men, and which are, therefore, in open contradiction to the teaching of the Holy Spirit? How can we fail to recognize that they are counterfeits? Another friend, also pastor of an Assembly of God church, understood this truth and asked his church to apply it. He and his church were expelled from the denomination to which they belonged. When I mentioned this to another pastor friend, he did not seem very surprised. He was aware of the problem. He told me, "**When this teaching of Paul began to circulate in our assemblies it was a veritable bomb. We could not accept it because we would have had to admit that all that happened in our Assemblies was FALSE.**" In other words, in order to make error seem as true as possible it should not be stopped! Tradition often takes priority over the Word of God. The history of the Church through the centuries demonstrates this in a humiliating and painful way.

### **The Martyrdom of a Text**

Torture is a shameful practice which continues, alas, even in our civilized societies today. It was even used on texts of the Bible. Tormentors are ready to use any means available to disfigure and cut Bible texts to pieces so that they seem to confess the opposite of their essential meaning, the opposite of what they really say.

Let me insert a short parenthesis here that will be very helpful to us. No teaching of Paul's is clearer or more irrefutable than when he says, "There is one God and one mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ..." (I Tim 2:5). He is saying that since there is only one God there can only be one mediator, Jesus, and no one else. The Roman Catholic Church modifies this truth completely by holding it in light of the wedding of Cana in particular (John 2:1-10). Because Mary pointed out to her Son that the guests had no more wine, the following miracle is credited to Mary's glory, making her the Mediatrix of all graces. In doing this, the apostles' teaching is short-circuited and thus nullified.

Under such duress, biblical texts will confess to anything, and mediators, great and small, will soon become legion. I am sorry to find the same procedure used by people from whom I have expected a more rigorous consideration of the Holy Scriptures. I must say, however, and this to the credit of my Pentecostal brothers, not one of them denied that speaking in tongues in Acts 2 was addressed to God and not to men. But Paul's clear affirmation that "anyone who speaks in a tongue speaks to God and not to men" (1 Cor 14:2) is drowned out by voices trying to establish the contrary. Just as the passage relating the wedding at Cana has been used by Rome to color, annul and weaken the unique mediation of Jesus Christ, the passage in Acts 2 is being used to explain Paul's doctrine. Just the opposite ought to be done.

### **Slow-motion Movie Camera**

I would like to look at the "triple manipulation of Acts" in slow motion.

*First trial:* "If the phenomenon of speaking in tongues was only addressed to God, it certainly would have been confined to the dimensions of the Upper Chamber."

*First answer:* In all big meetings, whether it be on the day of Pentecost or in our own times, prayers to God are not, imprisoned in some secret place. Prayers, praise and thanksgiving are addressed to God as publicly and as, visibly as our preaching is addressed to the crowds.

*Second trial:* "Since what they said was understood, the apostles must have been speaking to men."

*Second answer:* In mass meetings both then and now, everyone understands what is said in prayer, and yet prayers are obviously addressed to God!

*Third trial:* "They proclaimed, speaking out loud and did not whisper."

*Third answer:* This is the case with all our public prayers, whether they be offered in churches, on the radio, on television or out-of-doors. They are just as audible as our preaching. The fact that our prayers are addressed to God does not keep us from adding the necessary decibels with amplifiers so that they can be heard and understood by those to whom we are not actually addressing the prayer!

### **A Necessary Precision**

Contrary to what is often hastily assumed, the tongues on the day of Pentecost did not convert anyone. Similar in essence to the prayers of praise and thanksgiving today, it was simply a declaring of the wonders of God (Acts 2: 11) and uttering the mysteries of God (1 Cor 14:2). Of course, that captured the crowd's attention for what would follow. But the thing that brought them to repentance and faith was Peter's message which was not in tongues. If speaking in tongues had been a message for men, then why did Peter preach afterward? Hadn't the crowd asked, "What does this mean?" (Acts 2:12), showing that speaking in tongues was meaningless to them. It was the message that followed that gave them the key to this sign, "I will pour out my Spirit on all people..." (Acts 2:17), on all flesh, or in other words, on all tongues, all tribes and all people. So we see that the gift of tongues raised a question without giving an answer, whereas Peter's message gave the answer and brought the crowd back to its senses. "They were pierced in their heart..." (Acts 2:37) and were converted as we see in the rest of the passage.

These thousands of Jews who, saved through Peter's message, were able to return to their own countries witnessing to salvation in Jesus Christ. At the same time they could affirm before the Jews in their homelands that people of other tongues were also to be saved, that they now had equal access to their Jehovah, and that because of this they would become brothers. Certainly they had not yet understood the extent of this great mystery, but the sign of tongues prepared them to accept the penetration of the Gospel into the Gentile world and not to oppose it as would certain other Jews. These first converts who were naturally opposed to the salvation of the Gentiles, would never forget the memorable hour when God the Holy Spirit spoke barbarous tongues for the first time. The sign was luminous. God accepted them to the point of even speaking in their tongues. From now on the Jews are going to have to put up with this fact. Whether it pleased them or not, God had decided in His sovereignty to unite in one body, by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Jews and people of foreign tongues (1 Cor 12:13). Speaking in tongues was the only adequate sign.

### **A Choice**

In the back of my mind I have stored a painful memory of the day when my neighbor, an experienced Assembly of God pastor, asked me to participate in a debate on speaking in tongues. His opponent was a full-time minister within the Darbyist (Brethren) assemblies. Each one had his open Bible on the table. I thought that my pastor friend was very well versed in his own doctrine, but he really lacked weight. His arguments were swept away as if by a tornado. His opponent knew the Scriptures so well that I wondered if he had swallowed a Bible. I had the impression of being with Stephen whose opponents were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking." (Acts 6:10). I do not remember the arguments which disarmed my friend - and drove him into a corner, for I was too inexperienced to assimilate them at the time. But then he did and said something which really struck me. I shall never forget it. He closed his Bible, and putting it aside, said, "Biblically you are right, but I cannot deny *experience!*" This scene stayed with me for a long time. It was all there in his gesture and his words. The Bible was put aside and Experience was

given first place. My friend had been beaten on his own ground, forced to recognize the truth. But to keep up a good front he had to choose between Experience and the Bible, to deny the one and keep the other. It was the Bible which was sacrificed for Experience. This far reaching subjectivity has invaded all levels of Christianity-subjectivity which gets rid of whatever bothers it, even if it is the Word of God, while putting a nice biblical label on its experiences. It is pulled off very smoothly. New converts and those with no biblical foundation are easily fooled.

On the way home I was sad for my friend and would have liked to have been able to console him. But he didn't seem bothered in the least. He was happy and relaxed. After all, he had his Experience and he was satisfied. He reminded me of the Catholic priest who once told me, "If the Bible does not speak of purgatory, that does not bother me. Our church believes in it and that is enough for me." Just as the Church holds the place of divine authority in teaching for the priest, so does Experience hold for this pastor a place higher than that of the Scripture itself. The one has his "Church" as Authoritative Teacher, while the other has his "Experience" as Authoritative Teacher.

### **More Experiences**

In this area of experiences, I enjoyed the story of how several people were converted by listening to an interpretation of speaking in tongues that had been addressed to them personally. I thought, "Error cannot convert men to Truth. Since their experience led them to God, it must have come from God." This was apparently very logical, but it was not satisfactory. I discovered that the people of Philippi in Greece could have been saved by what the young slave, indubitably possessed with a demon, said about Paul and Silas, "These men are servants of the most high God who are telling you the way to be saved." (Acts 16:17). This woman while victim and servant of Satan, was also bearer of the pure truth. It took all the spiritual discernment of Paul to unveil the confusion. But can this truth, coming from the very depths of Hell, give credit to occultism? I have met Christians who have been brought to the Bible by Jehovah's Witnesses. But their salvation, initiated by the Jehovah's Witnesses, can in no way justify the false doctrines of this erroneous sect.

The Apostle Paul tells us that certain people preached the Gospel by envy and rivalry, trying to stir up trouble for him. This preaching must have brought forth fruit because Paul says, "Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice." (Phil 1:15-18). Can the results recommend those evil motivations? Can we justify that kind of shameful preaching in the name of the results it produced?

### **Behold the Opera!**

I knew a servant of God who was saved in a theater. He had heard a quotation from the Bible and was gripped in his heart by the Spirit of God. There, where he was, he gave his life over to God. Not only did he never go back to the theater, but he never sent anyone there to be saved. Does the end justify the means? I am afraid that there is this worldly spirit that prevails with certain Christians.

John Bost, the founder of the "Asiles de la Force" at Bergerac in France, was a pastor's son. He went to the opera to see a play. There he was touched by the Spirit of God. He rushed out quickly, going to his room, fell on his knees and gave himself to God. If the Opera can produce such lovely fruit why doesn't the path of consecration go through a theater box? *Sacrilege!* But now, wasn't this precisely the principle which I tried to defend when I wanted to justify speaking in tongues because of some rare good results? One day a friend of mine, a Colonel of the Salvation Army, came back from Africa and paid a visit to our worship service and there he praised the Lord in Lingala, a West African dialect. Then came an interpretation which had nothing to do, in any way, with what had just been said in his prayer. Now this imposture was biblical in that the pseudo (would-be) interpretation was as evangelical as the words of the slave girl in Acts 16. Someone in the audience could have very likely taken this interpretation for himself, but it would take a spirit other than the Holy Spirit to go so far as to justify such a counterfeit!

### **The Unusual**

While I was not yet enlightened on this subject, I had already noticed that for certain people, speaking in tongues easily became uncontrollable. They were sliding into practices that would have been severely reprimanded by the Apostle Paul. In the same manner, a brother who believed he had a gift of healing, or who wanted it at any price, told me that he accompanied his laying on of hands with speaking in tongues. Strange. I wondered in what part of the Bible he had found an example to justify this practice. Another gave special importance to speaking in tongues when he prayed for people possessed by evil spirits. According to him, a seance of exorcism with speaking in tongues became that much more effective. Stranger than strange. Others, of whom their conversion was not beyond doubt (this being said without a judgmental spirit) were only sure of having their sins forgiven and of being saved because they spoke in tongues.

I saw that the ways used were different and certainly innovative, but all lacked the counsel of the Word of God. Is it not possible that the Apostle Paul, who condemned speaking in tongues outside of a prescribed pattern (unbelieving Jews and with interpretation), would have protested loudly at such deformations? (I Cor 14:19) Would he have not repeated what he said to the Corinthians? "Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe." (I Cor 14:20,22).

## THE BIG QUESTION: WHEN?

Let me go back to a point I have already made. According to Paul, speaking in tongues is a sign for the unbelieving Jews and not for Gentiles, for the Holy Spirit said, "I will speak to *this people* ..." (1 Cor 14:2). Having established this point, I did not want to go back and lay the foundation again, but, on the contrary, to start building on it. One thing very naturally led to another and I ended up with a troubling conclusion. The more I tried to clarify my convictions, the more entangled they seemed to become. I thought to myself, "Now that the Church is mainly composed of Gentiles, its universality is no longer an issue. So what is the use of this Sign today and for whom is it given? Centuries have gone by since anyone needed this sign to convince him that salvation is open to People of different tongues-French, Swiss, English, Chinese, Zulu, etc. No one has contested this truth for centuries. So...!?"

This rigorous logic drove me to the very conclusion I wanted to avoid. Like a trapped rabbit I strangled myself in my furious struggle. Everyone with whom the Holy Spirit has dealt knows that He will not let go until there is surrender. Jeremiah had the same experience. He fought against God until he finally said, "You Persuaded me and I was persuaded; You overpowered me and prevailed" (Jer 20:7).

The Apostle Paul, master of biblical logistics, who spoke in tongues more than anyone else, who expounded its doctrine and its limits, also had to announce its end. All good things come to an end, at least in this world here below. It is as logical as eliminating secondary railroads when there are no longer any passengers. So Paul was moved by the Holy Spirit to write, "if there are tongues, they will cease..." (1 Cor 13:8).

To retain a sign that no longer meant anything to anyone would have been like keeping detour signs on a highway where the road work has long since ceased.

I found that the New Testament traces a gradual decrease which is both significant and troublesome:

1. In Acts 2-They shall speak in tongues
2. In 1 Corinthians 12-All do not speak in tongues
3. In 1 Corinthians 13-Tongues will cease.

### That is the Question!

Yes, tongues will cease, but *when*? That is the question! Up to this point I had lost a battle or two in fact three. I had ultimately admitted, according to Bible teaching:

- 1 That speaking in tongues could by no means be addressed to men, and that when it was, it was counterfeit.
- 2 That speaking in tongues was the sign for unbelieving Jews indicating salvation was open to all peoples and that it was given exclusively for them.
- 3 That there was only one kind of speaking in tongues, and not two as I had been taught on the basis of superficial exegesis.

I must say that although these three battles were lost, I now considered them victories, and not as a kind of Trojan horse. Truth does not enslave, it liberates. My discoveries, nevertheless, began to alienate some of my friends, although I still had so many things in common with my brothers that if there had been a Trojan horse I would have sent it back. I was determined to fight to the end with all the ammunition I had.

### Saint Augustine

Meanwhile, I did some research to see what history might contribute, though approaching it warily because of the way it is sometimes written. What I hoped to find in the writings of the early Church Fathers was not to be found. John Chrysostom and Saint Augustine (354-430) both wrote in their commentaries on the Scriptures that the gift of tongues had already disappeared in their day. Here is what Augustine said in his *Homilies on the First Epistle of John*:

"They were appropriate signs for that time, destined to announce the coming of the Holy Spirit to humans of all tongues, showing that the Gospel of God should be announced to all the tongues of the earth. This sign appeared to announce something and then disappeared."

So what had taken me so much time and effort to discover had been written by Saint Augustine some 1700 years ago! His teaching, which I discovered by myself in my own turn, is self-evident. The Early Church and even the Apostolic Church before that, were made up less and less of Jews and more and more of people of different tongues, and consequently were more and more convinced of the universal offer of salvation. Once this had been fully accepted, there was no one left to be convinced of the fact that God so loved "the world", that Jehovah was not just the God of Israel, but also the God of the nations. Therefore the "charisma" (gift) which was a sign of this truth, as well as the practice of this gift, had no more reason to exist. So God withdrew it. He did the same thing with the divinely inspired writers of His Word. More than nineteen centuries have passed since John wrote the Revelation, and no one else has had the "charisma" (gift) of adding to the Scriptures. God withdrew this gift. There are, of course, some stubborn people like Joseph Smith, the supposedly inspired author of the book of the Mormons! Receiving and writing the New Testament was made possible by a gift of the Spirit, and yet it did not continue. Everyone, except for a few illuminated people, is of the same opinion. Everyone, including my Pentecostal brothers.

### **Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

The teaching that speaking in tongues was an unquestionable sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was shaken to its foundation. The only thing that the sign of speaking in tongues confirmed was that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was truly the entrance of Jews and non-Jews into the Body of Christ. This is what Paul says, "For by one Spirit we were all, both Jews and Greeks, baptized into one body" (1 Cor 12:12). Why? This was the question that formulated in my mind. The answer was there, right in front of me. "...Baptized into one body" (1 Cor 12:13). To those who did not believe or were opposed to the entrance of the Greeks into the body of Christ, the sign of speaking in tongues confirmed it. I was turned completely around when I saw that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was entirely different from what I had thought. I had been taught, told and retold that access to the gifts of the Spirit was acquired by this baptism.

Now the only verse in the Bible that speaks of this baptism tells me that it was to place Jews and Greeks together into one body.

### **Had I Read it Correctly?**

I had to read this verse several times to be sure that I had read it correctly. So it was to *this end* that the baptism was given, "...baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks" (1 Cor 12:13), that is, to form one body of Jews and Greeks. I, at last, understood that by this "baptizing" the Holy Spirit took away the hostility between these people, tore down the separation that divided them and kept them apart. He melted them into a new people, a new body: the Church itself.

Just as different grapes from different plants can be united in one cup of blessing for the Communion service, so the winepress of the Holy Spirit unites men of different tongues to receive one unique hope (Eph 4:4-6). What a blessing to be a part of these great meetings where people of different races, different colors and different cultures sing together the praises of the Lord. That is what Paul calls the baptism of the Holy Spirit, "... by one Spirit... into one body, whether Jews or Greeks", and I would like to add, whether French or English or Spanish or African... Hallelujah! We were ourselves the sign, the evidence of the entrance of the tongues into God's International Church.

### **A Jeopardized Duel**

As you can see, I have the nature of a fencer. I like to make points. But in my duel with the Apostle Paul, he was scoring more points than I was. To keep my honor, I could see that I needed to tighten up my defense and make a point or two of my own. As it was, Paul and the "antis" had advanced too far into my territory. It was time to counter attack with my surprise tactics that I reserved for such occasions. I had one more trick up my sleeve and more than one string on my bow. All right, so the Bible does say that tongues will cease, but *when?* In the same passage Paul says that knowledge and prophecies will also cease (1 Cor 13:8). *Touche!* If the first two have not ceased, why should the third one have disappeared? *Touche!* Doesn't it seem rather arbitrary to eliminate one and keep the others? *Touche!* I crossed swords with an "anti" about this and was sure that I would lay him out on the ground. But I was out of luck. He was a real Musketeer. The blow with which I intended to floor him failed and in a minute I found myself skewered like a roasting chicken. He had me over the fire.

### **Knowledge and Prophecy**

I very quickly came to understand that before the New Testament had been written, when neither knowledge nor Bible prophecy had been sealed in holy writing, a spontaneous word of knowledge (understanding) and an equally spontaneous prophetic exhortation (1 Cor 12:8) were often given by the Holy Spirit in the meetings of the Primitive Church. Paul refers to this when he says, "you have heard about...the mystery made known to me.. You will be able to understand my insight (knowledge) into the mystery of Christ..." (Eph 3:3,4). But when knowledge and prophecy were confined to the New Testament writings, these two gifts (charismas) also came to an end. From then on "Knowledge" and "Prophecy" took on another character. They became commentaries, an explanation or an interpretation which cannot add anything to what has already been written. Their "inspiration" is not

the same as that of the New Testament writings. Otherwise they would have to be added to the Bible. That is what the Mormons have done with the tablets of Joseph Smith. They are made of gold, if you please! They are authoritative for the Mormons, but only for them. Other religions have their inspired prophets or infallible leaders. That is one of the characteristics of a sect. These writings are placed on the same level as the Bible and even manage to eclipse the Bible's authority and teachings. There are prophets such as Agabus who predicted a famine (Acts 11:22), but they have nothing in common with those that Paul mentioned when he said, you are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone (Eph 2:20). Knowledge and prophecy are part of the foundation to which no one can add anything more. Every Christian can say with Paul that Knowledge and Prophecy will cease. And they did cease when the last line was written by the author of Revelation. Dr. Scofield puts it this way, "The New Testament prophet was not merely a preacher, but an inspired preacher through whom, until the New Testament was written, new revelations suited to the new dispensation were given." This is what is meant by the expression "...when that which is perfect is come..." (1 Cor 13: 10). The finished and completed writing of the Word of God is the ultimate of perfection. It is written, "I have seen a limit to all perfection: Thy commandment (Word) is exceedingly broad" (Ps 119:96).

## The Blind Leading the Blind

Along with many others, I was convinced that the end of tongues was linked with 1 Corinthians 13:10, "But when the perfect is come...". I had heard it repeated so many times that I believed it without checking it out. After all, if it was written, it must be true. It was so evident. But a shadow of doubt came over me and I decided to read for myself what the Holy Spirit had to say on this subject. What a shock! It wasn't my Musketeer who dealt the final blow, but Paul himself. I realized with indignation that I had been duped once again. As a matter of fact, *nowhere in the Bible does the Holy Spirit say that the gift of tongues will cease when that which is perfect is come.* By simply, unhurriedly reading God's Word, I discovered the error. Everything was clearly written in these verses that are often misquoted and used for dishonest ends. When I reread 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, I found... well, let's look at it together. First of all, let's take a look at verse 8. "...but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away." That is very clear. The following two verses will now tell us what will pass away when that which is perfect is come. Let's carefully read verse 9. "For we know (knowledge) in part, and we prophesy in part," But where are tongues? They are not in the verse. I am afraid that we are the ones who put them into this verse *in order to believe* that they would remain at least until that which is perfect is come. In other words, the disappearance of tongues *is not tied* as the other gifts with the coming of that which is perfect. Paul never said that. On the contrary, he says, and we have seen it again and again, that the end of the tongues gift has to do with something completely different—the *purpose* for which God gave it. This *purpose* was fully achieved when it was fully admitted that the nations, as well as "this people" (the Jews), benefited from Jehovah's salvation. When this fact was universally believed, accepted and no longer contested by anyone, this gift was no longer needed. Here, at the very time that this gift was justified, the one who used it more and better than anyone else was led by the Spirit to say, "tongues ... will cease" or, according to another version "will not continue". These "tongues of fire" went out, not because that which is perfect came but because of a lack of fuel, lack of the presence of "this people" (the Jews), and especially their unbelief which made them oppose the salvation of other peoples. Stars, as everyone knows, are visible and useful only at night. When the sun rises they disappear. So it is with the gift of tongues. It was only useful during the darkness of an unbelieving Israel who opposed the nations' salvation. The gift faded out very simply when the Gentiles' calling came to light. This is what finished off the last of my resistance.

I tried, as so many others have done, to translate verse 10, "when that which is perfect is come..." by the possibility, "when *perfect* is come". And *perfect* for me was the Lord. Supposing this were true, then in the eighth verse that would mean prophecy, knowledge and tongues would not cease until the Lord's return. If this is true, why does the thirteenth verse say, "these three *remain*: faith, hope and love", contrasting them with the three others which pass away? These three remain, but after what? It is clear that faith and hope will also disappear at the Lord's return (Love is excluded because it is eternal). If prophecy, knowledge and tongues disappear only when Christ comes back, that would mean that faith and hope would disappear with them at the same time. In fact, here is what I made the text to say, "*six things abide* until that which is perfect is come: prophecy, knowledge, speaking in tongues, hope, faith and love"!

But the Holy Spirit makes it clear and precise that, on the contrary, of these six, faith, hope and love alone abide and survive the first three. These three will cease before faith and hope, which cease at the Lord's return. So, when? Here is the order.

1 Knowledge and prophecy cease when that which is perfect is come, which is to say, when the Word of God is fully revealed. The gift of tongues ceases when its purpose is fulfilled, that is, when the Gentiles' place in salvation is assumed and when the judgment, carried by the sign, falls on unbelieving Israel.

2 Hope and faith do not cease, but remain until the Lord's return.

3 Love, which is the greatest gift, continues beyond Christ's return through eternity.

## The Sinking of the Ship

This time I understood the dishonesty on my part, quibbling over details as if I were the official defender of that doctrine. For my doctrine was like a ship full of holes ready to sink. Until now my ship was on the sea, but now the sea was in my ship and I was trying to patch up a few small pinholes

while the whole other side of my ship was caved in. I knew I had to abandon the ship as soon as possible, but I liked my old craft. Such is the human heart. It resists God and all evidence. I would rather break than yield. But what difference did my defeat make if the Truth of God triumphed? I still would have liked to believe that the end of I Corinthians 13 left some hope that tongues would continue, but I no longer had the heart to do so. I was tired of quibbling and splitting hairs over the Holy Spirit's clear declarations! I knew that the other expressions-"the partial" (verse 10), "when I became a man" (verse 11) and "but then face to face" (verse 12) -were not going to put me afloat again either. Meanwhile, I had become familiar with the Scriptures and their analogies. I had no difficulty understanding that when Paul said, "For we see dimly, but then face to face", he jumped from a present, partial situation to its glorious and remote conclusion, "then I shall fully know just as I have been fully known." We should not be surprised that Paul does so in one sentence. Any assiduous Bible reader is familiar with this practice. When the Lord Jesus went to the synagogue of Nazareth, He read the famous text of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me because He anointed me... He has sent me to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord..." (Luke 4:18,19). He interrupted His reading there in the middle of the sentence. And He did so intentionally, for between the last word He read and the following one in the same sentence, there are at least 1950 years. The part which He quoted concerned His first coming, while the rest spoke of His glorious return. Would we place Christ's first coming in the twentieth century on the pretext that both events are mentioned in the same sentence? And yet, that is exactly what is done with the gift of tongues by those who pretend that it will continue until we see the Lord face to face-all of that because it is written in the same chapter as the sentence which says "then I shall know fully as I am known". I do not want anything to do with this type of leaping exegesis which is worthy of a Jehovah's Witness. Let the acrobat lovers have it.

### Somersaults

Here is a typical example. A dear friend of mine who became charismatic insisted on defending speaking in tongues. He confided to me, "If the gift of speaking in tongues does not exist today except as a hoax, then it did not exist in the first century either and it was just as false then as now. For," he added, "God is the same yesterday, today and forever." Here we have a perfect example of what is called a sophism. It was just like saying, "If there are no more apostles capable of writing the Bible today, then there never were any!"

With this kind of reasoning, how can we explain that this God who does not repent of His gifts and who is the same yesterday, today and forever took away certain signs and manifestations even in apostolic times? Remember that at Pentecost *three* signs accompanied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit:

1. A sound like a mighty rushing wind.
2. Visible tongues of fire which came upon each of them.
3. The ability to speak in tongues (Acts 2:2-4).

It is obvious that the first two signs *did not continue* though God never made a formal declaration that they would not continue. Would it be honest to affirm in the name of an immutable God that since the first two signs do not exist today, they never did exist? But it would seem that, according to this astounding feat of exegesis, we should refuse the disappearance of the third sign-the only one God did say would disappear!

### A Bit more Bible Knowledge, if you please

For many the greatest difficulty is to admit that certain gifts of the Spirit, useful to the Church as they may have been, might no longer exist even though the Church continues to exist. They say that if the primitive Church had need of them, how much more does she have need of them in the last days! This apparent logic will not stand up to a minimum of reflection and knowledge of the Scriptures.

While debating the question with a very dear friend, he cited for me these two verses so often heard, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb 13:8), and "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom 11:29).

In his eyes that which the Word of God affirmed was actually for today.

I asked him why he did not practice circumcision on his baby son, nor the sacrifices prescribed by the Old Testament, nor the offerings of animals, nor the feasts of Jehovah.

Taken aback just a bit, he recognized that he had spoken hastily, for even if the Word of God remains eternally, certain of its teachings are not applicable to us today.

So he said to me, "Certainly in the Old Testament certain practices no longer concern us, but it is not the same in the New Testament which is for us. We must receive it in its entirety and, above all, the words of Jesus Christ."

I then opened my Bible to the New Testament and asked him to explain to me the words of Jesus in Matthew 10:5 where He sends the twelve apostles with these precise orders, "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles." That means that the Gospel should not be preached to any but Israel. "Do

you accept these words of Jesus today?"

After a moment of silence he said, "I never thought of that.

Since both of us admitted the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and that it was not by the will of man that any prophecy was given, but men spoke for God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit of God (II Pet 2:21), I asked him if the gifts of writing pages of knowledge and of inspired prophecy, so useful to the upbuilding of the Church, existed still. Without hesitation he replied, "No."

"Thus," I said, "you believe that God has taken this gift away?"

"Yes," was his response.

"In your opinion, does the Bible say this gift has ceased?"

"No."

"And yet you believe it has ceased."

"Yes.

"Thus you believe that this gift ceased even though the Bible nowhere says that it would cease. Then tell me, why do you not believe in the ceasing of speaking in tongues when the Bible says, "if there are tongues, they will cease" (I Cor 13:8).

NOTE: In error, certain people have used Revelation 22:18 seeking to prove the end to inspiration of the Bible with the completion of the book of Revelation to John. This verse treats only of "the prophecy of THIS book." The same ban is pronounced for the Pentateuch and yet numerous books have been added to that. The reason for the end of revelation must be found elsewhere, but this is outside our present consideration.

### **Manna, heavenly Bread**

For a long time I was in arms against the idea that God might have withdrawn from the Church one, or several, gifts of the Spirit. But I was forced to surrender to the evidence that it is God alone Who remains unchanged, not His gifts. God gave Jonah the gift of a vine, a living parasol, but later He withdrew it though Jonah felt he still needed it (Jonah 4:7,8). But when Jonah lost his vine, he did not lose His God. Though the Lord may take away His gift, He does not withdraw His presence. Just for the sake of comparison and not as an absolute proof, the history of Israel, wandering in the desert provided a lesson for me. Six days out of seven they received the heavenly gift of manna, bread sent down from above. They did not have this gift in Egypt, in spite of God's presence with them there. In the desert this gift was the sign, the guarantee of the rich harvest that awaited them in Canaan. It lasted forty years. But as soon as they arrived in the Promised Land, the manna ceased to fall (Joshua 5:12). God no longer sent down bread from heaven. Why? Because they had the fruit of the land. The gift which was a sign and a shadow of God's promises stopped when those promises became reality. Let me sum up this comparison in three points:

1 The manna was not given while the Israelites were in Egypt any more than the gift of tongues was given to the Lord Jesus during His earthly ministry.

2 The manna that fell during the forty years in the desert announced the harvests of Canaan just as the gift of tongues announced to the Jews the harvest of Gentiles (Acts 2:17,21).

3 The manna did not continue once the Israelites entered into the land of Canaan. In the same way, according to Paul, the gift of tongues does not continue once the harvest of the Gentiles is no longer denied or disputed.

### **The End**

Leaving the realm of comparison which can be contended, I was irresistibly impregnated with a truth having both a doctrinal and absolute aspect:

1 The judgment which the gift of tongues (Isaiah 28:11-13) pronounced on unbelieving Israel, dramatically began to fall on the country in the year 70 A.D. when Jerusalem fell and the Jewish people were dispersed throughout the world.

2 Speaking in tongues also announced the massive entrance of Gentiles into the Church, and parallels with the setting aside and judgment of Israel. The sign was completely fulfilled, as fully as our salvation was accomplished on the Cross. When Jesus cried, "It is finished", He excluded any repetition of this sacrifice. So the Holy Spirit prophecy, "if there be tongues, they will cease" (1 Cor 13:8), forbids the perpetuation of this gift.

### HE... EDIFIES HIMSELF

Once again I must go back and speak of this verse quoted a thousand times. "One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself" (1 Cor 14:4). This affirmation does not contradict the end of speaking in tongues, of which we have spoken at length. If we speak of this matter again, it is to place it in its historical context. It is like talking about the inspiration of the Bible-to say that it is inspired does not mean that new pages can be added today to the old ones. We have seen that the *purpose* of speaking in tongues was to be a sign for the unbelieving Israelites who opposed the salvation of the Gentiles. But at that time I was only partially clear about this truth, and I wondered if this was the only purpose. If so, speaking in tongues was really finished. But I was of the opinion, along with many others, that speaking in tongues was principally meant to edify the one speaking. I had heard it said so many times that I could repeat it by heart. At my immature level of understanding, this text all by itself seemed sufficient to me to silence all those denying the pertinence of speaking in tongues today. It was a gift of the Spirit to be used for personal edification. There was a triumphant arrogance in wielding this verse. It seemed as absolute to me as "you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church," (Matt 16:18). Being Catholic from birth, I had to change my tune about that famous verse. This weapon which, in my euphoric ignorance, I once believed to be infallible, ended up to be a wet fire-cracker, as wet as the other verse that did not say what Rome tried to make it say. Having been burnt before by similar mistakes, I decided that it would be useful to check out the text in its context, that is, chapters 12, 13 and 14 of I Corinthians. So, I started at zero, reading again all three chapters with great care. I had the impression that it was a bomb that backfired and blew up in my face.

#### Main Idea

What was the main idea that Paul was trying to get across in these three important chapters? *Others. The common good.* Throughout these verses, the obvious concern is for the good of *others*, for the edification of *others*. The theme is: *others, others, others* expressed in different words.

112:7 "...to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the *common good*."

212:15 "...that the members should have the same care for *one another*."

314:3 "...one who prophesies speaks to men for *edification and exhortation and consolation*."

414:4 "...one who prophesies edifies the *church*."

514:5 "so that the *church* may receive *edifying*"

614:6 "what shall I *profit you*"

714:7 "how will it be *known*"

814:8 "*who* will prepare himself for battle?"

914:9 "how will it be *known* what is spoken?"

1014:12 "for the edification of *the church*"

1114:16 "how will *one*"

1214:16 "since *he does not know* what you are saying"

1314:17 "the *other man* is not edified"

14:19 "that I may *instruct others*"

15:26 "Let all things be done for *edification*."

16:31 "that *all* may learn"

17:31 "that *all...* may be exhorted"

18 All of the thirteenth chapter of love which is the most excellent way, a fruit for *others*, for a tree does not bring forth fruit for itself.

But right here, springing up in the middle of this general spirit of altruism, which is the *purpose* of every gift of the Spirit, we find the best specimen of selfishness ever imagined, "One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself". How degrading to take the "charisma" (gift) that God had given as a sign *for others* and use it for one's own personal advantage! How egotistical can one get? The Apostle Paul definitely uses a tone of finding fault (Heb 8:8) when he stigmatizes, saying "... edifies himself". Cursed be those who monopolize the gifts of the Spirit. Shame on the "Samsons" who are more agitated by the Spirit than they are filled with the Spirit, and who play around with this gift like foolish, spoiled children who want everything for themselves.

### The Blame

"Look at the prophets," says Paul. "They are the example that we should follow. Obviously their gift builds them up too, but at least they edify others in the process. They prophesy for others, not just for themselves. When the eye sees, it sees for the whole body, not just for itself. It doesn't hoard the light it receives but allows the entire body to benefit from it. A foot does not walk all by itself. It carries the rest of the body." So, when the gift of tongues had its full reason for being, practicing it outside the presence of those to whom it was destined (unbelieving Jews) was forbidden by Paul who mastered this gift more than anyone else. He would have flogged those who misused it or who used it for personal ends. The pastor edifies himself but he also edifies others. The teacher, too, edifies himself also when he expounds Bible doctrine, but he edifies others at the same time. The evangelist gains personal edification from his gift, but it is the unsaved who really benefit from it. As a matter of fact, Paul placed prophesying in opposition to speaking in tongues in the same verse (1 Cor 14:4). One edified the church while the other, on the contrary, only edified himself. And not only that, but he was taken for a barbarian by those listening (1 Cor 14:11). In other words, the one who prophesied reached his goal-to edify others-while the one who spoke in tongues missed the goal completely. Using "...he edifies himself..." in this way is an abuse which Paul reprimanded. Paul meant: He edifies himself, *but only himself!* This reproach coming from the master of the gift of tongues must have shaken these Corinthian chatterboxes whom he classified as children in a previous chapter (1 Cor 3:1; 14:20).

I felt so alone in my discovery. What a joyful surprise to read from the pen of John Stott in his book *From Baptism to Fullness of the Spirit* that he taught along the same line as what I have written in this chapter. After having said that self-edification is by no means conformable to the New Testament teaching on edification, Stott continues "... aren't we forced to confess that there was an abusive use of a spiritual gift? What should we think of a professor who would only give himself private lessons? Or what should we think of a man, possessing a gift of healing, who would only heal himself? It is difficult to justify the personal use of a gift expressly given for the good of others."

### WHERE SHOULD SPEAKING IN TONGUES BE USED?

This question had already brought me to reconsider the very popular idea that the gift of tongues should mainly be practiced in private. This idea is attributed to Paul who supposedly taught it to the Corinthians. Of course, I went to see what Paul said about it. Foiled again! No matter what version I used, this passage was not to be found. I felt like I was pursuing the invisible man. All I could find was "if there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God." (1 Cor 14:28). That was simply the most elegant, the most Christian way to say "shut up!"

But there is no mention of speaking in tongues at home, in private. Where should speaking in tongues be used? Since it was given as a sign for unbelieving Jews, it is logical that it be practiced in their presence, there where the sign had a chance of being understood, not where no one understood it. The best example is found in Acts 2. Here the sign appeared in the presence of Jews from fifteen different nations to show them that the election of God was for "everyone" and that it extended to "all flesh". The sign was given there in public, not in someone's house or in the church. In the church, Paul preferred to say five words which were understood rather than ten thousand words which were not understood. Because of his calling as Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul had the opportunity to speak in tongues more than anyone else according to God's plan. In spite of the fact that he was the Apostle to the Gentiles, he was in contact and in conflict with Jews everywhere, even with his Jewish brethren in the faith who did not accept this particular point of doctrine.

When Paul said, "I speak in tongues more than you all." he was not referring to the number of words spoken. He did not want to compete with the Corinthians for he would have been badly beaten by their prodigious fluency and chatter. It was in earnest that he spoke more than they did (1 Cor 14:20), having spoken where he was seen and heard by unbelievers of *this people* for whom the sign was reserved (1 Cor 14:22).

Everyone knows that traffic lights are for the benefit of those who use the roadways. What would you think of a city's traffic commission deciding in the basement of the City Hall that all of the city's traffic lights would be for private use? If traffic lights are taken from their corners, their usage becomes absurd. In the same way, what use would the traffic light of tongues have been at home in private, that is to say, hidden from *this people* to whom the sign was destined? That is exactly what the sign meant. It was the green light opening the way for all the tongues of the earth to join in the procession of the Lord's redeemed.

### Another Proof

Perhaps someone is saying, "When Paul received the Holy Spirit, although he was a Jew, he did not speak in tongues. That would have been quite useful, especially for Ananias who came to lay hands on him." But in this case the sign would have been redundant. The Lord Himself had just informed each one directly in these words that the name of Jehovah and His Word were now passing on to the Gentiles, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before *the Gentiles and kings* and the sons of Israel" (Acts 9:15), and "The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear an utterance from His mouth. For you will be a witness for Him to *all men* of what you have seen and heard." (Acts 22:14,15). Paul knew it. Ananias did too. The sign was unnecessary in their case, as it is now for those who already know that the Gospel is for the people of every nation, tribe and tongue. Neither Paul, nor Ananias, nor we today, contest this truth. The sign would be superfluous.

### Do not Forbid to Speak in Tongues

One day, after having explained all this, a brother asked me, "Why did Paul say, 'Do not forbid to speak in tongues.?' (1 Cor 14:39). The answer is that in spite of the Corinthian's exaggerations and their untimely and inappropriate use of this gift, it was still a gift of the Spirit. Paul only wanted to control it, not stifle it. As long as this gift was exercised in its right time, Paul could not forbid its use, except where it was misused. God's gifts and calling are without repentance, as we see in the case of Samson. His herculean strength was also a gift of the Spirit, but in his spiritual immaturity he used and abused it just as the Corinthians did with speaking in tongues. Samson's strength and the Corinthian's gift were to be channelled to better ends until the Holy Spirit withdrew their practice. Paul did not discourage Luke from writing the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. Paul wrote more of the inspired New Testament than anyone else. Concerning the rest of the New Testament he could have said, "Do not forbid anyone to write", as he said, "Do not forbid it", about speaking in tongues. To continue writing sacred Scriptures or speaking in tongues when God himself decreed these gifts would cease is the sort of thing which breeds heresy.

For those who, in spite of much evidence to the contrary, insist that no one should try to stifle the right to speak in tongues, I reply by citing another comparison. Speaking in tongues should be considered as one does the Gospel. It isn't enough to teach or to preach whatever seems applicable for it to have value. The Holy Spirit teaches us, using the pen of Paul, that the true Gospel, the only one that saves, is clearly explained. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, this explanation is remarkably precise:

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

The Gospel is the bridge of salvation crossing the river of sin and resting on five pillars. If any one of these five pillars are removed, salvation is not possible because the Holy Spirit tells us that this is the minimum, otherwise our faith is in vain. The true Gospel must therefore contain:

1. The death of Christ for our sins (verse 3)
2. The resurrection of Christ for our justification (verse 4)
3. The announcement of the Good News (verse 1)

4. The reception of this Good News (verse 1)
5. The living of the Good News with perseverance (verse 1)

Only a bridge firmly resting on these five pillars will lead to an assurance of salvation (verse 2). This is why the Holy Spirit adds "... if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." In other words, the other bank (or the "shore of salvation") can only be reached if these five pillars are in place. If one is missing, the bridge cannot be crossed.

- If one believes that Christ died but not that he was resurrected from the dead (I Cor 15:12) your faith is in vain writes Paul-and the bridge cannot be crossed.
- If one believes these first two essential points, but does not proclaim them (or if the proclaiming is done in private with the idea of only edifying the speaker) no one would be saved because God says "... and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom 10: 14)
- If the first three conditions are met but those who hear the offer of salvation do not receive it by faith, they cannot become children of God (John 1:12). One of the pillars is missing and the bridge cannot be used.
- And finally, if all four conditions are met but this good news is not inscribed permanently in the daily life through perseverance, the Bible says that you have believed in vain. The Gospel reduced to only 4/5 of its whole is as useless as the renown "Pont d'Avignon" whose span ends midway across the Rhone. This gospel can be used by no one to reach the shore of salvation: it is no longer the Gospel but instead a false gospel.

It is the same with speaking in tongues. It can be likened unto a bridge with seven pillars which could be called the great Bridge of Pentecost at Jerusalem. At least these seven pillars are needed to have a true speaking in tongues. And at the same time remembering that an act 2/7 or 4/7 or even 6/7 authentic means that it is actually false.

1 It must be an actual language. (I Cor 14:10, Acts 2:8)

2 It must not be addressed to men. (I Cor 14:2)

3 It must be addressed only to God. (I Cor 14:2)

4 It must not be a sign for believers. (I Cor 14:22)

5 It is to be a sign to the unbelieving *Jews* that the Gospel is for all peoples. (I Cor 14:21)

6 It is to be a sign of judgment for the unbelieving *Jews*. (Is 28:11-13, I Cor 14:21)

7 It is not to be practiced in private but publically in the presence of unbelieving *Jews* for whom it is destined. (Acts 2:5, I Cor 14:22)

If today we were presented with a manifestation of speaking in tongues having all the guarantees listed above, I too would say as does the Apostle Paul "...do not keep them from speaking in tongues." However, in the twentieth century, these seven conditions could never be found together in any gathering or church on the face of the earth.

The speaking in tongues that is presented to us today is not even an imitation of the authentic, but is instead a counterfeit of that described in the Bible. No one would ever hear me say of it, "do not keep them from speaking." Printed on the money of my country is solemn warning: counterfeiters will be punished at hard labor. How much harder will be judged the person who counterfeits that which is to be a gift of the Spirit.

### **The Great Number**

The thing that reassures some and troubles others is the great number of people who speak in tongues today. That gave me a sense of security too in the past. I thought to myself with a certain self-satisfaction, "It is obvious that all who speak in tongues are not necessarily liars." But with my mania for thinking things through, which I inherited from Descartes, I could not leave it at that! (I have since learned that even the characteristics of analyzing

and thinking comes from God, for He commands us to love Him with all our *mind*.) Like a storm cloud darkening the sky, my constant questioning often troubled my serenity when I wondered about the real worth of my arguments. Having great numbers is not a proof of being right. It was the majority that said, "Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!" (Luke 23:18). The fact that 700 million Moslems believe in Mohammed does not prove that what he said is true. More people believe in the miracles of Lourdes and consequent doctrines than speak in tongues. Does that mean that we must accept the false doctrines concerning Mary? Jesus was often alone. So were Jeremiah and Paul. That did not change the fact that they were in the right.

But the greatest argument of all had to do with the experiences of several leaders in the evangelical world today who speak in tongues, and whose reputations were regarded as a reference. Though that may still be a point of reference for others, it no longer counts for me, for there are many great men of God with world-wide reputations who are thoroughly against the use of tongues today.

### The Magnifying Glass

A few years ago I had the honor of meeting one of the best known, most highly regarded leaders among those who speak in tongues. As he shared with me some of his discoveries which have nothing to do with the subject we are discussing, I recognized two obvious doctrinal errors. His reputation also slipped. I can still listen to his preaching with appreciation, but not with the same blind admiration which his reputation had previously evoked. Without a magnifying glass he had a respectable Christian stature, but nothing more than the normal Christian possesses. His teaching was no more infallible than that of the Pope in Rome who stands for indulgences and against the marriage of priests. But that is another question and it is their problem, not mine. My responsibility is to submit to the Scriptures as Job did (Job 32:12). There are only two responsibilities, either we believe in the sovereign, transcendental Word of God, or we believe in "proofs", experiences" and other famous assertions like those I have just mentioned. I had to recognize, in spite of myself, that these "experiences" which are doubtful at best, lack weight, besides the fact that they are being exercised outside of God's timing.

### CONTRADICTIONS

Recently I heard a song in tongues. The interpretation was twenty times longer than the few words of the song. No one batted an eye. Everyone in the church was ready to swallow the camel even though they had a reputation for straining at a gnat. And what was I to make of my most recent encounter with speaking in tongues heard a few weeks ago, where the expression "spiriti santi" was uttered at least three times without its being mentioned once in the interpretation? Besides, this pseudo (would-be) gift of tongues was not in Italian, only the expression "spiriti santi". Now the "spiriti santi" is the plural of "spiriti santo" (Holy Spirit). By using the plural form of "one Spirit" (Eph 4:4-6) this man was blaspheming the Holy Spirit without knowing it. He would never have deliberately done so. Who was manipulating his tongue during the worship service? The assembly in which these outrageous practices took place is known to be sober and moderate. Most surprising and troubling of all, these contradictions did not seem to disturb in the least bit the serenity of those who heard them. When I tried to ask about these anomalies, the answers were vague and evasive. Many confessed that their gift of tongues was not understood by the one who spoke it, nor by those who heard it, *not even by the one who interpreted it!* According to them, this was an ecstatic interpretation, more or less a heartfelt comprehension. Others admitted that the same case of speaking in tongues could very well have several interpretations! So, if understood correctly, when wheat is sown, the harvest might turn out to be corn, oats, rye or barley without any surprise on the farmer's part? Do you expect that a cat can give birth at the same time to kittens, puppies, little foxes and chicks? But no one gets upset when, in the spiritual realm, we are asked to believe that one kind of speaking in tongues brings forth several kinds of interpretations? Does evangelical Darwinism exist? Are we witnessing a sort of mutation of the species? Am I just supposed to accept passively all of this without pointing out the fraud?

Someone wrote me to say that he found nothing abnormal about the interpretation being two or twelve times longer than the original message. According to him, the interpretation is not the translation of what was said in tongues but God's answer to it! I was flabbergasted! Even if I were the only one in the world to protest, I would do so. The Scriptures cannot be manipulated in this way! They clearly state that an interpretation is imperative, for Paul wrote to the ones who spoke in tongues at Corinth, "...how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the 'Amen' at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? (I Cor 14:16). In other words, the one who heard speaking in tongues had to understand what was being said in order to add his 'Amen' (so be it). And how could he understand? By the interpretation (I Cor 14:28). And this interpretation was no less than the translation of what had just been said to God by the Spirit. The only one who would dare say the contrary are those who distort the Scriptures to their own destruction (II Pet 3:16).

## I Refuse to do so

I could bring in a whole truckload of these sad "experiences" which have been labeled with the magic password "Holy Spirit". In reality, they near the mark of imagination, opportunism, subjectivism, and some even smell of sulfur. I could go on and on. The supply is inexhaustible, but I do not care to dwell on these sordid, though unfortunately true, stories. I refuse to use the methods of those who try to discredit the apostles because of Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial. You cannot always judge a cause by those who defend it. Some one brought to my attention that immorality is plaguing Pentecostal circles almost as much as it is plaguing the Catholic clergy, but for different reasons. It is because of their hypersentimental approach to spiritual life, the abandonment of their wills to unknown psychic powers, and their excessive desire for success. It is no news to me that they are often disloyal toward other evangelicals, readily fishing in troubled waters, and that in their words as well as in their writings, respect for the truth does not subdue them. As for me, I refuse to point out these faults systematically, especially since other evangelicals may not be any better. The green light has already turned yellow for those who have set the Word of God aside while they still profess to swear by the Bible alone.

## Three Dangers

There are three dangers involved in the present practice of speaking in tongues. In order to consider them correctly and to bring out the seriousness of the matter, we must keep in mind that this gift (charisma) was withdrawn by the Holy Spirit Who had given it for reasons that I have already treated at length.

**First danger:** Paul says that while speaking in tongues, the understanding (mind) remains sterile (unfruitful) (I Cor 14:16). It is in neutral gear. The Holy Spirit is supposed to take over. The Psalmist wrote, "My heart overflows with a good theme; I address my verses to the King" (Ps 45:1). If the Holy Spirit takes the place of the composer, then the composer is no longer composing. And "letting yourself go" can lead to a very comfortable pillow of laziness.

**Second danger:** Speaking in tongues easily becomes a diploma of superiority which opens all the floodgates. For many, the gift of tongues is the ultimate proof of consecration, but at the same time it becomes their field marshal's baton. Others are only second-class soldiers, or they are, at their best, simple corporals. Some go so far as to think those who do not have this gift must be unbelievers.

**Third danger:** Speaking in tongues often replaces self examination and self judgment before the Word of God. When sin moves into a Christian's life, the Christian should examine himself (I Cor 11:28, 31). But using tongues as a criterion of spirituality makes the test easy. Each one tries his gift of tongues to see if it still works, which, without a doubt, it will, since the Holy Spirit, Who may be quenched and grieved, has nothing to do with the affair. The one who analyzes himself in this way would be able to sigh with relief and say, "Since the Spirit still speaks through me in such a supernatural way, He must approve, or more exactly, He does not disapprove of me, at least not enough to take His gift away from me." A conclusion which is no longer based upon what the Word of God condemns but rather upon what the gift of tongues accredits, is an aberration. "Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves" (Rom 14:22). Many of our charismatic brothers have run into this danger. They have found themselves in the same camp as Catholic priests with their false doctrine. But they can no longer disapprove of them, for if a priest speaks in tongues, it means that God's Holy Spirit accepts him on the same level as any born again evangelical. And thus, such pointed dilemma and poor deduction lead directly to the surrender of all doctrine.

## THE BRAZEN SERPENT

Moses made the brazen serpent according to God's orders, and it was the means of salvation for thousands of people (Numbers 21:9). It was a gift from Heaven, the power of God for the salvation of those who believed in His Word. The Lord Jesus Christ used this image in His famous interview with Nicodemus, even making a parallel between his own person and work and the serpent, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up..." (John 3:14). The Israelites kept this bronze serpent for centuries afterwards. But let us look at II Kings 18:4 to see what good King Hezekiah did with it, "He removed the high places and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah. He broke into pieces the bronze serpent Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel burned incense to it." This serpent had become a stumbling block for Israel. And yet it was the same one that existed in the days of Moses. It was neither a replica, nor an imitation of the true one. It was the true one-the exact same one. The initial act of looking at it had been embellished with the passing of time. Now, the Israelites were even offering the incense which was reserved for the Lord alone. Under the guise of worshipping God it ended up becoming an idol, taking the place of God himself. We can be sure that the person who denounced the outdated and reproachable practice of looking at the serpent did not have the unanimous approval

of those around him. Partisans of the bronze serpent could have justified their faith by advancing historical and biblical proofs, not to mention those based on experience. Or they could have pleaded that God who had commanded the Israelites to look at the serpent had not changed, that he remained the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8), that the experience which had taken place in the desert could also happen in their time, that the power of God had not changed and moreover, that not one word was said about the end of the serpent's use and effectiveness.

### **A Relic**

Actually, the spiritual practices which pivoted on this relic became an abomination in the eyes of the Lord. For many, the gift of tongues is also a relic which they defend and carry in their hearts. They cherish it, talk about it all the time, and give it their unlimited devotion, since it was God who gave this gift... but God also gave the bronze serpent for a specific reason for a specific time. Beyond that time it became obsolete, like medicine which becomes dangerous if kept after its expiration date. Healing is transformed into infection. This is just what happened with the bronze serpent. The Israelites' spiritual life had become infected. When the serpent was removed by Hezekiah, many thought their religious life would fall apart. They had nothing tangible to hang onto. I can understand why some people hold on to the gift of tongues, with a sort of frenzy. It is because their spiritual life is so weak that, if they lost this gift, there would be nothing left. Their inner life is almost entirely based on this external manifestation, and if it were taken away, their spiritual life would collapse. They cannot get along without it. Their life would lose all sense of direction. Without the gift of tongues they would be like drug addicts without their drugs, going through unbearable withdrawal pains.

### **Bad Faith**

I have met such people. One day I met a pastor, an extremist, advocate of the gift of tongues, who tried to convince me that it was an experience that every man had to have. His "bronze serpent" was for everyone and for all times. I opened my Bible with him and asked him to read verses 29 and 30 of I Corinthians chapter 12.

"Are all apostles?"

"No, of course not", he replied.

"Are all prophets?"

"No."

"Are all teachers?"

"No."

When we came to the next verse he refused to answer or read any further. He could very well see where this text would lead him. Had I asked, "Do all speak in tongues?" the answer would necessarily have been, "No". I tried to take him back to this passage three times, and three times he refused to go all the way to the end. He left me there, quite angrily. From then on he considered me a "persona non grata". When you tear down high places like Gideon did, you have to expect violent reactions, and the loss of friends.

### **Ecstasies**

Having come this far, we must now demystify certain practices, or experiences, which are unconsciously taking many people away from the Scriptures. Here is the testimony given by the parents of a young, truly born-again Christian. When their son spent time in his room before God with the gift of tongues, they noticed that something happened. When he came downstairs, he was a bit like Moses when he came down from the mountain completely transfigured by the presence of God. Irrefutable and very convincing, don't you think? It certainly appears that way. But to come to that conclusion, you have to ignore what we have said about speaking in tongues. You must put aside the fact that it was not a sign for believers, that the practice of this gift was not given to everyone, that it is nowhere written that a person should practice it in private, not to mention the simple fact that this gift is no longer needed. Here you have at least three violations of the Scriptures, not counting all the others which I cannot reiterate without repeating all that has been said before. All those who are impressed by such experiences do not realize that they are overstepping the Scriptures. They are being completely subjective. Eastern religions offer as much, if not more. Those who have had the privilege of reading *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome*, the autobiography of Father Chiniquy, a Canadian priest who was converted after fifty years in the Roman Church, would do well to reread it. He says in this book that when he was a priest, his most blessed and exalting moments were spent in adoration before the Host. That was where he touched the Sublime. He was transported, lifted up and transfigured by it. After his conversion, he saw this sublime experience, linked with the doctrine of transubstantiation, to be the abomination it is. And yet, what elevation of the soul, what exaltation, what a testimony!

## **False Exaltation**

I remember going to a camp in France when I was a new Christian. Under the sincere pretext of evangelizing the neighboring town, a friend and I took off for an afternoon without permission from the camp officials. In the name of Jesus Christ we had quite an escapade-harmless but glorious. We thought we had really done something fantastic. When we came back to camp we were as radiant and light-footed as if we were walking on clouds. The camp director, a mature Christian, didn't understand at all. We felt justified by our bliss. It was real-life experience. We were sure of ourselves and of our experience, but its exaltation did not last. There is one thing I can see now. It didn't take long for me to recognize this experience by its true name. Rather than ecstasy, revelation, or some other height of spirituality, it was nothing more than auto-suggestion. The truth remains that God prefers obedience to sacrifice (1 Sam 15:22), and that the prophet's spirit is subject to the prophet's control (1 Cor 14:31). Experiences which exalt the soul do not say much to me, even when it is the bronze serpent of the Bible that inspires them. Since when are religious intensity and emotion a sign of truth and spirituality? In Ezekiel 8:14 we find that the women at the gates of the temple in Jerusalem were in such deep devotion that tears came to their eyes. But it was an abominable idol named Tammuz which had provoked their state of ecstasy. There is no doubt that these women had a good feeling, a sort of inner freedom, but there is no doubt either that God called this experience a great abomination. Still today when so many psychic experiences are taking the place of simple faith in the Word of God, we must cry out with the prophets of old, "To the Law and to the testimony!" (Is 8:20). I admit that there is a certain intoxication with the Holy Spirit. The experience of being filled with the Spirit is not foreign to me. I have known such moments and would never deny them. But I have also tested all things and held onto that which is good. As far as the rest is concerned, I have rejected it. All of this was very difficult for me, especially since I too, like the Apostle Peter, could claim my own Pentecost.

## **Humiliating Surrender**

All I had believed, all that I had fought for and all I had hung on to was sinking-and taking me with it. That hurt. But what was even more painful, was admitting that someone else was right. In reality it was my EGO, my Pride, that was being sorely beaten. Having believed for years that I had received more than others, I had a smug little feeling of superiority. It was not easy to recognize that those I had looked down on knew more about the matter than I did and that they were on more solid ground than I. It was like breaking a horse. I thought I could buck off the cowboy on my back, but instead of throwing him off, I was broken in. It was a rodeo where I had little chance of winning. The Bible passages that I had slid over so easily now turned against me and pricked me like spurs. And what's worse, when I called for help from those on my side, they had no theological basis to defend their side of the question. Everything was built upon experiences, without any mention of the negative experiences which were just short of blasphemy and imposture.

## **The Other Guy's Fault**

When I timidly ventured to point out these things, I was invariably told that it was others who were the phonies. "Others" referred to other denominations, other Pentecostal churches, but never their own church. It was the church across town or down the street. For the Swedish Covenant assemblies, it was the Gypsies who falsified everything. For the Assemblies of God, it was the Charismatics who smelled of sulfur--or the Brahamists, the Four Square, the Full Gospel, the Holy Rollers, the Revival movement, etc. Though all of these groups originated from the same spiritual branch, they could not guarantee the authenticity of anyone but themselves. And not even all of them were sure of that, for several admitted that they were worried because the occultist felt at ease in their church whereas he avoided the other ones. When you know that occultists are accustomed to speaking in tongues, you have good reason to be troubled. But whether it be occult or not, it is still all a matter of experience.

I personally heard the president of an occult group in France say, "In our circles we speak in tongues, and they are contemporary languages." But what he added made me shudder "... It is not like the Pentecostals." So, this famous occultist prided himself on having an authentic gift of speaking in tongues, while the Pentecostal movement could hardly claim such a record of authenticity.

What can we say in the face of this example of authenticity, inspired by the father of lies, and disguised in terms as evangelical as the extraordinary words of the young woman of Acts 16 mentioned earlier? What can we say, but that Hell itself is hidden behind this apparent orthodoxy? The Enemy knows very well how to manipulate the railroad switches of our lives. He has always wanted to put God's people on a dead-end track. He is the great expert at camouflage, using a few fragmented Bible passages and so-called spiritual experiences to make the track seem true and relevant.

From the many misleading ways, I pick out one that best illustrates the subtlety of him who disguises himself as an angel of light (II Cor 11:14). A certain magazine dedicated to "experience" tells how a French pastor, not knowing one word of Hebrew, began to speak in this language by the Spirit and was understood by a fellow worker. How many applauded the biblical orthodoxy of this gift! My astonishment does not come from the phenomenon itself which appears to me to be as authentic as the miracles of Lourdes, or to be as evangelical as the surprising words of the possessed damsel of Acts 16.

No, my surprise comes from the following commentary which I now quote, "...this seems to present all the needed guarantees (of biblical authenticity)." It amazed me all the more for we have here an example of counterfeit sewn together with such coarse white thread that it is very easy to expose the imposture.

1 First of all, the gift was recognized and understood by a believer convinced of the universality of the salvation offer. The sign did not teach him a thing. He was in contradiction with the Holy Spirit Who precisely says that this sign is for the non-believer (1 Cor 14:22).

2 Secondly, the gift of tongues, as practiced and taught in the New Testament, was anything but Hebrew. As a matter of fact, the tongues spoken by the Spirit are cited as foreign tongues or barbarian (other than Hebrew) tongues (1 Cor 14:11). Now then, who were the foreigners and the strangers? There is only one possible answer: the non-Jews. The tongues are, without exception, in contrast to the Hebrew tongue.

No Gentile needed to be convinced that the Jews could have access to the presence of God, since it was these same Jews who brought them salvation on God's behalf. The sign of tongues was given so that the Jews might understand that salvation was henceforth open to the Gentiles and *never the opposite*.

To have a Gentile (or a Frenchman) speak in Hebrew would be to reverse the divine order, as if, for instance, to give Peter's vision to the Gentile Cornelius. Now Cornelius, receiving the message of salvation from Peter's mouth, had absolutely no need to learn that Peter could be saved just like he was. It would have been complete *nonsense*. Or could we imagine for an instant that we would need a linguistic miracle in the "langue d'oc" (old language of southern France) or in the "langue d'oïl" (old language of northern France) to convince an Englishman that the French have a right to French nationality?

This is, however, what the above article seriously relates, that is to say, that the gift of tongues in Hebrew given to this French Christian reveals to him that the Jews have, as much as he does, the right to their God!

With the help of certain commentator's naivety, the Enemy shuffles the cards to his liking. He has no trouble achieving his purpose which is to sow confusion and discord among God's people, and in that way, to prepare the coming of the Great Babylon, whose name also means *confusion!*

When the Dalai-Lama recently visited France, the newspapers all carried the story about His Holiness' memory of a particular incident which took place when he was yet a child. Though no one ever taught him and though he lived in a distant province, he was able to speak the dialect of the capital, Lhasa. This example of speaking in tongues was real, verifiable and contemporary. No one would even think of questioning its authenticity. But what spirit enabled the Dalai-Lama to speak in tongues? I will let you answer for yourselves.

### **If there were no Banknotes, there would be no Reason to Counterfeit**

One of my dearest friends is the pastor of a Revival church. I greatly appreciate this man's spiritual and moral qualities. Like many others he says about speaking in tongues that "it would be of no use to counterfeit banknotes if there were no true ones." He realizes that there is a lot of counterfeiting in connection with this gift, but in his mind, it is the true gift that is practiced in his own church. What he does not realize is that even in his own church he is completely duped. The experience that he insists on reproducing-though he does not manage to do so every time-is simply a handful of outdated bills which are no longer valid, having been retired from circulation centuries ago. He pretends that he is reproducing what was practiced in the early Church, but his Practice is far from being biblical.

Notice instead:

*First*, in his church 99% of the speaking in tongues consists of messages addressed to men. That already makes 99% of this Practice false since the Holy Spirit says that he who speaks in tongues does not speak to men (1 Cor 14:2).

*Next*, the remaining 1% is addressed to believers, which is one hundred percent contrary to the Holy Spirit Who teaches the very opposite (1 Cor 14:22).

*Finally*, all this does not fulfill a biblical Purpose because it does not convince unbelieving Jews, for whom the speaking in tongues was designed.

*More than that*, armed with a tape recorder, I went to see one of the members of his church who, according to the pastor, had the gift of interpretation of tongues, and in whom he had full confidence. I played for him a recording of "tongues" spoken earlier and asked him to interpret again what he had heard previously and had interpreted on that occasion. Alas! the second interpretation was as different from the first one as the Rhone River is different from the Rhine, and which, in fact, flows in the opposite direction! The contradiction between the two interpretations was very evident. I pushed the verification further. A Scottish brother had recorded for me the Lord's Prayer in his native broad Scott's accent. The interpretation given did not resemble in any way the prayer of our Lord.

In fact, his printing plate was so crude that any counterfeiter would reject it hands down. But he loves his counterfeit banknotes and holds on to them because he believes them to be authentic, the only real ones among false ones. That causes smiles, but sad smiles. But, in addition to the sad smile

and his false printing plates, I still hold a friendly and brotherly attitude toward him, which he deserves.

The Bible warns us against the temptation to live by sight, by miracles, signs and experiences. Those who travel this dangerous route will be easy prey for the Antichrist who comes with all sorts of miracles, signs and lying wonders, and with wicked deception (II Thess 2:9, 10). The satanic spirit is already at work today and his way seems to be well prepared in the hearts of those who, even though they name the name of Christ, put themselves in a position leaning toward the Antichrist. When the fruit is ripe, it will fall of itself. The Adversary will have only to take it for himself without effort or opposition.

## NEARING THE END

This next-to-last chapter is for you my Pentecostal brother who, until now, has sincerely believed this particular point of doctrine, a teaching which now seems mutilated, and as out-of-date as the bronze serpent was in the time Hezekiah. The teaching of the Scriptures should be enough for you, but in spite of yourself, your environment still holds you under the influence of experiences which are tacked onto the Bible, sometimes for the better and many times for the worse.

If the reading of this treatise precisely dealing with the gift of tongues has left so much as 1% of doubt in your mind, let me approach you on your favorite ground, that of *experience itself*. But as I do so, I tremble for fear that you will not be honest with yourself and with God. Try this experience for yourself and by yourself. Do it without cheating. Sometime when you are alone and in prayer, tape what you say in tongues before God. You believe that this gift has not been removed and that you genuinely possess it. That is your right, but you must also accept that your brother's gift of interpretation is as authentic as your gift. Choose several of the most spiritual Christians whom you know and in whom you have complete confidence. Ask each one *separately* to interpret your speaking in tongues. After taping all of them, listen and compare them for yourself, if you have the courage to do so. Within a few words or shades of meaning, each interpretation should say the same thing. Then you can tell me if I exaggerate when I use the word *counterfeit*. I can imagine what you are feeling as you read these lines. You are disturbed. You may be afraid: afraid to discover the truth. And already you are backing off. You know that you will probably never try this "test". Your heart has already found a good excuse to talk you out of it, but your excuse will convince no one but yourself. "It would be sacrilegious to put a gift of the Spirit to such an electronic test. I will not stoop to it." Are you sure that this is a good excuse? Under other circumstances you would not hesitate to tape a message, to listen to it yourself and even pass it along to someone else. Or is it the fear of discovering the truth about yourself that makes you hesitate? Here is a way to test the spirits and it is available to you. Besides, electronics is an exact science, and quite neutral. It could never trick you or trick itself. But maybe you would rather be tricked and stay that way. You might be angry with me. I can understand that. You are angry with me for proposing a means of verification that is infallible. The pat answer that "no one understands" is of no help now. Your game of hide-and-seek is over and you have been found out. It took me a long time, but at last I saw the light.

Perhaps you do not really want to understand and see clearly-like the stubborn man who, when he learned that the saint to whom he often prayed never existed, replied, "Whether she exists or not, I will pray to her anyway! So there!" That is the epitome of the stubbornness of the human heart. "I want my bronze serpent ... so there!" Go ahead and enjoy yourself with your gift. Cherish it. With that kind of an attitude your game can become an idol. If you refuse to dethrone it and throw it out of your life, beware lest God give you up to your own desires and to the spiritual ruin to which they lead.

### The Remedy

Several Christians who did not have this gift and who sought for it for years, shared with me their desperation because they had not been able to find it. They lived in the constant agony of being rejected by God. They had been told that they were not saved unless they had spoken in tongues. And if they persisted in saying that they were saved, they were considered to be second rate citizens and not full blooded ones with full rights. For you who are suffering from pangs of doubt, let me encourage you to stop tormenting yourself, and by faith to lay hold of the promise that all things are yours in Christ (Col 2: 10)-Christ, who never spoke in tongues Himself, though He is the SON OF GOD.

Others have come to me and confessed their utter confusion, for their practice of this gift was nothing more than a facade hiding what was, in reality, spiritual and moral defeat. Their gift in tongues was a sort of compensation for a life of failure. They remained shallow although maintaining the appearance of spiritual depth. They needed this gift to boost themselves up in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. Those who spoke in tongues the most, suffered from a distressing instability which they had kept hidden, not daring to divulge it, and not knowing its cause. To reassure themselves of their spirituality and to keep face before others, they were constantly doubling the dose. They were caught in a vicious circle, turning around their own experiences.

This quicksand of psychic experiences, to say the least, took them on a spiritual rollercoaster of unpredictable highs and lows, ecstasy one minute, tears the next. The diagram of their life was like the teeth of a saw, happy in the morning, down in the evening. Praising their pastor one month, cutting him to pieces the next. And changing churches like changing shirts.

There is a way to deliverance. First, be sure that you have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ unto salvation. Next, do as Hezekiah did who broke to pieces the bronze serpent *that Moses had made*. That is to say, fully confess this unbiblical error before God. Finally, renounce this practice and claim the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanses from all sin (1 John 1: 7,9). When the Israelites forsook their "biblical" idol, their sin was forgiven. God will forgive yours, too. By faith you must take hold of God's full pardon and His complete deliverance from the psychic forces which reign over you and make you a slave, in spite of all your efforts, to their unstabilizing influence. At the feet of Jesus, Legion, the most unstable man you could meet, the man whose cries were not uttered, the man whose life was an elevator ride that always stopped at the bottom (Mark 5:5), found peace, rest, his right mind, and the power at last to bear coherent testimony to those around him. My fervent prayer is that these few lines would find you prostrate before Him Who delivers from all alienation, even that which is provoked by a biblical zeal void of knowledge (Rom 10:2).

## FINALLY, BRETHREN

This last chapter is for you my non-Pentecostal brother. My book has put you at ease. It assures you that you are right. My spiritual journey is similar to yours. Perhaps you would like me to go even further, all the way to the end of a logical conclusion, and say that the present speaking in tongues which is both anti- and extra-scriptural can only be of diabolical origin. I have not said that, it is true, because conscientiously I cannot go beyond what I have seen for myself to be true or false. Certainly I recognize that the father of lies is waiting in ambush behind this experience. Some people affirm that they have, according to the commandment of Scripture, tested the spirits controlling those who speak in tongues and have found that they were demons. I have not gone that far. I have not received the gift of testing the spirits other than by examining the Scriptures. The simple use of a tape recorder has confirmed this scriptural examination and revealed that a spirit of error is presiding over the speaking in tongues today. The spirit of error is certainly not the Holy Spirit. Perhaps you will tell me that a satanic spirit and a spirit of error are as different as a white hat and a hat that is white. Since you insist, I would refer you to the writings of Dr. Gerald E. MacGraw which are, in fact, an extension of my own book. I suggest that you consider a few short excerpts from his interesting article entitled "Tongues Should Be Tested":

"...after a few moments of prayer, we ask the person who came for counseling to speak in tongues ... For most of them had already exercised the gift of tongues during their private devotions. Then the leader of the group interrogates the spirit who inspires the speaking in tongues, not the person himself. Many doubted the authenticity of this gift, but many others were certain that this test would confirm its divine origin. The shocking fact is that more than 90% had to admit after this test the demonic origin of their gift of tongues. There are many Pentecostals and charismatics who recognize that demonic tongues exist. However, they insist that their gift is genuine. A young woman asked to have her gift tested because she felt there were evil influences in her life ... she was sure that her gift was of divine origin. Another woman in her church who had the gift of discernment had assured her that in her case the gift came from the Holy Spirit. When we got together to Pray for the deliverance of this young woman, the spirit told us that he hated the Lord Jesus Christ. In questioning this demon, he confessed to be the origin of this girl's gift of tongues ... Even well grounded Christians can be possessed by a demon who speaks in tongues ... There have been missionaries home on furlough who have heard someone blaspheming in tongues, using the language of their mission field. Someone asked to see me. She was a remarkable Christian, gifted, well balanced and trustworthy, a soul winner ... it was impossible for me to imagine that this distinguished Christian could harbor a demon, concerning, the gift of tongues ... Soon she began to speak in tongues, expressing bitterness and hate towards Christ, towards herself and towards us. Undeniably, she had a demonic gift in tongues. Others ... are profoundly sincere and spiritual. Their life witnesses a true conversion, a real desire to grow in the Lord ... I do not believe that the demon who speaks in tongues can separate someone from Christ ... But the experiences that I have had in counseling show that multitudes of

enthusiastic Christians think they are speaking in tongues when it is only an illusion."

I leave Dr. MacGraw with the responsibility of his conclusions, but I do not contradict him. Others in Europe have come up with the same results as he. When George Burch tested the gift of tongues in 147 people in the United States he found that 3 cases were doubtful, whereas the 144 others were cases of demon possession. This is, however, an area of investigation to which I do not yet have access. I can neither deny nor confirm that the gift of tongues is, as Dr. MacGraw asserts, 90% of demonic origin. What I confirm nevertheless, Bible in hand, is that the gift is 100% false.

## Indian Wrestling

It is between the two of us, my brother. We are going to arm wrestle. You want to catch me off guard, pushing me to say what I do not want to say. With three seemingly irresistible tries, you would like to force my hand.

1 Since the gift of tongues does not come from God, it must come from Satan.

2 You would like to add the weight of James 3:11, relating to the use of the tongue, "Does a fountain send out from the same opening both sweet and bitter water?"

3 With unbeatable logic, you would like to draw the only possible conclusion: those by whom Satan speaks cannot belong to Christ. Christ and Belial cannot cohabitate the same life (II Cor 6:15). Destiny: 1000 degrees Centigrade for eternity!

Be careful! With that kind of reasoning you might very likely be brought before the bar yourself. For you also praise the Lord Who saved you from a great condemnation by His sacrifice. And the same lips which are a source of fresh water during the worship service on Sunday become a spring of bitter outside the church when you slander your brother, your co-worker, in the work which God has entrusted to him. And you say that it is a demon who speaks through your Pentecostal brother? You may be right, but *who* fills your own mouth when you bark unpleasant orders at your subordinate, when you stay stubbornly silent before your own spouse, when you slander your brother or despise him, or strike him with the rod of *truth*, boxing his ears instead of washing his feet? When you listen to some Christians during the week you wonder what they could sing on Sunday except the calumny from the opera "The Barber of Seville" by Gioacchino Rossini!\*

Confess that your fountain sometimes gives fresh water, sometimes bitter, and that this bitterness is not of God.

\*Dr. Bartolo, the suspicious old guardian of the beautiful Rosina, is fearful of losing his ward to the handsome young nobleman, Count Almavira. In the aria "La Calumnia" (Calumny) Don Basilio, a music teacher, advises Bartolo to plant a rumor about the Count which will cause Rosina to reject him. Basilio describes slander as something which begins from a small insinuation, which then grows into a fearful tempest and which at last falls in fury upon the helpless victim.

## Who Is to Blame?

Moreover, do you not understand to what extent you are responsible for the slipping away of those in your congregation who seek manifestations of the Spirit? One day I went to a shoe store to buy a new pair of shoes. When the salesman saw what I had on my feet, he said something which I will never forget, "Your shoes are very tired and worn out." Can the same thing be said about your church meetings? They are tired and worn out. The songs are tired, the messages are tired. Certainly they still fit, but how worn out they are! Freshness and spontaneity among brothers have grown long beards. Your brotherly love is also tired. Do not forget that people always prefer warm error to cold truth. Too often the truth you profess is nothing more than cold orthodoxy. People cannot warm themselves very well on an iceberg, even less in a deep freeze! An old sputtering, smoking, wood burning stove will create a warmer and cozier atmosphere than a sophisticated furnace which is running only at a fourth of its capacity. There is no place for lukewarmness in the work of God. Souls are not being saved. The Spirit was given to us so that we would have an abundant life, nothing less. Where the life of the Spirit is abundant and flowing with living waters, Christians are not in danger of slipping into false experiences offered as a panacea to heal all the ills of the church.

## It is also Written

Slowly but surely I come to the end of my book. It was especially for you, my non-Pentecostal brother, that I wrote it, not for the others. They will no more be persuaded of their error than a Jehovah's Witness would be persuaded of Christ's Deity, even when shown the truth in the Scriptures. More than ever, I am on your side. I have recognized the truth of your teaching and the purity of your doctrine. Recommend this book to those who are troubled by the charismatic's siren song. After all, I lent my ear to their melody, but by the grace of God, the help of the Spirit, and the light of the Word, I was able to avoid their dangerous reefs. You have finished this book. It would be good to pick it up again and read it carefully once more, systematically studying the truths brought out, and the errors which are exposed. The questionnaire at the end will help you to answer those who ask

you a reason of your hope (I Pet 3:15).

Well equipped for every good work, you will then be a man of God who accurately handles the Word of Truth (II Tim 2:15). Without ceasing you must bring back to the Scriptures all those who have strayed to experiences which are only scriptural in name. Remind them that three times during the temptation in the desert, Satan proposed experiences to our Lord and each time Christ replied, "It is written" (Matt 4:7). When the Adversary becomes more subtle in his seduction and says, "It is written", we must answer, "It is also written." Just as our divine Example, we must dare to say to those who are blown here and there by every wind of doctrine, what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, "You worship that which you do not know..." (John 4:22). It may even be necessary to resist them to their face. Contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3), and following the example of our Master, tell them with truth and love, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures..." (Matt 22:29).

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