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TONGUES AND PROPHECY--A COMPARATIVE  
STUDY IN CHARISMATA

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Exegetical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

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by

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SHORT TITLE

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## TRANSLITERATION KEY

Greek                      English

α	a
αι	āi
β	b
γ	g
δ	d
ε	e
ζ	z
η	ē
ηι	ēi
θ	th
ι	i
κ	k
λ	l
μ	m
ν	n
ξ	x
ο	o
π	p
ρ	r
σ,ς	s
τ	t
υ	u,y
φ	ph
χ	ch
ψ	ps
ω	ō
ωι	ōi

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of the Problem

A link between the two charismata of prophecy and glossolalia is undeniable and provides the basis for a study and comparison of these two "utterance gifts." It is the primary purpose of this paper to explore the relationship of these two gifts to each other.

A study of this nature becomes especially relevant at a time when there is increasing talk about a "charismatic revival" in some quarters of historic denominations. This growing interest is reflected in the higher incidence of books and journal articles dealing with these matters in recent years.

This paper will not furnish a solution to every problem associated with the phenomena under consideration, but it is an attempt to bring into clearer focus the teaching of the New Testament in this area of the charismata. It is hoped that this study will help to clarify some of the uncertainty with which the two gifts are regarded.

### Delimitation of the Problem

This paper is not intended to be an exhaustive treatment of the New Testament gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues. The discussions are restricted almost entirely to the contents of the Scriptures, so that this is a study in biblical, rather than historical, theology. It is indeed true that the annals of post-biblical church history are punctuated with outbreaks of what their champions claimed were renewals of the gifts; but such a study, valuable and instructive though it would be, is beyond the scope of the present writing.

This study is further delimited in that primary attention is given to the Pauline and Lucan treatments of the two gifts--particularly as found in I Corinthians and Acts. The area of prophecy and prophets in the New Testament is broad; the study under hand is concerned chiefly with the gift of prophecy as it is found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

It is not the purpose of this paper, further, to delve into isagogical problems. It is assumed that the book of Acts was written by Luke and that the Corinthian correspondence and Ephesians are Pauline.



## Overview of Organization of Material

Chapter II, "Background and Antecedents," is intended to be foundational to the study. In it the reader is introduced to the New Testament emphasis upon the work of the Holy Spirit from the inception of the Church, and the relationship which therein exists between the charismata and similar phenomena in both the Old Testament and the non-Hebrew world.

Chapter III, "Explication of the Term Lalein Glōssais," explores the different interpretations placed upon this expression. In Chapter IV, "Form and Content of the Two Charismata," these charismata are compared as to the modes in which they express themselves and also as to the subject matter of the utterances.

Chapter V, "Regulation of the Two Charismata," serves to indicate that neither the glossolalist nor the prophet is a law to himself. In the exercise of his gift, he is expected to adhere to certain minimal restrictions.

The study concludes with Chapter VI, "Function and Purpose of the Two Charismata." Each of the gifts is examined with respect to the contribution it is to make to the

community of believers. Both have distinct value, but prophecy is superior to speaking in tongues in many respects.

#### Major Sources of Data

As reflected in the bibliography, a variety of source material has been used. Exegetical commentaries, monographs and journal articles have proved invaluable in a study of this nature, but much work was also done with the assistance of standard lexical aids and the Greek New Testament.

All English quotations of Scripture in this paper are from the Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible, unless otherwise noted.

## CHAPTER II

### BACKGROUND AND ANTECEDENTS

#### The Age of the Spirit

And it shall come to pass afterward,  
that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;  
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
your old men shall dream dreams,  
and your young men shall see visions.  
Even upon the menservants and maidservants  
in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

So spoke the Lord through the prophet Joel (2:28-29). And so was the prophet quoted, in essence, by Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-18). With respect to this, Schweizer has said:

That Luke regards prophesying, prophēteuein, as the central and decisive activity of the Spirit, is shown by his<sup>1</sup> insertion of this word [at the end of v. 18] into the long and otherwise unaltered quotation from Joel about the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit. For Luke, the Church of the Last Age is a church of prophets.<sup>2</sup>

And again: "Prophets no longer come by ones and twos. All

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<sup>1</sup>Or was it Peter's?

<sup>2</sup>Eduard Schweizer, et al., "Spirit of God," Bible Key Words, translated by A. E. Harvey (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), III, 43.

members of the ultimate Church are prophets."<sup>3</sup> In contrast, then, from the Old Testament in which the possession of the Spirit was for the comparative few, the Spirit in the New Testament is for all. The prayer of Moses has been answered: "Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!" (Num. 11:29).

Yet is it undeniable that a degree of ambivalence attaches itself to the usage of prophētēs and its cognates in the New Testament. Are all Christians indeed prophets? Paul rather clearly calls for a negative response to this question (I Cor. 12:29). But he can also say, "earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy" (I Cor. 14:1); "Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy" (v. 5); "you can all prophesy one by one" (v. 31). In response to this apparent contradiction even in the thinking of Paul, it may be said that in the New Testament there is a distinction between the office of prophet and the function of prophesying. Just as the term apostle has both a restricted and a

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

broader meaning, so also with the term prophet. Paul's question, in context, deals with the offices of apostle, prophet, teacher--to which, rather clearly, not all believers are called.

But the potential for prophesying lies within each believer since he is a possessor of the Holy Spirit. Upon receiving the divine impulse and in accordance with the regulations outlined by Paul (I Cor. 14:26-32), any worshiper may prophesy. He is then, in a broad sense, a prophet.

It is of interest that the gift of prophecy is not restricted to men. Among those that received the Spirit at Pentecost were very likely "the women and Mary the mother of Jesus" (Acts 1:14), who would be included in the "daughters" and "maidservants" of Joel's prophecy. It is stated further in Acts that Philip the evangelist "had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied" (21:9). Paul, as well, speaks of women who prophesy (I Cor. 11:5). It may be significant, however, that the term for prophetess (prophētis) is not used to designate any of these women. The possibility exists, at least, that they were not to be regarded as filling the prophetic office but rather the

prophetic function. Compare the indictment of the church in Thyatira (Rev. 2:20):

But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess [prophētis] and is teaching and beguiling my servants to practice immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

In this "Age of the Spirit" women as well as men receive the Spirit of prophecy, but it must be noted that even in the history of Israel there existed women who were prophetesses (for example, Miriam, Ex. 15:20; Huldah, II Kings 22:14-20; and Anna, Luke 2:36). But once again the difference lies in the fact that in the Church all women have the potential for prophesying, whereas in Israel the number of prophetesses was severely circumscribed.

Of special interest for this study is the observation that on the Day of Pentecost the disciples "began to speak in other tongues" (Acts 2:4) and that this is equated with prophesying (vv. 17-18). It cannot be gainsaid that there is in the New Testament a very close association of glossolalia and prophecy. But apart from Acts 2, these charismata are rather clearly differentiated from each other. It is said of the Ephesian men that "the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied"

(Acts 19:6). In the locus classicus of the treatment of the two gifts, the intent of Paul is to emphasize not so much the similarities but the dissimilarities which exist between the two (I Cor. 12-14).

Because similarities do indeed exist, however, it is a thesis of this paper that glossolalia and the gift of prophecy are related as the species is to the genus.

Speaking in tongues is a specialized and more restricted form of prophesying. Hodge has stated:

all speaking under divine, supernatural influence, was included under the head of prophesying; and as all who spake with tongues "spake as the Spirit gave them utterance" [Acts 2:4], in the wide sense of the word they all prophesied.<sup>4</sup>

Schweizer adds:

prophesying (prophēteuein) in times of crisis takes the form of speaking in tongues (Acts ii.4; x.46; xix.6), a phenomenon astounding enough to convince even those who are not yet involved.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Charles Hodge, An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., c.1884), p. 278.

<sup>5</sup>Schweizer, p. 40.

## The Office of Prophet in the New Testament

As already noted, the official designation of prophet must at times be distinguished from the more general application of that term to anyone who gives a prophetic utterance. This becomes necessary when one sees the common juxtaposition of prophētēs with apostolos (I Cor. 12:28-29; Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11; Rev. 18:20) and the unique ministry associated with those two offices jointly. For example, they are the foundation of the Church (if, as is probable, tōn apostolōn and prophētōn in Eph. 2:20 be taken as genitives of apposition); to them was revealed the fact that Gentiles are "fellow heirs, members of the same body" (Eph. 3:5-6). It may therefore be concluded that this office of prophet fulfilled a unique, historical function in the early days of the Church and that, as such, it is now non-existent.

Further strength is lent to this when one considers that there are specific men who are called "prophets." If all believers are considered prophets (at least potentially), it would be somewhat meaningless to give this specific designation to certain individuals. Yet there is an



enumeration of names in Acts 13:1; Agabus is called a prophet (Acts 11:27-28); Judas and Silas are also prophets (Acts 15:32). Prophets, therefore, constituted a class in the early Church.

It will be noted that prophets are also linked with teachers (Acts 13:1; Eph. 4:11; compare Did. 11). It may be stated at this juncture, by way of anticipation, that the function of prophet and teacher often seem to overlap.<sup>6</sup> But when the two offices or functions are conjoined (compare also Rom. 12:6-7), the prophet is always mentioned before the teacher.

By the same token, in all occurrences of a common mentioning of apostles and prophets, the two are always given in that order. This would indicate a very definite subordination of the prophetic office to the apostolic office. While the prophets of the New Testament are very decidedly in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets,

the great gulf which separated Christian piety from Jewish is shown by the failure of prophets to play a dominant role in Christianity. They took their place within the Church and therefore under the

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<sup>6</sup>Supra, p. 85.

apostles, whose leadership of the Church remained uncontested.<sup>7</sup>

Of interest is the appearance of itinerant prophets in the New Testament, especially in the book of Acts. Agabus traveled with other prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch (11:27-28); he is later found at Caesarea (21:10). Judas and Silas likewise traveled from Jerusalem to Antioch (15:22,32).<sup>8</sup> These itinerant prophets are reminiscent of the band or company of prophets sometimes mentioned in the Old Testament (for example, I Sam. 10:5; 19:20) and of Jesus' words in Matt. 10:41: "He who receives a prophet . . . ."

#### Antecedents of Charismatic Utterances

It hardly needs demonstration that prophets in the New Testament are the successors of the Old Testament

נְבִיאִים. That which characterized the divine spokesmen in the old dispensation may be said, generally, to be true of those in the new. There are few areas, if any,

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<sup>7</sup> Adolf Schlatter, The Church in the New Testament Period, translated by Paul P. Levertoff (London: S.P.C.K., 1955), p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. also Did. 11,13; Hermas, Mand. 11.

where there would be no point of contact between the two. The origins of New Testament glossolalia, however, present a complicated problem the solution of which can be rather elusive.

Attempts have been made to find a direct correlation with Grecian cults. "A vigorous infiltration of ideas and customs from pagan Asia Minor is obvious."<sup>9</sup> The ecstasy of the Pythia is often cited as a parallel to speaking in tongues, inasmuch as the woman, possessed by the god, breaks into uncontrolled speech. Others seek to establish a link with the cult of Bacchus. The subjects in these exercises are completely beside themselves; their ejaculations are involuntary; they emerge from the trance-like state with no recollection of what has transpired.

May one look in another direction for the antecedents of glossolalia? Behm suggests the Old Testament, comparing glossolalia with the "ecstatic fervour of the נְבִיאִים, who seem to be robbed of their individuality and overpowered by the Spirit (cf. I S. 10:5ff.; 19:20ff.;

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<sup>9</sup>P. Volz, Der Geist Gottes, as quoted by Maurice Barnett, The Living Flame (London: The Epworth Press, 1953), p. 103.

also I K. 18:29f.) . . . ."10 With reference to the prophet who fired Jehu's revolt, both Behm and Barnett suggest a speaking in tongues, especially since the man is called a "mad fellow" and reference is made to "his talk" (II Kings 9:11). The prophets of I Sam. 10:5-6 are also cited as glossolalists; "it may be supposed from the context that they shouted in ecstasy, i.e. were 'speaking with tongues.'"11 Barnett goes so far as to elicit the statement of Is. 28:10 as an example of glossolalic speech:12

צוֹ לָצוּר לָצוּר לָצוּר  
 קוֹ לָקוֹר קוֹ לָקוֹר  
 זְעִיר זְעִיר זְעִיר

It is difficult for the present writer, however, to understand how any of these instances can be construed to be a speaking in tongues. Much depends on the suppositions

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<sup>10</sup>Johannes Behm, "glōssa, heteroglōssos," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., c.1964), I, 724.

<sup>11</sup>Maurice Barnett, The Living Flame (London: The Epworth Press, 1953), p. 28.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 28-29.

upon which the above interpretations are predicated. If glossolalia in the New Testament is to be identified with a volubility of incoherent, non-sense sounds uttered uncontrollably by the subject, then it is not difficult to see analogies in both the Grecian religions and the Old Testament.

It is herein submitted that speaking in tongues as described and treated in the New Testament is unique; that "there is nothing to be found in either Hebrew or Greek antecedents comparable to the experience described by Paul's letters and the Book of Acts as speaking in tongues."<sup>13</sup> To quote further:

there was no experience we know of in ancient times which is not clearly differentiated from speaking in tongues, and in several ways. First, tongue-speech is not a frenzy; it can usually be controlled . . . . Second, loss of consciousness or the state of trance, is not a necessary part of the experience. . . . And, last, tongue speaking always requires interpretation, and the ability to interpret can be given.<sup>14</sup>

To be sure, New Testament glossolalia must be related to Old Testament prophecy. Prophecy in both testaments is

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<sup>13</sup>Morton T. Kelsey, Tongue Speaking (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1964), p. 141.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 141-42.

essentially the same, and glossolalia is a form of prophecy. Beyond this it is unsafe to go. The features of speaking in tongues are such that the connection with Old Testament prophecy is at best tangential.

Much of the discussion in this section impinges upon the modus operandi of the two charismata. There is no question in the minds of the New Testament writers that glossolalia is possible only by the agency of the Holy Spirit; it is likewise true that, notwithstanding the possibility of fraudulent utterances, prophecy is a gift of the Spirit. At Pentecost, the disciples spoke with tongues "as the Spirit gave them utterance." Agabus the prophet "foretold by the Spirit" (Acts 11:28); he could also preface a prophecy with, "Thus says the Holy Spirit" (Acts 21:11). But it is not the source of the inspiration which has given rise to much misunderstanding of these gifts; it is rather the reaction of the recipients to the divine afflatus. For this reason some hold, as has been seen, that the expressions of glossolalic and prophetic utterances are akin to the mantic or ecstatic frenzy of the Bacchic cult and others.

It is instructive that the New Testament writers refrain from using the words mantis, manteuomai, mainomai when dealing with the prophet and the glossolalist--words "whose employment would tend to break down the distinction between heathenism and revealed religion."<sup>15</sup> In classical Greek, for instance, the prophētēs is superior to the mantis (see Plato, Timaeus, 71E), for he interpreted the oracles of the mantis which had been given in a frenzied state. When the word manteuomai does occur in the New Testament, it is with reference to the slave girl who brought her owners much gain by "soothsaying" (Acts 16:16). But Paul, the apostle and prophet, found it necessary to exorcise the spirit which possessed the girl. It is difficult to find a clearer disjunction of manteuomai and prophēteuō than exists here.

In the thinking of many, the crux interpretum is to be found in I Cor. 14:23: "If, therefore, the whole church assembles and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad

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<sup>15</sup>Richard Chenevix Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958), p. 19.

[mainesthe]?" Glossolalia is therefore to be identified phenomenologically with madness, or the frenzied state. Yet it must be noticed that Paul here states, "If all speak in tongues . . . you [plural] are mad." The prescription is against all, at one time or in rapid succession, speaking in tongues, with the clear implication that no interpretations thereof are given. It is under these conditions that the charge of madness may be brought against them. It is instructive, as Behm<sup>16</sup> has noted, that in Acts 26:24-25 mainomai is opposed to the verb apophtheggomai--to speak out or declare, with a connotation of boldness or loudness or enthusiasm. Instructive as well is the fact that this latter verb occurs in Acts 2:4 (the Spirit gave them "utterance") and in Acts 2:14 (Peter lifted up his voice and "addressed" them).

It should not go unnoticed, however, that the glossolalists of Acts 2 were mocked by some who said, "They are filled with new wine" (compare Eph. 5:18). It is quite possible that because of the complete novelty of their experience the newly-filled disciples reacted in a strange

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<sup>16</sup>Behm, p. 447.



manner. Yet it is also conceivable that this was the judgment solely of men who were not devout (v. 5) and whose evaluation therefore ought not to be taken seriously.

Neither the glossolalist nor the prophet is beside himself when he speaks in response to the pneumatic impulse. Otherwise the Pauline restrictions of I Cor. 14:26-32 are meaningless. It is precisely because he may restrain and control himself that Paul says that under certain circumstances he ought to. "Der urchristliche Prophet ist ein Mann mit klarem Bewusstsein."<sup>17</sup> And as Schlatter has capably said:

the gift of the Spirit did not involve a kind of schizophrenia, as though inspiration were an additional factor to ordinary thinking. Rather the whole of a man's thinking and being was brought under the influence of the Spirit. The whole conscious personality became the vehicle of inspiration.<sup>18</sup>

Much misunderstanding has risen with respect to glossolalia because of Paul's statement that the glossolalist utters mysteries pneumati (I Cor. 14:2)--which it

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<sup>17</sup> Gerhard Friedrich, "Propheten und Prophezeien im Neuen Testament," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Friedrich (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1959), VI, 852.

<sup>18</sup> Schlatter, p. 22.

is best to take as a reference to the speaker's spirit rather than the Holy Spirit. In v. 14 he says further, "if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful." The thought is that the mind of the speaker in tongues is unproductive--it does not contribute to the utterance, nor does it understand what is said. Glossolalia "is an activity of the spirit of man, but not of his understanding."<sup>19</sup> This does not, and cannot, mean that the mind is eclipsed or that the speaker is rendered unconscious in the process. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to extract such a meaning from the word akarpos.

This section may well be concluded with the words of Schlatter:

[The disciples'] description of Jesus as the Son of God and of his communion with his Father, is poles apart from manticism, mysticism, or occultism. Jesus is a self-conscious personality, always in control of himself; and he has a will which was given to him as a free possession--and all this is the creation of the Word of God and the work of the Spirit. . . . In him whom they adored as the perfect work and bearer

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<sup>19</sup> Leon Morris, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958), p. 190.

of the Spirit, the disciples had a standard by which to judge the working of the Spirit in themselves and in the Church.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Schlatter, p. 17.

CHAPTER III

EXPLICATION OF THE TERM LALEIN GLŌSSAIS

Preliminary Considerations

The subject of glossolalia in the New Testament is treated in only two of its books--The Acts of the Apostles and I Corinthians. The former speaks of effusions of the Holy Spirit upon disciples at Jerusalem, Caesarea and Ephesus; the latter deals with the Pauline teaching with respect to this charisma. The expression lalein glōssais kainais is found in Mark 16:17 but it will not be taken into consideration in this paper because, even granted its textual soundness, it does not contribute significantly to the subject at hand.

The phenomenon of speaking in tongues is expressed in a number of ways in the Greek New Testament:

lalein heterais glōssais - "to speak in other tongues" (Acts 2:4).

lalein glōssais - "to speak in tongues" (Acts 10:46; 19:6; I Cor. 12:30; 14:5,6,18,23,40).

lalein glōssēi - "to speak in a tongue" (I Cor. 14:2,4,5,13).

genē glōssōn - "kinds of tongues" (I Cor. 12:10,28).

glōssai - "tongues" (I Cor. 13:8; 14:22).

glōssa - "a tongue" (I Cor. 14:9,14,19,26).

The expressions in Acts and I Corinthians are so closely related--indeed they are identical in some instances--that one must conclude that both authors are speaking of the same phenomenon. Lalein glōssais is found in I Corinthians as well as in all three of the references in Acts, with heterais added in Acts 2:4. With respect to this adjectival addition to the term, it is not without significance that Paul's quotation of Isaiah 28:11 reads in part, "en heteroglōssois kai en cheilesin heterōn lalēso" (I Cor. 14:21). The linguistic affinity of this verse with Acts 2:4 cannot be overlooked. In addition to these considerations, Peter identifies the experience of the Caesarean believers in Acts 10:44-47 with that of the believers in Acts 2, for he says, "the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15).

It may be noted further that in both books the gift of prophecy is associated very closely with the gift of tongues. Peter relates the glossolalia of Pentecost to the promise of Joel, "your sons and your daughters shall

prophecy" (Acts 2:17-18). The Ephesian believers "spoke with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:6). And it scarcely needs to be demonstrated that in I Corinthians 14 it is these two gifts which are the focal point of Paul's discussion.

In light of the above considerations, it may be concluded that the expression lalein glōssais is a terminus technicus of the New Testament and that the glossolalia of both Acts and I Corinthians are a homogeneous phenomenon. It is highly improbable that the associates Luke and Paul should use the identical and unique term lalein glōssais but with disparate meanings. That certain problems do exist, however, cannot be denied; but in the treatment which follows it will be demonstrated that there exists a basic and essential unity in both the Lucan and the Pauline understanding of this phenomenon.

The remainder of this chapter will set forth the more important views on the nature of the biblical glossolalia. Variations within the different viewpoints have been kept to a minimum in order to arrive at a clearer understanding of the basic position of the exponents of each of these schools.

Glossolalia as an Auditory Phenomenon

This view concerns itself primarily with the "other tongues" of Acts 2 and stresses, rather than the "speaking" of verse 4, the "hearing" of verses 6,8,11. Godet places this interpretation on the happenings of the Day of Pentecost:

the Holy Spirit . . . took possession of the gift of speech, transfiguring it, so to speak, to give utterance to emotions which no natural tongue could express. It was, doubtless, a something intermediate between singing and speech, analogous to what we call a recitative, and the meaning of which was more or less immediately comprehensible like that of music. On Pentecost, when this language was manifested in its most distinctive form, every well-disposed hearer understood it at once . . . , so that he thought himself listening to his own tongue. . . . There is at the root of all existing languages, an essential, unique language; no doubt, if it existed as such, it would be composed of onomatopoeiae.<sup>1</sup>

This view is also espoused by George B. Cutten, who states, perhaps more clearly, that "Luke seems to affirm that the miracle did not lie in the tongues of the speakers, but in the ears of the hearers."<sup>2</sup> Philip Schaff

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<sup>1</sup>F. Godet, Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, translated by A. Cusin (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1898), II, 320.

<sup>2</sup>George Barton Cutten, The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), p. 50.

elaborates by suggesting that the glossolalia at Pentecost "was at once internally interpreted and applied by the Holy Spirit himself to those hearers who believed and were converted to each in his own vernacular dialect . . . ." But he adds, "I can find no authority for this theory, and therefore suggest it with modesty . . . ." <sup>3</sup>

It cannot be gainsaid that Luke stresses the fact that the devout men heard their own languages, but it does not necessarily follow that one must conclude there was essentially a miracle of hearing and not a miracle of speaking. It would seem, rather, that the purpose in stressing the hearing is to stress the genuineness of the speaking.

John Calvin emphasizes that at Pentecost there was indeed a miracle of speaking.

otherwise the miracle had not been wrought in them [the disciples], but in the hearers. So that the similitude should have been false whereof he [Luke] made mention before; neither should the Spirit have been given so much to them [the disciples] as to others. <sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882), I, 241.

<sup>4</sup> John Calvin, Commentary upon The Acts of the Apostles, edited by Henry Beveridge from the original



Behm<sup>5</sup> and Schweizer<sup>6</sup> also reject the view that it was a miracle of audition.

The speaking, and not the hearing, is the important factor to Paul as well as to Luke; indeed, Paul states that the gift of tongues may be exercised privately (I Cor. 14:2,28).

#### Glossolalia as a Lingual Exercise

The explanation set forth by not a few writers is that when Luke and Paul make reference to glōssa in connection with the gift of tongues, the word is to be construed as the literal, physical organ of speech. Appeal is made to the usage of this vocable in the singular.<sup>7</sup>

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translation of Christopher Fetherstone (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Printing Company, 1844), I, 77.

<sup>5</sup> Johannes Behm, "glōssa, heteroglōssos," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., c.1964), I, 725.

<sup>6</sup> Eduard Schweizer, et al., "Spirit of God," Bible Key Words, translated by A. E. Harvey (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), III, 46.

<sup>7</sup> Supra, p. 23.

Beet explains it thus:

in the apostolic church there were men on whose "tongue" the Holy Spirit exerted a direct influence, moving it to speak words which were neither prompted nor understood by the speaker's own mind. . . . Such speaking might be called "with a tongue": for only the tongue was at work, without conscious mental effort.<sup>8</sup>

He states further that glōssa cannot mean a faculty of speaking one or more foreign languages or "a miraculous utterance, in moments of special inspiration, of prayer or praise in a human language unknown to the speaker."<sup>9</sup>

H. A. W. Meyer, an oft-quoted exponent of this view, holds that

the speaker's own conscious intellectual activity was suspended, while the tongue did not serve as the instrument for the utterance of self-active reflection, but, independently of it, was involuntarily set in motion by the Holy Spirit, by whom the man in his deepest nature was seized and borne away.

He explains the origin of the term tongue as follows:

in such utterances of prayer, the tongue, because speaking independently of the nous, apparently spoke of itself, although it was in reality the organ of

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph Agar Beet, A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1882), p. 260.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 259.

the Holy Spirit. It was not the I of the man that spoke, but the tongue,--so the case seemed to be, and so arose its designation.<sup>10</sup>

Following in the same vein, Baumgarten states that the primary significance of the phrase "in other tongues" (Acts 2:4) is that the tongues of the disciples underwent an essential change--that, "whereas before they had been organs of the flesh, they were now become instruments of the Holy Ghost."<sup>11</sup>

The question arises at this point as to how one person may speak in tongues, if that word is to be taken in its literal sense. Beet answers that one can conceive "different modes of speaking, under the influence of the Spirit: hence one person might have 'kinds of tongues' [I Cor. 12:10,28]; and . . . speak 'with tongues' [I Cor. 14:5]."<sup>12</sup> Meyer also concurs in this. But if this explanation is truly held by these writers, then there is

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<sup>10</sup> Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Corinthians, translated from the 5th edition by D. Douglas Bannerman, translated, revised and edited by William P. Dickson (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), p. 287.

<sup>11</sup> M. Baumgarten, The Acts of the Apostles, translated by A. J. W. Morrison (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1854), I, 56.

<sup>12</sup> Beet, p. 260.

already a departure from the literal meaning of the word tongue, for they then regard it as a mode of speaking and not as the literal organ of speech.

Several writers who sense this inconsistency but who nevertheless subscribe to the view's basic position go one step further in their interpretation of the various expressions used to designate glossolalic speech. Schmiedel says:

"tongue" (glōssa, apart from 14:9) must be rendered "tongue-speech,"--i.e., speech which . . . seems to be produced by the tongue alone. This is by no means a departure from the literal sense; rather is it simply an instance of the same transition from the instrument to its product which is exemplified in ordinary Greek when "tongue" (glōssa) is used in the sense of "language." . . . "Tongue" must necessarily be something of the same order as the other things enumerated [in I Cor. 14:26]; and thus a definite kind of discourse which is capable of being delivered in a religious meeting.<sup>13</sup>

Thayer expresses the same basic position:

The plur. in the phrase glōssais lalein, used even of a single person (1 Co. xiv.5sq.), refers to the various motions of the tongue. By meton. of the cause for the effect, glōssai tongues are equiv. to logoi en glōssēi (1 Co. xiv.19) words spoken in a tongue . . . : xiii.8; xiv.22; genē glōssōn, 1 Co. xii.10,28,

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<sup>13</sup>P. W. Schmiedel, "Spiritual Gifts," Encyclopedia Biblica (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1907), IV, 4769-70.

of which two kinds are mentioned viz. proseuchē and psalmos, 1 Co. xiv.15; glōssan echō, something to utter with a tongue, 1 Co. xiv.26.<sup>14</sup>

The foregoing modification, or amplification, of the view under discussion makes it a bit more acceptable. It cannot be denied that the primary, fundamental meaning of glōssa is "tongue." Neither can it be disputed that the term may be used to denote what Schmiedel calls "tongue-speech," or that it may be used metonymically for "words spoken in a tongue."

Yet there are some serious objections which may be raised against this view. It does not, in the first place, make provision for the heterais glōssais, "other tongues," of Acts 2:4. Thayer recognizes this difficulty and so distinguishes this reference to glossolalia from the other references in Acts 10 and 19 and in I Corinthians.

It may be objected further that this view normally arises from a misunderstanding of the modus operandi of the gift of tongues. Its exponents hold in general that

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<sup>14</sup>C. L. Wilibald Grimm, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, translated, revised and enlarged by Joseph Henry Thayer (4th ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901), pp. 118-19.

the speaker's tongue is "involuntarily set in motion by the Holy Spirit,"<sup>15</sup> and that the utterances are uncontrollable. Thayer states that the speakers in tongues are "rapt in an ecstasy and no longer quite masters of their own reason and consciousness" and that they "pour forth their glowing spiritual emotions in strange utterances, rugged, dark, disconnected, quite unfitted to instruct or to influence the minds of others . . . ." <sup>16</sup> Yet Paul states that glossolalists do indeed have control of themselves; otherwise his injunctions that they are to remain silent under certain conditions (I Cor. 14:23,28) are meaningless.<sup>17</sup>

Directly related to all the foregoing discussion, which centered mainly on the term glōssa, is the view which tends to shift the emphasis to the word lalein. It is held by Mackie, for instance, that lalein is "an onomatopoeic word, the primary significance of which is found in the English equivalent 'lalling.'" Therefore the

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<sup>15</sup> Meyer, p. 260.

<sup>16</sup> Grimm, p. 119.

<sup>17</sup> Infra, pp. 64-65.

phrase lalein glōssais "may well be taken . . . to involve the notion of the disconnected, unmeaning use of the tongue for the making of sounds."<sup>18</sup>

Proponents of this view, of whom Moffatt is typical, usually offer a description of glossolalic utterances such as the following:

Broken murmurs, incoherent chants, low mutterings, staccato sobs, screams, and sighs, dropped from the speaker's lips in hurried, huddled utterances. Instead of the mind controlling the tongue, as it did in the more conscious forms of prophetic speech, the tongue appeared to be moved by some spirit which had taken possession of the votary.

Moffatt adds:

such cries sometimes included weird, strange words which sounded foreign. . . . At times the enthusiast actually appeared to be talking some outlandish jargon, if not positive gibberish.<sup>19</sup>

Against this view, however, it may be argued that lalein is used with considerable frequency in the Greek New Testament with hardly any distinction from legein. In point of fact, it is also used with respect to prophecy,

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<sup>18</sup>Alexander Mackie, The Gift of Tongues (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1921), p. 24.

<sup>19</sup>James Moffatt, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (New York: Harper & Brothers, n.d.), p. 208.

which is normally conceded to be a more rational utterance than glossolalia (compare I Cor. 14:3).

Furthermore, it is difficult to understand how, if this view in its more extreme forms is correct, Luke and Paul should set forth speaking in tongues as a gift of the Spirit, for babbling and gibberish can hardly be identified as a work of the Holy Spirit. Godet has well said:

How would the apostle have attached to this gift such value as to give thanks for the rich command he had of it himself? The apostle, as chap. xiv. [of I Cor.] itself shows, was too sound-minded to give himself up to a religious exercise so puerile as is thus supposed, and to allow it a regular place in Church worship.<sup>20</sup>

However low the gift of tongues is placed in the hierarchy of the charismata, the Scriptures nonetheless treat it as a work of God the Spirit.

#### Glossolalia as Archaic or Unusual Words

It is with some difficulty that one tries to locate this view in the continuum of explanations of glossolalia; it is neither entirely distinct from nor mutually exclusive of either the preceding viewpoint or that which will

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<sup>20</sup> Godet, p. 319.



follow. According to Beare, for example, speaking in tongues is the utterance of

a strange, unusual, unfamiliar word; one that has become obsolete or belongs to a peculiar dialect. Aristotle remarks that diction may be given a certain elevation and distinction by the use of such glōttai; but if the speaker uses nothing else, his speech will be barbaric (Poetics 22a). This is strongly suggestive of Paul's words in 14:9-11 . . . . This does not suggest a formless babble, or "lalling," but a succession of words which give the impression of language, but are unintelligible to the hearers.<sup>21</sup>

Margaret Thrall is in substantial agreement when she says that glōssa had become a technical term for a rare expression, an ancient language, an obscure dialect, or an unintelligible language. She states further, "It may be that a person in a state of extreme religious emotion might go back to using his own original native tongue, but in a confused manner."<sup>22</sup>

It may be noted, in addition, that the Liddell and Scott Lexicon gives, as one meaning of glōssa, an "obsolete

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<sup>21</sup>Frank W. Beare, "Speaking with Tongues," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXXIII (Sept. 1964), 243.

<sup>22</sup>Margaret E. Thrall, The First and Second Letters of Paul to the Corinthians (Cambridge: The University Press, 1965), pp. 98-99.

or foreign word, which needs explanation."<sup>23</sup> Not unrelated to this is the view that the glōssai are pericopes-- chosen passages of Scripture, with or without a commentary. Glōssa then becomes "a word or a part of Scripture, (mostly old), which requires exposition, an altered or new exposition given by commentators." By way of application, then, the heterai glōssai of Acts 2:4 are "pericopes different from those given by tradition [that is, those prescribed by tradition for that feast day]."<sup>24</sup>

Meyer opposes the view that glōssa conveys the thought of archaic expressions, glosses, or exalted poetical form. He is here quoted at length because of the capable manner in which he deals with this view.

glōssa in that sense is a grammatico-technical expression, or at least an expression borrowed from grammarians, which is only as such philologically beyond dispute. But this meaning is entirely unknown to ordinary linguistic usage, and particularly to that of the O. and N. T. How should Luke have hit upon the use of such a singular expression for a thing, which he could easily designate by words universally

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<sup>23</sup>Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, revised and augmented by Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie (9th ed.; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 353.

<sup>24</sup>G. J. Sirks, "Cinderella of Theology," Harvard Theological Review, L (April 1957), 86.

intelligible? How could he put this expression even into the mouths of the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, etc.? For hēmeterais glōssais, ver. 11, must be explained in a manner entirely corresponding to this. Further, there would result for hēmeterais a wholly absurd meaning. hēmeterai glōssai, forsooth, would be nothing else than glosses, obsolete expressions, which are peculiar to the Parthians, or to the Medes, or to the Elamites, etc.<sup>25</sup>

A further objection is raised by Charles Hodge because of the occurrence of the singular form of the word--glōssa. He states that a man might be said to speak in "phrases," but certainly not in "a phrase,"<sup>26</sup> for the record in both Acts and I Corinthians conveys the thought of more than a single phrase or expression being uttered by the glossolalists.

#### Glossolalia as a Linguistic Miracle

Speaking in tongues is, to many, a speaking in different languages. According to this view, the genē glōssōn

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<sup>25</sup> Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, Critical & Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles, translated from the 4th edition by Paton J. Gloag, translated, revised and edited by William P. Dickson (2nd ed.; New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1889), p. 46.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Hodge, An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., c.1884), p. 250.

(I Cor. 12:10,28) may be types, or species, of languages. It has already been noted that the word glōssa may be translated "tongue"--the physical organ of speech--or, in a technical sense, a poetic or archaic expression. By metonymy, it may also mean what Schmiedel calls "tongue-speech"--the product of the activity of one's tongue. A further meaning found in the Bible is that of "language."

In the Septuagint, the word glōssa occurs in the narrative of the confusion of tongues (Gen. 11:7) as a translation of the Hebrew לשון. It is used further to translate the Hebrew לשונות, which occurs in Gen. 10:5,20,31 to indicate the language or languages spoken by the different families of the earth. While there are additional instances of the use of these and other Hebrew words for language which are rendered glōssa in the Septuagint, one case which is decidedly in point is that of Is. 28:11 in which occurs the phrase dia glōssēs heteras lalēsousin (compare Acts 2:4: lalein heterais glōssais; also Paul's allusion to the Isaiah passage in I Cor. 14:21: en heteroglōssois . . . lalēsō). The reference in Isaiah is clearly to the language of the invading Assyrians which the Israelites would not understand.

It may be argued, further, that the word hermēneia and its cognates (hermēneuein, hermēneutēs, diermēneuein, diermēneutēs, methermēneuein) imply the meaning of "language" for glōssa in I Cor. 12-14, and that therefore hermēneuein means "to translate" or "to interpret" an unintelligible language. The usus loquendi of these words in both the Septuagint and the New Testament is, with few exceptions, an argument in favor of this position. For example, the word hermēneutēs occurs in Gen. 42:23 as a designation for the person who stood between Joseph and his brothers and who acted as "an interpreter," since Joseph had not yet disclosed his identity and was, to their thinking, an Egyptian not speaking their language.

With one exception (Luke 24:47), and exclusive of I Cor. 12-14 where its meaning is being sought, this word and its cognates are used in the New Testament to introduce the meaning of foreign words or expressions. Compare, for example, Mark 15:34: "And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' which means (ho estin methērmeneuomenon), 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'" The preponderance of evidence in the New Testament, therefore, is that these

cognate words convey the idea of translating, or interpreting, a language unknown to the hearers or readers.

One's concept of the gift of interpretation of tongues is necessarily governed by his concept of the nature of glossolalia. Yet the biblical usage of these related words is a strong indication that translating of languages is meant by Paul's use of hermēneia.

There remains, however, a rather difficult problem with respect to the exact nature of these languages, for, as Walker states:

there is an apparent contradiction between the two principal authorities as to the essential character of the gift. . . . It is admitted on all hands that what St. Luke describes in Acts 2 is a divinely bestowed power of speaking in foreign languages; whereas the glossolalia of I Corinthians 12-14 seems to have been rapt ecstatic utterance, unintelligible and needing interpretation--but not necessarily involving the use of foreign languages.<sup>27</sup>

It is not uncommon for a view to be held which will accept the Lucan account and then seek to impose it upon the Pauline teaching; conversely, it is common practice to interpret Acts solely in the light of I Corinthians. Consequently, two points of view have evolved which, while

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<sup>27</sup>Dawson Walker, The Gift of Tongues and Other Essays (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906), pp. 3-4.

accepting the position of glossolalia being a speaking in languages, regard the languages either as heavenly, spiritual languages or as human, foreign languages.

### Is Glossolalia a "Spiritual" Language?

Those who respond "Yes" to this question place primary emphasis upon the Pauline teaching. Behm advocates this interpretation, stating that glōssa is

the 'language of the Spirit,' a miraculous language which is used in heaven between God and the angels (1 C. 13:1) and to which man may attain in prayer as he is seized by the Spirit and caught up into heaven (2 C. 12:2ff.; cf. 1 C. 14:2,13ff.; Ac. 10:46; 2:11).<sup>28</sup>

Grosheide speaks similarly when he says, "The speaking in tongues . . . is the speaking of a miraculous spiritual language that had its own sounds."<sup>29</sup>

It is maintained that the general tenor of the teaching in I Corinthians 14 is such as to suggest a spiritual, or heavenly, language. The speaking in tongues seems to

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<sup>28</sup> Behm, p. 726.

<sup>29</sup> F. W. Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), pp. 288-89.

be directed at all times to God: "For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit" (v. 2). Since "no one understands him," it must be a language not spoken by men. Reference is also made to praying in tongues (v. 14). If, then, this is a means of communication between man and God, and if this speaking is impelled by the Holy Spirit, it is felt that a language of heaven is more suited to the occasion than merely another language of men.

Further appeal is made to the "tongues of angels" cited in I Cor. 13:1, which are held to be angelic languages. Even Lenski, who does not accept the view of tongues as a new spiritual language, says with respect to this:

When angels speak to men they use human language, but Daniel, John in Revelation, and Paul himself when caught up to Paradise, heard unutterable things. Perhaps we may say, they actually heard the tongues of angels as they speak in heaven.<sup>30</sup>

He says further: "All else that Paul writes about angels

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<sup>30</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1935), p. 554.



shows them to be real indeed, and so their language is real."<sup>31</sup>

In rebuttal of this is the contention that Paul here uses figurative language, for angels in reality would have no need of this medium of communication among themselves, as do humans. Yet in its context, this reference must be taken to mean in essence what is conveyed by the thought of "tongues" in the chapters immediately preceding and following it.

A problem which arises, however, is that of distinguishing these utterances in a spiritual or angelic language, if such they be, from mere babbling or meaningless sounds uttered in a frenzied or hysterical state. If speaking in tongues can be disassociated from the babbling and gibberish which may accompany such a state, then there is some merit in the view which holds that the glossolalia of the New Testament is constituted, at least sometimes, of utterances in other-than-human languages.

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 555. Of interest to the reader would be extra-canonical allusions to "tongues of angels" such as Eth. Enoch 40 and The Testament of Job 38-40, in which latter passage the three daughters of Job are enabled to speak in the languages of angels.

May Glossolalia Be Foreign, Human Languages?

Those who hold this view generally take as their starting point the Lucan account of Acts 2. The case for this is stated so well by Meyer that it is here quoted at length:

For the sure determination of what Luke means . . . , it is decisive that heterais glōssais on the part of the speakers was, in point of fact, the same thing which the congregated Parthians, Medes, Elamites, etc., designated as tais hēmeterais glōssais (comp. ver. 8): tēi idiāi dialektōi hēmōn. The heterai glōssai therefore are, according to the text, to be considered as absolutely nothing else than languages, which were different from the native language of the speakers. They, the Galileans, spoke, one Parthian, another Median, etc., consequently languages of another sort, i.e. foreign, 1 Cor. xiv.21; and these indeed--the point wherein precisely appeared the miraculous operation of the Spirit--not acquired by study. . . . Accordingly the text itself determines the meaning of glōssai as languages, not tongues.<sup>32</sup>

It must be noted, however, that Meyer does not accept the account in Acts 2 as being historically accurate.

The glōssais lalein in Corinth was identical with that mentioned in Acts x.46 and xix.6, identical also with the speaking at Pentecost, Acts ii., according to its historical substance . . . , although not

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<sup>32</sup>Meyer, Acts, pp. 45-46.

according to the form preserved by tradition in Luke's account, which had made it a speaking in foreign languages, and so a miracle of a quite peculiar kind.<sup>33</sup>

Much has been written concerning Luke's choice of heteros, rather than allos, in describing the tongues at Pentecost. An extended treatment of these adjectives is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is to be noted that there is no rigid distinction between these words in extra-biblical or in biblical writings. Indeed, the two words are used interchangeably in I Cor. 12:8-10, which lists the nine charismata. And Moulton and Milligan even suggest that in at least two cases Luke substituted one term for the other: in Luke 8:6-8 heteros is used instead of allos, and in Luke 6:29 allos is used in place of heteros.<sup>34</sup> The best indication, then, of the meaning of heterais in Acts 2:4 will be found in the context itself, and it has already been noted that this will attach to heterais glōssais the meaning of "different" or "other"

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<sup>33</sup> Meyer, Corinthians, p. 283.

<sup>34</sup> James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1949), p. 257.

foreign languages. The stress would appear to be on the noun rather than on the adjective.

While there is considerable difference of opinion in attempting to identify the Corinthian phenomenon with that of Pentecost, one indication that there was indeed a parallel in the two manifestations of the gift is found in I Cor. 14:21 and the linguistic affinity of that verse with Is. 28:11 and Acts 2:4.<sup>35</sup> Walker has said:

the use of heteroglōssois . . . (which in its original setting can only have indicated "men of foreign speech") would seem to indicate that, on the Day of Pentecost at any rate, St. Paul believed the glosso-lalia to have included speech in foreign languages. It points even to the possibility that this particular form of the gift may have been manifested at Corinth too.<sup>36</sup>

One major objection often raised is that if the gift of tongues was the ability to speak in one or more foreign languages, the gift was not so employed by those who received it. It is assumed by those who raise this issue that the gift was a permanent endowment for the purpose of evangelization. Yet Peter, on the Day of Pentecost,

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<sup>35</sup> Supra, pp. 23,38.

<sup>36</sup> Walker, p. 79.

addressed the crowd in the language that all understood-- Aramaic--not in a newly acquired foreign tongue. It is nowhere implied in the New Testament that the bestowal of the gift meant the permanent acquisition of a foreign language which the individual could employ at will.

A more serious objection, and one which would detract from the supernatural element in the gift, is raised by those who contend that the phenomenon is explainable on psychological grounds. If there was indeed a speaking in languages unknown by the speakers, then it was the result of an abnormally quickened or excited memory. Henry C. Sheldon says that the speaker in tongues possibly uttered snatches of a language which was not at his command under ordinary conditions, "but whose latent impression upon his mind could be raised to the sphere of actual mental operation under peculiar excitation . . . ." <sup>37</sup> Mackie <sup>38</sup> and Walker concur in this. Walker, however, says that this in no way belittles the gift, for:

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<sup>37</sup> Henry C. Sheldon, History of the Christian Church (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, 1894), I, 116.

<sup>38</sup> Mackie, pp. 24-25.

it surely does no violence either to the terms of St. Luke's narrative or to a most reverent view of the facts, to hold that when the Divine afflatus came on the assembled Christians, when this rush, as it were, of spiritual power and conviction seized them and possessed them, they were, for the time being, if not "beside," at any rate "above," themselves. Psychologically speaking, they were lifted to a different, an abnormal plane of consciousness, and their normal faculties were in abeyance.<sup>39</sup>

It is unlikely that anyone who has examined the evidence from a psychological standpoint will deny the fact that under certain abnormal conditions the subconscious may be stimulated to the extent that one may speak in a tongue with which he is not conversant. But Walker himself is not completely satisfied with this explanation, for he says with respect to the Corinthian glossolalia:

It must, however, be admitted that utterances of a devotional character would hardly be as likely to be heard in the streets of Corinth as in those of Jerusalem, where the Temple and streets would constantly be filled by worshipping throngs.<sup>40</sup>

Prior to this statement he had suggested the possibility that the Christian disciples had at some time heard Jews praying in languages other than Aramaic and that these

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<sup>39</sup> Walker, p. 54.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

prayers had, unconsciously, become a part of the disciples' mental store. His point is that whereas the glossolalia of Acts 2 may be explained in this way, it would be extremely unlikely for the same thing, mutatis mutandis, to have occurred in Corinth.

Cutten, whose studies in this area have become classics, takes issue with the theory that the abnormally excited memory is the explanation of speaking in languages, and states that cases of exalted memory approaching this which have been "carefully and scientifically examined so as to preclude imposture have been isolated cases, and very few in number."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>George Barton Cutten, Speaking with Tongues, Historically and Psychologically Considered (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), p. 59. Related to this entire area of the psychological aspects of glossolalia is the recent work of Morton T. Kelsey, Tongue Speaking (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964), in which he relates speaking in tongues to the Jungian "collective unconscious"--especially in Chapter VII, passim. Any extended treatment of these psychological considerations, however, would be beyond the scope and intent of this paper.

## Summary and Conclusion

With regard to the specific character of glossolalic utterances, this chapter has investigated the basic theories. That which deems it a miracle of hearing overlooks the obvious intent of the Lucan narrative to emphasize that the miracle lay in the act of the disciples' speaking. It is extremely difficult, as well, to reconcile the theory with the Pauline treatment of the gift. This view, therefore, leaves much to be desired.

The viewpoint that the emphasis is upon the literal organ of speech is not without merit, especially as it is expanded by Schmiedel and Thayer to mean "the product of the tongue" or "tongue-speech." Nevertheless, this view is inadequate, for it fails to reckon with the Pauline teaching that the glossolalist is master of himself and does not speak "involuntarily" or "uncontrollably." In addition, it tends to neglect other meanings of glōssa besides that of the physical organ of speech.

The view that speaking in tongues is the utterance of meaningless sounds while one is in a highly emotional or frenzied state must be set aside, for it attributes



babbling, gibberish and hysteria to the Holy Spirit. It also says, in effect, that Paul prided himself in the ability to babble more than the Corinthian Christians!

Are the glōssai to be regarded as archaic glosses or exalted poetical expressions? To do so is to ascribe to the word a meaning which is not without foundation, but which is nevertheless a technical, grammatical term which very likely was alien to the vast majority of Luke's and Paul's readers.

The last of the basic views presented--that speaking in tongues means speaking in a language or languages unknown to the speaker--is the most tenable of all the interpretations placed on the character of New Testament glossolalia. This use of glōssa has a firm basis in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, and it does no violence to either the Lucan accounts or the Pauline teaching on the subject.

A problem arises, however, when Acts is compared with I Corinthians, for in the former it is clear that the glossolalia--at least at Pentecost--was a speaking in foreign languages, whereas in I Corinthians there are indications that the phenomenon may have been a speaking in

a spiritual or heavenly language although the possibility of a foreign, human language is also present. Much confusion has arisen because of this. In the thinking of some, the Corinthian phenomena must be interpreted in the light of Acts 2 and must therefore mean utterances in foreign languages. Others insist that Paul's teaching is normative, and that since it regards tongues as ecstatic utterances, possibly in a heavenly language, therefore the accounts in Acts cannot have reference to speaking in foreign languages; the Lucan record must be adjusted to conform to the Pauline teaching.

There are those, however, who will not be driven into one camp or the other, and who maintain that there are two general forms of the gift. Among these is Charles J. Ellicott, who speaks of the higher form of the gift, which is a speaking in languages known to the hearer but unknown to the speaker, and the lower or more common form, which consists of ecstatic forms of prayer, praise and thanksgiving so uttered as to need an interpreter.<sup>42</sup> It is not

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<sup>42</sup> Charles John Ellicott, A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (Andover: W. F. Draper, 1889), p. 240.

clear, however, whether he regards the latter as speaking in a heavenly or spiritual language, even though he draws this distinction.

Ellicott is undoubtedly headed in the right direction by not allowing himself to be driven into an "either/or" position, for it is not inconceivable that the gift assumed these two forms. (Could this be the meaning of genē glōssōn?) While generally the teaching of I Corinthians 14 seems to imply that speaking in tongues consists of utterances in heavenly or angelic speech, the linguistic affinity of that chapter with Acts 2:4 and Isaiah 28:11 suggests the possibility of utterances in foreign, human tongues as well.

## CHAPTER IV

### FORM AND CONTENT OF THE TWO CHARISMATA

#### The Essential Nature of Prophecy

Prophecy is essentially a divine revelation (apokalupsis) given to the prophet which he in turn communicates to others. In I Corinthians 14 the terms prophecy and revelation may, for all practical purposes, be identified with each other. It is surprising, for instance, that in v. 26 Paul speaks of "a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation" but fails to mention prophecy. By a process of elimination, and especially in light of v. 29, the conclusion is that the two terms are to be equated. Instruction is given to prophets to speak serially and Paul says, "If a revelation is made to another [prophet] sitting by, let the first be silent" (vv. 29-31). Even in v. 6, where there is the enumeration revelation, knowledge, prophecy, teaching, Paul may be speaking of two pairs related to each other as a-b-a-b. That prophecy is basically a divine disclosure may be seen further in Eph. 3:3-6; the mystery of Christ "has now been

revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."<sup>1</sup>

It is evident from this [the work of Agabus in Acts 11:28; 21:10-11] that what the prophet chiefly looked for from the Spirit, and what he received, was some disclosure to help the Church in the accomplishment of her service.<sup>2</sup>

This disclosure could take the form of foretelling (Acts 11:27-28; the book of Revelation). At times it bared the secrets of a man's heart (I Cor. 14:25). That a prophet was expected to be clairvoyant is illustrated by Matt. 26:68, "Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?" and Luke 7:39, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known . . . ."

#### The Communication of Prophecy

Prophecy in the New Testament is communicated by three means: symbol, the written word, the spoken word. The first is the least frequent, occurring in only one passage (Acts 21:10-11). Agabus bound his own feet and

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<sup>1</sup>The reader is referred to infra, Chap. VI, which treats the topic of the function of prophets.

<sup>2</sup>Adolf Schlatter, The Church in the New Testament Period, translated by Paul P. Levertoff (London: S.P.C.K., 1955), p. 23.

hands with Paul's girdle to symbolize the owner's treatment by the Jews at Jerusalem. This method has counterparts in the Old Testament but finds no prominence in the New.

Secondly, the divine disclosures may take the form of the written word. The most obvious example of this is the last book of the New Testament (compare Rev. 22:18, "the words of the prophecy of this book").

Neither of the above, however, is the emphasis of Paul. For him, the gift of prophecy operates within the local assembly by means of the spoken word (I Cor. 14:29) and, in distinction from the gift of tongues, its message is directed to men (I Cor. 14:3). The precise form which prophecy assumed is not clear, however. Since it is a message delivered to and for men, is it to be identified with either teaching or preaching? It is not unusual to find statements such as, "Prophecy is a type of inspired preaching (or teaching)." But such an equation is much too simple. As Cullmann has observed, teaching and preaching are based on an intelligible exposition of the Word;

the gift of prophecy, on the other hand, is based on apokalupsis.<sup>3</sup>

It is interesting to observe that nowhere in our English New Testament does the English word "preaching" translate the Greek word propheteuein. It is the equivalent generally of kērussein or a compound of aggellein, both of which carry the implication of telling something, which though it may not be known to the hearers, yet is already a completed fact.<sup>4</sup>

Prophecy and preaching are not mutually exclusive, but some rather important differences do exist between the two. It is true that "as activities they overlap, but . . . they differ essentially in the message which it is their function to proclaim."<sup>5</sup> Preaching, on the one hand, is the kerygma--"the announcement of good news of what God had done and was prepared to do for those who would hear and believe." Its hearers are usually those outside the pale of the Church. Prophecy, on the other hand, is "declaratory and imperative" and is concerned

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<sup>3</sup>Oscar Cullmann, Early Christian Worship, translated by A. Stewart Todd and James B. Torrance (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>Ernest Best, "Prophets and Preachers," Scottish Journal of Theology, XII (June 1959), 150.

<sup>5</sup>R. B. Y. Scott, "Is Preaching Prophecy?" Canadian Journal of Theology, I (April 1955), 16.

primarily with a crisis which faces God's people.<sup>6</sup> These revelations of prophecy "proclaimed to the primitive church what it had to do and to know under special circumstances."<sup>7</sup> Its hearers, then, were believers and only incidentally unbelievers or outsiders (I Cor. 14:24).

The gift of prophecy was not intended either to supersede preaching or to be regarded simply as preaching. In the primitive Church, as Cullmann has said, "there is room alongside preaching for a perfectly free proclamation in the Spirit . . . ."<sup>8</sup> Yet of the two, preaching, which is associated with the apostles, received priority. Prophecy "may offer divine instruction which is helpful hic et nunc, but it is put beneath the apostolic preaching, beneath the gospel, which must occupy the place of honor (compare I Cor. 12:28)."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-17.

<sup>7</sup> F. W. Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p. 287.

<sup>8</sup> Cullmann, p. 20.

<sup>9</sup> Grosheide, p. 337. The general conclusions herein reached are held by Gerhard Friedrich in subtopic "Evangelium und Prophetie" in his article "Propheten und



## Form and Content of Glossolalia

"For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit" (I Cor. 14:2).<sup>10</sup> Glossolalia does not direct itself to men; the direction of the utterance is Godward. This is apparent from the very nature of the gift.

Speaking in tongues may take the form of praying or of singing. This is surely what Paul means when he speaks of praying in a tongue and praying with the spirit, on the one hand, and singing with the spirit on the other (I Cor. 14:14-15). It is suggestive that the disciples before the Pentecostal outpouring "with one accord devoted themselves to prayer" (Acts 1:14), and that in all likelihood they were engaged in prayer when they "began to speak in other tongues" (Acts 2:4). Is it possible, as well, that in

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Prophezeien im Neuen Testament," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Friedrich (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1959), VI, 856-57.

<sup>10</sup>It is preferable to regard pneuma in this passage as the spirit of man (cf. v. 14) rather than the Spirit of God.

Rom. 8:26 there is an allusion to praying in tongues?

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words."

With respect to "singing with the spirit" or singing in tongues, there is a rather striking parallel with the "spiritual songs" (ōidais pneumatikais) of Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16. Especially instructive is the former passage, which reads in context:

And do not get drunk with wine,  
 (methuskesthe oinōi; compare methuousin,  
 Acts 2:15)  
 for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit,  
 (plērousthe en pneumati; compare eplēsthēsan  
pneumatōs hagiou, Acts 2:4)  
 addressing  
 (lalountes; compare lalein, Acts 2:4, and its  
 consistent use with glōssa in I Cor. 12-14)  
 one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,  
 singing and making melody  
 (psallontes; compare psalō tōi pneumati,  
 I Cor. 14:15)  
 to the Lord  
 (compare "to God," theōi, I Cor. 14:3,28)  
 with all your heart, always and for everything giving  
 thanks  
 (eucharistountes; compare eucharistiāi,  
 I Cor. 14:16)  
 in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the  
 Father (Eph. 5:18-20).

The terminological parallels are striking; it is difficult not to see glossolalic singing in this passage.

He who speaks in tongues utters "mysteries" (mystēria) (I Cor. 14:2). There are three clues provided as to the nature or content of these utterances. In Acts 2:11 it is stated that they consisted of "the mighty works of God" (ta megaleia tou theou); closely allied to this is Acts 10:46, in which it is stated that the recipients of the Spirit were "speaking in tongues and extolling God (megalunontōn ton theon)." Two other terms are used-- bless (eulogēis, I Cor. 14:16) and thanksgiving (eucharistiāi; also eucharisteis; vv. 16-17). It may therefore be concluded that speaking in tongues consists of praise, blessing and thanksgiving to God by means of prayer or song, in a language unknown by the speaker.

Since glossolalic utterances are capable of interpretation, it follows that these prayers and songs in tongues ought to lend themselves to interpretation. Such a need would call into operation the gift of interpretation of tongues which, in those circumstances, would also assume the tone of prayer or song. It is quite possible that this is the meaning of praying "with the mind" and singing "with the mind" (I Cor. 14:15).

In concluding this matter, it may be that herein lies a possible explanation of the expression "various kinds of tongues" (genē glōssōn) found in I Cor. 12:10,28. It may mean the different modes of expression for glossolalia--speaking, praying, singing.

Paul was able to bring freedom of the Spirit and the restrictions of liturgy together in the self-same service because he saw everything in the light of one aim: the oikodome (building up of the Church). For this reason, he is able to allow speaking with tongues, under certain conditions, and at the same time to repeat liturgical formulae, without giving rise to anarchy with the one or lifelessness with the other. It is precisely in this harmonious combination of freedom and restriction that there lies the greatness and uniqueness of the early Christian service of worship.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Oscar Cullmann, Early Christian Worship, translated by A. Stewart Todd and James B. Torrance (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), pp. 32-33.

## CHAPTER V

### REGULATION OF THE TWO CHARISMATA

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the limitations and restraints imposed upon the utterance of charismata. It is patent, especially from I Cor. 14:26-33, that Paul did not encourage the indiscriminate exercise of glossolalia and prophecy, despite the basic edificatory function of both these gifts. They must operate within the framework of ecclesiastical order. Concerning this, Cullmann has said:

Paul was able to bring freedom of the Spirit and the restrictions of liturgy together in the self-same service because he saw everything in the light of one aim: the oikodomē (building up of the Church). For this reason, he is able to allow speaking with tongues, under certain conditions, and at the same time to repeat liturgical formulae, without giving rise to anarchy with the one or lifelessness with the other. It is precisely in this harmonious combination of freedom and restriction that there lies the greatness and uniqueness of the early Christian service of worship.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Oscar Cullmann, Early Christian Worship, translated by A. Stewart Todd and James B. Torrance (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), pp. 32-33.

## Restrictions upon Glossolalic Utterances

The basic restrictions imposed by Paul upon the exercise of glossolalia are found in I Cor. 14:27-28. There is to be a maximum of only three utterances in tongues in a service of worship. They are to be given seriatim (anmeros); should they all speak at one time, the charge of madness may justly be brought against them (I Cor. 14:23). Finally, an utterance in tongues is to be followed by an interpretation; if there is present no one with the gift of interpretation of tongues, then the glossolalist is to remain silent or, at best, to speak inaudibly.<sup>2</sup> It is evident from the nature of these regulations that speaking in tongues, in the context of I Corinthians, is not an uncontrollable or involuntary exercise. The individual who feels moved upon to speak in tongues has the ability, should the occasion so warrant, to restrain the impulse. What is said of prophets (14:32) is equally true, mutatis mutandis, of glossolalists: "the spirits of prophets are

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<sup>2</sup>However, he himself may and ought to pray for the ability to interpret (I Cor. 14:13).

subject to prophets." (It should be noted, however, that this statement is capable of a different interpretation.)<sup>3</sup>

An application of the Pauline restrictions to the accounts of glossolalia in Acts, however, gives rise to certain problems. The Acts phenomena appear to violate every one of the Pauline regulations.

A limitation of three speakers in tongues is placed upon the Corinthians; yet in Acts 2:4 it is stated that all the disciples spoke in tongues, according to Acts 10:45-46 the household of Cornelius spoke in tongues (it may be safely assumed that the centurion's household consisted of more than three members), and in Acts 19:6-7 there were about twelve men who on one occasion spoke in tongues and prophesied.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, those who spoke in tongues in Acts did not speak in sequence. This is especially clear in the cases of the Jerusalem (chap. 2) and Caesarea (chap. 10) glossolalia, and it is probably true of the Ephesus glossolalia (chap. 19). In Acts, the phenomenon appears to have

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<sup>3</sup> Infra, p. 70.

<sup>4</sup> Paul imposed a limitation of three upon prophetic utterances as well (I Cor. 14:29).

been more spontaneous than Paul would allow. Peter at Caesarea, however, did not censure those who had interrupted his preaching with their speaking in tongues.

Finally, it must be noted that in none of the cases in Acts was there an interpretation given of the glossolalic utterances. The "devout men" in Jerusalem (2:5-8), it is true, understood what was being said, but this was not the gift of interpretation of tongues. What they heard was simply the mighty works of God "in our own tongues" (tais hēmeterais glōssais) (2:11).

Luke, who had been rather closely associated with Paul, ought to have been aware of the latter's teaching on the regulation of glossolalia. Therefore the question naturally obtrudes itself as to why there should be this disparity between the Acts experiences and the Corinthian teaching.

A comparison of the two records indicates several points of interest. One is that there is a spontaneity associated with the Acts phenomenon, but in I Corinthians glossolalia is to be restrained and regulated. Furthermore, in Acts the tongues are associated with the reception of the fulness of the Holy Spirit in each of the



three accounts. It was incontrovertible evidence to Peter and those with him that the Caesarean Gentiles had also received the gift of the Spirit (Acts 10:45-46). On the other hand, there is no indication in I Corinthians that glossolalia accompanied the initial reception of the Spirit's fulness; the phenomenon in that context is one of the gifts of the Spirit, not an accompaniment of the gift of the Spirit as in Acts. Moffatt concurs in this when he says that Paul "never suggests that it might be expected as an invariable accompaniment of conversion and baptism, which Luke seems to do in the Book of Acts (x.46, xix.6)."<sup>5</sup> Barnett likewise takes this basic position:

Glossolalia seems in the early days to have been the regular accompaniment and evidence of the descent of the Spirit upon believers (Acts 2:4, 10:46, 19:6), or at least by a certain party it appears to have been the expected accompaniment of being filled with the Spirit.<sup>6</sup>

In light of this, it is therefore suggested that the speaking in tongues in Acts served a function which is not

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<sup>5</sup> James Moffatt, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (New York: Harper & Brothers, n.d.), p. 210.

<sup>6</sup> Maurice Barnett, The Living Flame (London: The Epworth Press, 1953), p. 58.

mentioned in I Corinthians, namely, that it accompanied the reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit where Luke has gone into any explanation of those experiences. In essence, however, the phenomenon is the same in both sources.

### Circumscription of Prophecy

The basic restrictions upon prophetic utterances are the same as those for glossolalic utterances. "Two or three" prophets may speak, but this must be "one by one" (kath' hena). A new factor is introduced, however, in that "the others" are to weigh what is said (I Cor. 14:29). Who are "the others"? While not impossible, it is not likely that Paul had in mind the members of the congregation. In context it appears best to take the expression to mean "the other prophets." They are to weigh, or pass judgment on, the utterances of their fellow-prophets.<sup>7</sup>

Moffatt says:

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<sup>7</sup> F. W. Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p. 338.

The prophets are not to regard themselves as a union of free spirits who are above criticism, but as individuals responsible for one another, in the interests of the Church whom they serve with their gifts.<sup>8</sup>

It is significant that the word translated "weigh" (diakrinein) is cognate with diakrisis (I Cor. 12:10); the gift following that of prophecy in the enumeration of I Cor. 12:8-10 is designated diakriseis pneumatōn--"the ability to distinguish between spirits." The order in which these two charismata are listed can hardly be accidental, especially when viewed in the light of I Cor. 14:29. With this may be compared the two gifts which follow-- various kinds of tongues and its complementary gift, the interpretation of tongues. It may therefore be concluded that, vis-a-vis the obvious correlation between the last two gifts, there is a similar connection between the preceding pair. It may be noted further that just as the charisma of interpreting tongues could at times be given to the glossolalist himself (I Cor. 14:13), so the gift of discerning or distinguishing of spirits could be given to the prophet.

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<sup>8</sup>Moffatt, p. 225.

It has already been noted that Paul's statement, "the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets," very likely refers to the ability of the individual prophet to subject his spirit to himself.<sup>9</sup> It is possible, however, that Paul meant "the spirits of prophets are subject to other prophets" who have been endowed with the gift of distinguishing of spirits. Friedrich, in comparing New Testament prophets with their Old Testament counterparts, states that the former have only limited authority (in contrast to the "uneingeschraenkte Autoritaet" of the latter).<sup>10</sup> The prophet in the New Testament Church

ist nicht der uneingeschraenkte Herr ueber die andern, sondern er ist der Beurteilung unterworfen. Er ragt nicht ueber die Gemeinde hinaus, sondern er ist genau so wie die andern ein Glied der Gemeinde.<sup>11</sup>

A clear parallel to this phase of Pauline instruction is found in I John 4:1-3:

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<sup>9</sup>Supra, pp. 64-65.

<sup>10</sup>Gerhard Friedrich, "Propheten und Prophezeien im Neuen Testament," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Friedrich (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1959), VI, 850.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 851.

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits (dokimazete ta pneumata) to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God.

The gift of diakrisis pneumatōn is, therefore, "die Gabe, echte und falsche Propheten zu unterscheiden."<sup>12</sup> The test is primarily doctrinal. The true prophet, according to John, confesses "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh." According to Paul, he confesses "Jesus is Lord." That there are indeed false prophets is supported by both the Old Testament (Deut. 13:2-6; 18:20-22; Jer. 28:8-9) and the New Testament (Matt. 24:11; 7:15; Rev. 16:13). And just as legitimate prophets and teachers are closely identified with each other (Acts 13:1; I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11) and, as will be seen, the prophet himself has a didactic function in the Church,<sup>13</sup> so the terms "false prophet" and "false teacher" may be interchanged (II Pet. 2:1; compare II John 7 with I John 4:1-3).

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<sup>12</sup>Erich Fascher, ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ (Giessen: Alfred Toepelmann, 1927), p. 185.

<sup>13</sup>Infra, p. 85.

According to Paul, there was the possibility of a person uttering, "Jesus be cursed!" while presumably under the influence of the Spirit of God (I Cor. 12:3).<sup>14</sup> But such a one must be a false prophet, prompted by a spirit other than the divine Spirit. It is, once again, a declaration of the lordship of Jesus which is the criterion by which pneumatic utterances are judged to be genuine. It perhaps needs to be underscored at this juncture that this is the only test of the genuineness of the gift of prophecy which Paul proposes. The failure of a charismatic utterance to edify (I Cor. 14:26) would not necessarily brand it as false or spurious; it could have been merely the result of poor judgment or a failure to observe the Pauline restrictions.

It is somewhat difficult, however, to determine with any degree of certainty the standard by which prophetic utterances were to be adjudged either true or false.

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<sup>14</sup>Moffatt's explanation is novel and fanciful: "some Corinthians may have been impressed, almost against their better judgment, by hearing a member of the local synagogue (next door to the Corinthian meeting-house, Acts xviii.7) crying in rapt, passionate tones, as though he were inspired, 'Your Jesus is no Christ! God's curse be on him!'" (Moffatt, p. 179)

While one may not be able to rule out entirely a subjective factor, whereby fellow-prophets could receive an inner witness with respect to the prophecy, Paul's emphasis appears to be on the objective factor of doctrinal content as the determinant. The tests of I Cor. 12:3 and I John 4:1-3 are not to be taken as inclusive, but merely as suggestive of the wider content of the apostolic witness. The word of the apostles, then, is the objective standard. It is not by accident that when the offices of apostle and of prophet are juxtaposed in the New Testament, the apostle is always first (for example, I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11). Even that which purports to be a prophetic "revelation" cannot pre-empt the apostolic word.

Compare Gal. 1:8-9:

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, If any one is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.

It is herein submitted that this priority of the apostle over the prophet is the reason for the limitation of three prophetic utterances and three glossolalic utterances in a service of worship. These charismatic

irruptions are not to be so numerous as to usurp the place of the normal exposition and reading of the Scriptures.

Here once again one may see the Pauline genius for synthesizing the extraordinary with the ordinary, the charismatic with the institutional, the Spirit with the Word. Could this not in some way be related to the words of Jesus that those who worship God must worship Him "in spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24)?

It is of interest that both the Didache and the Shepherd of Hermas deal with the matter of true and false prophets. But in these writings the test of true prophecy is based not so much on the content as on the life and morals of the prophet. "I have given thee the life of both kinds of prophets. Therefore test, by his life and his works, the man who says that he is moved by the Spirit" (Hermas, Mand. 11). The true prophet is "gentle and tranquil and humble-minded, and abstaineth from all wickedness and vain desire of this present world, and holdeth himself inferior to all men . . . ." In a like vein, the Didache says that "not everyone that speaketh in the Spirit is a prophet, but only if he have the ways of the Lord" (chap. 11). These statements, while finding no real



counterpart in Pauline teaching, are strongly reminiscent of Jesus' words: "You will know them [false prophets] by their fruits" (Matt. 7:16,20).

The false prophet "receiveth money for his prophesying, and if he receiveth not, he prophesieth not." Furthermore, he does his work secretly, avoiding the "assembly of righteous men" (Hermas, Mand. 11). The Didache places a limitation upon the length of time an itinerant prophet is to remain; if he stays more than two days, he is a false prophet (chap. 11). In addition, "no prophet when he ordereth a table in the Spirit shall eat of it; otherwise he is a false prophet" (chap. 11).

## CHAPTER VI

### FUNCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE TWO CHARISMATA

#### Basic Considerations

Glossolalia, the more dramatic of the two gifts under consideration, had so captivated the Corinthian believers that they placed an inordinately high value upon it. As a matter of fact, many of them regarded it as the gift par excellence. The term pneumatikos, spiritual, is found in the plural in I Cor. 12:1 and 14:1 and refers to the charismata in toto. In 14:37 Paul says, "If any one thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual (pneumatikos), he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord." The parallel use of the word with "prophet" leads to the conclusion that Paul is here speaking of the glossolalist--inasmuch as the thrust of that entire chapter is a comparison and contrast of the two--and that it is an accommodation to their usage of that word.

This exceptionally high esteem in which they held the gift of tongues was unwarranted, however, because that

charisma had some inherent limitations. It is not the purpose of Paul, however, to discredit the manifestation of glossolalia in the assembly of believers; he merely strives to inform the Corinthian church that the gift has a relative value when compared with the entire list of charismata, and especially prophecy. Therefore he can say, "do not forbid speaking in tongues" (14:39); none of the limitations he imposes on the exercise of the gift is to be construed as a tacit disapproval of speaking in tongues. Yet it is significant that in Paul's enumeration of the charismata the gift of tongues and its cognate gift of interpretation of tongues are last (I Cor. 12:8-10, 28-30). In other listings of spiritual gifts, such as Rom. 12:6-8, glossolalia is not mentioned at all.

It is perhaps understandable that the unusual character of the gift of tongues was responsible for their misplaced value upon it, but as Schweizer has said:

extraordinariness is felt to be basically irrelevant as a criterion; it would do just as well as a criterion for the religious experience of pagans (I Cor. xii.2). The real criterion for measuring the value or lack of value of the gifts of the Spirit is the

confession, Jesus is Lord, and at the same time the edification, oikodomē, the expediency, sumpheron, of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

Herein lies the key to the Pauline approach to the manifestation of spiritual gifts in the Church. "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good [pros to sumpheron]" (I Cor. 12:7). "Let all things be done for edification [pros oikodomēn]" (I Cor. 14:26). It cannot be stated too strongly that the raison d'etre of the charismata is edification, to which all other functions must be subordinated. The common good must not be sacrificed in the interests of any benefit which may accrue to the individual!

The individual member must not attempt to disassociate himself from the body (I Cor. 12:14-26); for good or ill, it is an integral part of the organism. So must the "pneumatic" not operate within a sphere bounded only by his own interests, doing only that which brings to him personal satisfaction. There is no room in the Pauline schema of the charismata for the individualistic, atomistic approach

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<sup>1</sup> Eduard Schweizer, et al., "Spirit of God," Bible Key Words, translated by A. E. Harvey (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), III, 67.

of some of the Corinthian pneumatics. These pneumatics must exercise their gifts within a somatic framework! They must contribute to the well-being of the body--the assembly of believers. Liberty in the Spirit must be governed by responsibility to the body.

### The Value of Glossolalia

The fourteenth chapter of I Corinthians suggests at least three functions which are served by glossolalia. The first is the edification of the glossolalist himself. "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church" (I Cor. 14:4). The intent of this passage is that even though speaking in tongues may not be understood by anyone present (v. 2) or by the speaker himself, it nevertheless edifies him. If an interpreter is not present, he is to keep silence in the church, and is to speak "to himself [heautōi] and to God" (v. 28). The suggestion is made by Grosheide that the expression "to himself" does not mean the glossolalist ought to "address his words to himself, but that he speaks for his own benefit (cf. vss. 14,22)." The dative, then, would be

a dative of interest.<sup>2</sup> This is not unlikely, but perhaps Paul simply meant that under those conditions the person was to speak inaudibly.

Secondly, the edificatory value of tongues is extended to the body, the church, for "he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, unless some one interprets, so that the church may be edified" (I Cor. 14:5). Any public utterance in tongues must be interpreted; otherwise it tends to confusion rather than edification. As a matter of fact, the glossolalist himself "should pray for the power to interpret" (14:13) so that his utterances may be intelligible to the assembly. One "in the position of an outsider [idiotēs]" is unable to respond with the "Amen" to uninterpreted tongues, because "he does not know what you are saying" (14:16). Here the idiotēs is "die nichtekstatischen Zuhörer, die uebrige Gemeinde."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps he may better be designated as a

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<sup>2</sup>F. W. Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p. 319.

<sup>3</sup>Hans Lietzmann, An die Korinther I, II (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1949), p. 72.

proselyte or catechumen.<sup>4</sup> In all likelihood the word in v. 24 is to be interpreted in the same manner, where it is linked with apistos, an unbeliever. The negative reaction of these two groups to uninterpreted and successive or simultaneous glossolalic utterances tends to break down, rather than build up, the church. In church, says Paul, it is preferable to speak five words in an intelligible language ("with my mind") rather than "ten thousand words in a tongue" (I Cor. 14:19).

The manner in which speaking in tongues coupled with an interpretation serves to edify the church is not clear. But since the content of glossolalic utterances may be a praising or extolling of God or a recounting of His mighty works,<sup>5</sup> it may be assumed that the faith of believers will be stimulated and strengthened as they hear these things in their own language. With this edification of the individual members, then, there will most naturally follow the edification of the body.

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<sup>4</sup>Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated and adapted from the fourth revised and augmented edition by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, c.1957), p. 371.

<sup>5</sup>Supra, p. 61.

Thirdly, tongues serve a purpose with respect to unbelievers as well, for they are "a sign [sēmeion] for unbelievers" (I Cor. 14:22). It is difficult in light of preceding discussions to concur in the judgment of Lietzmann that

Die Glossolalie hat also in der goettlichen Heilsordnung nicht positiven Wert fuer die Erbauung der Gemeinde, sondern ist nur also sēmeion, d.h. als furchtbares Raetsel fuer die verstockten Unglaeubigen von Gott geschickt.<sup>6</sup>

When Paul states that tongues are not a sign for believers, he intends it as a mild rebuke to the Corinthians for their unwarranted elevation of this charisma; it is wrong for believers to think that glossolalia per se is a mark (perhaps, the mark) of the divine presence. However, the gift is calculated to arrest the attention of the unbelievers. This does not necessarily mean that because of it they will believe; yet it may be inferred from the context that if they reject this sign, their culpability is thereby increased. This was the apostle's point in quoting Is. 28:11 in this connection. Disobedient Israel would know, when the Assyrians with their "strange tongues"

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<sup>6</sup>Lietzmann, p. 73.



and "lips of foreigners" came upon them, that God had indeed spoken; yet they refused to repent.

This is an admittedly difficult passage. There may be some merit to the explanation which says that Paul quotes Is. 28:11-12

to prove that outlandish [?] tongues will not convert people and then allows himself a turn of phrase that at first mystifies the reader. What he means to say in 14:22 is, "Thus, tongues are a sign not for [future] believers but for [future] unbelievers, while prophecy is not for [future] unbelievers, but for [future] believers." Tongues will confirm the unbeliever in his unbelief, prophecy will convert him.<sup>7</sup>

A concluding note is in order with respect to the value of speaking in tongues. The apostle Paul rather clearly restricts the public exercise of glossolalia; he implicitly states it is not one of the "higher gifts" (I Cor. 12:31); he places it last in the enumeration of the gifts. But he also recognizes a decided value in the gift and, rather than discourage its exercise, says, "do not forbid speaking in tongues" (14:39) and "I want you all

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<sup>7</sup> Walter C. Klein, "The Church and Its Prophets," Anglican Theological Review, XLIV (Jan. 1962), 8. Except for the bracketed question mark, words in brackets are the author's and not the present writer's.

to speak in tongues . . . ." (14:5). Not only this, but he claims to be the arch-glossolalist! "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all" (14:18). Nor does he question the genuineness of glossolalic utterances, for even with respect to an uninterpreted utterance he says, "you may give thanks well enough" (14:17). Moffatt sums up this phase of Paul's teaching thus:

He values the gift as something not only good but exalted; it is a divine manifestation of the Spirit, not a hallucination. He admits that it is something to be coveted (xiv.1-5,39). He himself is proud of having the gift, and he never dreams of doubting the reality of an inspired ecstasy which he knew from experience to be authentic.<sup>8</sup>

#### Function and Value of Prophecy

The basic function of the gift of prophecy is the edification or building up of the church (I Cor. 14:4). The prophet's ministry, therefore, is to believers; only indirectly does he minister to unbelievers (14:24-25). It may be said, however, that the variety of prophetic functions mentioned in that chapter is all related to the

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<sup>8</sup> James Moffatt, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (New York: Harper & Brothers, n.d.), p. 211.

central and controlling purpose--the edification of the body.

The prophet speaks to men for their upbuilding (oikodomē) and encouragement (paraklēsis) and consolation (paramuthia) (I Cor. 14:3). It is said of Judas and Silas, who were prophets, that they "exhorted (parekalesan) the brethren with many words and strengthened (epestērixan) them" (Acts 15:32). These two ministries may be paralleled with the first two of the triad in I Cor. 14:3.

The prophet has a didactic ministry as well. "For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn (manthanōsin) and be encouraged (parakalōntai)" (14:31). And further, "in church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct (katēchēsō) others . . ." (14:19). While the offices and functions of prophets and teachers are clearly distinguished (for example, I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11), there is also an overlapping of the two. It can be said, however, that prophetic teaching was in all likelihood more inspirational in nature.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>The reader is referred to supra, p. 71, where it was noted that false prophets may be considered false teachers.

The prophet is also a leader in worship, and as such is closely connected with prayer (compare I Cor. 11:4-5). It is entirely possible that to "pray with the mind" is a form of prophetic utterance (I Cor. 14:15), just as praying with the spirit is a form of glossolalia. The liturgical function of prophets is mentioned as well in the book of Acts, where it says that they worshiped (leitourgountōn), fasted (nēsteuontōn), and prayed (proseuxamenoi). It was during this time that the Holy Spirit spoke to them concerning the setting apart of Barnabas and Saul (compare also I Tim. 1:18; 4:14). According to the Didache, prophets are to be permitted "to offer thanksgiving as much as they desire" (chap. 10). Prayers "were evidently regarded, not exclusively but mainly, as the prophet's business . . . ." <sup>10</sup> Attempts have been made to identify this offering of thanksgiving with the celebration of the Eucharist but, as Klein cautions, it is just as likely that the word has here the sense obviously attached to it in I Cor. 14:16-17." <sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Oscar Cullmann, Early Christian Worship, translated by A. Stewart Todd and James B. Torrance (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1953), p. 12.

<sup>11</sup>Klein, p. 10.

In his treatment of pre-Christian prophets, Friedrich has made an interesting observation. Though Zechariah, Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna are not all identified as prophets or prophetesses (Luke 1:67; 1:41-42; 2:25; 2:36), they all speak under the influence of the Holy Spirit. In addition, they are all connected in some way with the temple. But contrary to the tension which existed in Old Testament times between prophet and priest, "Prophetie und Tempel stehen bei diesen vorchristlich-christlichen Propheten nicht im Gegensatz zueinander, sondern im Einklang miteinander."<sup>12</sup> Of added interest is a passage from Didache 13:

Every firstfruit then of the produce of the wine-vat and of the threshing-floor, of thy oxen and of thy sheep, thou shalt take and give as the firstfruit to the prophets; for they are your chief-priests.

The work of the prophet extends to the unbeliever as well (I Cor. 14:24-25). By the prophet's disclosure of the secrets of the sinner's heart, the sinner is convicted (elegchetai) and called to account (anakrinetai). One may

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<sup>12</sup> Gerhard Friedrich, "Propheten und Prophezeien im Neuen Testament," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Friedrich (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1959), VI, 837.

compare the disclosure by Jesus to the woman of Samaria concerning her marital status, and the response of the woman, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet" (John 4:18-19).

It is worthy of note that in the Pauline treatment of the gift of prophecy, there is no mention of a predictive element. One cannot generalize at this point, but it may be said that the overriding emphasis of prophetic utterances is upon the present rather than the future.

#### The Superiority of Prophecy

There can be little question that the gift of prophecy is one of the "higher gifts" (I Cor. 12:31) which believers are to desire earnestly (I Cor. 14:1,39), especially in preference to tongues. Several reasons for this high valuation of the prophetic gift have already been given and will here be summarized.

In the three most prominent Pauline listings of spiritual gifts, prophecy or prophet is found in each one (I Cor. 12:8-10,28-30; Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4:11). In addition, the prophet is often linked with the apostle.

The gift of prophecy could well be the most comprehensive of all the gifts. It is the genus of which glossolalia is a species; it has a didactic function; it is closely identified with preaching, though also different.

The content of prophetic utterances is broader in scope than that of glossolalia.

Prophecy may be more instrumental in the conversion of an unbeliever than glossolalia.

Prophecy may function in the assembly independent of any other gift, though the gift of distinguishing between spirits may be a necessary corollary to it. Glossolalia, on the other hand, cannot be exercised publicly without its complementary gift of interpretation of tongues.

Prophecy edifies the church; glossolalia, apart from an interpretation, edifies only the individual.

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