

A Study and Defense of the Position of Cessationism Exposing
Problems With the Opposing Position, Continuationism

Submitted by

Ronnie Willard Wolfe
11195 Flora Road
Harrison, OH 45030
(513) 367-2190

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Introduction

The doctrine of Continuation, that doctrine which speaks of the continuing revelation of divine knowledge, is both super-scriptural and anti-scriptural. It is based upon subjective rather than objective experience. Seeking for direct communication from God, these believers turn away from the basic teaching of Scripture and put it aside for a “greater” knowledge. Since God’s word is the basis for all theological belief, there is a significance to the fact that God’s word is finished, that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and that the word of God can be trusted for any and all revealed truth. This paper, besides dealing with the history of the movement of Continuation in its earlier and latter trends, will seek to show the differences between Continuationism and Cessationism and show the superiority of Cessation over Continuation. Then some practical aspects will be given to strengthen believers in the proper understanding of the importance of these issues, and some helps will be given to strength believers in their trust in the word of God.

It is the hope of this writer that this can be done in a kind yet challenging way that will benefit those who read this treatise. May God be pleased to bless our minds as we think together on this great subject.

SECTION ONE

Presentation Of The Problem

Chapter One

The Problem Stated

Many have taken in hand to publish beliefs on various aspects of theology, and some of these publications have been of tremendous help to preachers and laymen alike. Some, however, have been published with a taint of opposition and departure from what has been accepted as standard or orthodox truth.

In modern and post-modern times many have taken in hand to publish doctrines that are a departure from the basic orthodoxy of Bible believers. Conservative Christians believe that the Bible is true and that all doctrines should be taken from the scriptures in their correct and coherent context within their historical perspective and their true spiritual application.

Among the not-so-scriptural doctrines that are taken out of the true context of scripture is that doctrine called Continuationism. This is not a recent doctrine, because this doctrine has been proclaimed from the first centuries after Christ until our own day, although it has taken on various forms during that period of time. The progress and growth of the doctrine of Continuation has shown that this doctrine is not a stagnant doctrine but is one that continues to go farther and farther away from scriptural truth. Statements of unbelievable exaggeration have been made in recent years which manifest the overwhelming extent to which this doctrine has grown. Many popular preachers and teachers of our own day, for example, make statements which deny the Messiahship of Jesus Christ and even His blood atonement and His substitutionary death on the cross. Some of these will be considered later.

A study, then, of this doctrine of Continuation and its opposing view of Cessation is of

extreme importance in our day. This will be endeavored in this paper despite the many who have done it before and despite the fact that others have done a much better job than this present work, no doubt. Many volumes have been written on the subject of Continuationism, and a few very good books have been written on Cessationism. This is more reason to continue writing on the subject, since the majority of written material is on the side of Continuationism.

Samuel Waldron does a very nice job of defining Continuationism when he states:

Continuationism is the teaching that (at least some of) the miraculous gifts assumed and described in the Bible ought to continue in the church and, in fact, do continue to be given to the church. The words in parentheses above must be carefully noted. At times—and in some of its popular forms—Continuationism and Continuationists teach that there are no Apostles of Christ today. They do, however, usually believe that prophets, tongues-speakers, and miracle-workers continue to be given by Christ to His church.¹

These miraculous gifts, according to Cessationists, stopped sometime after the close of the Apostolic age. Some say these gifts ended when the last apostle died and that Paul was the last Apostle to receive these gifts. Others say that these miraculous gifts continued until the last person who received gifts by the laying on of hands passed off the scene.

The period most commonly set for their continuance is three centuries; the date of their cessation is ordinarily said to have been about the time of Constantine. This, as early as the opening of the eighteenth century, had become the leading opinion, at least among theologians of the Anglican school, as Conyers Middleton, writing in the middle of that century . . .²

It is, however, interesting to note that

The writings of the so-called Apostolic Fathers contain no clear and certain

¹Waldon, Samuel E., *To Be Continued*, Calvary Press Publishers, Merrick, New York, 2005, pg. 11

²Warfield, B. B., *Counterfeit Miracles*, The Banner of Truth, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 1995, pg 6-7

allusions to miracle-working or to the exercise of the charismatic gifts, contemporaneously with themselves.³

We notice, also, that Irenaeus in the second century AD spoke in the past tense when considering the gift of raising up the dead. He states that “they were raised up,”⁴ evidently referring to the Apostolic age.

It matters not when these gifts ended, for that may certainly be a matter of discussion on a minor point, but the important thing is whether these miraculous gifts (charismata) have ceased and, if so, why they have ceased.

The defining of the details of Cessationism and the proof that charismata have ended will be the endeavor of this paper. May God give grace, wisdom and understanding for the job at hand, and may many profit from this work. But first the problem must be stated, and it can be stated in four aspects.

The Apostles Are Only Common Men

In a wonderful book by my friend, John Hatcher, the importance of the work of the apostles can be found as it relates to the Holy Spirit. He states, “The Twelve were the link between Jesus and the Scriptures of the New Testament. All of the work of Jesus Christ and His Church is founded upon their witness and work.”⁵

The connection between the twelve apostles and the written word of God cannot be cast aside as only a common connection; it must be understood to be an extremely important

³Ibid, pg 10

⁴Ibid, pg 15

⁵Hatcher, John Albert, “Meet The Holy Spirit,” No Publisher, 1981, p. 28.

connection, since no book of the New Testament was written without the direct writing or the direct influence of the twelve apostles.

All of the work of Jesus Christ after he ascended to heaven was to be founded upon the apostles, because Luke declares that the twelve apostles were a unique group of men. John tells us in John 13:18, "I know whom I have chosen." He says to these twelve in John 15:16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." These scriptures declare plainly that the twelve apostles were a unique and qualified group to be the foundation of the works of Jesus Christ after he had gone to heaven.

The twelve apostles were ordained to be witnesses of the works and words of Jesus Christ. Peter exclaims:

Acts 10:39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: 40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; 41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.⁶

These twelve witnessed Jesus before his death, at his death, and after his resurrection. This was their obligation and a requirement in order to be one of these specially chosen twelve and to hold the office of apostle.

First there was Moses, the lawgiver; then there were the Prophets, who wrote most of the Old Testament; and then there were the Apostles, who were the last to be appointed to be true witnesses of Jesus Christ.

⁶King James Version used in all quotations in this dissertation.

1 Cor. 4:9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

We must realize that there is no apostolic succession. No one has the right to claim to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. Matthias was chosen to take the place of Judas Iscariot, and that was a prophecy given by the psalmist in Ps 109:8, "Let his days be few; and let another take his office." Since that time no man has been able to meet the requirements to become a true apostle. These requirements are mentioned in the book of Acts.

Acts 1:21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

We see, also, that the message of the twelve apostles is the same message as the message of the prophets. The message of the prophets, including Moses, was given; then the message of Jesus Christ was given in agreement with the prophets of old; and the message of the twelve apostles was the same and in complete agreement.

2 Peter 3:2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

So the message of the prophets, the message of Jesus Christ, and the message of the twelve apostles was the same message and in total agreement—there is no difference in the Gospel of the Old Testament and the Gospel of the New Testament, for the gospel was preached to Abraham before the New Testament times (Galatians 3:8).

These twelve apostles had special powers, divine powers and gifts that other men did not have, that no man has now, and no man will ever have again in this life.

Acts 5:12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

This is a matter of extreme importance when speaking of the doctrine of Cessationism. The twelve apostles had special gifts, and they could lay their hands on men and give special gifts to these men; but nowhere in the Bible do we see these men who received gifts at the hands of the apostles ever give gifts to other men; thus, the signs of the apostles were just that: "signs of an apostle" (2 Cor. 12:12).

Remember that, even though Paul was a great apostle, a special apostle to the Gentiles, "he was not included in the special office of the Twelve."⁷ So remember that the office of the twelve was a very special office and one that is not to be copied or mimicked in modern times. Paul speaks of "false apostles" in 2 Corinthians 11:13, so this gives us insight into the fact that some will make themselves apostles who are not apostles (Rev. 2:2). They are liars.

How do people make themselves apostles today? They do this by specifically announcing that they are the apostles of Christ. They also make themselves apostles by pretending to do the work of apostles, the divine wonders, signs and miracles that were done by the apostles in New Testament times and the prophets of old.

This is a mockery to the word of God, for these things were not done in a corner (Acts 26:26), and they were done for our learning (Romans 15:4); so we can learn and benefit from that which has been written as well as we can learn and benefit from things we may experience ourselves.

By endeavoring to duplicate the signs of the apostles, preachers today make the office of

⁷Hatcher, *op cit*, p. 34.

an apostle a common thing. This office can be had by anyone who simply claims to be an apostle. The office is underestimated by making possible the holding of this office by hundreds, thousands, or even millions of people on the earth at any one time. If the office of apostle is not special, then what value is it? Contemporary apostles must be revealed for who they really are: they are false apostles; they are false prophets; and they are deceiving a great multitude of people today.

Notice what is said by Richard De Haan concerning the apostles, which is true concerning them:

The question is asked by those who support faith healers: “Since God gave these gifts to the church, why shouldn’t they be exercised today?” In reply, I would say first of all that the apostolic office has been discontinued. The apostles were an especially chosen group of men. They were with the Lord Jesus during His earthly ministry. They were also witnesses of His resurrection. And apart from the appointment of Matthias, as recorded in Acts 1, and the Lord’s special choice of Paul, no provision was made for them to have successors. When they died, apostleship ceased.⁸

A terse and yet powerful statement is made by Ron Crisp when he says, “To go beyond the apostles in our search for truth is to go beyond Christ.”⁹

Part of the work of the apostles was to bring about the completed word of God to the churches of the Lord. The gifts of the Holy Spirit were used to accomplish this.

During the period when the New Testament was being written, the above-mentioned gifts exercised in the apostolic churches would serve as signs by which God bore witness to the divine authority of the apostles. It was they who brought extraordinary spiritual gifts to the churches through the laying on of hands, and as exercised in the churches the gifts in turn witnessed to the authority of those who

⁸De Haan, Richard W., *Miracles, Healing and You*, (Radio Bible Class, Grand Rapids, Michigan, n.d.), p. 23.

⁹Crisp, Ron, *God’s Final Word, A study of the History of Divine Revelation*, Addyston Baptist Church, Addyston, Ohio, 2007, p. 16

wrote the New Testament

The gifts of prophecy and tongues in apostolic time had no opposite effect from their modern counterparts. The existence of miraculous gifts in the early church pays honour to the completed Scriptures. The apostolic message inscripturated in the New Testament is so vital that the church cannot live without it. While it was being written, the same truths must more or less be given in another fashion to edify the church. And the miraculous exercise of gifts bears witness to the profound importance of the apostolic mission in confirming what Jesus began to speak (Heb. 2:3). Hence those miracles witnessed to the unique authority and sufficiency of the Scripture when complete.¹⁰

Notice, also, the purpose of Paul in his ministry here on earth was to fulfill (complete) the word of God.

Paul here affirms that that which was given “to me” was the same thing given “for you,” but a child can see that that which was given to Paul was by “revelation,” and to the Colossians to whom he was sent, by “declaration.” That is, he declared or delivered to others in the discharge of the responsibility of his apostolic office, those things which he “as an apostle” received by revelation, guarded, guided, and given by the “Spirit of truth.”¹¹

The Spirit Is Robbed Of His Rightful Position

The Holy Spirit is God—he is nothing less than God! But the Holy Spirit has a place in the Holy Trinity. Just as God the Father and God the Son have a place of position in the Trinity, so does the Holy Spirit. Notice the position of the Father and the Son.

1 Cor. 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

The head of every man is Christ, . . . and the head of Christ is God. This puts these two persons of the Trinity in their rightful position. One is not more God than the other, but they

¹⁰Chantry, Walter J., *Signs of the Apostles*, The Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 1979, pp 39-40.

¹¹Fort, H. Frank, *Holy Spirit*, Berean Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, 1964, p. 10.

are different in their position.

The Holy Spirit also has a position, and that is a tertiary position. That is why he is called the third person of the Trinity.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Notice that he will not speak of himself. He will not make himself to be the secondary or primary person in the Trinity. He has a tertiary position, and he must work in that position according to the word of God. He always works in the background, quietly leading, hearing and speaking in that still, small voice.

The Holy Spirit listened to the words of God, spoke these words to the apostles, and led them to write down the words in the scriptures. Those who wrote the scriptures were either apostles or men who were very closely associated with the apostles.

Robert Barclay, a Quaker, takes the position that the Holy Spirit is higher than the scriptures and that the scriptures take a “second place” to the Holy Spirit for the precepts of faith and practice.

Seeing then that we do therefore receive and believe the scriptures because they proceeded from the Spirit, for the very same reason is the Spirit more originally and principally the rule . . . When we doubt of the streams of any river or flood, we recur to the fountain itself; and having found it, there we desist, we can go no farther; because there it springs out of the bowels of the earth, which are inscrutable.

But the scriptures’ authority and certainty depend upon the Spirit by which they were dictated; and the reason why they were received as truth is, because they proceeded from the Spirit: therefore they are not the principal ground of truth.¹²

In much contemporary theology the Holy Spirit is elevated to a position that is much

¹²Barclay, Robert, *Views of Christian Doctrine*, n. p., Philadelphia, PA, 1888, pg. 36-37.

higher than he credits himself to have. Preachers today do this by emphasizing the Holy Spirit above Jesus Christ and even above God in some cases. The Holy Spirit speaks of Jesus and listens to the words of God, but he does not assume their position in the Trinity. Even when he manifests the gifts of God, he gives glory to God and Jesus Christ, not himself.

Others, it may be noted, absent the Holy Spirit from their religious services by empowering the ordinances and rituals above the Holy Spirit himself.

Ritualism, Romish or Anglican, agrees in making the Church's action a substitute for the action of Christ and His Spirit. On whatever ground it is placed, whether it represents the Church's action as a perpetual continuation of Christ's life on earth, and therefore a sort of perpetual incarnation, which was Mohler's theory, or describes the Church's action as, in some measure, meritorious and propitiatory,—which is the common theory,—it entirely ignores the operation of the Spirit of God, and binds the results to a mere array of forms. It makes the ever-acting High Priest a mere inactive spectator, and is irrespective of the SPIRIT'S GRACE and of the RECEIVER'S FAITH. The whole transaction is lodged in other hands. Ritualism conjoins the sacraments and the Spirit in such a sense that the dispensation of the one is simultaneous with and equivalent to the communication of the other.¹³

Problems At Corinth Are Underestimated

The book of First Corinthians seems to be almost the whole Bible for some contemporary preachers who emphasize the gifts of the Spirit. They lift up the Spirit to a greater prominence than Jesus Christ himself. In doing this they underestimate the problems at Corinth.

First Corinthians was written to correct many problems which the Corinthians had in the church. They had divisions; they had much sin, including idolatry; and they were misusing the gifts of the Spirit. To hear some contemporary preachers one would think that First

¹³Smeaton, George, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 1989, p. 272.

Corinthians was a book about the most spiritual Christians in the Bible, but the truth of the matter is that the Corinth church was one of the most unspiritual and one of the most backslidden churches in the Bible record.

In First Corinthians Chapter 12-14 one can read of the use of spiritual gifts and Paul's correction of the wrong usage of these gifts. In Chapter 13 Paul shows these believers a better way, the way of love, which evidently the Corinthians lacked on a large scale.

Many modern preachers do not understand, or at least they do not proclaim, the problems at Corinth but rather emphasize their use of spiritual gifts. They encourage people to pray for these special gifts and teach that a believer's faith is proved by these sign gifts. This is done through the emphasis of the spiritual gifts at the expense of showing the errors in this church and the correct use of the gifts of the Spirit.

The Purpose Of Gifts Misunderstood

The purpose of the gifts of the Spirit is not to prove salvation. If people were to be able to obtain the biblical gifts of the Spirit today, it would not prove their salvation, and the lack of these gifts would not prove their perdition, since that is not the purpose of the gifts of the Spirit.

The purpose of the gifts of the Spirit is closely related to the writing of the scriptures and the verification of the divine offices of the prophets, Jesus Christ himself, and the apostles. If any other purpose is taught, it is the wrong purpose. This makes these signs not only for a specific purpose but also temporary in their nature. This is the crux of this subject.

What purpose did they fulfill? Several answers might be given. In the ministry of

Christ, they served primarily as credential signs. The Lord Jesus had come claiming to be the promised Messiah. The miracles authenticated His claim. . .

Remember, the miracles of Christ and the apostles were not performed primarily as acts of mercy, although they were all of that. But more than that, they were evidence of the truthfulness of their preaching and teaching.¹⁴

Notice, too, can be given to the fact that the period in which gifts were used by Christ and the apostles was a transitional period, which intimates that the period of inauguration was not a permanent one but only an introduction and accreditation of a “new age” which was coming into being.

It is a fact of momentous significance that all the references in the ‘Acts’ to the Baptism of the Spirit, and of the accompanying sign of Tongues, belong to the transition period represented by chapters ii-xii

It follows, then, from the foregoing, that the spiritual happenings of the first ten or twelve years of the Church’s history were irregular, that it was a transition period, that a new age was being inaugurated, that its inauguration by extraordinary signs (as indeed, every new dispensation has been; witness the miracles of Moses in Egypt, of Elijah and Elisha, and the miracles of our Lord), and, that transition period passed, there is no further repetition of these happenings, as the Epistles by their silence serve to show. To insist on the permanence throughout this age of the above-mentioned signs is uncritical and unsound.¹⁵

The writer quoted just above also speaks of the character and purpose of the gifts of the Spirit when he said,

Manifestations of the Spirit, therefore, were for a definite purpose, and for a limited period. The working of miracles, the visits of angels, the *general* speaking with Tongues, judicial acts such as the deaths of Ananias, Sapphira, and Herod, the blessing of handkerchiefs, raising the dead, and other signs were for that transition period only, and when the purpose for which they were designed was accomplished, they ceased to operate *as evidential signs*. This view is the most consistent with the

¹⁴De Haan, *op cit*, pg. 12-13

¹⁵Scroggie, W. Graham, *The Baptism of the Spirit and Speaking with Tongues*, Pickering & Inglis Ltd., London, England, n.d., pp. 17-18.

teaching of the entire New Testament, and furnished us with the elucidation of many difficulties.¹⁶

¹⁶Ibid, pp. 18-19

SECTION TWO

Historical Perspective

Chapter Two

From New Testament To Modern Day

Charismata In The New Testament

Most of the references to the Holy Spirit are found in the first half of the New Testament, and most of them are in the book of Acts, which deals with that present-day activity of the Holy Spirit. The Day of Pentecost sets the stage for the subject at hand. This day is the catalyst for the entire discussion upon the charismatic gifts given in New Testament times.

Richard Gaffin mentions three dimensions concerning the gift of the Spirit. These dimensions will set a point of reference for the subject at hand.

What is the significance of the gift (baptism) of the Holy Spirit? Basic answers lie along two major, closely interrelated lines: (A) Pentecost and Christ and (B) Pentecost and the church, from which follow implications for (C) Pentecost and the experience of the individual believer.¹⁷

Charismata In The Second and Third Centuries

The so-called Church Fathers lived in the second century following the life of Christ and the lives of the Apostles. Some of these men had been taught by the Apostles themselves, so they had a close connection with the Apostles. This is the reason they are called the Church Fathers. Not everything they taught was good doctrine, but many things can be learned from their writings.

These Church Fathers and early Protestant writers have done much writing and give to us some interesting perspective on the subject at hand. For example, on his comments on

¹⁷Gaffin, Richard B., Jr., "Perspectives On Pentecost," Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Phillipsburg, NJ, 1979, pg. 14.

Acts 2:4, Augustine said, “These were signs adapted to the time.”¹⁸ Augustine also states,

“For those that are baptized do not now receive the Spirit on the imposition of hands, so as to speak in the tongues of all the peoples; neither are the sick healed by the shadow of the preachers of Christ falling on them as they pass; and other such things as were then done, are now manifestly ceased.”¹⁹

Quoting of the Church Fathers and others during this time, however, gives little support to the cessation argument. Both Chrysostom and Augustine give record of many miracles occurring during their active lives; and since scripture is our only true argument for any position, quotations from these fathers do not give much credence to the argument at hand. Even though Chrysostom admitted to being an eye witness of many miracles, he states “Of miraculous powers, not even a vestige is left.”²⁰

John Chrysostom also stated this in different words in his Homily XXIX in paragraph 2 commenting on 1 Cor. 12:1-2:

This whole place is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place. And why do they not happen now? Why look now, the cause too of the obscurity hath produced us again another question: namely, why did they then happen, and now do so no more?²¹

Even Augustine with his experience of being an “eye-witness” of many, many miracles believed to be at the hand of God through the Spirit, was embarrassed by the same miracles’ being performed by many heretics and heathen people. B. B. Warfield states:

¹⁹Retractions I xiii 7

²⁰Warfield, B. B., *op cit*, p 47.

²¹Schaff, Philip, Edited by, “Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, ‘Homily 6 on First Epistle of John,’” Christian Literature Publishing Co., Chicago, Illinois, 1888.

It was naturally a source of embarrassment to Augustine that the heretics had miracles to appeal to just like his own; and that the heathen had had something very like them from time immemorial.²²

The errors of the second- and third-century fathers are enough to bring doubt upon their witness of divine miracles in their own day, for each divine miracle must measure up with the divine truths. To believe, as they did, that most of these miracles occurred along with the mediation of saints' bones and relics is to admit that the miracles are at least questionable and at most completely untrustworthy and false. Ambrose propagated that a "fuller grace" was given upon Jesus' resurrection, and that is what has revived the "miracles of old."

"The miracles of old," he cries, "are come again, when by the advent of the Lord Jesus a fuller grace was shed upon the earth."²³

When reading of the many miracles that took place in the first centuries after Christ, one may wonder whether this is Christianity or Spiritualism. Some of the so-called miracles have to do with the host of the Eucharist, the bread of it bleeding when broken; a dead man having no rest until the bread of the Eucharist was placed upon his grave; dogs going mad after eating the bread of the Eucharist; etc. These superstitions lead us to discount the many miracles recorded in the early centuries after the Apostolic age.

One would do much better to learn that the miracle of scripture is divine and that miracles accompanied the writing of the scriptures rather than to ask for and image the miracles that dim the eyes from the undeniable and precious truths of scripture. The miracles of the second and third centuries give no more credence to the word of God or proof of its divinity than the

²²Ibid, pg 43

²³Ibid, pg. 46

miracles that are recorded in its very pages.

As one fords from the Biblical account into ecclesiastical history, he can see that a gap appears in the performance of divine miracles from the end of the Bible to the second and third centuries of church history. So, then, a change is made from a wonder-working God to a wonder-working church. From the very beginnings of the heretical catholic church there has been an inference of miracle-working to give credence to the catholic church. Many treatises have been written describing these supernatural occurrences, and these are mostly connected with the bones of martyrs, saints, and with relics.

The Montanist Movement

The Montanists are sometimes linked with the more modern Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, but this is tenuous and is mentioned here only to show its weak connection. Although Montanus and his followers were esoteric and mystic, they have no real connection with the modern-day Charismatics.

The followers of Montanus were called Kataphrygians, and they were known to speak in ecstasies and use loud noises in worship. Montanus was supposed to have been filled with the Spirit when he was baptized.

As the dispensation of the Father had given way to the dispensation of the Son, so the dispensation of the Son had now given place to the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, for [he maintained] Christ's promise of the Paraclete had now been fulfilled.²⁴

These actions seem to be much like the Charismatics of today, but there does not seem to be any true connection between the modern-day Charismatics and the Montanists of the

²⁴Bruce, F. F., *The Spreading Flame*, Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1964, pg. 219.

second century.

Some modern pentecostals see the Montanists as the last flicker of the apostolic gifts of the spirit, although it seems that the apostolic age was already over before the Montanists began. Whether they were or not, thereafter no one claiming to have the gift of prophecy was likely to be well received in the church, and any genuine move of the spirit was certainly quenched.²⁵

A sect of the Montanists were mystics, and they sought to continue throughout the coming generations with this same mysticism and doctrine.

The Montanists were practical mystics who sought the true succession of the Spirit not in the hierarchical but in the prophetic, the mystical order. Their doctrine spread from Asia to Thrace and Gaul and to Rome and Africa.²⁶

Although there is no physical connection that can be made from the Montanists to the Irvingites, there is a practical and doctrinal connection.

The prophet in the second century was in the line of succession of the seers of the New Testament. Hermas and Ignatius, Ammia and Quadratus, had uttered their visions, and Priscilla and Maximilla were but following in their train. There was nothing new in the mode of Montanist prophecy. As ecstasy fell upon Priscilla she put her face between her knees, after the manner of Elijah, and heard voices. Sometimes the vision came during worship in church, and there is much in all we learn of these visions to remind us of those to which Edward Irving bore witness.²⁷

Charismata In The Fourth Century And Beyond

This history of the development of these miracles is recapped by B. B. Warfield in the following account:

²⁵<http://www.tertullian.org/montanism.htm>, 10/30/2008

²⁶Murray, R. H. *Group Movements Throughout The Ages*, Harper and Brothers Publisher, New York & London, n.d., Page 38.

²⁷Ibid, 43

If we wish to trace this heathen infusion along the line of literary development, we must take our start from those Apocryphal Acts of Encratite tendency which, in a former lecture, we had occasion to point to as naturalizing the heathen wonder-tales—then a fashionable literary form—in the church. Once naturalized in the church, these Christian wonder-tales developed along the line of the church’s own development. As time went on, E. von Dobschuta explains, the church drew ever closer to the Encratite ideals which were glorified in the Apocryphal Acts, and it was this which gave their tendency to the new Christian romances which began to multiply in the later fourth century, and are represented to us especially by Athanasius’ *Life of Anthony*, and Jeromes’s *Lives of Paul, Hilarion, and Malchus*.²⁸

There was a miracle thirst which accompanied the uprising of miracles in the fourth century and beyond. The idea that man should follow after the miracles of the New Testament rather than the true commandments of Christ in the New Testament manifested that these miracles are not valid for the times. Caesarius says concerning this,

“Is it the example of Christ that we are to follow?” he asked, “Is it that we should raise the dead? Is it that we should walk on the surface of the sea? Not at all; but that we should be meek and humble of heart, and should love not only our friends but also our enemies.”²⁹

If miracles are the verification of the Christian church to these Catholics, then I suppose that the churches they call heretical may also be verified as being Christ’s churches; for they, also, had at least as many miracles as those claiming to be the true Church.

In the days of John Calvin, we notice that the Protestant attitude was in favor of the cessation of the gifts, for he says,

The gift of healing, like the rest of the miracles which the Lord willed to be brought for a time, has vanished away in order to make the new preaching of the Gospel marvelous forever.³⁰

²⁸Ibid, pg. 61

²⁹Ibid, pg. 66

³⁰Calvin, John, *Institutes Of The Christian Religion*, Battle Translation, 1960, p. 1467.

The Higher Life Movement

Asa Mahan and Charles Finney were instrumental in preparing the world for the new Higher Life Movement. They were social reformers who taught the perfectionist theology of sanctification. Mahan was president of Oberlin College in Ohio, and it was Mahan who convinced Charles Finney to be a professor at Oberlin.

The role of Asa Mahan (1799-1889) and Charles Finney (1792-1875) in preparing the world for the Holiness and Pentecostal revivals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries should not be underestimated. Both were avid social reformers who taught the perfectionist theology of sanctification. As we shall see, Mahan's writings and work were the key to the new Pentecostal Movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Finney, through his teachings on revivals, provided the means by which the new Pentecost theology was delivered to large numbers of Christians throughout the world. The two were brought together by the founder of Oberlin College, John Jay Shipherd, and by businessman and abolitionist leader, Arthur Tappan. After being invited to become the first president of Oberlin College in Ohio, Mahan travelled with Shipherd to New York in January, 1835, where they helped persuade Charles Finney to come to Oberlin as a professor of theology. Tappan agreed to finance the endeavor.³¹

Mahan later became involved in the English Holiness Movement after his writings became well known in England.

Mahan then became totally involved in the English Holiness Movement. Mahan's writings were among those largely responsible for preparing the groundwork for the Holiness Movement that was to be promoted from Oxford. In addition to his work on promoting the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and scriptural holiness, Mahan's influence on the involvement of key Americans, such as Dwight Lyman Moody and William Edwin Boardman, in England was also notable.³²

In this point, as in others, Montanism bears a striking affinity to Irvingism, but differs from it by its democratic, anti-hierarchical constitution. Irvingism asserts not

³¹Fannin, Kerby F., Ph.D., *While Men Slept* (Life Resources, Inc., Addison, Michigan, 2002), pg. 335.

³²Ibid, pg. 344.

only the continuance of the apostolic gifts, but also of all the apostolic offices, especially the twelve-fold apostolate, and is highly ritualistic.³³

After the publication of the book *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost* by Asa Mahan, there was a prevailing opinion in England that this outpouring of the Holy Spirit was to be expected and asked for. He said

On the third day of the [Oxford] Conference, Mahan continued stressing receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He emphasized that the power of the Holy Ghost was available and all that the participants needed to do was to ask for it³⁴

The Pentecostal Movement

The first of three movements which have affected our present-day challenge on the doctrine of tongues, signs and wonders is the Pentecostal Movement, which began through a man by the name of Charles Parham, who had roots in the Methodist Church and the theology of Charles Wesley.

In 1900 Charles Parham opened a college to perpetrate his views. He believed that the gift of tongues would be given so that the entire world could be evangelized.

Denominational churches believed at this time that all the sign gifts had ceased, but Parham believed they were for the end times. He believed that these wonders would usher in the Triumphant Christ and His kingdom.

“Parham was the first to teach that tongues are the initial evidence of "the baptism of the Holy Spirit,” and on New Years Eve in the year 1900 a woman by the name of Agnes Ozman finally spoke in tongues, and in turn several others spoke in tongues, also. This was

³³http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/2_2ch10.htm, 10/30/2008.

³⁴Fannin, *op cit*, pg. 347.

the beginning of the Pentecostal Movement.

Two key people in the twentieth century “Pentecost” as it came to America were Charles F. Parham (1873-1929) and Agnes Ozman [LaBerge] (1870-1937), both of whom were influenced heavily by Keswick teachings. Parham was influenced by the theologies that came from the annual camp meetings at Keswick, England, which, as we recall, through the influence of Asa Mahan, promoted the emphasis on the “Baptism with the Holy Spirit.”³⁵

In 1904-05 a Pentecostal movement was taking place in Wales, which is, no doubt, a counterpart to the Pentecostal revival of our own country. Out of Parham’s Bible school came a man by the name of William J. Seymour, a black preacher, who spearheaded the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California. Here the events of what was called the Azusa Street Revivals occurred. After a time, these revivals died out, but the Pentecostal Movement would not die; it would carry on. Out of this movement came denominations such as the Assemblies of God and the United Pentecostal Church.

The Charismatic Movement

This is the second of three movements that have an effect upon our subject at hand. This movement began around 1960 in Van Nuys, California, with an outburst of tongues speaking in St. Mark’s Episcopalian Church. Then the effects of this event moved into the mainline denominational churches, including the Roman Catholic Church. Then the movement entered universities in America including Dartmouth College, Stanford University, and Princeton Theological Seminary.

In 1967 and 1968 the movement reached more deeply into the Roman Catholic Church,

³⁵Ibid, pg. 355

by a few Catholic students who met in 1968 for a Catholic Pentecostal conference. This number grew from about 30 to about 22,000 in 1973, who met at Notre Dame for a conference.

Some Roman Catholics taught that the ancient goddess was really a representation of the Virgin Mary, known to them as the “Mother of God,” who would crush the serpent under her feet. According to Mathiew Orsini, for example, in *History of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God*.³⁶

In 1977 The Kansas City Charismatic Conference was held. This brought together in an ecumenical gathering Old Charismatics, Protestant Charismatics, and Catholic Charismatics. In 1977 it was reported that there are over ten million Charimatics in America.

The entrance of the Charismatic Movement into the Catholic Church corrupted much doctrine. The doctrine of salvation by grace through faith was denied. The salvation experience . . .

. . . refers to an experience of the saving power of Christ, which occurs before the baptism in the Spirit. It gives a man the knowledge that he is saved. . . . However, the doctrine that this is the only mode in which Christ’s saving grace can be received, that it is necessary for salvation, and that it gives a man certitude about his state of grace (justification) and even about his ultimate salvation, besides being quite unscriptural is in contradiction with a firm and unanimous Catholic tradition, and with the formal teaching of the Council of Trent.³⁷

The Third Wave Movement

This could also be called the signs and wonders movement, and it is hard to put a strict date to the beginning of this wave of enthusiasm that has been in effect throughout most of the entire 20th century. It is a progression of the movements that preceded it and is a part of

³⁶Ibid, pg. 377.

³⁷Ibid, pg. 436.

those “waves.”

This movement is also called the Vineyard Movement. In this movement, the Gospel is illustrated by supernatural signs and wonders. John Wimber is known as the central figure of this movement, the founder of the Vineyard church movement. C. Peter Wagner, a teacher at Fuller Seminary School of World Missions, is also a key leader of this movement.

This “signs and wonders movement” is the newest movement of the Charismatic type, and it is still flourishing today. The movement stresses the gift of prophecy and the gift of healings.

Miracles and Wonders Today

So the miracles continue even to our day. One such stream of miracles took place upon the death of a young Jansenist, Francois de Paris in 1727. The Lutheran historian, Mosheim, relates the story of his death, how that many came to his tomb to be healed. Both the Jesuits and the Jansenists came to the tomb of this dead man to be healed, and the press of visitors was so great that the Jesuits eventually enclosed the tomb so that no one could approach it.

Even in our own day and time miracles are continuing to be reported. Those in the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements are believing and reporting many miracles of healing, baptisms of the Holy Spirit, and speaking in tongues. Thus Continuationism is well established in our own day. “Since around 1960 few topics have received more attention in the church than the gifts of the Holy Spirit.”³⁸

This indicates an inherent problem in theology. A break in theology or a change in

³⁸Gaffin, Richard B., Jr., op cit, p. 9.

theology must bring inquisition and investigation. The belief that divine miracle-workers have revived and are the same as the miracle-workers in the New Testament is a conspicuous change in doctrine; therefore, contemporary theologians are challenged to give more heed to the doctrines of scripture and develop a theology that correctly reflects the scriptural position and not a theology that caters to the emotions and subjective experiences of people.

This must also be done with great patience and prayer, for the doctrines of scripture are divine. If at all possible, one must develop a sincere and intense prayer life in order for the Holy Spirit to illumine him in the things of scripture. If this argument is retained upon a completely logical, philosophical and theological basis, the problem will never be solved; but if theologians will seek the face of God and will be honest with what the scriptures teach, the problem may be solved; and it will be a joyous surprise what conclusions will be seen with God the Holy Spirit as our teacher, God the Son as our mediator, and God the Father as the one to whom is owed all the praise.

SECTION THREE

Modern Perspective Of The Problem

Chapter Three

The Use Of Several Greek Words

The meaning of several Greek words is important to the study of the Charismata as it relates to the problem at hand. These words build a small nomenclature to the study of the Charismata, so their definition and usage are very important to the study.

The word *charisma*. This word does not, according to several scholars, hold an extraordinary meaning such as the meaning put to it by the modern Charismatic Movement and some of the early Protestant Fathers.

Since the days of Tertullian, western theological language has used charisma and its vernacular derivatives in a sense that the Biblical and early post-Biblical usage . . . does not support. That is, . . . as the generic term for the extraordinary and at times miraculous.³⁹

The actual meaning of this word is taken from the verb *charizomai*, which simply means “favor” or “grace.” The word *charisma*, then, takes on the meaning from the verb *charizomai* that means a gift freely or graciously given, and the meaning is no more than that.

The only thing that designates the extraordinary or miraculous is the context in which the idea of a gift is used. This will be brought out in the context of scripture and not in the basic meaning of the word.

The word *pneumatikos*. This word is properly translated “spiritual,” and it carries with it the meaning of simply being spiritual and not of a supernatural spirituality which results in miraculous gifts.

³⁹Piepkorn, Arthur C., "Charisma in the New Testament and Apostolic Fathers," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, 42 (1971):370.

Though no one would deny that gifts are supernatural in that they are received from God, to insist that because gifts are termed *pneumatikos*, they are inherently supernatural, meaning miraculous is reading too much into the word. The meaning of *pneumatik* is simply “that which pertains to the Spirit,” indicating the source or realm of these gifts. This does not imply that the gift must be supernatural, non-miraculous, or miraculous. It only denotes the source and the realm.⁴⁰

So the miraculous is shown by the context of scripture and not in the basic meaning of the word. No Christian denies that gifts are supernatural, from God, but to believe that a thing is miraculous because it is described by the word *pneumatikos* is taking the meaning of the word too far.

The word *Doma*. This is the simple word for “gift,” and it describes gifts both from earthly sources and from God. The giving of gifts includes both that which God gave to the whole of believers as well as to individuals who had special gifts for miraculous purposes.

The word *Dorea*. “A careful study of *dorea* in the NT reveals two important matters. First, *dorea* in Acts and the epistles is used chiefly of gifts given by God to authenticate the apostles and their witness.⁴¹ Secondly, the use of *dorea* to denote a "free gift" of God is seen in its association with *charis* ("grace") in such passages as Acts 2:38, 8:20, 10:45, 11:17, and 2 Cor 9:15.⁴²

The word *merismos*. This word means “division” or “distribution” and is used in Hebrews 2:4. God used the distribution of gifts to manifest and authenticate his message to men in apostolic times. The reason for the study of these words is summarized as follows:

⁴⁰Stitzinger, James F., *Spiritual Gifts: Definitions and Kinds*, The Masters Seminary Journal, 2003, p. 152.

⁴¹Caneday, Ardel B., "A Study of New Testament Gifts, Their Nature and Continuance," unpublished seminar paper, Winona Lake, Ind.: Grace Theological Seminary, 1975, p. 10-11.

⁴²Stitzinger, *op cit*, p 153.

From this survey of significant Greek words, various aspects of spiritual gifts are evident. *Charisma* means a free and undeserved gift, an unmerited grace gift from God's grace. From *pneumatikos* one sees that the realm and source of the gifts is the Spirit. *Doma* stresses concrete character and *dorea* stresses gracious giving while adding the aspect of formal endowment. The word *merismos* denotes the aspect of distribution of the Spirit. One should include the significance of all these words in coming to a definition of a gift, because a gift possesses all these aspects.⁴³

⁴³Ibid, 154

Chapter Four

The Church at Corinth

In order to show the case at hand the church at Corinth must be considered as a type of church that is produced if it has the marks of a charismatic church. Upon a cursory reading of the book of 1 Corinthians one can see the difficulty with the church. It was a charismatic church, and it was an immature church. When these two features are put together, a church exists which needs much rebuke, correction and reformation.

Corinth was a charismatic church, because it seemingly had all of the gifts of the Spirit, yet they were not a strong church (See 1 Cor. 1:4-7). In verse four Paul mentions that the grace of God was given them by Jesus Christ: this evidently indicated the gifts of the Spirit. In verse five Paul tells them they are “enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge.” Then he encourages them in verse seven that they might not come behind in any gift.

Paul spent most of the letter of 1 Corinthians correcting them for wrongs. He corrects them concerning immorality in chapter five, which is not even named among the Gentiles (1 Cor. 5:1). He corrects them on lawsuits in chapter six, and gives a lecture on marriage in chapter seven. He warns them of eating meats offered to idols in chapter eight. Then in chapter ten Paul encourages them by examples of the Old Testament to refrain from idolatry, and they are to use these examples to learn “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12).

Corinth was an immature church. Paul also spent much of his time rebuking them for their immaturity. This is shown in 1 Corinthians 12-14 as Paul corrects them for the wrong use of the gifts that God had given to them. He warns in chapter twelve of those who speak and do not

have the Spirit of God. This was a test that Paul put into place for the Corinthians to be able to distinguish those who spoke genuinely by the Spirit of God and those who spoke who did not have the Spirit of God. Those who had the Spirit of God would speak the truth about the incarnation of Jesus Christ, that he is the Lord (1 Cor. 12:3).

See how Paul dealt with the problem of immaturity. He used three analogies in describing Christian development and growth. A building, a battle, and a body. The analogy of the building is in chapter three, and the Apostle is saying “an unfinished building is an eye-sore—finish what I began and ‘take heed’ how you build.” The picture of the battle is in chapter nine and taken from the brutal boxing matches of the Isthmian games. Paul says, “an unfinished contest is a waste and a loss—go on to the crown” The analogy of the body is the theme of chapter twelve. Here Paul is saying, “a non-functioning body is a tragedy and a non-cooperative body is a suicide. Stop tearing the body apart in your selfish, childish desire for the showy gifts.” All three analogies point to the failure of this church to finish what God had begun. Arrested development!⁴⁴

There is only one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), and there are many members. So, the Spirit of God being the same all the time divides to every man according to God’s will (12:11). God gives gifts accord to his will, and these gifts vary from one person to another. Paul explains this in 1 Cor. 12:18 “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.” This indicated that God gives gifts to men at his own will and not upon the request of the believers. Nowhere in this or any other book does the Bible say that we are to ask for these spiritual gifts. In 1 Cor. 14:1 Paul says, “Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.” This does not instruct these believers to pray or ask for spiritual gifts. It simply means that they were to have a high regard for these gifts and to desire that they might have them, even though they may never have them, to esteem them great in their own eyes, not to shun the people who have them or disregard their effectiveness in the church when used

⁴⁴Gardiner, George E., *The Corinthian Catastrophe*, Kregel Publication, Grand Rapids, MI, 1974, pp. 18-19.

correctly.

In chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians Paul explains the “more excellent way.” He expresses how love works in the scheme of using the spiritual gifts. He explains that spiritual gifts will cease but that love will continue. This will be explained more thoroughly later in this paper. In chapter 14 Paul explains how that he speaks in tongues more than any of them do; however, they are not to think of speaking in tongues as being more important than explaining the truth in plain language. The significance of speaking in tongues was for some other reason than to show spiritual superiority. Tongues were given to proliferate the true word of God to people in other languages. This will be handled in more detail later, also.

The use of Spiritual gifts was exploited by the Corinthians, else Paul would not admonish them in 1 Cor. 14:26, “How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.” God is not the author of confusion, Paul says in 14:33.

Having spiritual gifts and being spiritual are not the same thing, and having knowledge and being spiritual are not the same thing. The Corinthians were known for their knowledge. If they lacked in anything, it was not in knowledge. Paul warns them about their knowledge in chapters one and two. Paul came to them in simplicity, not excellence of speech (1 Cor. 2:1-2). The Corinthians were proud of their knowledge and their spiritual gifts, but Paul came to them in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling (1 Cor. 1:3). Then he explains true knowledge. He says, “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Cor. 2:13).

There was selfishness at Corinth with their fancy love-feasts, gorging food instead of celebrating the ordinance with its true symbolism. They were not ignorant of spiritual gifts, but they were ignorant about the reason for the use of spiritual gifts.

There were divisions in the church at Corinth. Members were split among themselves over personalities. This is brought out in 1 Corinthians chapter one.

When Clement of Rome wrote a letter to this church in 97 AD, thirty-eight years later, he was dealing with the same problem—divisions. Immaturity! Paul makes sure that they understood the link between childishness and division by placing the two side by side in 1 Cor. 3:1-9.⁴⁵

The Corinth church was critical. They criticized Paul for having a bodily presence that was weak and a speech that was contemptible (2 Cor. 10:10). This illustrates their immaturity and their wrong use of spiritual gifts.

The Corinth church tolerated evil in the church. They saw nothing wrong with quarreling, indulgence in sins, gluttony, and drunkenness. Even with all of this the Corinthians thought they had reached spiritual maturity because they had spiritual gifts, but they rather were very weak spiritually even though they had spiritual gifts from God. This teaches us that spiritual gifts do not make a person spiritually mature.

Then why do modern churches seek after the spiritual gifts preaching that those who have the gifts are more spiritually mature than those who do not? It is because of the ignorance of the true teaching of spiritual gifts. The Corinth church died with its city, although the letters that Paul wrote to them are still in existence to warn us of the problems that existed at Corinth.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Ibid, p. 21

⁴⁶Ibid, p. 23

The Corinthian church also exalted the Holy Spirit, so Paul exhorts them that no one can call Jesus accursed who has the Holy Spirit. In other words, they cannot put the Holy Spirit above Christ and push him to the side or diminish his sovereignty. John tells us that the Holy Spirit will not speak of himself but will exalt Christ (John 16:7, 13, 14). So then anyone who puts the Holy Spirit above Christ is speaking heresy. Do not forget that the work of salvation begins with the Holy Spirit and is complete only in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit does his part in salvation of convincing of sin, etc., but it is by grace through faith in Christ that we are saved, not faith in the Holy Spirit. “For it pleased the Father that in him (Christ) should all fulness dwell” (Colossians 1:19).

Even though there are different gifts, there is only one Spirit, one Lord, and one God. So the Trinity is involved in the giving and execution of gifts to the believers (1 Cor. 12:4-6).

The Holy Spirit gives the gifts, Christ assigns the place of ministry of the gifts and God the Father provides the energy.⁴⁷

When Paul commanded that the members at Corinth covet earnestly the best gifts (1 Cor. 12:31), he was showing that some gifts were superior to others, but he was also saying that even those gifts were surpassed in importance by a more excellent way, and that way was love, the one thing that was lacking at Corinth in this church.

These gifts are not to make the recipient of them proud or boastful. They are received by grace at God’s will and are for the edification of the body of Christ at Corinth.

The reception of a spiritual gift is not the result of prayer, fasting, tears or sacrifice on the part of the recipient, but is a gift of grace, for the good of the body of Christ . . .⁴⁸

⁴⁷Ibid, p. 29

⁴⁸Ibid, p. 33

Chapter Five

Modern-Day Charismatics

In this chapter some modern-day Charismatics will be considered, those who believe in the continuation of the gifts of the New Testament. It should be seen by this the proliferation of the doctrine of continuation that has exploded over Europe and the United States during the last century or so.

There is no shortage of modern-day Charismatics. Names such as Benny Hinn, Paul Crouch, Oral Roberts, Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagen, Kathryn Koolman, John Wimber, and Jack Deere come to mind. Many Charismatics today believe that there is more that is needed beyond salvation by grace, the promise of the Holy Spirit's indwelling, and the word of God for growth.

John Wimber was not satisfied with the results of his ministry and sought more "power." Jack Deere was not satisfied and longed for more "passion for God."⁴⁹

All of these modern-day wonder workers base the truth on the subjective impressions of emotion and personal experience.

. . . when a man named John White told him that he had actually seen miracles from God and described two of them, Deere's thinking began to change on the basis of this testimony.⁵⁰

The problem with basing what one believes to be the truth upon only experience is that experience must be interpreted. If a person believes that his friend will not lie to him, then he

⁴⁹Edgar, Thomas R., *Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit*, Kregel Resources, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1996, pg. 11.

⁵⁰Ibid, pg 16

will believe what his friend tells him about his experience. Just because a person is trustworthy does not mean that he can discern the difference between a miracle that is done by God and a miracle that is done by slight of hand or even by the Devil himself. We simply cannot trust experience when it comes to ascertaining facts. The only way to properly interpret an experience is with a standard, and that standard for the Christian is the word of God.

Charismatic experiences are often interpreted mainly on the basis of a tendency toward a charismatic perspective that focuses on the experience itself and neglects other factors or possibilities. For many who become charismatic, the real cause is not the experience. The real cause is a dissatisfaction, a feeling of some lack. This is a consistent item in charismatic testimonies.⁵¹

As a result of this interpretation of miracles, charismatics propose many varying experiences all the way from merely speaking in tongues to actually being a seer for God, directly receiving messages from God to give to their hearers in the world. The gift of prophecy is many times used to speak God's word directly from God to the ears of the prophet's hearers.

The gift of prophecy is speaking under the direct supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit. It is becoming God's mouthpiece, to verbalize His words as the Spirit directs. The Greek word *propheteia* means "speaking for the mind and counsel of God." It is inseparable in its New Testament usage with the concept of direct inspiration of the Spirit. Prophecy is the very voice of Christ speaking in the church.⁵²

Jim Goll goes on to say in this same book,

Today we are witnessing the re-emergence of two distinct prophetic streams that first appeared over 25 years ago: the seer visionary stream and the *nabiy'* verbal stream. As spiritual fathers, Paul Cain perhaps best represents the first, while Bill

⁵¹Ibid, p. 26

⁵²Goll, Jim W., *The Seer*, Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, 2004, p. 18

Hamon exemplifies the second. Founder and director of Christian International in Florida, Dr. Hamon described the mid-20th century emergence of these two prophetic streams that have reappeared in recent years:⁵³

It is evident in Goll's book that experience is the basis for truth.

The single most characteristic mark of a true prophetic person is the evidence that he or she has stood in the counsel of God and has, therefore, faithfully declared what he or she heard from His mouth. According to Robertson Smith, it is this divine word that distinguishes a prophet: "the possession of a single true thought, not derived from current religious teaching, but springing up in the soul as a Word from Jehovah, Himself, is enough to constitute a prophet."⁵⁴

Not only so, but the only way to be sure that one is being a true prophet is be accountable with others. The Bible is, many times, not mentioned as a source of accountability.

The antidote to this poison (of being jealous of another's gift) is to learn to walk in accountability with others, cultivating faithfulness while giving ourselves to the unique expression of grace that God has imparted to each of us.⁵⁵

Cessationists believe that all experiences must be proven by scripture. The scriptures are the basis for all truth, whether it is a theological point or a personal experience. If an experience is not aligned with scripture, then it becomes suspect immediately.

Visions can be either simple experiences of individuals, or they can be truly from God and work for his glory. In his book, Goll confuses real visions with false visions when he refers to the vision mentioned in Proverbs 29:18 as no more than a personal vision that has no biblical basis, one vision being as valid as another.

This verse in the New International Version reads: "Where there is no *revelation*, the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law." . . . The point is clear: without prophecy, without divine revelation or vision, people will cast off all

⁵³Ibid, p. 24

⁵⁴Ibid, p. 33

⁵⁵Ibid, p. 34

restraint. They will run wild because they have no guidance—no *vision*. The Word of God—His *law*—provides vision and guidance for living, and those who follow it are blessed. Everyone needs a vision to sustain them in life.⁵⁶

Then Goll gives as an example of this the vision of Constantine when he saw a flaming cross outlined against the sun which said in Greek *En toutoi nika*, which means “In this sign you shall conquer.” Then he had his soldiers to put the mark of *chi rho* on their shields and fight. They won the battle against Maxentius.

The vision of Constantine is hardly the same as the vision mentioned in Proverbs 29:18. The vision in Proverbs 29:18 is the revelation of the truth including the scriptures that were written down by those who were led along by the Holy Spirit, the inspired word of God. This is not speaking of visions that people of all ages have such as Constantine’s vision, and it is definitely not speaking of any and everyone today who has any kind of a vision he thinks is from God.

Goll continues in his book to compare the visions of Elisha, Jacob, Zechariah, and Daniel to visions of the present day. There are no Elishas today, no Jacobs today, no Zechariahs today and no Daniels today. He does, however, admit that “. . . our most important source of revelation is the *logos* canon of Scripture.”⁵⁷ The problem with this is that the canon of Scripture is not the “most important source of revelation;” it is the *only* source of revelation today. Goll gives three sources of revelation: the Holy Spirit, the human soul, and evil spirits.

⁵⁶Ibid, p. 46

⁵⁷Ibid, p. 72

The Scriptures indicate that spiritual revelation or communication comes from any one of three sources: the Holy Spirit, the human soul, and the realm of evil spirits.⁵⁸

Visions and revelations which come from our human soul can be impressed by our sinful nature, and we can be deceived by our own mind. Just being in tune with God is not a sufficient test for visions and revelations. Many think they are close with God when in fact they are very far from him, their hearts being deceived. The soul of a man is driven by the heart, and Jeremiah says that the heart is “desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9). Even with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the human heart has the old nature and is susceptible to error and wickedness, so a man cannot depend upon his human soul to receive true revelations from God. We might as well have our conscience be our guide without the word of God as to have our soul be our guide.

Goll gives nine spiritual tests for determining whether a vision or revelation is valid. They are (1) Does the revelation edify, exhort, or console? (2) Is it in agreement with God’s Word? (3) Does it exalt Jesus Christ? (4) Does it have good fruit? (5) If it predicts a future event, does it come to pass? (6) Does the prophetic prediction turn people toward God or away from Him? (7) Does it produce liberty or bondage (8) Does it produce life or death? and (9) Does the Holy Spirit bear witness that it is true?⁵⁹

All of these nine tests seem very good; but if there are no open visions today, since the word of God is complete, then why are spiritual tests of this kind needed today? Of course, we believe they are not needed. Naturally, if there were visions and revelations today, they

⁵⁸Ibid, p. 73

⁵⁹Ibid, pp. 77-78

would need to agree with God's Word; but since there are no open visions and revelations today, then there is no need for these tests. Only those who believe in present-day visions and revelations must submit a list of tests for these visions and revelations. Those of us who believe in the word of God as the final authority for faith and practice have no need for these tests. This, then, would be a moot point for Cessationists.

The last part of Goll's book is unnecessary, also, because it deals with explaining Godly dreams, the symbolic language of dreams, the meaning of symbolic numbers, and the levels of supernatural visions. These are all moot points to Cessationists. Only those who believe in present-day visions and dreams need a nomenclature that is specific to that line of study; but since there are no visions and revelatory dreams today, there is no need to develop such a scheme of interpretation of these things.

SECTION FOUR

Solution Of The Problem

Chapter Six

Miracles In All Ages

It is important to notice that miracles have taken place in every age, and there is no reason to think that they do not occur in our own age.

If the usefulness of miracles in planting the church were sufficient reason for their occurrence in the Roman Empire in the third century, it is hard to deny that it may be sufficient reason for the repetition of them in, say, the Chinese Empire in the twentieth century.⁶⁰

Many of these miracles, however, were counterfeit due to the fact that many were accompanied by the bones of saints and the graves of Martyrs.

A considerable number of these were wrought by the relics of “the most glorious martyr, Stephen.” The bones of Stephen had come to light in Jerusalem in 415. Certain portions of them were brought into Africa and everywhere they were taken miracles were wrought.⁶¹

Now Augustine arrived in Africa in 388, and in 392 he speaks on the hypothesis that miracles no longer happened.

We perceive, he writes in the former treatise [*On The True Religion*], that our ancestors, by that measure of faith by which the ascent is made from temporal things to eternal, obtained visible miracles (for thus only could they do it); and through them it has been brought about that these should no longer be necessary for their descendants. For when the Catholic Church had been diffused and established through the whole world, these miracles were no longer permitted to continue in our time, lest the mind should always seek visible things, and the human race should be chilled by the customariness of the very things whose novelty had inflamed them.⁶² Augustine, then, thought that the miracles were ceased in his day; because he thought

⁶⁰Warfield, *op cit*, p. 35.

⁶¹Ibid, p. 38.

⁶²Ibid, p. 41

that, if the miracles continue as they did in the New Testament, they would become customary and would be taken for granted. This is what has happened in our own day: miracles are an everyday affair, a customary thing, a common event; and their extraordinary nature has been supplanted by mediocrity.

This is not to say that no miracles are taking place today, but any true miracles that are taking place are accomplished through the genuine, heartfelt, and fervent prayer of all saints. The contention here is not that miracles do not happen today but that they happen due to the need and intercession of common believers, not through the prayers and exercise of special people who have divine gifts to perform miracles.

“ . . . Therefore the Bridegroom has cautioned us, that we ought not to be deceived even by miracles.” Similarly the heathen and Christian miracles are pitted against one another, and decision between them sought on grounds lying outside the miracles themselves. “Which, then, can more readily be believed to work miracles? They who wish themselves to be reckoned gods by those on whom they work miracles, or those in God, or in Christ also as God? . . . Let us therefore believe those who speak the truth and work miracles.” It is not the empirical fact which counts—there were all too many empirical facts to count—but the truth lying behind the empirical fact.⁶³

The performing of miracles and the truth of scripture go hand in hand. If a visible miracle is performed, the subjectiveness of the miracle itself should not determine the validity of the miracle, but the truth that accompanies that miracle should determine whether the miracle is truly from God or whether it comes some other way.

Witness is given in every generation from New Testament times to our modern day of miracles that have consistently happened. However, these miracles must be tested by truth, not by the subjective evidence of simply seeing a miracle take place.

⁶³Ibid, p. 44.

There is also a false connection between the performing of miracles and sainthood. In Catholic doctrine no one may become a saint without the working of miracles, but this is an erroneous connection between the performing of miracles and sainthood.

Nor did there ever lack those who openly repudiated the notion that any necessary connection existed between saintliness and miracle-working. Richard Rolfe of Hampole, who also became posthumously a miracle-worker, was in his lifetime pronounced no saint because he wrought no miracles. His reply was to the effect that the inference was inconsequent. "Not all saints," he said, "do or have done miracles, either in life nor after death; nor do all reprobates either in life or after death lack miracles. . . ."⁶⁴

The New Testament miracles of the Apostolic age cannot be compared with the ecclesiastical miracles of the second and third centuries.

But the real grounds of the presumption against ecclesiastical miracles are never adverted to—namely that Scripture represents miracles to be attached to the Apostles, the vehicles of revelation, as their signs, miracles having occurred after their age; that on the testimony of history miracles accordingly ceased with the Apostolic age, and only after an interval are heard of again; that, when heard of again, they are the apparent progeny of the apocryphal miracles of the Gnostic and Ebionitic romances of the second and third centuries and not of the miracles of the New Testament.⁶⁵

We must, then, take the ecclesiastical miracles of the second and third centuries to be directly connected with the heathen miracles of the past, since they have no direct connection with the truth of Scripture or even the Apostles, which all miracles must have.

In many of these miracles illness was treated as being accompanied by sin and were caused by sin. Therefore, many did not get the physical treatment that would have made their lives more productive and may have even saved their lives.

⁶⁴Ibid, p. 50

⁶⁵Ibid, p. 57

Yes, there are miracles in all ages, but not all of these are true miracles. True miracles take place daily in the lives of believers, all believers; and there is no sanction of the lives of particular saints that God manifests to give them power to do miracles. Miracles take place in every age because of the power of every believer's faith and prayer. God answers to all believers and not simply to specially chosen men who are his "gift to the world" to perform miracles in order for multitudes to follow after that man and elevate him to religious heights which are commensurate with his attainments or his abilities to lead men or to persuade crowds.

If someone should state that he has seen a miracle (a thing that seems to be supernatural), no believer in Christ should question the validity of the miracle. The only thing for us to do is to evaluate the fact that there are false miracles, true miracles, and physical happenings which seem to be miracles. Christians, therefore, do not hold that all miracles are fake miracles but rather that miracles happen in every age, though God has not given the gift of miracles to any man in our modern day. True miracles can happen at the command of God and by his power, and artificial miracles (which seem to be much like genuine ones) may happen at any time. It is not for the Christian to judge whether each individual miracle is a true or false one but to understand that God is all-powerful and that he will do as he pleases concerning the performance of miracles. He may continue them or stop them at his will, and it is just as likely that he would stop them as it is that he would continue them.

However, Christians are to make a general judgment upon miracles that they see or of which they may become aware. Any miracle that is wrought by the immediate action of God will, first of all, have with it perfect wisdom, since God is not only omnipotent but also

omniscient. Secondly, there will with the miracle be a moral character, since God is ultimately moral in nature. When there is non-religion, wrong religion or superstition, the miracle is not genuine. Neither can a miracle be accepted as genuine which is surrounded by absurdity or wickedness. These are standards by which miracles can be judged; though, as has been noted, it is not the Christian's duty to judge every individual miracle.

Yes, there are miracles in our age, and every believer should expect to experience them to one degree or another. Believers, however, should not depend upon miracles to verify or vindicate their faith in a particular doctrine. Doctrine comes from the word of God, not from a man or woman who performs miracles. The truth as set down in Scripture is correct whether or not believers ever see another miracle, and the truth of Scripture will set us free from the clutches of false miracles in our day.

Since believers do not trust in miracles but in Christ and his word, they need not be judges of other men's miracles. They must simply trust the truths of Scripture, live their lives accordingly, and accept miracles as God performs them before the believers' very eyes, not trusting in the miracles but in the God who performs them. The believer must also be aware that others may follow miracles for truth and faith. Christians are bound to pray for these ones who follow after empty clouds and broken cisterns, that God will touch their lives, not necessarily with miracles, but with the knowledge of the truth.

Chapter Seven

The Cessation of Gifts

The subject of this dissertation is, not the cessation of miracles, but the cessation of the godly, supernatural gifts given to men to perform signs and wonders. It is apparent that in Apostolic times there were men who were blessed with gifts of tongues, prophecy, protection from poison, exorcism, healing, raising from the dead, punitive judgments, and general signs and wonders; and all of these were apostolic. Each one was done by an apostle or by someone who had the hands of an apostle laid on him or was in one way or another influenced by the apostles.

B. B. Warfield takes the performing of miracles by men into the first and second centuries assuming, it may be conjectured, that the apostles were all gone out of the world by this time and that no miracle-workers were present after the death of the apostles. In the time between the baptism in the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost and the dying of the last apostle there was a felt presence of the Holy Ghost that men have not had before or since, especially since many individual Christians had the ability to perform miracles from God.

In the New Testament we find that the extraordinary gifts were not the possession of all believers but special supernatural gifts to the few.

It is very clear from the record of the New Testament that the extraordinary charismata were not (after the very first days of the church) the possession of all Christians, but special supernatural gifts of the few.⁶⁶

⁶⁶Ibid, p. 235.

It is also apparent that the Apostles were the only people who were able and permitted to transfer these gifts to others by the laying on of hands. Philip baptized people of Samaria and did great wonders among them, but he could not give the Holy Ghost to them; so the Apostles were called to Samaria for that purpose.

There is only one primary thing that the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is to do today, and that is to preach the Gospel (Matt. 28:18-20). No one needs the supernatural gifts of the Apostles in order to do this work. Any ordinary Christian can do this. If God sees fit to perform a miracle while believers are preaching the Gospel, then so be it; but we should not expect miracles to come at any particular time or in any particular way. When believers see the miracles, they should praise the name of Jesus Christ and go on preaching the Gospel. This will suffice for the basic service of our Lord. This is the primary purpose for the Christian's existence, and grace and faith are the primary motivation for the work of the Lord, not miracles, signs and wonders.

Reformers have consistently shouted "Sola Scriptura;" and if this is so, then new revelations, miracles, signs and wonders are no longer necessary for the vindication of the word and work of God in our present age. Miracles and signs to vindicate the word of God were effectual in the first century alone and not in any subsequent century.

There is an end to the commandment, which infers that there is an end to prophetic utterances and performances of miracles. Paul said in 1 Tim. 1:5 "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." The commandments of the Lord are ever present with us, because they are laid down in the completed word of God. Therefore, no further miracles, signs and wonders are

necessary for us to have these commandments continued through perpetual revelations. The commandments (the Law) that were given to Moses did not need addendum, neither did God re-evaluate and re-inspire these words; because they were written by the very finger of God and have been preserved for us down to this day. If New Testament miracles are required in our day to prove that Jesus is who he says he is, then why do we not need to re-confirm the miracles of Moses (continuing to perform these exact miracles), in order to prove that Moses is the man the Scriptures claim him to be.

The word of God itself announces that nothing should be added to the word of God. Moses says in Deut. 4:2 “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.” The summary goal of the commandments is love.

The tendency of new prophets is to change the very word of God from what it is originally to a different message with a different emphasis. Modernism has crept into our religious society through this effect. In Modernism an incumbent expectation exists for new revelation above and beyond that which is stated in Scripture.

The true matter of concern in current debate becomes apparent when it is recognized that the assertion that “revelation has ceased” involves more than simply affirming a closed collection of authoritative, inspired writings. It means more comprehensively that no further inspired, authoritative communications come to people other than those that are found in the Bible.⁶⁷

The cessation of spiritual gifts implies the cessation of special revelation which brought us the infallible word of God. O. Palmer Robertson speaks of three aspects of this cessation: (1)

⁶⁷Robertson, O. Palmer, *The Final Word*, The Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle, PA, 2004, p. 56.

the “do not add” declaration, (2) The “end” in relation to the “means” of special revelation, and (3) evidence of the decline of the revelational gifts in the New Testament era. These shall now be delineated briefly.⁶⁸

The “Do Not Add” Declarations. Once the ten commandments were uttered and eventually engraved upon two tablets of stone, and once they had once been reiterated in Deuteronomy Chapter Five, there was no further addition to them, but they were set as the approved commandments from God to his children. Not even the Lord himself would add a word to these commandments.

But even though Moses himself referred to the long sequence of prophets who would succeed him (Deut. 18:18), he now declares that no one must add to or subtract from the commands he is now delivering.⁶⁹

The adding to or taking away of the word of God as it was spoken to Moses was an indication of a false prophet, the subject which is introduced in Deuteronomy 13:1-18 after Moses’ speaking the command that no one was to add to or take away from the words God had given to him. Future revelations were to come continually in units of completed revelations which were not to be changed.

When Moses gave the Spirit of God to the 70 elders (Numbers 11), they prophesied, whereupon they became instruments of divine revelation and spoke God’s word even as Moses did; but they did not append or abbreviate the words of God that had already been spoken through the prophet, Moses. Neither did the 70 elders continue forever in their

⁶⁸Ibid, p. 70.

⁶⁹Ibid, p. 63

speaking the revealed word of God.

Each unit of inspiration came piece by piece throughout history until we come to the last revelation given to John the Apostle. At that time, John made a similar command that no one was to append or abbreviate the word of God (Rev. 22:18-19).

But now the aged John, appropriately regarded as the last survivor of the apostolic band, writes of the glories of the Christ not only as he saw him on earth, but as he was privileged to see him in heaven. Here now is the ultimate vision of the glorified Son of God to be experienced by man in his present state. Of this final revelation of Christ, the goal of all revelation, nothing is to be added to it and nothing can be subtracted from it. Any modification of this his splendour, any subtraction from this his glory will have eternal consequences. All the awesome curses of John's final revelation of the future will fall on the presumptuous one who dares even to attempt to add to his glory. For fallible human efforts to supplement his honour by their imagined insights can only pervert the perfections of this inspired, authoritative picture of the glorified Christ.⁷⁰

As each of these revelations was given by God, each succeeding revelation was given to support and to supplement previous revelations; but when the final revelation came through John the Apostle, there was a finality to it, because, when it was given, God had been revealed in his fulness in Jesus Christ (Col. 2:9). Any further "revelation" would be superfluous, unnecessary, and ultimately blasphemous. Any further "revelation" would only diminish the effectiveness of the final revelation given to the Apostle John in the book of Revelation. Besides, the book of Hebrews makes very clear (Heb. 1:1-2) that, when Jesus was manifested in the flesh, died and rose again from the dead, he was speaking in the last days; and, when that Revelation of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:1) was finished, the whole revelation was written, and no future revelations are expected or needed.

⁷⁰Ibid, p. 65-66.

The End In Relation To The Means Of Special Revelation. There are some future expectations of God's children subsequent to the final revelation of the word of God, but this is in the area of Christian growth and blessings, not in the continuation of special gifts that bring about special revelation.

As has already been noticed, the subjective goal of all revelation is love, which is stated best in 1 Corinthians Chapter 13. "Love never fails" (1 Cor. 13:8a). There is a comparison here of the special gifts given by God and the love that is its prescribed goal. Once the glories of Jesus Christ have been made manifest (as in the book of Revelation), then there is no more need of special revelation. Love (revelation's ultimate goal) has been reached, and the gifts have ceased. Now we live in the fruit of the Spirit rather than in the gifts of the Spirit.

If the children of Israel did not mourn over the fact that the manna stopped upon their entrance into the Promised Land, neither should we be disheartened or forlorn upon the cessation of the spiritual gifts that have served their purpose and have brought us to a higher level of spiritual truth and confidence. Just as Israel entered a land flowing with milk and honey, so have we entered into the land of nourishment and growth through the word of God, the final word, the complete, the plenary word of God. Believers now can look forward to what is coming in their future rather than looking back to see how much like the infant church they can be. Phil. 3:14 "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Evidence of the Decline of the Revelational Gifts in the New Testament Era. The evidence of the decline of the "confirmatory gifts" is seen in that the Great Commission implies, yea infers, that the spread of the Gospel will be done in stages: from Jerusalem, to

Judea, then to Samaria and to the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8).

As the gospel passes from Judea to Samaria, the confirming gifts are manifested. Then once more as the gospel crosses over massive barriers and enters into the vast world of the Gentiles the manifestation of these extraordinary gifts confirms the blessing of God. Since no further distinctive stages of advancement are left in the processes of redemptive history, no further externalized manifestations of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit should be expected.⁷¹

Contrasting the earlier and later writings of the Apostle Paul will also give an indication that the revelatory gifts are to diminish and were to come to an end at the close of the Apostolic age. In his earlier writings, Paul spoke much about these special gifts, regarding them as incumbent upon believers to make use of and to regard as presently active.

Paul therefore employs his apostolic authority to instruct the church that it should not despise this new manifestation of the revelational gift of prophecy.⁷²

Believers were to “Despise not prophesyings” (1 Thess. 5:20). They were encouraged to use the gifts and to desire the gifts. But in his later writings he speaks not only fewer words regarding these special gifts but also uses a different manner of words in regard to these gifts.

Paul speaks of “Holding forth the word of life” (Phil. 2:16), Those to whom Paul was writing in his later writings were to preach the word (2 Tim. 4:2), and they were to encourage them to commit what they had learned to faithful men so that they in turn may teacher others, also (2 Tim. 2:2).

There was a deposit of truth known as “the faith” for which believers were to contend

⁷¹Ibid, p. 73.

⁷²Ibid, p. 74

(Jude 1:3)—this rather than expecting to receive special revelation from God. Their minds and hearts were going back now to the word of God that had already been written at the hand of Paul and others in order to be sound in the faith. The work of inspiration and revelation were completed in the Apostles and their companions, and the latter believers were not to receive any revelation that was not directly connected with the Apostles themselves.

Preachers are now to teach this deposit of truth to their members and to God-called preachers and teachers that they may continue to teach them to their children and to future generations, the word of God extending itself through final truth in order that the Gospel may be preached, doctrine may be believed, and churches may be strengthened in the final truths of God's word.

Certainly some commandments from God have ceased to be compulsory for us today. The symbolic commandments of the Old Testament were all delivered from our requirement by the death of Jesus Christ. Also, such verses as Exodus 23:19, where it is stated "Thou shalt not see the a kid in his mother's milk." This and other passage like it are not New Testament requirement.

Likewise, some new covenant principles are temporary as well.

The same principle holds for some commands in the new covenant era. Phases and stages in the development of the new covenant may not be as dramatically different from one another as in the case of the old covenant periods. Yet differences clearly exist. At one point Jesus sent his disciples out and told them to take no provisions with them (Luke 10:4). Later he gave them virtually the opposite instructions (cf. Luke 22:36).⁷³

⁷³Ibid, p. 79.

So the revelatory gifts of the early New Testament times have ceased in our day. Some may object to this because of the plain references in Scripture that they were not to forbid to speak in tongues and that they were not to forbid prophesyings, but is it not just as feasible that God can administrate his purpose in any way that he so desires? If God desires gifts today, he certainly can use them today, but the tenor of Scripture is expressly against this method. One can see with immediate clarity that the revelatory gifts dwindled in the New Testament times and have ceased by the end of the Apostolic age.

Objection may also be made that the heathen need the miracles to verify the Gospel in them so that they may believe. But God has never saved people through sensational means but has always saved them by his grace through faith in him. Even Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:6). If the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), as well as the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, is not sufficient for the work of God to save sinners, then the Bible is ineffective in itself to save—it is by hearing the word of God that men are saved today, not by the manifestation of supernatural miracles (Rom. 10:17).

Chapter Eight

An Explanation of First Corinthians Chapter 13

One passage of Scripture that has caused much debate about the subject at hand is First Corinthians 13. In this chapter this section of Scripture will be considered. Not everyone will be satisfied with the conclusions reached in this chapter, but be that as it may; this Scripture must be handled to give a thorough investigation of the subject here.

In this chapter Paul is speaking of the endurance of love. Love will survive all things. It shall never pass away or be done away, this in contrast to some of the special gifts given to the apostles and others.

. . . but this grace never fails as to its principle; it is an immortal and an incorruptible seed; it lives throughout the most violent temptations, as in Peter; and under the greatest desertions and sorest afflictions, still there is an affection for God; Christ is he whom such a soul loves; and the saints are the excellent in the earth, in whom is all his delight: and it also continues as to its use, and will do so, when faith and hope will lose theirs, even in the other world; for faith will be changed into vision, and hope into enjoyment; but love will be the same, only act in a higher sphere, and to a greater degree, and in a perfect manner.⁷⁴

But the immediate context of 1 Cor. 13:8-11 is not the supremacy of love, rather it is the cessation of certain gifts subsequent to the time of Paul's writing here.

The primary purpose of 1 Cor. 13:8-13 is not to focus on the cessation of spiritual gifts. On the other hand, though the emphasis is still on giving further proof of the supremacy of love, there is a definite statement on the cessation of certain gifts. In fact, Fee says, "The greater urgency of this present argument . . . is with the 'only-for-the-present' nature of the gifts, not with the permanence of love—although that is always lingering near the surface. Love is scarcely mentioned (vv. 8a, 13 only); the fact that the gifts will pass away forms the heart of the entire argument (vv. 8-12)." Interpreters may disagree about the time of the cessation, but no one doubts the

⁷⁴Gill, John, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, (E-Sword electronic Bible), 11/1/2008.

statement about the cessation.⁷⁵

Paul then compares love with three other things: prophecies, tongues, and knowledge. Prophecies will fail (Gr. KATARGEO). This word for “fail” means to “render useless.” Prophecies, then, will be rendered useless in time. This is special revelation of the word of God which the Apostles and their companions wrote as they were led by the Holy Spirit. This special prophesying will fail or be rendered useless at some point in the future. This happened when the last word of the Bible was written and there was no more need for special revelation from God in the form of the written word. The Bible has now been completed, and the world now has the completed word of God in hand for perpetual reference.

Tongues will cease (Gr. PAUO). The word “cease” here is the word to stop or to come to an end. Tongues will eventually come to an end—there will be no more speaking in tongues, no need for this as a special gift for revelatory purposes to vindicate the writers and preachers of New Testament times. This word “cease” is in the Future Middle Indicative and indicates that tongues will cease of themselves, or they shall make themselves cease. So, as a matter of events that come by natural cause and by God’s providence, tongues will come naturally to an end. As the time comes when tongues are no longer needed to manifest God to the Gentile world by the Jews, the need for tongues naturally ceased, came to an end, were verifiably gone.

Knowledge will vanish away (Gr. KATARGEO). Knowledge will be rendered useless at a time in the future. This is special knowledge, revelatory knowledge that only the Apostles and

⁷⁵McDougall, Donald G., *Cessationism In 1 Cor. 13:8-12*, TMSJ14/2, Fall, 2003, p. 184-185.

a few others had—only those who wrote the Scriptures. When the Scriptures were completed, this knowledge was no longer needed; only the knowledge of the Scriptures themselves is needed today. This is not common knowledge, because common knowledge will never vanish away. We know the Lord now, but one day we shall know even as we are known—“but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Cor. 13:12). So, common Christian knowledge will not vanish away even in the coming eternity. So, there must be a special knowledge that will vanish away. This is the special knowledge had by the Apostles and others to write down the impeccable words of God as he inspired writers to write and as they were led along by the Holy Spirit until that time when the word of God was finished and this special knowledge was needed no more, and it vanished away.

We know in part, and we prophesy in part (Gr. MEROS). The knowledge that God gave the Apostles and others to write the Scriptures was “in part.” It was not the complete word of God but was a section of the whole body of Scripture. Paul did not receive all of the inspired word of God from Genesis to Revelation. He received only a part of it. Likewise, other writers received only a part of the word of God. And as long as the word of God was still in “a part,” then no one could know the completeness of it. Not until John wrote the book of Revelation was the word of God complete, and a warning was given not to add to this revelation or to take away from the revelation (the book). Their knowledge was in part just like their prophesying was in part. Moses prophesied; Jeremiah prophesied, David prophesied, and others did likewise; but all of these writers prophesied in part, waiting for the coming of that which was perfect.

That which is perfect shall come. The word of God is known as the “perfect law of liberty:” James 1:25 “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.” Likewise here in 1 Corinthians 13:10 Paul speaks of “that which is perfect.” This Greek word is TELEIOS, and it means “complete.” So, when that which is complete is come, then that which is in part will be done away. When the word of God, the perfect word of God, is come, is written, is finished, then that which is “in part” (prophecies, tongues, and knowledge) shall be done away or shall stop and be rendered useless.

Many think this is the Perfect One, Jesus Christ; but this is not so. Grant it, Jesus was made perfect by the things that he suffered (Heb. 5:9), but every believer is also made perfect (1 Cor. 2:6). This is not speaking of the one person who is perfect, since all believers are made perfect in Christ, but it is speaking of “that” which is perfect, a neuter pronoun. This is the very word of God which comes to completeness when the last word of the New Testament has been written at the hand of John the Apostle.

At that time the things which are in part shall be done away or will be rendered useless. Prophecies shall fail, tongues shall cease, and knowledge shall vanish away. This prophecy is the special prophecy of the word of God. These tongues are the special manifestation of tongues for the vindication of the word of God to the Gentiles, and this knowledge is the special knowledge that is given to those who wrote the Scriptures.

1 Corinthians 13:11 is a transitional verse between the verses preceding it and the ones following it. We are now “transitioning” from being a child to growing up to be a man. That is the current condition of Paul as he lives as a believer in Christ. He has put away childish

things and has grown into a man.

The word “now” in verse 12 indicates the condition of believers at the time Paul is writing this. He is speaking of living this side of Heaven. At this time he sees through a glass darkly: he cannot see the perfections of the future state of men as they transcend the imperfections of this life and take up residence in that place that God has prepared for them that love him (1 Cor. 2:9).

Notice that Paul uses different terminology here than in the previous verses. He spoke earlier of “that which is perfect shall come.” Now he speaks of “then face to face;” so he is not speaking of the same thing here. He is speaking of seeing Jesus face to face. He sees through a glass darkly, as in a steel or copper mirror. The word “darkly” has to do with seeing obscurely or understanding as a riddle. Paul did not understand everything he wrote in Scripture, even as the prophets of old did not understand their writings. Even today we do not understand the Bible as we ought. There are some “dark sayings” to us, and they will not be revealed unto us until we see Christ face to face. Paul now knows (GNOSIS) in part, but then (when Jesus returns) he shall know (EPIGINOSKO) even as he is known (EPIGINOSKO). This “epiginosko” is a fuller knowledge, a thorough acquaintance with the knowledge that Jesus has. Believers will understand things from God’s viewpoint rather than from our current viewpoint. What a glory that will be!

In verse 13 we understand that three things remain: faith, hope and charity, only these three. These dominate over prophecies, tongues, and knowledge. When love has been brought to fruition in our Christian lives, it is the completion of the obedience of the law: Rom. 13:10 “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

Later only love will remain, for it is the greatest of the three. Our faith will turn into sight, our hope will be seen and will no longer be hope; but love will remain forever. Love is the crowning principle of all that Christ stands for, all that our work encompasses, and that which will sustain the currents of the worldly sea through which we must sail each day.

Chapter Nine

The Baptism And Fullness Of The Spirit

In Ephesians 5:18 we read: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;” This fermented wine in Eph. 5:18 is a liquid, and it is ingested. Likewise, the Spirit of God is like water, also. Isaiah 44:3 says, “For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:” Let us consider the filling or fullness of the Holy Spirit in contrast to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. A great difference is apparent in the scriptures concerning these two things.

The form of the imperative (present tense), as often pointed out, accents that what is commanded is to be done continuously or repeatedly, not just once. This, by the way, is an indication that the filling of the Spirit is not identical with the baptism of the Spirit. Unlike the latter in its once-for-all occurrence . . . , being filled with the Spirit is an ongoing process of activity in the Christian life. The command of verse 18 may be variously paraphrased: “be continually full of the Spirit,” “be filled with the Spirit again and again,” “constantly be seeking the fuller outworking of the Spirit in your life.”⁷⁶

The Contrast

The great contrast between the baptism of the Spirit of God and the filling of the Spirit of God is evident in Acts 2:2-4 and is important to this study.

⁷⁶Gaffin, *op cit*, 32-33.

The Baptism of the Spirit

Notice Acts 2:2-3:

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

Now notice Acts 10:44-45:

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a physical event. There was a physical sound from heaven, the sound of a rushing mighty wind, and the house was physically filled with the wind. There were physical manifestations of tongues like as of fire on each believer. Therefore, the Holy Spirit physically came into their midst and baptized these believers. Baptism is a literal immersion, for the word baptize means “to immerse, to submerge.”⁷⁷ The believers were literally immersed in the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

The Filling of the Spirit

The Bible says in Acts 2:4 “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance,” and in Acts 10:46 “For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.” Since we noticed in Acts 2:4 that believers spoke in other tongues because of the *filling* of the Holy Ghost, and since Peter says that the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles "as on us in the beginning" (Acts 11:15), we

⁷⁷Strong's Lexicon on Online Bible, Verson 2.10.09

assume these Gentiles were also filled with the Spirit, the filling being different from the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

There is also a contrast shown in Eph. 5:18 between being drunk with wine and filled with the Spirit of God. In being drunk with wine, people become incoherent, loose and fancy-free. A drunk man cannot drive a car effectively. A drunk man cannot control his urges and desires for certain things and may show himself a fool in the presence of others. A drunk man cannot think straight and makes foolish decisions. He is rebellious according to Deut. 21:20: “And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard.” He goes into poverty according to Prov. 23:21 “For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.” He has the mouth of a fool according to Prov. 26:9 “As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools.”

In being filled with the Spirit a person becomes sound in his mind, obedient, self-controlled, and has clear thinking. Notice Mark 5:15 “And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.”

This contrast is like two opposing forces: one goes one way; the other goes the opposite way. To be drunk with wine means to travel away from and against the Lord. To be filled with the Spirit of God is to travel toward God and in agreement with the Lord. This should be the mind of every believer in Jesus Christ.

The Greek present imperative shows that in Ephesians 5:18 the believer is to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit.

It is well known that in the Greek language, if the imperative is aorist, it refers to a single action, while if it is present the action is continuous. Thus, when at the wedding in Cana Jesus said, "fill the jars with water" (Jn. 2:7), the aorist imperative shows that he meant them to do it once only. The present imperative "be filled with the Spirit," on the other hand, indicates not some dramatic or decisive experience which will settle the issue for good, but a continuous appropriation.⁷⁸

The Confusion

The first confusion is, and the charismatics say, that signs and wonders must follow the filling of the Holy Spirit as it did on the Day of Pentecost and as it did in the house of Cornelius. Signs and wonders do not necessarily follow the filling of the Holy Spirit. Of all the groups who received the Spirit in the book of Acts, only three are said to have spoken in tongues (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-46; 19:1-6).

The second confusion is that baptism and filling are the same thing. To say that the baptism in the Spirit of God and the filling of the Spirit of God are the same is incorrect, because baptism is literal; filling is spiritual. Those who were "baptized into Moses" were literally covered over as they crossed the Red Sea. The water was walled on both sides above their heads, and the cloud which followed them was above. They were not filled unto Moses, but baptized unto Moses.

The third confusion is that baptism and/or filling of the Spirit makes a person Perfect. But notice Phil 3:12: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

Because of this confusion many today believe that the Holy Spirit has come in waves. The

⁷⁸Stott, John R. W., *The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit*, Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1972, p. 48.

first wave was on the Day of Pentecost when the Spirit came upon the believers there. The second wave was supposed to be at the beginning of the Pentecostal Movement. This movement began in the very early 1900's with the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, California. The third wave began with the Charismatic Movement, which began somewhere around 1960 with an Episcopal Bishop named Dennis Bennett.⁷⁹

The Complement

The filling of the Holy Spirit complements our salvation experience. The command to be filled with the Holy Spirit is to Christians, not the lost world. There is no command in Scripture for anyone to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. The tense in the Greek for being filled is present imperative, which means that we must continue to be filled as we do when we drink water. We are to be "dipsomaniacs," being thirsty all the time for God's word. The filling of the Holy Spirit complements in these ways:

Our Gait

To gait means to walk along in a certain way. The Lord begins our walk with him when we trust him as our Savior. It will be our nature and character to follow him as he walks along with us. The Spirit of God comes when we are saved, and he guides our walking as we go on our way. We are given the Holy Spirit at salvation, and he will be our companion all along the way. He will never leave us.

⁷⁹Bennett, Dennis J., *In Touch and Emotionally Free*, 11/20/2008 from <http://www.emotionallyfree.org/dennis.htm>

Our Growth

We read in 2 Peter 3:18 “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” After we are saved, we must desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby (1 Peter 2:2). Rev. 21:6 tells us “And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” We must be constantly thirsty in order that we may submit ourselves to the Spirit of God and be filled by him. Many believers stop growing shortly after they have begun to walk the Christian walk. That is because they do not remain thirsty for the things of God; and the Holy Spirit will not fill a heart that is not thirsty for him.

Our Gusto

As we go along, we want to do the best we can for Christ. As we grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, we become more perfect all the time. Matt 5:48 commands “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” In Phil. 3:13-14 we notice this: “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” We will never be so full of the Spirit of God that we will not need to be filled again; because when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we use that unction that he gives us to work for him, and we continue to be thirsty for something more from Jesus Christ. We should be constantly endeavoring to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect.

The Chasm

There is a great chasm that comes when one is saved by the grace of God. The Spirit, according to the measure of our growth, separates us from the world.

First, we are separated from heresy: 2 Thess. 3:14-15 “And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”

Second, we are separated from the world: James 1:27 “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

Third, we are separated from rebellious Christians: 1 Cor 5:11 “But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.”

The Command

This command is for every believer "be ye filled with the Spirit. There is no command in scripture to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. This is not something that comes automatically. We must be submissive to God's word, because the word of God is what the Spirit uses to bless us. You cannot be filled with the Spirit if you are not saved. Be a "dipsomaniac"-- always be thirsty for God's word. Be not drunk with wine, but be ye filled with the Spirit. John 7:37 encourages us: “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.”

Chapter Ten

Tests for False Prophets

The Miracles Must Be Done Through Genuine Faith

Most miracle workers today will admit that their signs and wonders must be through faith and not of the works of the law, but most have a flaw in that reasoning. The flaw is that, although they on the one hand teach that signs and wonders are done through faith, on the other hand many teach that a person is saved by his works. Notice the following scripture:

Galatians 3:5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

We understand by this scripture that the ministering must be done through the Spirit, and the working of miracles must be done, not by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith. Now, if a man has not been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8), how can he by faith do miracles?

Many today will teach salvation by grace through faith without any problem, but then they will teach that a man can lose his salvation, which is in essence teaching salvation by the works of the law. A person who believes he can be saved by grace through faith and then lose his salvation by works is a person who has no genuine faith. Notice Galatians 3:3 “Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”

It is also evident from the things we see in those who claim these extraordinary gifts, they do not teach the truth about salvation. They teach that salvation is either by the efforts of men or that men must keep themselves; whereas the Scriptures are very plain upon this subject: We are saved by grace and not of works. The Bible also says that if

anyone brings another gospel, “let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:9).⁸⁰

Gifts Came By Only Two Ways

The first way that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were given in the New Testament was directly from God. Remember that on the day of Pentecost the gifts of the Holy Spirit were given directly to the disciples from God himself. These were immediate, not intermediate.

Christ, while here on earth, gave His disciples power to perform miracles. On the day of Pentecost and at the house of Cornelius, when the “baptism in the Holy Spirit” did take place, these extraordinary gifts were given directly from God.⁸¹

The second way in which the gifts were given was through the laying on of the hands of the apostles.

All other instances when gifts were given, they were given by the laying on of hands by the apostles. No other person could do this. Read the book of Acts carefully, and you will observe this; especially, the 8th chapter that shows Philip able to perform miracles but not able to give the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Peter and John came and did give gifts to those there.⁸²

A personal experience by C. B. Hedstrom may evidence the problem with today’s preachers who believe that these gifts belong to our age. Speaking to a faith-healer, he said:

. . . we shall go up to my mother’s where we have a blind sister, an adopted girl that came and blessed our home when only two years old. She has been totally blind for some fifteen years. My saintly mother will shout and the praises of God as she never did before when you lay your hands on this saintly sister of mine and her eyesight is restored. Oh, what a time we shall have today!” And in happy anticipation tears of joy rolled down my cheeks. Just as we stopped he said, “Wait a minute.” “Wait for what?” I asked. “Oh,” he answered, “I don’t believe I possess those gifts.” .

⁸⁰Sadler, Carl, *The Baptist In The Holy Spirit*, Kentucky Mountains Baptist Schools, Booneville, Kentucky, n.d., pg. 5

⁸¹Ibid, pg. 5

⁸²Ibid, pg. 5

. . . “You know just as well as I do that this portion of God’s Word is not for our day; that it was fulfilled in the days of the apostles and was a historic event the same as Calvary and Pentecost.”⁸³

Guilt By Association

Many modern-day charismatic organizations have associated themselves with organizations that teach false doctrine.

The Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship has now become a militant unity of Vatican ecumenism—unity with the Church of Rome. Cheers of approval like those from Philadelphia, will intensify as Roman Catholic personnel and material continue to be read, heard and accepted at the Fellowship’s rallies, world congresses and participation in countless meetings with Pentecostal-Charismatic groups around the globe.⁸⁴

The Bible asks in Amos 3:3 “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” As a matter of fact, they cannot. If a charismatic church associates with the Roman Catholic Church, then there must be some kind of agreement between them. The only way that can be is for one of them to dispense with one or more doctrines. The trend today is to ignore basic and fundamental doctrines in order to agree on more subjective matters. Since the Catholic Church also believes in and performs signs and wonders, that is the ground on which the charismatic churches agree with the Roman Church.

⁸³Hedstrom, C. B., *Is There Healing In The Atonement?*, Rev. A. D. Muse, Louisville, Kentucky, 1938, p. 24.

⁸⁴Ewin, Wilson, *The Spirit of Pentecostal-Charismatic Unity*, Bible Baptist Church, Nashua, New Hampshire, n.d., p. 16.

The Test Of Lying Wonders

In his book, Mark W. Fenison gives six tests that must be passed in order for signs and wonders to be real. These tests are listed below with scripture references.

The first test is that of lying wonders. Fenison remarks:

The very same terms used to describe the power, signs and wonders of Christ and the Apostles are also used to describe those whose power comes from Satan. However, there is one significant word added above that is not found to describe the wonders of Christ and the Apostles. That one term is “LYING.” Why does the Apostle describe Satanic miracles as “LYING”? Is it because they are not true miracles but are fake, or is it because they are authentic miracles but they are used to confirm “lies” or doctrines of demons and thus characterize prophets who speak falsely?⁸⁵

The two scriptures used to support this test are as follows:

2 Thess. 2:9 – Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.

1 Tim. 4:1 – 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.

The miracles that some people perform can be very real, but the doctrine may be false. Satan is the great counterfeiter; they mimic God’s prophets. Rather than using signs and wonders to confirm God’s word, modern-day prophets do miracles so that people will believe what they teach regardless whether the teaching agrees with the word of God.

⁸⁵Fenison, Mark W., *Some Non-Prophet Organizations*, Grace Baptist Publication, Florence, Kentucky, n.d., pp 21.

The Test Of Fulfilled Prophecy

In order to be a real prophet, a person must speak the words of God and teach the truth of God; but the second test is that all prophecies must be fulfilled.

If Benny Hinn claims to speak prophetically in the name of the Lord and predicts that Fidel Castro will die before the year 2000 and it does not come to pass, this is proof that he is a false prophet.⁸⁶

Deut. 18:21-22 – And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

The Test of Falsehoods In Visions

Visions and dreams are proclaimed by modern-day miracle workers. Some have visions, or dreams, of prophetic events; and some say that they can by dreams and visions see into the hearts of others and tell their attitudes and even their thoughts.

If Ellen G. White claims by dreams or visions to have seen some of the people visiting her conference will be alive at the coming of Christ and others will be objects of destruction by the last plagues in the book of Revelation and yet they all die previous to the Lord's coming, this is proof she is a false prophet. "I was shown the company present at the Conference. Said the angel: 'Some food for worms, some subjects of the seven last plagues, some will be alive and remain upon the earth to be translated at the coming of Jesus' (Testimonies, Vol. 1, p. 131 by Ellen G. White).⁸⁷

The Test of Plagiarism

Jeremiah 23:25, 30 – I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. . . . Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.

⁸⁶Ibid, p. 24

⁸⁷Ibid, p. 25

God gives prophets his own words, but some modern-day prophets steal their words from other and claim that they received them from God.

For example, it has been documented that Ellen G. White, Kenneth Hagin and Joseph Smith, all plagiarized from others and that most of their written works, which they claim was given to them by God, were stolen from other writers. Even SDA scholars now admit that many of Ellen G. White's writings she claimed that God gave her were as much as 90% copied directly from other writers.⁸⁸

The Test Of Good Fruit

Notice that Matthew 7 :15-16 tell us "Beware of false prophets . . . Ye shall know them by their fruits." Many prophets of our day do not bear good fruit but evil fruit.

If a person is characterized by lying, immorality and dishonest business practices, then, obviously any claim to speak for God must be seriously suspect. For example, there is sufficient documented evidence that Joseph Smith, Charles Taze Russell, Ameer Sempleton McPherson, and a host of others claiming to speak God's Word were morally deficient in character.⁸⁹

With these practitioners moving among society in our modern day, there is no wonder that there is so much confusion among "believers" today. Every Christian should have a holy and separated life dedicated to the Lord not only to be obedient to God but also to keep him from the error of false prophets.

The Test Of Acknowledging Paul's Words

1 Corinthians 14:37 – If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

⁸⁸Ibid, p. 26

⁸⁹Ibid, p. 28

Many modern-day prophets do not particularly like the apostle Paul. They say he did not mean what he said in some passages and that some of what he wrote was not inspired of the Holy Spirit. They also refuse to obey his words in 1 Cor. 14:26-27, 31 when Paul gives the order of speaking in an unknown tongue. They do not obey this order: (1) no more than three in a service, (2) no more than one speaking at a time, (3) none if there were no interpreter, and (4) no women speaking publicly in the church service.

The Pentecostal movement as a whole consistently violates all these inspired commands of Paul. Here is clear evidence they are neither spiritual nor are they true prophets of God.⁹⁰

The Test Concerning Christ's Person

1 John 4:1-3 – Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

The Mormons teach that Satan is the brother of Jesus and that Jesus is no more God than any Mormon can ultimately achieve to be. The Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Jesus was not God the Son in the flesh but a created being. The United Pentecostals go to the opposite extreme and claim that the only God is Jesus Christ and that there are no distinct, literal, and separate Persons designated as "The Father" or "The Spirit."

The Word of Faith movement claims that any believer can be as much God as Jesus was God. Kenneth Hagin said: "In the new birth, God imparts His very nature, substance, and being to our human spirits . . . every born again man is an incarnation . . . the believer is as much an incarnation as Jesus of Nazareth . . . That's who we are;

⁹⁰Ibid, p. 31

we're Christ" (D. R. McConnell, *A Different Gospel*, Updated Edition, Hendrickson Publishers, 1988, p. 120).⁹¹

These are not tests that may be done one or two at a time, but these are tests that must be passed in their entirety. One may not pick and choose which ones to pass; every prophet must pass every test.

I pray that every believer will take these tests to heart and by them be able to test the proclaimed prophets of our day to find them false prophets. A joy beyond description will be experienced by those who can identify and avoid these false prophets.

⁹¹Ibid, pg. 32

SECTION FIVE

The Practical Application

Chapter Eleven

Teach The People

Peter spoke tersely concerning feeding the flock. First, the Lord had spoken to him concerning his own duty of feeding the sheep—teaching them the things of God.

John 21:17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Then Peter instructed others to feed the flock of God. Here he speaks of the local churches in which the truth of God is taught, and that truth must continue to be preached throughout the generations until Jesus comes again.

1 Peter 5:2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

In the second chapter of Dr. Lee Roberson's book on the Holy Spirit, he refers to a magazine article in which twenty men and women who have most to do with shaping our lives in the last fifty years were listed.

In a recent issue of a weekly magazine, there is an article on the question, "Which twenty men and women had the most to do with shaping our lives in the last fifty years?" The list begins with the name of Winston Churchill and ends with the Wright Brothers. In the entire list there is not one who can be termed an outstanding Christian leader. In the list of twenty at least eight of them are atheists.⁹²

⁹²Roberson, Lee, *Be Filled With The Spirit!*, Highland Park Baptist Church, Cattanooga, Tennessee, n.d., p. 19.

The world, along with most professed Christians, has taken its lead and has admired and followed worldly leaders. Why is this so? It is because the Holy Spirit is not their primary leader for life and faith. The necessity, therefore, to continually teach the members of local churches the importance of a right paradigm for believing and following the Holy Spirit is paramount and will be rewarded in a stronger and more efficient and active church.

The difference between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the filling of the Holy Spirit should be stressed, and positive results should be realized through the preaching and teaching of this important subject in our churches.

Dr. Roberson mentions some negatives concerning the filling of the Holy Spirit, and this writer will use his list and deviate from it a little in order to show the difference between a person who is filled with the Spirit of God and a person who is not.⁹³

Those Not Filled With Holy Spirit	Those Filled With The Holy Spirit
Restless	Rest (Matt. 11:28)
Discontent	Contentment (1 Tim. 6:6)
Fruitlessness	Much Fruit (John 15:15)
Powerlessness	Power (John 1:12; Acts 1:8)
No Song	Singing Praises (Eph. 5:19-20)
No Place Of Service	Place of Service (Philip: Acts 8:5, 26)
No Peace	Peace (Phil. 4:7)

As a result of these negatives and positives concerning the filling of the Holy Spirit, each pastor and teacher should feel the necessity of spending time teaching on the subject of the

⁹³Ibid, See pages 29-34

Holy Spirit, not only because of the interest that many will have on the subject, but also because there is so much error taught concerning the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our Comforter and friend. It should be extremely important for every believer to believe the truth concerning him.

Many pastors and teachers fear mentioning the Holy Spirit in their lessons simply because of the many different views on the Holy Spirit, but the fact that there are many different ideas about him should spurn us to a deeper study of the subject along with a willingness to challenge others regarding the truth of the Holy Spirit.

Pastors could and should take time to preach a series of messages on the Holy Spirit in order to keep their members informed about what is going on in the religious world regarding the teaching about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will be a great blessing to all who obey him and who surrender to him as their Comforter, Intercession, and friend.

Chapter Twelve

Live The Life

Besides teaching the people, the next important thing in the practical application concerning the Holy Spirit is to live the life. A person may hear the words of the pastor or the Sunday School teacher, but can he actually see the action of his words in that person's daily life? The Bible says in James 2:20 "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" The old expression is "Actions speak louder than words."

If a Christian, for example, does not carry his Bible to church, those noticing his church attendance will think that his Bible is of little importance to him. By the same token, if a person sits in the church pew with a Bible sitting on his lap or by his side and never opens the Bible for reference while the preacher is preaching, then he is showing others that his Bible is of very little importance. Now, I know that we all as God's people know in our minds how important the Bible is to each believer, so should we not, then, manifest that knowledge by using the Bible more often and referring to it during the preaching service?

Preachers' and teachers' lives should be clean from every worldly vice. It is not popular today to live a clean life, but the word of God demands it; and we can be greater witnesses for the Lord and have a greater influence on others in a godly way if we will keep our lives clean. James 4:8 "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."

The Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier, and he will give us intellectual endowments for the purpose of teaching others, and he will give us "more grace" to take up more challenging work

for our Master and Lord. He will keep us from temptations. He will guide us through life, and he will assure us of his sealing and power to deliver from this weak and temporal life. Christ lived for us; now we must live for him.

The Holy Spirit changes the human personality to such an extent that, not only is it said that he can learn more and in a quicker manner but it is also known that the personality of each born-again person has been changed.

Dr. Adam Clarke, the Commentator, who was declared by the eminent Joseph Parker, of London, to have been the greatest scholar of a thousand years, has a striking paragraph in a book, now out of print, called *Hints To Preachers*. This paragraph has been quoted and vouched for by a very able and devout student of the writings of Dr. Adam Clarke, and is as follows: "One who is filled with the Holy Spirit may acquire more knowledge in any given branch of learning in one month, than he or another of like calibre and equal application can acquire in twelve months without the Holy Spirit."⁹⁴

Four items are mentioned in this same book as to the betterment of a person who has been filled with the Holy Spirit.

(1) That those faculties and talents which may hitherto have lain latent, unmatured, are aroused into use, (2) That all faculties will be developed to the highest normal pitch, (3) That there will be a gradual bringing back to their normal condition of those faculties which have been dwarfed, or warped, or abnormally developed through sin and selfishness, (4) That all this growth and development will be strictly along the groove of man's natural endowment."⁹⁵

Thus, these changes' fitting and affecting the will of an individual and that person's knowing that his body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, he should live in the power of the Holy Spirit and thank God for the new life given him by God's grace.

⁹⁴Huffman, Jasper A., *The Holy Spirit*, Wesley Press, Marion, Indiana, 1938, p. 125.

⁹⁵Ibid, pp. 128-129.

Chapter Thirteen

Be A Witness

The theme verse for the book of Acts is Acts 1:8 “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” The entire book of Acts is taken up with the theme of witnessing about Jesus Christ. The whole purpose of the work of the twelve Apostles was to witness what they had seen and heard concerning Jesus Christ. The events of their lives were wonderful and at the same time tragic. But all of this was done under the power of the Holy Spirit, and they did not seem to mind. Acts 15:26 speaks of “Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In a practical way concerning the Holy Spirit, we should all be aware that our greatest and most blessed duty is to the lost world and their salvation. We must give the message of Christ as he has given it to the writers of the New Testament. We have no new visions, dreams or revelations to give to people. We have no signs or wonders to perform. There is no command in the Bible for us to perform these signs and wonders, but there are many that declare our duty to tell of Jesus Christ and his saving grace.

Being a witness involves a separated life, which has already been spoken of; and this seems to be the problem with our witnessing today. Those who witness do not have separated lives. This writer has been invited to attend charismatic church by people who were not of a true Christian character. Their lives spoke more to me than their willingness to invite people to their church. Many of these people claim to be filled with the Holy Spirit or to have been

baptized by the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit does not condone a lifestyle that is contrary to his own nature.

From Jerusalem to the uttermost part of the world the early believers witnessed of the saving grace of Jesus Christ, even among the great trials that came to them. Many of them hazarded their lives, traveling to far-away lands, witnessing on their way. This is the true test of the filling of the Holy Spirit. He will put the words of God in our mouths and give us power of words to speak to others about Christ. One writer puts it simply when he says

The conclusion is inevitable that a result of being filled with the Spirit is that one becomes a witness of the Truth; that to be a true witness it is necessary that one should have received the Holy Spirit.⁹⁶

⁹⁶Calkins, Raymond, *The Holy Spirit*, The Abingdon Press, New York, Cincinnati, Chicago, 1930, p. 145.

Chapter Fourteen

Conclusion

Why is it necessary to have a continual teaching ministry to those in the local church concerning the Holy Spirit? It is because each believer must learn to be satisfied with what the Holy Spirit has done and will do in his life; he is not to look for anything beyond what the Bible teaches as the benefits of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. The word of God is the final authority for every believer on items of faith and practice. The word of God should satisfy our curiosity and keep us excited about matters of our entire lives.

Supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit were claimed by some into the second century. Then various groups practiced these at different times in history, including the Jansenists, the Camisards, the Cevenols, and the Shakers, etc. Beginning in 1960 there was a upsurge in the use of miraculous gifts in Pentecostal type churches. Since that time many major denominations have become involved in the charismatic movement (or whatever it may be called today). Conservative churches must both learn the importance of teaching on the subject of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit and teach these things in the churches; otherwise, more and more churches will follow the ecumenical mind set that has prevailed over these nearly fifty years.

Experience over Scripture is the order of the day, but believers in Jesus Christ will be more satisfied with the settled peace of Scripture than to depend upon personal experiences for comfort, joy and praise to our God.

Closing his book, Thomas Edgar gives a good conclusion:

Do we need to be surprised by an experience from God in order to compensate for feelings of deficiency? No! God has given us everything we need for faith and godliness. We lack nothing. Any feeling of lack is not due to a lack of anything that God has for us. It is due to our own frailty, our own failure to avail ourselves of what God has already done for us. Rather than seeking a surprise, we should be satisfied with what we have in Christ and live the Christian life in conformity to His written Word.⁹⁷

⁹⁷Edgar, *op cit*, p. 263

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Glossary

Apocryphal	Of doubtful authenticity.
Cessationism	The teaching that the revelatory gifts of the New Testament have ceased and are not active in the churches of today.
Charisma	A Greek word meaning “favor” or “grace.”
Charismata	Charismata (pl.), charisma (sg.): [Greek; 'things given']. Or put another way, 'stuff from grace'. A charisma is given, not earned or bought. It is given by the Spirit, not by a leader or a church body.
Chi Rho	In Greek, the first two letters in the word Christ.
Continuationism	The teaching that (at least some of) the miraculous gifts assumed and described in the Bible ought to continue in the church and, in fact, do continue to be given to the church.
Corinth	“A celebrated city of the Peloponnesus, capital of Corinthia, which lay North of Argolis, and with the Isthmus joined the peninsula to the mainland” (E-Sword Bible Program).
Doma	This is the simple Greek word for “gift.”
Dorea	A Greek word meaning “gifts given by God.”
En toutoi nika	A Greek phrase meaning “In this sign you shall conquer.”
Encratite	One of a sect in the 2nd century who abstained from marriage, wine, and animal food.
Holy Spirit	The third person of the Trinity, which includes God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
Merismos	A Greek word meaning “division” or “distribution.”
Mohler’s Theory	A “perpetual incarnation” theory which teaches that salvation perpetuates Christ’s life on earth in each believer.
Perfectionist Theology	A theology which teaches that a person can be perfect (without sin) after

he has been saved.

Pneumatikos

A Greek word meaning “spiritual.”

Sola Scriptura

“(Latin ablative, "by scripture alone") is the assertion that the Bible as God's written word is self-authenticating, clear (perspicuous) to the rational reader, its own interpreter ("Scripture interprets Scripture"), and sufficient of itself to be the final authority of Christian doctrine.” (Wikipedia), 1/5/2009.

Special Revelation

God’s revelation of the Bible to man through inspired writers, which was accomplished throughout history until the end of God’s special revelation at the close of the book of Revelation.

Spiritualism

Spiritualism was a movement that formed around the belief that the spirits of departed mortals had begun to communicate with the living, and that the living could converse in a systematic way with the land of the dead.”

Third Wave

The third of three religious movements which have affected the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the giving and use of gifts from God in our present day. This is also called the “signs and wonders” movement.

Trinity

A term that is used by religious scholars to identify the three Persons of the Godhead. These three are equal, but they have separate offices and separate levels of position in their work. The word Trinity is not a Bible word.

Twelve Apostles

The twelve men that Jesus chose in his public ministry to be his specially chosen ones and to work closely with him in his ministry. After Judah Iscariot died, the church then chose another to take his place, per the book of Psalms. This was Matthias. These twelve are special in their office and in their gifts.