

## The 'Speaking with Tongues' of the Early Christians.

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IN the year 1833 there appeared in the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* a plea for a new arrangement of the sermon with reference to its form and content. The author, Klaus Harms, was generally known through his ninety-five theses against Rationalism, which were issued on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the Reformation. As a title to his article on the sermon, he used the words: 'With tongues! Dear brethren, speak with tongues!' He knew very well that a correct interpretation of the biblical expression would not permit of this application, but he evidently did not comprehend the full meaning of the words, or he would scarcely have thus used them. What, then, does the formula, 'to speak with tongues,' really mean according to its original interpretation?

From the second and third centuries on, the customary interpretation has been: *to speak in foreign languages*. Origen, and probably Irenæus, thus explained the expression, and at the present time it is so understood by many theologians and the majority of the laity.

In fact, the speaking 'with other tongues' in the Acts of the Apostles (chap. 2) is undoubtedly intended to mean speaking in foreign languages. It is there said of the disciples that on the first Pentecost after the Lord's death, 'they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance' (v. 4). Since the same expression is used farther on (v. 11) to mean speaking in foreign languages, it would naturally bear the same meaning in the above verse.

There has been a desire, it is true, to draw from v. 11 such an explanation of the miracle of speaking as to make it one of hearing, but v. 4 is decisive against this idea. For, in harmony with that verse, the subsequent statements are to be understood: 'Every man heard them speaking in his own language' (v. 6); 'and how hear we every man in our own language, wherein we were born' (v. 8); 'we hear them speaking in our tongues of the mighty works of God' (v. 11).

These same verses render it still less possible to conceive, as among others Goethe attempted, of

this speaking with other tongues as speaking in an absolutely new language, which was at once intelligible to all, and even appeared as their mother tongue. For, in that case, we should not have the simple statement, 'Every man heard them speaking in his own language,' but rather something like this: 'Every man heard them *as though* they were speaking in his own language.'

But on other grounds, it is possible to doubt the correctness of the usual interpretation of the miracle, as one of speaking in foreign languages. The Acts of the Apostles mention in two other passages (10<sup>46</sup> 19<sup>6</sup>) the circumstance of speech with tongues without any reference whatever to foreign languages. What good purpose, moreover, would have been served, if Cornelius and his household, or the disciples of John whom Paul baptized, had spoken in foreign languages? But now in the first passage (10<sup>47</sup> 11<sup>15</sup>) the phenomenon in question is compared with the Pentecost miracle, although it is described by another phrase, not as speaking 'with *other* tongues,' but only as speaking 'with tongues.' Does it therefore follow that the phenomenon of Pentecost was not originally considered a miracle of speaking in other tongues?

The following considerations, however, are the only really decisive ones. First, according to Ac 2<sup>13</sup>, some of those present at the festival at Pentecost explained the apostles' speech with tongues, as due to drunkenness. On this point Herder remarked, when over a hundred years ago he discussed the gift of speech at the first Christian Pentecost Festival, 'Where is the vineyard full of sweet wine, in which foreign, unknown languages can be suddenly learned?' This criticism of the audience really does not at all suit the phenomenon just described. For even if one would like to explain this criticism as malicious perversion, such a possibility would be excluded by Herder's further statement: 'Not only does the author relate this derisive explanation of the Pentecost miracle, as seriously as he has told of the miracle itself, and of the astonishment of the others at it; but even Peter, in explaining the inspiration with speech, takes it into serious consideration. He defends his com-

panions by saying that they are not drunken, since it is but the third hour of the day, etc. But what would he have said if it had been later in the day? Could anyone, by filling himself with sweet wine, speak languages he had never learned? Peter no more than Luke would have wished to say that; for he plainly speaks to the mockers just as he would to reasonable men, who are capable of being persuaded: "Ye men of Judea, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words. These are not drunken, as ye suppose," etc.

To this consideration yet another is to be added. We have just seen that Peter directed his address to Jews and dwellers in Jerusalem, that is, Israelites, his brethren (vv. 14, 22, 29). On the other hand the author designates (v. 5) those who were present, in the first place it is true, as Jews dwelling at Jerusalem, but then as 'devout men from every nation under heaven'; whereby apparently real representatives of the different nations of the earth are meant. But even if the phrase, 'Jews dwelling at Jerusalem,' might lead one to reject this explanation, that which follows must dispel that doubt. In the list of names (vv. 9-11), which not accidentally is customarily designated as the catalogue of nations, these people describe themselves simply Parthians, Medes, Elamites, etc. The Jews of the Diaspora, however, were not accustomed thus to designate themselves, especially when they were in the Holy City among their brethren. Besides, in addition to the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, etc., there are also Jews or proselytes mentioned, so that the former could not themselves have been either Jews or proselytes. It is true that many attempts have been made to regard this clause, 'Jews and proselytes,' as explanatory apposition to the remainder; but in that case it ought to stand at the end of the whole list and be marked in some manner or other as appository. Finally, we may still less apply these words to the clause which immediately precedes them, 'Roman citizens temporarily stationed in Jerusalem' (R.V.: 'sojourners from Rome'), for under this expression real heathens and not Jews are to be understood. The contradiction between vv. 5-11 and the ones that follow, is therefore undeniable. In the former, heathens and Jews, in the latter, only Jews, are represented as being present at the miracle at Pentecost.

Plainly this discord in our account is indissolubly connected with the one we have first considered.

Where a speaking in foreign languages is assumed, there must too be postulated representatives of these foreign nations. Moreover, it has already been shown that the narrative in its further course knows nothing of either the one or the other. Not only, then, must the idea of speaking in foreign languages, but also the notion of the presence of the representatives themselves, have been added later.

Whether these additions can be separated from our present text so that the original account will be recognizable, it is not necessary here to consider. I believe that it is possible, yet it is not of great importance in the present connexion. Only, we must settle with all possible brevity the question how our current idea of the miracle has arisen.

We can scarcely hold that at a later time the speaking in tongues came generally, and without further explanation, to be looked upon as speaking in *foreign* languages, for in that case this essential element would have been arbitrarily added in thought. Rather is it the case, as Herder, again, has seen, and the most divergent theologians since his time have recognized, that we have here an imitation of the Jewish tradition of the promulgation of the law on Sinai. 'Although the ten commandments,' says a Midrash of the ninth century, which, however, gives on this point only the old tradition, 'were announced with a single sound, yet all the people heard the voice.' That was possible thus: when the voice was uttered, it was divided into seven voices and then changed into seventy tongues, and every nation heard the law in its mother tongue. After this fashion, then, it came to be believed that the first Christian sermon was heard by each man in his native language.

But original tradition was only of such an inspired announcement of the mighty works of God, that it filled one with astonishment, provoked another to mockery, and was designated moreover as a speaking with tongues (not with other tongues). Of what nature this speaking was, we gather as little here as in the two other references in the Book of Acts. For in 10<sup>40</sup> it is described only as a praising of God, and in 19<sup>6</sup> it is connected with prophecy. What it really was, is not explained by such expressions.

The mention of the subject in the (not genuine) conclusion to the Gospel by Mark is still less clear. This account, written perhaps by the Pres-

byter Aristion, in the beginning of the second century, gives the Lord's announcement to his disciples that they would speak with new tongues (v. 17). This expression can scarcely mean languages, which up to that time were unknown to them; but what then does it mean? The reference itself gives no further information than that this speaking with tongues (for perhaps the promise was only concerning tongues, not *new* tongues) was a wonderful phenomenon of the same order as the casting out of demons.

Finally, when we consider for a moment the later references to the matter in the Catholic Fathers, we find that Irenæus says that many brethren could be heard in the Church at his time who had prophetic gifts, who spoke through the Spirit in different tongues, and who, with the aim of being useful, brought to light the hidden things of men and explained the secrets of God (*Adv. Haer.* 5. 6, 1). But previously he had pictured the speaking with tongues (at least according to the old Latin translation of his work) as speaking in all languages, just as the miracle at Pentecost, which, indeed, from the Acts could not be otherwise understood (3. 17, 2). Such a speaking in foreign languages, however, by means of which the hidden things of men were brought to light and the secrets of God explained, Irenæus himself had certainly not heard. He must, therefore, have had absolutely no personal observation of the phenomenon, but described it only on the evidence of the Acts of the Apostles and the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the statements of which, in his opinion, were not mutually inconsistent.

It is different with Tertullian. In his polemic against Marcion, he challenges him to produce a psalm, a vision, a prayer, that is to say, a spiritual one, spoken in ecstasy, that is, in unconsciousness, if only an interpretation of the tongue was added (5. 8). Thus 'tongue' is understood to mean a prayer spoken in ecstasy, and we find here an element that has nowhere appeared in the previously mentioned descriptions of the phenomena, and yet is of the greatest importance for a better understanding of the subject. One might say truly that it is only a later montanistic idea of speaking in tongues which Tertullian here portrays, from which inferences as to the first Christian form of the phenomenon ought not to be drawn. We must therefore leave this description of Tertullian's for the present, and first examine the

speaking with tongues of the early Christians, after which we shall return to the consideration of the montanistic prophecy.

The only remaining sources for the investigation of the matter, namely, the writings of Paul and particularly the First Epistle to the Corinthians, are, however, sources of the highest value, for the apostle says of himself (1 Co 14<sup>18</sup>): 'I thank God, I speak with tongues more than you all.' His testimony, therefore, will be reliable throughout.

In this investigation the genuineness of the Epistle is assumed without question, although it has been disputed of late by several scholars in Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and England. I cannot enter here upon a refutation of their considerations, but I hope to show that the gift of tongues, as it is described in 1 Co 12-14, is a phenomenon conceivable only in the earliest period of the Christian Church, and that, therefore, the Epistle must be genuine.

Likewise the theories advanced also by theologians in Holland, that these chapters contain numerous later interpolations, indeed, are composed of eight separate parts, will be refuted through the essentially unified result to which the investigation will lead. The question whether the fragment towards the end of chap. 14, in which the women are forbidden to speak in the church, is conceivable in the same Epistle with chap. 11, in which prayer and prophecy is generally granted to them, is not one that demands our attention here.

In the inquiry into the essential elements of the speaking with tongues, we must proceed from the fact that Paul everywhere distinguishes it from prophecy. When he makes a general enumeration of the gifts of the Spirit, he names the one as well as the other (12<sup>10. 28</sup>). When he mentions only the two, he places them in contrast with each other (14<sup>1ff. 20ff. 27ff.</sup>). A study of early Christian prophecy will therefore give us a better understanding of the speaking with tongues.

Prophecy is described as edifying, comforting, consoling, as convicting, judging, making manifest the secrets of the heart, and, finally, as instructing (vv. 3. 24f. 31); but contrary to expectation it never appears as a foretelling of the future. Yet it depends upon immediate Divine revelation, though the recipient need not at once give expression to what he has thus received (vv. 30f.). Criticism, moreover, is in no way excluded by its super-

natural origin, but, on the contrary, 'the others' (not simply one but the others in general) are to test the statements of the prophet (v.<sup>20</sup>). In every case it is assumed, and in v.<sup>3</sup> expressly stated, that prophecy, for which we should more properly use the name sermon, is universally intelligible.

Just this element, however, is lacking in the speaking with tongues. 'He that speaks in a tongue speaks not unto men, but unto God: for no man understands,' says the apostle (v.<sup>2</sup>); and he illustrates this later by several comparisons: 'Even things without life giving a voice, whether pipe or harp, if they give not a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?' (v.<sup>7</sup>). The simple Greek music was not yet sufficiently advanced to be able to produce definite impressions by means of the bare tone of certain instruments. The Greek, just as the musically uneducated man of to-day, liked to hear familiar melodies, or at least those which would be easily understood; for otherwise he did not comprehend the music. 'For,' continues Paul as proof, 'if the trumpet, which sounds loud enough, give an uncertain voice (that is, an indefinite signal), who shall prepare himself for war?' (v.<sup>8</sup>). The mere sound of the trumpet with which we immediately connect definite impressions, meant nothing to the Greek; he wanted a definite signal. With this light we can now understand more fully the reference we considered earlier: 'If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal' (13<sup>1</sup>). The cymbal, at least, is likewise in modern music only a noise-instrument, which awakens no definite idea. Even of such little account, says Paul, is the very highest form of speaking with tongues, namely, that which is practised by the angels. Further, returning now to chap. 14, we find that he compares the gift with indistinct speaking: 'Unless ye utter by the tongue speech easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?' (v.<sup>9</sup>). The discussion here is not concerning speaking with tongues, for that, according to what has gone before, is *always* indistinct. Paul, rather, likens the indistinct speaking with tongues to indistinct speaking in general—both are unintelligible and useless. And, finally, for the last analogy: 'There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world. If, then, I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be to him that speaks a barbarian, and he that speaks will be a barbarian

unto me' (vv.<sup>10f.</sup>). Paul thus *compares* speaking with tongues with speaking in foreign languages, consequently he regards the two as not the same, and this verifies the conclusions we have already reached as to the meaning of the expression. If, as a last resort, appeal is made to v.<sup>21</sup>, where the apostle points out to those in the Corinthian Church, who spoke with tongues, a prophecy regarding the Assyrians, who spoke foreign languages, it is to be said in reply that here, as elsewhere, Paul applies a directly Christian interpretation to the Old Testament, without in any way concerning himself as to the historical sense.

Our investigations, then, so far have proved only that the speaking with tongues was unintelligible. Many, it is true, have desired to draw larger inferences from the references we have discussed, and hold that the speaking with tongues consisted of inarticulate sounds, but in strict interpretation that is not said. Neither can appeal be made to Ro 8<sup>26</sup> where the apostle speaks of 'unutterable groanings,' for these are not designated as speech with tongues. Possibly this speaking assumed that form occasionally; certainly it appeared in another form also. But in order to establish this fact, it is necessary to insert a short further statement. Paul repeatedly contrasts with one another the speaking with tongues and prophecy, and in the same way spiritual gifts and prophecy, or those who are spiritually endowed and prophets (1 Co 14<sup>1-37</sup>). It is evident from this that he understands under spiritual gifts chiefly the gift of tongues, and under spiritually endowed those who speak with tongues. According to this result, then, the beginning of the entire discussion (12<sup>1f.</sup>) must be interpreted. For this purpose it is all the same if one translates: 'Concerning spiritual gifts,' or better still, in view of what follows, 'concerning those persons who are spiritually endowed, I would not have you ignorant.' In any event, Paul refers to those who spoke with tongues when he says: 'Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking in the Spirit of God says, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit' (v.<sup>3</sup>). Here at all events those who spoke with tongues uttered intelligible words, though of so curious a nature that we must necessarily later return once again to this reference.

In the present connexion, appeal for proof of the result we have just reached might perhaps be

also made to the fact that the speaking with tongues was often interpreted by others. For this is indicated by the mention of both the interpretation and the speaking with tongues, in the enumeration of the spiritual gifts with which different persons were endowed (12<sup>8ff.</sup>), and then by the corresponding questions: 'Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?' (v.<sup>30</sup>). In particular, it is proved by the development towards the end of chap. 14. When in v.<sup>26</sup> we read: 'When you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation' (to offer), a more exact rendering would be this: 'Each one has something different, the one this, the other that.' But then further: 'If any man speaks in a tongue, let it be by two, or at the most three, and that in turn; and let one interpret: but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church' (vv.<sup>27f.</sup>). Here the interpreter cannot be one of those who speak in a tongue. At least then he must interpret also what is spoken by the others, since none shall remain without interpretation. But if this were so, it would certainly have been stated. It is simpler, therefore, to distinguish 'the one' from those who speak with tongues. Finally, why only one is to interpret, while the prophets may be criticized by 'the others' generally, is easy to divine: probably otherwise different interpretations might easily have arisen. For it is to be remembered that speaking in a tongue was for the most part unintelligible; even if one understood particular words or sentences, their connexion at least must have been obscure, if not, perhaps it was the case that even absolutely senseless combinations of sounds alternated with the intelligible words and sentences.

But how, then, was an interpretation possible at all? Perhaps practice and familiarity with the matter enabled some to interpret simultaneously the speaker's face expressions and gestures. Only thus could the congregation, as appears to be presupposed, also respond with 'Amen' to a speech in a tongue which they understood only in places; while, on the other hand, the uninitiated and unbelieving, unacquainted with these phenomena, must have designated them as madness (vv.<sup>16. 23</sup>).

But how did such a manner of speaking come into existence at all? It is sometimes thought that the Corinthians wished to speak a new language, because their mother tongue was not

sufficient to express their feelings. But ignoring the certainty of opposition from Paul to such a desire, it is decisive against the theory that those who spoke with tongues were without clear consciousness, and therefore could not have this aim in view. The apostle explicitly says (v.<sup>14</sup>): 'If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful' (or inactive). Those who spoke in a tongue were therefore in a state of ecstasy, and gave immediate expression to their feelings in phrases which must have been in the main unintelligible to the others.

From this fact the remarkable reference (12<sup>9</sup>) considered above can also be explained. Here the entire distinction which Paul makes for the Corinthians is based on the assumption that some members of the Church really said, 'Jesus is anathema,' as others said, 'Jesus is Lord.' These outcries did not occur, however, during persecution, because in reality we hear nothing of this, neither in learned discussions concerning the relation of the earthly Jesus to the heavenly Christ, for of such at this time we know even less; but they occurred in speaking with tongues, which is the only subject under discussion in this connexion. Those who spoke with tongues must have often uttered cries like this one, 'Jesus is anathema,' without really wishing to curse Jesus, for in general Paul designates speaking in a tongue as prayer, singing of praises, blessing, and giving of thanks (14<sup>14ff.</sup>). These cries are, then, only to be explained as unconscious utterances.

We are therefore in a position to understand why the speakers could not on the whole, as we have seen, interpret their own speeches. They had of their condition only a general remembrance, by which nevertheless they could be strengthened in the faith<sup>9</sup> (v.<sup>4</sup>).

However, many must have remained in possession of their senses in a larger measure, so that they could afterwards interpret their own speeches. That is manifestly assumed in the words further on: 'I would have you all speak with tongues, but rather that ye should prophesy: and greater is he that prophesies than he that speaks with tongues, except he interpret' (v.<sup>5</sup>). In a still later reference Paul even desires that everyone who speaks in a tongue pray that he may also interpret (v.<sup>13</sup>).

Our investigation yields, therefore, the following conclusions: The speaking with tongues occurred in ecstasy, and was in general unintelligible. There

were differences in the case of different individuals, and even of the same individual at different times. Sometimes a man was conscious to such an extent that he afterwards remembered his utterances; but at other times he had so entirely lost control of his senses that he gave to his feelings an expression exactly contrary to their content. If, in addition to this, we may suppose that with these unconnected words and sentences, meaningless sound-combinations alternated, then some additional light will be thrown upon the apostle's expression, 'Kinds of tongues' (12<sup>10</sup>).

But why does he speak at all of 'tongues'? This question could have been correctly answered long ago, if it had not been asked almost universally too soon. Just as in numerous other questions, so also here, it has been customary first to examine the meaning of the words used in the expression, and after that to explain the description of the matter itself. Had the process rather been reversed, most of the interpretations of the expression under consideration would at the very beginning have proved themselves impossible.

That this is true of the explanation, 'to speak in foreign languages,' we have already seen. It holds good also for the translation, 'to speak in a new language,' to prove which it is not even legitimate to cite Is 50<sup>4</sup>, Lk 21<sup>15</sup>, or Rev 13<sup>5</sup>, since in all these references the tongue or the mouth which is given to the prophet, the apostle, or the beast, is more exactly described. As little ought one to translate, 'speak with the tongue,' as if by 'tongue' the human organ were to be understood. For thus, then, the characteristic fact that it is a special speaking with the tongue would not be expressed. Or, would a speaking which was effected *by the Spirit* have been designated simply as a speaking *with the tongue*? Then at least (as in the reference of another nature (14<sup>19</sup>), which has been considered above), the article (with *the tongue*) would have been used, and with reference to a single person, the plural (in *tongues*) would not have been used as it is in the case in 14<sup>5f, 18</sup>. And, finally, what sense would there be in saying, 'the one has a tongue' (v. 26), if this expression is to be understood as referring to the tongue as a human organ? Much more accordant with these quotations is the explanation of 'tongues' as archaic expressions or unintelligible sayings. For in this latter sense was the Greek word used, not only in

educated, but also in uneducated circles. But, nevertheless, even this explanation is insufficient. If Paul, without comment, called that *ecstatic* speech a speaking with tongues, the expression must have been already in use just for such phenomena, and, therefore, the thing itself must have been known earlier.

In fact, at the beginning of his entire discussion, the apostle himself contrasts the speaking with tongues with similar phenomena in heathen environment: 'Ye know that when ye were Gentiles ye were led away unto those dumb idols (by the demons, since they stood behind the idols), howsoever ye might be led (that is, involuntarily)'—but now ye should be able so far to control yourselves as not to cry in ecstasy, 'Jesus is anathema' (12<sup>2f</sup>). We do not know, indeed, what form of heathen ecstasy Paul had especially in mind. Perhaps it was the madness of the priests of Cybele and Bacchus, who were as a matter of fact worshipped in Attica and Achaia. It is even possible that Paul's comparison of speaking in tongues with sounding brass and a clanging cymbal (13<sup>1</sup>) was derived from the use of these instruments in the worship just mentioned. If finally a step further may be taken, it is conceivable that the Christian speaking with tongues had sometimes taken the form of wild and disorderly howling, such as was uttered by the Corybantes in their processions—but this is in no way certain.

Still less may we suppose that the speaking with tongues was similar in kind to certain Gnostic prayers published lately, for the enigmatical words of which these prayers largely consist are names of gods whose existence was first supposed in Egypt. 'About the middle of the nineteenth dynasty the discovery was made there that the most efficacious names of gods consisted in absolutely senseless combinations of letters. In books of conjuring, as well as in books of the dead, and in scientific works, the most abundant use of this acquisition has since been made, until far down into Christian times.' But the speaking with tongues of the early Christians was, as we have seen, nothing artificial, but something throughout natural.

For this reason, both now and formerly, comparisons have been made with similar phenomena of religious excitement in recent times. Thus the speech of the Camisards at the end of the

seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries consisted very often of inarticulate sounds or newly created words, which, however, were supposed to belong to unknown languages, or were explained artificially from foreign sources. A member of the sect himself described his state in the following manner: 'I always felt in this state an extraordinary elevation to God, before whom I therefore swear that I have neither been dazzled nor misled by any man, nor induced through worldly considerations to utter throughout any other words than those formed by the Spirit or the angel of God himself, who at this time made use of my organs of speech. To Him alone I surrender during my ecstasy the guidance of my tongue, while I strive only to turn myself towards God and to take note of the words which my mouth utters. I know that then a higher and another Power speaks through me. I do not think over it afterwards, nor do I know beforehand what I shall speak. My words come to me as the speech of another, but they leave a deep impression in my memory.'

Quite similar was the fanatical movement which arose among the Jansenists of France in 1731, and expressed itself among other ways also in the unintelligible speaking of those who were affected by it. They believed, just as the Camisards did, that their organs of speech were controlled by another power, so that they were not conscious of their words until they heard themselves utter them. At times they retained their full consciousness, and after the ecstasies were over, remembered exactly all they had done and spoken, so that they could correct and complete their speeches which were written down by the hearers. However, after the paroxysms were over, in most cases they were in absolute ignorance, or had only very incomplete knowledge of what they had spoken. They also often made use of entirely senseless sound-combinations, which were regarded as words from foreign languages.

This latter form of ecstasy appeared again in this century in the 'forties,' in the so-called '*sermon-sickness*' in Sweden. Inarticulate sounds alternated with the unconscious singing of hymns, and the preaching of sermons for repentance. A recollection of what had been said scarcely ever remained. There we find also exact analogies to that cry of the Corinthians, 'Jesus is anathema'; for in many of those who

were attacked, the sermon-sickness expressed itself at first in horrible oaths.

Least of all should I like to compare the Corinthian speaking with tongues with the phenomenon with which many are accustomed directly to compare it, viz. the speaking with tongues among the Irvingites, for this phenomenon was from the very beginning artificial. Prayer was offered that God might again give to the new apostolic Church the gifts of the old. Among these was included the gift of tongues, by which was naturally understood speaking in foreign languages. One day a young girl really did begin to speak in a foreign language, which she herself did not recognize. Her words were written down and sent to every available linguist, Dr. Pusey among others, with the inquiry if it were perhaps Hebrew. As a matter of course, no one knew the unknown language; they were only senseless combinations of sound, at first voluntarily, and then involuntarily produced. Later, the speech of others who believed that they had received the same gift, was found to contain as a matter of fact single words from foreign languages which they understood. Afterwards also the remainder was in the most artificial manner explained, as being English, Latin, Italian, or French.

That in Corinth, likewise, the inarticulate outcries of those who spoke with tongues (if such occurred at all) were explained in this manner, is scarcely probable. The opinion has indeed been advanced that 'Abba' was at first heard in a speech with tongues, and on this account later came into use, but it is just as easy to believe that it was directly borrowed from the Jews. Still less may we regard 'Maranatha' as the artificial explanation of a senseless combination of sounds. The Aramaic prayer-cry, 'Our Lord, come!' appears, on the contrary, to have been used as a sign of recognition, which, however, people soon ceased to be able to understand. It is possible that this or similar expressions from foreign languages occurred in speaking with tongues, but they certainly did not arise from a love for their foreign origin. For the Corinthian speaking with tongues was not, I repeat, anything artificial, but something thoroughly natural, and for this reason the Epistle which describes it must without doubt belong to the earliest time.

Just in the same manner now we must conceive of the miracle at Pentecost, and the speaking with



tongues both of Cornelius and of the disciples of John. The wonderful inspiration, without which the first followers of Jesus would never have come into publicity, expressed itself at first, if not in inarticulate sounds, yet in unconnected words and sentences. Nevertheless, the disciples at least were masters of their excitement to such an extent, that they became silent when Peter began to speak. In the same way also Paul sought to restrict as much as possible the ecstatic element in the gift of tongues in Corinth. He had a difficult position in dealing with the phenomenon. On the one hand he had to thank God for it, because he could see in it the direct proof of the efficacy of his preaching to the Corinthians. Moreover, according to 1 Co 13<sup>1</sup>, he attributed the gift of tongues to the angels also—why, then, should he not rejoice when men performed like deeds? And therefore he forbade anyone to stop speaking with tongues (14<sup>30</sup>), as for the same purpose he had written to the Thessalonians: 'Quench not the Spirit' (1 Th 5<sup>19</sup>). But even this very expression of his sounds rather unemphatic, and much more so do others. At the close of the twelfth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, when he enumerates the different gifts which God has given to the Church, the preceding context would lead one to expect that he would continue somewhat in this manner: 'So each one with the gift he has received may serve the whole Church.' But instead of this we read, 'Desire earnestly the greater gifts,' and among these, according to what follows, speaking with tongues at all events is not included. And even the greater gifts of grace are not the greatest. While he dictates these words, it occurs to the apostle that love is nobler than the gifts of which he had been writing. So he stops a moment as though meditating, and then continues triumphantly: 'And a still more excellent way show I unto you.' Thus follows in chap. 13 the Psalm about love, beginning with the words cited already several times: 'If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal.' Even in its highest form, then, speaking with tongues is worthless if love is not added. Therefore, returning to his proper theme in the beginning of chap. 14, he says: 'Follow after love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts (such as speaking with tongues), but rather that you may pro-

phesy.' Speaking with tongues is thus placed below prophecy. Moreover, farther on Paul says of himself: 'In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue' (v. 19). And, again, in v. 26 he says: 'Let all things be done unto edifying' (comp. 12<sup>7</sup>), the context showing that he has the edification of others in mind. According, then, to this principle, Paul must have rated very low that speaking with tongues which did not serve this purpose. In fact, he seeks (vv. 21<sup>f.</sup>) to prove from the previously quoted reference in Isaiah, that speaking with tongues was intended as a sign to the *unbelieving*, since they would be sure to regard it as madness, and so would not be converted. He exhorts the Corinthians, on the other hand, to be not children in mind, but of full age (v. 20); in other words, they were especially proud of their ability to speak with tongues, but still Paul designates it as childish. Paul's attitude, therefore, authorizes for us the maintenance of the conclusion we have already reached. Speaking with tongues was a child's complaint, but such a form of illness as could be exceedingly dangerous to Christianity. Among the Camisards, the Jansenist convulsionists, the 'sermon-sick,' or even among the Irvingites, we have just an example of what the young Christianity might have become if Paul had not taken steps to prevent its degeneration into this form. If on this account the early Christian Church may seem to many less great, Paul appears to us so much the greater.

It is true, it might be said, that that high-grade excitement was naturally temporary, and that along with it speaking with tongues must also have spontaneously disappeared. But that is just what is very questionable. Possibly the attempt would have been made to use artificial means for its sustenance, but then the phenomenon would really have become what in Goethe's opinion it was from the very first. To quote him: 'They shut themselves up in themselves, stopped the clear flow of the living teaching, in order to raise the water to its first height, then brooded with their own spirit over the darkness and moved upon the deep. In vain! This artificially produced power could bring forth nothing but dark presentiments. They stammered them out, no one understood them, and so they wasted the best time of the meeting.' That this was *not* the



case must therefore have been due to another cause, and that was, in fact, the opposition of St. Paul.

Nowhere in Paul's later Epistles do we find any mention of speaking with tongues; and the same is the case in the post-Pauline writings. We read, it is true, once more in Eph 5<sup>18</sup>, 'Be not drunken with wine, but be filled with the Spirit,' but this has reference more particularly to the prophets. After a short time the nature of speaking with tongues was so little remembered, that though it was indeed not confounded with speaking in foreign languages, yet both could be associated as if they were similar in kind. Thus arose that conception of the miracle at Pentecost which now lies before us in Ac 2, and which has really a deep and true meaning. Will it not be true, indeed, in the future, that all peoples—those also of whom nothing was known at that time—will hear in their own language the proclamation of the mighty works of God? The author of the

conclusion to Mark's Gospel, whether Aristion or some other, had also no definite conception of the speaking with tongues, and, as we have seen, Irenæus had just as little. Tertullian, on the other hand, knew of the phenomenon in its montanistic form, which we can now say resembled that of the early Christians. It was, perhaps, even superior to the latter, in that the montanistic oracles, although spoken in ecstasy, and in parts needing explanation, yet as far as the individual words were concerned, appear to have been intelligible. That could not always have been the case with the speaking with tongues. Nevertheless, the Church has rejected this reaction, and rightly, for this rejection is but the application of Paul's axiom: 'God is not a God of confusion, but of peace' (1 Co 14<sup>33</sup>).

In conclusion, if our preachers should wish to speak again with tongues in the old way, not only the uninitiated and unbelieving, but also the best Christians would certainly say, 'Ye are mad.'

## The Antediluvian Patriarchs.

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In the *Sunday School Times* for 31st December 1898, Professor Hommel has an interesting article on 'The Story of Cain and Abel,' in which he points out that, while Abel represents the Semitic nomad shepherds, Cain stands for the cultured population of the Sumerian cities of ancient Babylonia. Cain is, in fact, 'the smith,' and, as I pointed out many years ago, the Cainites, or Kenites, were the tribe, or caste, of wandering smiths, among whom the secrets of the craft were handed down from father to son. The Assyrian equivalent of Cain is *Ummannu*.

The tinkers are still a wandering caste in the East, as they were in Europe during the Middle Ages. This will explain how it is that though Cain represents the settled Sumerian people of Babylonia, he can yet be described as a 'fugitive and a vagabond.' Can the 'mark' that was set upon him be a tattoo-mark peculiar to the caste?

Seth, who took the place of Abel, is a duplicate of the latter. He is the *Sutu* of the cuneiform monuments, the *Satiu* of the Egyptian inscriptions, that is to say, the Semitic nomads of the deserts

between Egypt and Babylonia, and of the plateau of Mesopotamia. The name must go back to the period when the ancestors of the Babylonians and Egyptians had not yet separated from one another, and when the wheat of Babylonia was being introduced into the valley of the Nile.

I believe that the Egyptian god Set—or rather, Sutu, as the Tel el-Amarna tablets show the name should be read—is merely the 'Sutu' god. At all events, Set was the god of the desert in which the Semitic nomads lived, and the name of the goddess, Satit, at the First Cataract is written in the same way as that of the Satiu, while her consort, 'Anuqit, is the feminine of the Canaanite god Anak. That the Sutu worshipped an eponymous deity we know from Nu 24<sup>17</sup>, where they are called 'the children of Sheth,' (just as the Ammonites are called the children of Ammi), and the Assyrian king Samas-Hadad (or Samas-Rimmon) invokes 'the god Sutu-sar,' 'Sutu the king' (*W.A.I.* i. 29, 18.), who is coupled with the god Nabu-rabe, 'Nebo the great,' in a text published by Dr. Scheil (*Z.A.* viii. p. 206). The form 'Nabu-rabe,' it may be added, belongs to