

It must be confessed that there are very serious difficulties in the way of the acceptance of either the one or the other of these attempts to reconcile St. Luke's account of Pentecost, as it is generally understood, with the apostle's account of the gift of tongues, contained in the chapters which have been so frequently referred to in the course of these articles. The hypothesis adopted by the two German divines shocks one by the doubt which it seems to cast upon the integrity of the narrative; and that adopted by Mr. Beet and others, is open to the objection that it represents a particular gift, though described in the same words, as meaning one thing in one place and an entirely different thing in another. The admission of such a principle would add immensely to the difficulty of the interpretation of Holy Scripture. In view of the objections which lie against both the one and the other of these theories, one is tempted to ask whether there may not be some other mode of reconciliation which will equally well account for all the facts, and that is more simple and satisfactory?

Assuming, then, the literal exactitude and entire trustworthiness of the narrative of St. Luke, and the complete identity of the gift of tongues bestowed upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost, with that afterwards enjoyed by the Church at Corinth, is there any sober and rational way of accounting for the astonishment experienced by the multitude which was present on that occasion, drawn from the ends of the earth, when each one heard the disciples speaking in the language in which he was born? The difficulty appears to have been felt at a very early period in the history of the Church, and a theory was adopted in order to get rid of it. As early as the days of Gregory Nazianzum, some held that the Pentecostal miracle was auricular rather than lingual. That it was rather a miracle of hearing than of speaking, or that if the tongue was the instrument of the Spirit in producing the miraculous effect, it was not produced by the sound proceeding from it, operating in the natural way upon the organ of hearing, but by the supernatural influence which attend these sounds. The theory was that the miracle consisted in this: though all spoke in one and the same language, each of the hearers believed that he heard them speak in his own. The speakers, by the power of inspiration, operated so mightily on the feelings of their susceptible hearers, that they involuntarily translated what went to their hearts into their mother-tongue. "By the element of inspiration," as one says, "the inward communion of feeling was so strongly brought forth, that the lingual wall of separation was entirely taken away."

The question, however, is whether the difficulties really exist for the removal of which these theories have been invented? The narrative in Acts is highly condensed, and may not this fact have been the occasion of some of the confusion of ideas which exist in respect to its teaching? What is described in the 4th verse, and that which is described in the 6th verse, are commonly understood as sustaining the relation to each other of cause and effect. But it is entirely overlooked that near as these two verses are to each other, an entirely new subject has been introduced between them. Indeed, the Revisionists have perceived this so clearly that they have made the fifth verse the beginning of a new paragraph. In the first paragraph, including the first four verses, the descent of the Holy Ghost and the immediate effects of it are described, and the description is complete. Then comes the statement of a fact without which what follows could not have