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Tongues and Miracles

(Part two)

By Clovis Ragsdale

In the previous article we noticed that tongues and miracles were a prominent part of the early day church. They were needed because the New Testament was not yet in being and to confirm the message preached by the apostles and other as being from God. It was noted that only the apostles had the power to confer these gifts and the persons who received the gift were not able to pass on this power to a third party. To accept these facts will help us to understand the answer to the question of whether or not these gifts still are in effect today.

The answer to this question is found in Paul's letter to the Corinthian Church, 1 Cor. 13, and beginning with verse eight. "Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away, whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part: but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away." The "in part" is listed in the preceding chapter, verses eight, nine, and ten, and includes tongues and miracles. This passage in chapter thirteen teaches that all the gifts would end when something better would take their place. That something better would be the fully revealed word or New Testament. Paul stated in 2 Timothy, chapter 3, verses 16 and 17, "all scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." James also refers to looking into the perfect law of liberty in referring to the revealed word.

Some would insist that Paul was referring to Christ in 1 Cor. 13:10. Although Christ is perfect, Paul does not have reference to Him in this passage. If so, he would not have said, "when that which is perfect is come, he would have said, when He who is perfect is come." He would have referred to Christ, but "that" is used by Paul and would refer to the completely revealed word.

In the closing verses of 1 Cor. 13, Paul further explains how the fully revealed word was to replace the temporary gifts which were in effect before the word was

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RENOUNCE THYSELF

Christianity has been condemned on the ground that it sacrifices man to God. It calls on man to renounce himself. Jesus said that we must deny ourselves if we are to be his disciples (Matt. 10:39; 16:24-27). On the other hand some say that Christianity is selfish because it teaches man to save himself (Acts 2:40). Furthermore, Christianity teaches us to love ourselves for it says that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:39).

How can we harmonize self-denial and self-love? How does this bear on what the individual should do about himself?

What Self-Denial is Not

Self-denial is not a form of self-hate. Hate is destructive but Christians are to love God, their neighbor, and themselves. It is neither a form of self-punishment, nor something which is done with a negative goal in view. Although the renounced person renounced sins, the renunciation of specific sins is not the renunciation of which Jesus speaks. Those who renounce themselves will deny themselves, when necessary, privileges when these stand between them and God's service (1 Cor. 9:14-23). Self-denial results in these renunciations but one may renounce these things without renouncing self. To understand self-renunciation we must understand something of the nature of sin.

The Selfishness Which Is Condemned

God is the Creator and man is the creature. We are to love him with all of our being (Matt. 22:37-39). Sin basically involves the choice of self or of someone other than God, as the supreme object of trust and service. It views man as self-sufficient in knowledge and in righteousness. It is self-willed, self-seeking, self-serving, and self-glorifying. It is the opposite of the humility, or poverty of the spirit, which is essential to accepting and serving God. In his sinfulness man makes himself the center of the universe.

The Negative Self-Denial

Self-renunciation is the dethronement of self as the center of the universe and the supreme object of trust and service. As Samuel Harris stressed: "It is not primarily the renunciation of the world, nor of wealth, nor of pleasures offense,

nor of the gratification of natural desires, nor of anything the world can give. One may renounce all these in false asceticism, retiring to the desert, and not only renouncing world pleasures and treasures, but daily subjecting himself to self-inflicted torments; or he may deny himself all reasonable comforts in niggardly miserliness; and in the former case, as really as in the latter, he may be living a life of supreme selfishness. That which is the object of Christian self-renunciation is not primarily the world and its treasures and pleasures: it is self" (God: The Creator and Lord of all, Vol. II, p. 215). As a consequence one renounces sin.

The Positive: Love of God

The dethronement of God involves the dethronement of self. To love God with all of our being means that God is the center of our lives. He is the one whom we supremely trust and serve. We are not sufficient in knowledge; therefore we accept the divine revelation. We are not sufficient in righteousness; therefore we accept the righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ. Instead of being self-serving, self-willed, self-seeking, and self-glorifying, we will to do God's will, seek him and his kingdom and righteousness first, serve God, and glorify him by word and by deed.

The Lordship of Jesus

As long as we are the lord of our own lives, or have other lords than Jesus Christ, we cannot be his disciples. We must renounce ourselves in order to be his disciples. We must accept his Lordship which involves doing his will (Acts 2:34-36; Lk. 6:46). As Hastings' Dictionary of the Apostolic Church put it, "Christian self-denial in this sense is the assertion of Christ's unconditional Lordship and the repudiation of all other claims... to determine Christian conduct." Having been crucified with Christ, he lives in us (Col. 2:20).

When we deny ourselves and accept the Lordship of Jesus, we must take up our cross daily and follow him (Lk. 9:23). Taking up the cross daily involves "the acceptance of the stern obligations and dread possibilities of the new life itself." Through self-denial "the

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The Fulton County Gospel News

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EDITORS: Clovis Ragsdale
and James E. Henley.

News!

The Church of Christ at Viola, Arkansas, will have a gospel meeting April the 26th through May the 2nd with brother O.L. Grisham as speaker. Lessons to be presented are as follows: Monday evening, Give Me The Bible; Tuesday evening, Let The Bible Answer; Wednesday evening, The Value Of The Soul; Thursday evening, In Darkness Or In Christ; Friday evening, Eternity—Heaven Or Hell?; Saturday evening, The Bible Description Of Hell; and Sunday evening, The Greatest Day.

The Church of Christ in Mammoth Spring, Arkansas will host a series of Bible Lectures March the 22nd through the 27th with services each evening at 7:30 p.m. Speakers and their subjects are as follows: Monday evening, Brother Bill Richardson speaking on the subject of: No Creed But The Bible; Tuesday evening, Brother Charles Leonard, speaking on the subject of: The Christian and Civic Matters; Wednesday evening Brother Ira Woodward, speaking on the subject of: Blessings Enjoyed By Christians Not Enjoyed By Non-Christians; Thursday evening, Brother Bill Jones, speaking on the subject of: Striving Lawfully; Friday evening, Brother Dean Fuggett, speaking on the subject of: Must I Attend All Services Of The Church; Saturday evening, Brother Art Smith, speaking on the subject of: Prayer. We urge you to attend all of the services.

Effective at once all names and addresses sent to be added to our mailing list must be either printed or typed. We are getting too many names that we have to guess at some of the letters, and if they are not right the post office will return them to us at a cost of 10 cents each. Please help us in this matter. The Editors.

CONTRIBUTIONS:

| | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Dona M. Barker | \$ 5.00 |
| Bertha Hines | 5.00 |
| Mrs. Bele Taylor | 5.00 |
| Elizabeth Church of Christ | 5.00 |
| Viola Church of Christ | 5.00 |
| Agnos Church of Christ | 5.00 |
| Tommy Risner | 5.00 |
| Ring Church of Christ | 5.00 |
| J. E. Ridings | 2.00 |
| W. E. Long | 5.00 |
| Arden Risner | 5.00 |
| Sturkie Church of Christ | 5.00 |
| Charlie Crawford | 2.00 |
| Edna Garner | 1.00 |
| Wheeling Church of Christ | 5.00 |
| Dellhalf Church of Christ | 5.00 |
| Edrie Stephens | 5.00 |
| E. E. McFadden | 5.00 |
| Freddie Powell | 5.00 |
| C. H. Calvin | 5.00 |
| Myrta Phillips | 1.00 |
| A Friend | 2.00 |
| Mrs. A. L. Ellis | 2.00 |
| Tom Cone | 10.00 |
| Betty Foster | 2.00 |
| Viola Church of Christ | 5.00 |
| A Friend | 2.00 |
| Effie Ford | 4.00 |
| Mrs. Jessie Sparks | 3.00 |

RENOUNCE THYSELF (Cont.)

individual tears himself out of the world conditions," and by taking up the cross daily "he shoulders the burdens of the new and as yet untried service."

Specific Acts of Self-Denial

While there may be specific acts of denying certain things to oneself, one can do this and not deny self. However, when one has denied self and accepted the Lordship of Jesus, there are specific acts of denial. First, we deny ourselves sinful things and we practice the good (Col. 3:5-17). Second, we may deny ourselves some things which are not wrong within themselves but which take our time and attention from the worthier matters. Third, we may deny ourselves, when necessary, privileges when such denial helps us to win others for Christ (1 Cor. 9:1-23), or helps one who is weak in the faith (1 Cor. 8: Rom. 14).

—James D. Bales.

The noblest contribution which any man can make for the benefit of posterity is that of a good character.

SENTENCE SERMON

We've seen pictures of great men astride horses, but never one astride a fence.

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

By Arvil E. Hill

The question, "How much is enough for me to give to the church?" does not have a specific Bible answer. However, it does have a particular interest to all concerned Christians. This article will offer some guidelines for arriving at a safe conclusion.

Guideline One: The Jews gave ten (10%) percent. There is no scripture suggesting that the christian must give 10%; likewise it is unscriptural to assume that less than 10% is enough. However, it can be reasoned that the principles guiding the children of an unchangeable God will change very little. Therefore, the serious student of the Bible will conclude that 10% is a good figure to use in most cases. An obvious reason for this guideline follows.

Guideline Two: The Christians righteousness must exceed that of the Jews (Matt. 5:20). Giving is a part of Christian righteousness. If giving is not righteousness then why give at all? Therefore, since the Jews had to give 10%, it seems logical that Christians should give that much or more.

Guideline Three: Christian giving must be abundantly, cheerfully, — not grudgingly (2 Cor. 9:6,7). No Christian who loves God, who is thankful for his salvation, and who is cheerful in his giving can be satisfied to give 1 or 2 percent of his income. No one can conclude that while spending large sums on luxurious living and expensive entertainment he can abundantly, not grudgingly, drop a dollar or less in Sunday's collection. In most congregations, the clothes and cars of the worshippers would suggest riches while the offering expresses poverty.

Guideline Four: Christian giving must not rob God. (Malachi 3:8). According to that verse, when the Jews gave less than 10% they were robbing God. How about Christians? A person must consider that all good and perfect gifts come from above. All material blessings can be taken away and God blesses those that give to His cause. (Mt. 6:33, 2 Cor. 9:6). It seems safe to conclude that less than 10% would be robbing God.

Guideline Five: If 10 percent as a minimum is too much to give, then consider the following.

1. Jesus set a lower standard of giving than Moses.
2. Christians under grace owe less to God than the Jews did under the Law.
3. Love produces no greater obligation or stronger motivation than the Law.
4. The Christian cause is not as worthy as Judaism, yet is a better covenant established on better promises.

PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE US

The Old Testament stories never grow old to the sincere seeker of truth, and to those who "Study to shew thyself approved unto God..." (2 Tim. 2:15). One of the most intriguing portions of the Old Testament is that section which has to do with the children of Israel, during their captivity and shortly after their release, and God's dealings with them. These stories of fleshly Israel contain principles which are applicable to the church, spiritual Israel, today. One such story is that which pertains to Joshua, successor to Moses, and his commands to the Israelites in their journey into the land of Canaan. After approximately forty years of bitter experience in the wilderness wanderings, they now stand on the threshold of the promised land.

There is a sense in which all Christians may say the very same thing of themselves. We now stand on the threshold of work for the Lord. This work will bring new experiences, new opportunities, and new obligations. As we "... have not passed this way heretofore" (Joshua 3:4), and the way is quite uncertain, it behooves us to follow divine guidance. "... it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). In the wilderness wandering, until the ark was completed, they had followed the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night; but now these things had disappeared. The ark became the symbol of God's presence and guidance. God's orders to Israel for crossing the Jordan apply in principle to His people today. Read Joshua, chapter 3, and the following lessons will be apparent to the thoughtful reader.

(1) The Israelites were commanded to follow the ark (v. 3), but they could not follow until they were given divine instruction. This instruction was God-given. Likewise, we have divine instructions (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 3:2), and we should be cautious as we follow our guide. Our attitude should be that which was manifest by Cornelius when Peter arrived to preach the Word of God. "... Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." (Acts 10:33). "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9).

(2) To follow the Ark meant forward movement. As we follow divine guidance, let us be prompt to "... go forward" (Ex. 14:15). Nothing grows by standing still; unless we are moving, no forward progress is possible. We are either growing or losing ground—the moon is either

growing larger or diminishing in size. We are either growing or not growing (Matt. 5:16). God has made no provisions for his children to retreat. In fact, the only direction God has given for movement is forward. (Luke 9:62; Joshua 1:7). As Christians we are to "... grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..." (2 Pet. 3:18), and add the Christian graces (2 Pet. 1:5-11). Not only is the Christian to grow, but he is commanded to "... go forward" with the gospel (Matt. 28:18ff; Mark 16:15, 16; Eph. 3:10). The spirit of the sweet singer of Israel should be manifest in all — "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments" (Psalms 119:60).

(3) As we "... go forward," under divine guidance, let us have clear vision, lest we lose sight of our goal. Joshua commanded the Israelites (v. 4), "Yet there shall be a space between you and it... come not near unto it, that we may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore." A clear space existed between the children of Israel and the ark — all could see it. We must not let anything hinder our vision and our desire to understand the will of the Lord. (Eph. 5:17; Prov. 29:18) Beware of prejudice (being down on what you are not up on!), pride, selfishness, and worldliness. These will hinder clear vision.

(4) In verse 5, Joshua commanded the Israelites "... to sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." Sanctify means to set apart to sacred usage. Brother Foy E. Wallace relates an experience that took place in his early life. Brother Wallace was engaged to conduct a gospel meeting (his second meeting effort), and as he arrived by train, he was met by a brother in Christ at the station. He was transported by horse and buggy to the meeting place. The brother said, "Foy, this is my sanctified horse and buggy." An explanation followed — "I don't plow this old horse or use this old buggy for any other purpose — I use this horse and buggy to take preachers around to preach. I have set it apart for that special purpose — it is my sanctified horse and buggy." (God's Prophetic Word, p. 39). Brother Wallace got the meaning of sanctification! God's children are sanctified when they obey the gospel and hence are set apart to serve the living God. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Sanctification comes about in obedience to the truth which is the word of God. (Rom. 12:1-3; 2 Cor. 6:17; 7:1; John 17:17).

If these principles are closely followed we can be assured of a prosperous work.

May the Lord bless each of you as we labor together in His vineyard. (1 Cor. 3:9, 2 Cor. 6:1). —Carroll P. Bennett

Have You Considered These Facts Lately?

1. That you are made in the image of God, Gen. 1:26
2. That man became so wicked that God decided to destroy him, Gen. 6:5-6
3. That one man was able through his righteousness to change God's mind, Gen. 6:8
4. That Christ was with God from the beginning, John 1:1-5
5. That Christ was obedient to God in all things, Heb. 5:8-9
6. That this obedience won for Christ an eternal place with God Heb. 12:2
7. That Christ love you and died that you might be with Him, John 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:18-19 and John 14:1-6
8. That Christ saves you through the Gospel, Rom. 1:16
9. That if you do not obey the Gospel of Christ you will be lost, II Thes. 1:8-9
10. That the Lord purchased the church with his own blood, Acts 20:28
11. That the Lord adds the saved to this church, Acts 2:47
12. That the Lord expects you to present your body a living sacrifice to God, Rom. 12:1
13. That if you are a Christian you are not your own, I Cor. 6:19-20
14. That it is a sin to divide religious people into factions, I Cor. 1:10-13
15. That to do anything in religion that is not authorized by God is sinful, Rom. 14:23, faith comes by hearing God, Rom. 10:17
16. That to follow the creeds of men will cause you to worship God in vain, Matt. 15:7-9
17. That the name Christian was first given to followers of Christ at Antioch in Syria, Acts 11:26
18. That there is no other name today through which we can worship God which is acceptable to Him, I Pet. 4:15-16.

Glynn Purdy

SENTENCE SERMONS

If I wanted to punish someone I would teach him to hate another.

—Hannah Moore.

Make more friends. Almost anyone will make a better friend than enemy.

Service is the rent we owe mankind for the space we occupy on the earth.

Too many professing Christians never get religion on their hands and feet.

The world is full of willing people: some willing to work, the rest willing to let them.

How Grown Up Are We?

By James D. Jarrett
West Plains, Missouri

Have you ever reminisced about the days of your childhood or watched a group of children as they played? If you have, the chances are that you noticed that things which seem terribly important to the child often seem trivial to the mature adult. We adults live in another world. A shattered balloon is no longer a catastrophe, nor do nickels appear to be worth more than dimes.

The Bible teaches that the value of things change to the Christian as he matures in much the same way that the child changes as he grows up. As babes in Christ we are weak and immature. As matured Christians, we must be faithful and strong.

The Word of God also teaches that we are not to remain as children in malice but in understanding we are to be full-grown. The apostle Paul said that when he became a man he put away childish things. Newborn babes in Christ are to feed on the milk of the Word, but the grown Christian is to leave the first principles and feed on meat.

The attitudes of the Christian must change if he grows. And if he fails to grow he may be lost. But many who claim to be living the Christian life have failed to grow up. They show a false set of values. They exhibit the selfishness of a child.

There are some who have failed to grow up in the matter of dress.

The Christian woman need not look to the world for her standard of modesty. It is the Word of God which says to dress modestly, not some cranky preacher. The Christian woman seeks both to please her fellow Christians and her God. She adorns herself gracefully and modestly and in so doing radiates the beauty of Christian womanhood.

There are those that must grow in attendance. In many places, we note a lack of faithful attending men especially for night services. The church must look to the men for leadership, but all too often the number of faithful attending, planning, and working men is all too few.

Those who have grown up in Christian grace will not allow entertainment, pleasure, or relaxation to interfere with the Christian activity. Though he may appreciate ballgames or decent T.V. he must put them in proper perspective. The poorest delivered sermon is of more value than the best entertainment.

In order to grow in Christ, we must learn to put HIM first. We must learn the value of diligent Bible study, true spiritual worship, and the real joy of Christian fellowship. Perhaps all of us need to reflect upon how grown up we are in our Christian life!

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

By Dr. John C. Stevens
President

Abilene Christian College

The spiritual health of the Christian depends to a very great extent on faithful church attendance.

Paul, writing to Timothy, spoke of some who "concerning faith have made shipwreck" (I Timothy 1:19). Indeed, the shores of time are strewn with the wreckage of souls who started out to live the Christian life and failed. And any Christian who says, "It can't happen to me," is deceiving himself. To the Corinthians, the apostle wrote, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).

Christians are commanded not to forsake the assembly (Hebrews 10:25), and as with all of the commandments of the Lord there is a very good reason for this instruction. For beyond all doubt, regular church attendance provides the Christian with some of the best opportunities for service he will ever have.

Attendance at services provides the Christian an occasion for personal dedication to the Lord. Every Christian needs this, for "though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day" (II Corinthians 4:16). The primary question for each individual at every church service should be, "What does this service mean to me?"

By attending all services, one may be influencing a weaker brother or sister in Christ to become stronger. The power of example must not be underestimated. The question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" has been answered emphatically by the Holy Spirit: "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in spirit of gentleness..." (Galatians 6:1). Furthermore, regular church attendance may encourage outsiders, who have never obeyed the gospel, to become interested.

Faithful church attendance will do more than perhaps any other single factor to enhance the influence of the church in the community it serves.

Faithful church attendance by all the members of the church will encourage the elders of the congregation to plan greater things and to outline a more ambitious program of preaching the gospel and carrying out the Great Commission.

Faithful church attendance may stimulate individuals to greater zeal, even to the extent that some will resolve to arise and carry the gospel to those regions of the earth which are yet in chains and darkness.

And then there is a special opportunity to families in church attendance. When father and mother and

TONGUES AND MIRACLES (Cont.)

fully revealed. He compared this to a child, who spake and understood only as a child until it became full grown, after which it put away childish speaking and understanding. Also, he compares a mirror to that of observing face to face. The lesson he was teaching is: Something better has replaced that which was temporary. The New Testament is the "something better" and the temporary has ceased to be.

The same Bible that says miracles would be performed and that says they were performed, also declares that they would cease. It is rebellion against God to try to perpetuate gifts in the church that God said would cease. It should be easy to understand why spiritual gifts were needed in the beginning of the church. The apostles and others would go into a place and preach the Gospel and convert many, and would go on to another place and do likewise. They could not be in all places at once. Newly established churches would have to have teaching and edification if they were to grow. This was supplied by the laying on of hands by the apostles on certain men who could sustain the congregation until further instructions were furnished. This came in the letters written by inspired men in the months and years immediately following their establishment. In a following article we will discuss so called miracles and tongues of the present day.

(To be Continued)

the children know that in their home it is understood that the family will be attending services on the Lord's Day and through the week, the home will be happier, and more effective in all its undertakings.

"... Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh" (Hebrews 10:25).