

"*interpreter*" of Peter at Rome ; and Paul, although he "spoke with tongues more than all," did not understand the language of Lycaonia.

But if the gift of tongues did *not* consist in the ability to use all sorts of foreign languages at will, what was its nature and what its significance ? It was primarily an address to God, and not to men. It was rather an act of *divine worship*—the ecstatic expression of the utterer's gratitude and praise. It was an extraordinary elevation of soul, in which the Holy Spirit for the time,—*not for all time*,—enabled its subject, in rapt inspiration, to utter languages before unknown.

Nor is it difficult to discern the prophetic significance of the gift displayed at Pentecost. It symbolized a world-wide preaching and hearing of the Gospel—marked the going forth of a power which was to restore to the nations a lost unity. In the language of one of our most able modern writers, "it was for all present an ocular prophetic demonstration of the universality of Christianity as ordained for all tribes and lands, and of the fact that the preaching of Christ and the praise of God should be heard in every language. In this respect, the speaking with tongues on the birthday of the Church, like the day itself, stands forth without parallel in history ; and at the same time as a significant prophecy, which is being fulfilled as the Gospel advances from nation to nation, not to rest till the whole world shall become obedient to the faith, and 'every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'"

III. In the third place, note the remarkable and advancing *fulfilment* of this "significant prophecy." The miracle of speech upon the day of Pentecost being the Divine foreshadowing and promise of the future, see how largely, how gloriously, these latter days have realized the result thus anticipated and typified from the beginning. To an extent which far outstrips the Pentecostal miracle, men "hear" to-day "in their own tongues" the wonderful works of God. And this not merely through the onward and triumphant march of missionary enterprise, but much more through that which, unobtrusive and retiring, lies behind the unexampled success of modern missions, and reaches farther and deeper than any mere human agency—through the work of that noble Society whose cause we plead to-night—the "British and Foreign Bible Society." Is it too much to say that our text is a foreshadowing of this great Bible work ? Let me place before you a few facts to show how widely, through the instrumentality of this Society, the prophetic miracle of the text is realized to-day. When the Bible Society was founded at the beginning of our present era—eighteen centuries after Pentecost—the Bible was to be had in only about half a hundred languages. But fifty nations could then "hear in their own tongue, wherein they were born." In the seventy years of its existence, it has multiplied that number fourfold. Since the days of our grandfathers, in the space of less than three generations, it has promoted the distribution, printing, or translation of the Scriptures in more than two hundred languages and dialects—in sixty-eight of the tongues of Northern, Western, Central and Southern Europe ; in twelve of the languages of Eastern Asia ; in no less than forty out of that Babel of dialects which is found in India ; in twenty-six different idioms of Eastern Asia and Malaysia ; in twenty tongues spoken in the Islands of the sea ; in the speech of twenty-three African nations and tribes, and in fourteen dialects of North and South America. Who can review this mighty work without being irresistibly reminded of that apocalyptic angel flying through mid-heaven on far-reaching pinion, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth—to every kindred and nation and tongue and tribe ? What *Christian* heart shall not kindle with enthusiasm at a result so world-wide and so beneficent ? And yet there are men called Christians who listen in cold blood to the recital of these grand outcomings of united Christian effort, without sympathy, without gratitude, without praise. Tell them of the bringing of light and deliverance to a few scores of their fellows immured in the fell darkness of some English colliery—their concern is instantly aroused. Tell them of the "en-