

# WARNINGS AGAINST FANATICISM AND FALSE MANIFESTATIONS

JESUS said in the 16th chapter of Mark: "And "these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

This Scripture is being fulfilled in the world today. God's power is resting upon those who are living according to the Word of God. But while this Scripture is being fulfilled, and God is demonstrating His power through the lives of those who are living in the Word, there are many who are going into fanaticism and false manifestations, bringing disgrace upon the name of the Gospel through their false ideas regarding the interpretation of this Scripture.

The Apostle Paul said: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (I Timothy 4:1). We are living in the very time of which he spoke. We are seeing the awful departure from the faith, the delusions and doctrines of devils, and the working of seducing spirits among many of the so-called people of God.

God does not put His approval upon false or fleshly demonstrations, which carry people to absurd extremes. Many are given over entirely to these demonstrations, such as the so-called holy dance, speaking in what they call tongues and giving "interpretations," writing in hieroglyphics which they call "tongues," jumping and screaming and jerking, and picking up snakes. God does not give His power to people for the purpose of making these outlandish manifestations and demonstrations. In almost every place where these manifestations are seen, you will find the people living in sin in one way or another.

It is not our desire to discourage the real manifestation of the Spirit, because we stand for all of which the Spirit is the Author. The power of God which comes with the baptism of the Holy Ghost is that deep power that settles down into the depths of a sanctified soul, which brings conviction on sinners and convinces unbelievers.

One can easily discern the true manifestation from the false, because the Spirit always brings a sweetness and calmness to the souls of those who are present. The demonstration of the Holy Ghost never grieves or grates on one's spirit. It empowers the soul for service, and that power should flow out in testimony and prayer, in praying for the sick, and in winning souls.

The Word of God commands: "Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." God has promised (in I Corinthians 12) the gift of prophecy, of tongues, of interpretation, of healing, and other gifts. We believe that He, in His sovereign will, will distribute these gifts among those who are worthy and humble enough to receive them. But we do not yet know of anyone who has manifested any definite sign of having received any of these gifts in their fullness. If anyone professes to have one of these gifts and does not live according to the Bible standard, he is false and fanatical. Many such preachers are misleading simple hearted people by what they call "tongues and interpretations."

Paul declared through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy" (I Corinthians 14:1). This coincides with his admonition to Timothy (II Timothy 4:2). "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

There is nothing in the Scriptures that justifies the speaking in tongues except as the Spirit gives utterance. Then it is not the person who speaks, but the Holy Ghost. It is "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD." Many people are departing from the Word in this respect, are being

led off into fanaticism, and are becoming a prey of the devil, simply because they want to do something extraordinary to attract attention. This takes people's minds from the Lord to some foolish physical manifestation.

The speaking in tongues, which always follows the baptism of the Holy Ghost, is not the gift of tongues. We believe that when one receives the real gift of tongues, he will be able to go out and preach to a nation in the language — or tongue — of that nation.

We have received in our mail specimens of what were supposed to be "writings in unknown tongues." There is nothing whatever in the Bible to authorize such writing.

In regard to so-called dancing in the spirit, we find no teaching in the New Testament which justifies any such conduct. If it were of God, surely there would have been some mention of it in the Acts of the Apostles; but nothing is said whatever, throughout the New Testament, regarding this subject, and we have no right to attempt anything God's Word does not mention. Everything must be measured by the Word of God, that all fanaticism may be kept out.

The Lord said, "They shall take up serpents; . . ." By these words God surely did not command men to take up poisonous serpents for the sake of displaying their power with God. Satan tried to induce Jesus to perform miracles for Satan's satisfaction, but Jesus rebuked him and said: "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." God promised to care for His child in the event of an accident or under conditions over which he has no control, as He cared for the Apostle Paul when he gathered sticks for a fire and a serpent fastened itself on his hand (Acts 28) . God's purpose is not "snake-charming."

Neither is there Scriptural justification for deliberate drinking of poison for the purpose of tempting God. Jesus never performed miracles merely to satisfy the curiosity of men. But the promised "signs" will unfailingly follow the work of those who are absolutely true to the spirit of God's Word.

If we read the Word of God carefully, and keep in the spirit, God will lead us into all truth. People who are doing absurd things, and try to justify their actions by God's Word, have left the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ, and have gone into fanaticism and brought disgrace upon the Gospel.

We solemnly warn all those who are making a profession of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ to search their heart and also the Word of God, and compare their life and conduct with its blessed teaching. It is the standard by which the children of God are to gauge their activities upon earth. The Scriptures tell us that "if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (I John 3:21). If we are living under condemnation (that is, of course, brought on-by sin), we have no right to lay claim to a Christian experience.

Fleshly manifestations are poor evidence of our standing in the sight of God. Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). There are many people who will dance and speak in tongues and profess interpretation, and go through many physical demonstrations; but when you search out their lives, you find that the true spiritual fruits are very much lacking.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). The flesh loves to vaunt itself; and those who are given over to fleshly demonstrations and manifestations are not only handicapping themselves for usefulness in God's service, but are proving a real stumbling block to the world.

Paul the Apostle clearly says, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:40). And he says also, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31).

We believe that much of the skepticism which is so widespread in the world today can be attributed to the low spiritual state of the professed Church of Jesus Christ. Skeptics see, on the one hand, coldness and lifelessness; and on the other hand, fanaticism and wildfire. In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord admonished His disciples: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

The true people of God are always sound and wholesome, exemplifying in their lives, in their conduct, and in their conversation the attributes of their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.