"A Queer Faith" - Topeka Capital (January 14, 1901)

Holy Spirit Research Center ORU Library

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/newspaper

Part of the American Studies Commons, Christian Denominations and Sects Commons, Missions and World Christianity Commons, and the New Religious Movements Commons
Strange Actions of the Apostolic Believers.

ARE INSPIRED FROM GOD.

The Believers Speak a Strange Language; And Wait...-Peculiar Hands.-S. J. Biggs' Extraordinary Statement.

THERE are great goings on at the old school in the southwestern part of town. People are saying, "We're a Religion," if the statement is true that the Apostolic faith is to be believed.

Mr. Biggs is a young man who came from Kansas City about the first of February. He has the "Apostolic congregation" which is present over and was founded in this section by Charles F. Parham. Mr. Parham, if he will be remembered, was a student at the Apostolic school at Fort Smith, Arkansas, which gained so much prominence lately when Little Big Boy, the young Topeka girl wandered away from the school in a fit of temporary insanity. A posse of officers scourred the country for days until she was found, in a weak condition, and taken to the hole.

Mr. Parham led a colony to this state school from Kansas City and Topeka traveled by train to New England town and held gospel meetings on the way. Miss Biggs went with this colony of religious enthusiasm. Parham afterwards returned to Topeka and started a "school" or "congregation" at the old Stone mansion in the southwestern part of this city, near Brook.

The "congregation," at present numbers thirty-five persons in which they certainly form the "Apostolic" body. Most of the thirty-five members are from Kansas City and Topeka. Relations with Mr. Parham and a few from Topeka.

It seems that under the Apostolic faith its adherents are prevented from asking for money contributions except through the "apostles," that is, the Lord's members. They believe that the Lord numbers prayer and they pray incessantly for what they want, giving little heed to the present, practical need of making a living. Most of the members took all their earthly possessions to the "apostles," who distributed the money and possessions as they saw fit. The money was expended for food, clothing, etc. According to Mr. Biggs, a man named Stanley, a convert to the faith, as well as his family, bought over $60 worth of furniture when the "apostles" was rented. Mr. Stanley owns a farm southwest of town and, according to Mr. Biggs, he is about to sacrifice this to keep the "school" going.

The "congregation" claims that all members of the school will live in the mansion. It is filled up into apartments and the house divided. Their daily duties are few, the only work is to be seated and there is a sense of a common school which furnishes milk for the whole colony.

The whole day is spent with prayer for the Lord at seven, and in the evening, Mr. Biggs tells this story without a suspicion of levity or the least literary humor into it at all. It was done, not consciously, for he seemed terribly in earnest.

Celestial threw up his hands and said: "Ne she the soun'ieh." Mr. Biggs told this story without a suspicion of levity or the least literary humor into it at all. It was done, not consciously, for he seemed terribly in earnest.
Topeka Capital, January 14, 1901

A QUEER FAITH.

Strange Actions of the Apostolic Believers.

ARE INSPIRED FROM GOD.

The Believers Speak a Strange Language
and Write a Peculiar Hand - S. J. Riggins' Extraordinary Statement.

There are great goings on at the old mansion in the southwestern part of town known as "Stone's Folly," if the statement of S. J. Riggins, a young convert of the Apostolic faith, is to be believed.

Mr. Riggins is a young man who came here from Kansas City about the 31st of October to join the "Apostolic congregation" which is presided over and was founded in this section by Charles F. Parham. Mr. Parham, it will be remembered, was a student at the Apostolic school at Shiloh, Me., which gained so much prominence lately when Lizzie Bell, the young Topeka girl wandered away from the school in a fit of temporary insanity. A posse of officers scoured the country for days until she was found in a weak condition, and taken care of.

Parham led a colony to this Maine school from Kansas City and Topeka traveling overland to the New England town and holding gospel meetings on the way. Miss Bell went with this colony of religious enthusiasts. Parham afterwards returned to Topeka and started a "school" or "congregation" at the old Stone mansion in the southwestern part of this city, near Seabrook.

The "congregation" at present numbers thirty-five persons and they certainly form a strange religious body. Most of the
Topeka Capital, January 14, 1901 (continued)

thirty-five members are from Kansas City -- coming here with Mr. Parham -- but a few are from Topeka.

It seems that under the Apostolic faith its adherents are prevented from asking for money contributions except through God himself. They believe that the Lord answers prayer and they pray incessantly for what they want, giving little heed to the present, practical need of making a living. Most of the members took all their earthly possessions to the "mansion" with them and these possessions are being slowly absorbed for living expenses. According to Mr. Riggins, a man named Stanley, a convert to the faith, as well as his family, bought over $100 worth of furniture when the mansion was rented. Mr. Stanley owns a farm southwest of town and, according to Mr. Riggins, he is about to sacrifice this to keep the "school" going.

The several persons who are members of the "school" all live in the mansion. It is fitted up into apartments and here the families dwell. Their daily duties are few. The food is to be cooked and there is the care of a single cow which furnishes milk for the whole colony.

The whole day is spent with prayer, for be it known that these adherents to an exacting creed believe that prayer and faith bring inspiration direct from God, himself, and that when they have arrived at a certain state of perfection they have all the qualifications and attributes of the apostles of old.
The leader, Parham, claims to be an apostle from God and there are several members who claim to be endowed with power from on high.

But the really strange feature of the faith is the so-called "gift of tongue from heaven." When this is received after long continued prayer, the members who succeed in getting it talk to each other in a sort of senseless gibberish and write a strange system of shorthand or hieroglyphics, which they say is conveyed from God personally.

The original "gift of tongue from heaven" woman in this "congregation" according to Mr. Riggins' story, is a Miss Auswin, a specimen of whose handwriting while under the spell, is given with this article.

Last Friday afternoon at 3 o'clock the members of the congregation started on a long session of prayer. They kept it up without ceasing until Saturday morning at 3:30 and then, according to Mr. Riggins' story, there were about twelve of them jibbering a strange gibberish at once, which they said was the voice of God through them.

"I believe the whole of them are crazy," said Mr. Riggins to a Capital reporter. "I never saw anything like it. They were racing about the room talking and gesticulating and using this strange and senseless language which they claim is the word from the Most High."

"I believe in a portion of the apostolic faith," said Mr. Riggins earnestly. "But I could not subscribe to it in its entirety, and so left the 'congregation.'
"I do not believe their senseless jargon means anything. I am trying to be an earnest Christian. I have left "school" without money to pay my fare to go anywhere, although I have a place of lodging. I have no home, and I am determined to study for the ministry and I have faith in God that He will provide a way. I do not claim to be an apostle and my whole desire is to do good in an humble capacity. When I left the 'congregation' today, I told why I did so, with all the earnestness at my command,"

Mr. Riggins said that some of Miss Auswin's writing, which she claimed to be inspired, was submitted to a Chinaman here in Topeka with the intention of seeing if he could translate it. The Celestial thre up his hand and said: "Me no understand. Takee to Jap."

Mr. Riggins told this story without a suspicion of levity and if he put any humor into it at the last, it was done unconsciously, for he seemed terribly in earnest.