

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT (CONT.)

MIRACULOUS “GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT”

WHAT WERE THESE “GIFTS?”

1 Corinthians 12:8–10 (ESV)

⁸ For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

-WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE (12:8; 13:2)

-FAITH (12:9; 13:2)

-HEALING AND MIRACLES (12:9-10; HEB 2:1-4)

-PROPHECY (12:10; ACTS 21:8-9; I COR 14:1-25)

-DISCERNMENT (12:10)

-INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES (12:10; I COR 14:1-33)

-TONGUES (12:10)

- PENTECOST (ACTS 2:1-11)

- CORNELIUS (ACTS 10:44-46)

- TWELVE MEN (ACTS 19:1-7)

- NOT UNIVERSAL (I COR 12:30)

- TONGUES AND PROPHECY (I COR 14:1-33)

WHY WERE THESE GIFTS GIVEN?

FOR EDIFICATION OF THE CHURCH

1 CORINTHIANS 14:4 (ESV)

⁴ The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.

TO PREPARE GOD’S PEOPLE FOR SERVICE

Ephesians 4:11–12 (ESV)

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...

1 Corinthians 12:27–30 (ESV)

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

FOR TESTIFYING TO GOD’S PLAN FOR SALVATION

HEBREWS 2:1–4 (ESV)

¹ Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. ² For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience

received a just retribution, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, ⁴ while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

HOW WERE THESE GIFTS GIVEN?

THE LAYING ON OF THE APOSTLES HANDS

Acts 8:14–17 (ESV)

¹⁴ Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, ¹⁵ who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶ for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

Acts 19:5–7 (ESV)

⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. ⁷ There were about twelve men in all.

Romans 1:11–12 (ESV)

¹¹ For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— ¹² that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.

2 Timothy 1:6–7 (ESV)

⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷ for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

DID OTHERS HAVE THIS POWER? (ACTS 8:4-25 ; I TIM 4:14)

1 Timothy 4:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.

WHEN WERE THESE GIFTS TO CEASE?

“WHEN THE PERFECT COMES” (I COR 13:1-13)

What is “the perfect?” What are the possibilities? If we conclude that “the perfect” is something other than the completion of the NT canon, what potential dilemma do we face?

“...UNTIL WE ALL ATTAIN TO THE UNITY OF THE FAITH” (EPH 4:13-14)

MIRACULOUS “GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT”

Ephesians 4:1–16 (ESV)

¹ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. ⁸ Therefore it says,

“When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,

and he gave gifts to men.”

⁹ (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) ¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

1 Corinthians 12:1–31 (ESV)

¹ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. ² You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. ³ Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the

ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body.¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be?²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."²² On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,²³ and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty,²⁴ which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it,²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?³¹ But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

And I will show you a still more excellent way.

1 Corinthians 13 (ESV)

¹ If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.³ If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part,¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

¹³ So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 14:1–33a (ESV)

¹ Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.² For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit.³ On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.⁴ The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.⁵ Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy.

The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

⁶ Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? ⁷ If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? ⁸ And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? ⁹ So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. ¹⁰ There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, ¹¹ but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. ¹² So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

¹³ Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. ¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵ What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. ¹⁶ Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷ For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. ¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. ¹⁹ Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

²⁰ Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature. ²¹ In the Law it is written, "By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." ²² Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. ²³ If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? ²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, ²⁵ the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

²⁶ What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. ²⁷ If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. ²⁸ But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. ²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. ³⁰ If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. ³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, ³² and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. ³³ For God is not a God of confusion but of peace...

SPEAKING IN TONGUES**Acts 2:1–11 (ESV)**

¹ When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?” ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.”

Acts 10:44–46 (ESV)

⁴⁴ While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶ For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared,

Acts 19:1–7 (ESV)

¹ And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. ² And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” ³ And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John’s baptism.” ⁴ And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” ⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. ⁷ There were about twelve men in all.

CESSATION OF GIFTS (I COR 13:8-10)**COFFMAN COMMENTARIES ON THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT**

-Coffman, James Burton

Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.

Beginning here, and to the end of the chapter, it is the permanence of love, as contrasted with the supernatural gifts which were so highly treasured by the Corinthians, which is stressed. And before moving to declare that all of these things which had so dazzled and inflated the Corinthians were soon to end, Paul had just outlined the glory and desirability of Christian love, the same being the "most excellent way" mentioned in [1 Corinthians 12:31b](#). But here he made the unqualified declaration of the end of supernatural gifts in the church. It may only be hoped that the Corinthians got the point better than many of the modern commentators.

Love never faileth ... As in the **RSV**, "Love never ends."

Prophecies ... shall be done away ... This cannot mean that prophecies shall be contradicted by events, but as Hodge said, "The gift (of prophecy) shall cease to be necessary, and therefore shall not be continued."^[17]

Tongues ... shall cease ... This means that the **TRUE** gifts of tongues would cease. In many generations after those days, the gift of so-called "tongues" would flourish at intervals throughout the history of Christendom; but Paul's words here absolutely deny any authenticity whatever to the so-called charismatics of the present day. True, it is only said here that "tongues **SHALL** cease"; but there is no reason whatever to believe that this least of all supernatural gifts should have survived when supernatural knowledge, divine prophecy, and the gift of miracle-working faith perished; which, of course, they did. Any authentic speaking in tongues is here restricted by the apostle Paul to the age of miracles; and when that ceased, the tongues ceased, except for the affectations of those who indulge, from whatever motives, the counterfeit "tongues" of the present day.

The very fact of Paul's showing "the more excellent way" declared that the supernatural gifts would soon pass away, otherwise that generation would not have needed the instruction. Those gifts at Corinth had a purpose. In that day in Corinth, no man had a copy of the New Testament; therefore it was necessary that supernaturally endowed men should teach and lead them; but today, "No preacher or teacher has any message from God unless he gets it from the Bible."^[18]

During the childhood age of the church, miracles authenticated the message of the inspired preachers ([Mark 16:20](#)). Miracles were to confirm the word of God. "No miracle today could confirm the word of God; it is already confirmed. Men need simply to believe and obey it."^[19]

The burden of proof must rest upon those who suppose the age of miracles is still upon us. If there are super-natural gifts, where are they? The contradicting claims of religious bodies pretending to work miracles are mutually destructive. This writer believes that there are no miracles being performed today by any persons whomsoever. Paul said they would cease; and they have ceased! That there are marvelous providences, so singular and astonishing as to startle people, is not surprising; for it may not be denied that God is still working in the world, and especially in his kingdom; but that quality of miracles bearing witness as a confirmation of God's word is not discernible in such merciful providences. What about the answer to prayer? Yes indeed God answers prayer, and sometimes in the most

astonishing ways; but such a thing bears no likeness to the supernatural and visible wonders of the apostolic age.

The character of people pretending to perform miracles in this generation refutes their claims. They get rich doing it; but the apostles never took money for healing anyone.

As Foy E. Wallace stated it:

The miraculous endowments designated **SPIRITUAL** gifts have **FAILED**, have **CEASED**, have **VANISHED AWAY** and are therefore no longer in force. All such powers were temporary and provisional and cannot now be exercised.^[20]

There is a meaning in such words as "cease ... fail ... vanish away," not merely of continuing no longer, but of being superseded by something else. As Russell noted, "Tongues prophecies, and ... knowledge shall be superseded."^[21] Despite the fact of Russell's taking a dispensational view of this passage, his idea of "superseded" is correct. And what was to supersede the tongues, etc.? It was the inspired writing of the New Testament. Thus, the fact of the appearance of that which was to do the superseding proved the near approach of the time for it to occur. In a sense, this Epistle superseded the tongues of Corinth.

When that which is perfect is come ... The great problem before Paul was the instruction and guidance of the church in Corinth; and the most acceptable view of what might be called "perfect" in connection with that problem would be the completed canon on the New Testament. McGarvey understood it as "the recorded word."^[22] Kelcy called it "The body of truth fully revealed."^[23] DeHoff identified it as "The New Testament."^[24] The comparison which Paul at once made contrasted the childhood age of the church with the church's maturity, not the present dispensation with the ultimate condition of the saints in heaven; and this demands that the expression "that which is perfect" must be associated, not with conditions in heaven, but with the maturity of the church; and that condition is met only by referring the words to God's completed revelation, the Bible.

A great many commentators insist upon referring "that which is perfect" to conditions in heaven, as for example in the following:

This anticipates the Parousia, the culmination of the age. To suggest that "the perfect" refers to the completion of the Canon of Scripture fails to find any support in the Biblical usage of perfect ... Such an interpretation exists to explain the absence of certain **CHARISMATA** in many churches today.^[25]

Regarding the "Biblical usage" of "perfect," it should be noted that even of the Old Testament it was said, "The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul" (Psalms 19:7); thus "perfect" most assuredly is applied to the revealed word of God; and such being true of the Old Testament makes it even more applicable to the New Testament. As for the absence of "certain [charismata]" in present-day churches, it may be dogmatically affirmed that "ALL [charismata]" is absent from all present-day churches, with the exception of counterfeit tongues affected by certain groups, the behavior of whom invariably demonstrates their so-called "manifestations" as being contrary to the orders of the Holy Spirit, unscriptural and thus bearing no resemblance whatever to the genuine gift which existed in the times of the apostles.

That which is in part shall be done away ... Failure to see that "**MIRACULOUS** knowledge, tongues, prophecies, etc." called in these chapters "spiritual gifts," are to be identified with the things in part that shall be done away involves interpreters in an impossible position. Take ordinary "knowledge," is this to be done away with when we get to heaven? Certainly not. Later, at the end of the chapter, Paul gives a glimpse of eternity, but not here. The things in part which were soon to be done away were the

supernatural gifts of the infancy age of the church. "Paul considered the days of spiritual gifts as the process by which the goal of maturity should be reached."^[26] As Lipscomb said it:

These gifts were to continue in the church to guide and instruct it until the completed will of God was made known. They were to serve a temporary purpose; then when their office was fulfilled, they were to pass away and give place to the revealed will of God.^[27]

The pattern of many commentators is like that of Macknight who paraphrased this thus:

When the perfect gift of complete illumination is bestowed on all in heaven, then that which is partial, namely, the present gifts of knowledge and prophecy, shall be abolished as useless.^[28]

However, who can believe that Paul was trying to control the outrageous situation in Corinth by assuring them that all of those miraculous gifts would disappear when they all got to heaven? The perfect illustration of what he really means was childhood giving way to maturity, stated in the very next line.

^[17] Charles Hodge, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

^[18] George W. DeHoff, *Sermons on First Corinthians* (Murfreesboro, Tennessee: The Christian Press, 1947), p. 96.

^[19] *Ibid.*

^[20] Foy E. Wallace, Jr., *A Review of the New Versions* (Fort Worth, Texas: Foy E. Wallace, Jr., Publications, 1973), p. 435.

^[21] John William Russell, *Compact Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1964), p. 426.

^[22] J. W. McGarvey, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

^[23] Raymond C. Kelcy, *First Corinthians* (Austin, Texas: R. B. Sweet Co., Inc., 1967), p. 61.

^[24] George W. DeHoff, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

^[25] Paul W. Marsh, *A New Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969), p. 404.

^[26] Raymond C. Kelcy, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

^[27] David Lipscomb, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

^[28] James Macknight, *op. cit.*, p. 219. ¹

¹ Coffman, James Burton. "Commentary on 1 Corinthians 13:4". "Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament". www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/1-corinthians-13.html. Abilene Christian University Press, Abilene, Texas, USA. 1983-1999.

GOSPEL ADVOCATE – A COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES: FIRST CORINTHIANS

- David Lipscomb, ed J.W. Shepherd

8 Love never faileth:—He now shows that spiritual gifts were temporary, and must pass away; while love, the doing of God's will to all, as a principle of action and a means of justification, would never pass away. Love is the ruling principle in heaven, and is eternal.

but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away;—Prophecy, the foretelling of future events and the teaching by inspiration the will of God after it had been given by the apostles, would be done away.

whether there be tongues, they shall cease;—The speaking with tongues they had never learned would cease.

whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away.—The time would come when miraculously bestowed knowledge would be known no more. All those spiritual gifts pertained to the introductory age of the church. These powers were given to help men do what they could not do without the power, as the New Testament had not been completed.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part;—At the time this was written, some things were unknown, had not been revealed. For the knowledge of God's will they were dependent upon those possessing the gift of prophecy. Most expositors think this refers to the partial knowledge of divine things we possess in this world, compared with the clear vision we shall possess when we shall have passed into the future; but this is wholly outside the scope of the apostle's writing here. He is contrasting the spiritual gifts, their teachings and blessings, with the service of love under the completed and perfect law.

10 but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.—These gifts were to continue in the church to guide and instruct it until the completed will of God was made known. They were to serve a temporary purpose; then when their office was fulfilled, they were to pass away and give place to it.

That perfection was completed, so far as God's work of the revealing work of the Spirit is concerned, when the full will of God should be revealed, or made known, and his provisions for saving men should be set in operation, as is set forth in the following: "And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ." ([Eph. 4:11-15.](#)) In this passage Paul explains the whole matter; showing that these miraculous gifts were to serve till the full knowledge was received to make them one in faith and to bring them to the fullness of men and women in Christ. That knowledge is given in the New Testament.

There are two reasons why the gifts of the Spirit are not now imparted. These gifts were miraculous powers. First, there are no apostles now to impart gifts. The apostles were inspired men; so they knew

all truth through inspiration, and they had seen and heard Jesus. Secondly, having revealed all truth needed to make men perfect, and thoroughly furnish them to all good works, having put in operation all the provisions of God for instructing and blessing men, there is no further need for miraculous revelations. Men can now learn all truth needed for present and eternal well-being from his will revealed and recorded in the Bible, and it will lead him into all the blessings of God in this world and in that to come, if he will study it to know and do the will of God. What man can learn himself, God will not work miracles to make known to him.

Again, to all creations and orders of God there have been creative and procreative ages. The creative age is that in which new creatures and a new order of things are brought into being; the procreative age is that in which these beings are multiplied and developed and the order is continued. In the creative age, the age of miracles, things are miraculously formed and created, afterwards they multiply and grow through the workings of law. Life was imparted to Adam and Eve by miracle; life, the same life that was given to them, has been passed on to their children through all the generations from them to us by law. No miracle has been needed to impart physical life since they were made alive. A miracle giving physical life would be a violation of the order of God. The same is true in the spiritual world. In the beginning spiritual life was imparted miraculously. Jesus Christ came into the world; through his teaching in precept and example; his suffering, death, burial; his struggle in the grave with the power of death and hell (in the grave the battle for man was fought and the victory won); his resurrection and ascension to his Father's throne, he created the material for the new spiritual kingdom. The apostles and their fellow disciples constituted the nucleus. Christ completed his work and left them with the words ringing in their ears: "Behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high." ([Luke 24:49](#).) The Holy Spirit came, imparted unto them spiritual life miraculously, organized them, gave laws to guide in the operation and development in the spiritual realm. The same spiritual life bestowed on them through miracle has been perpetuated and multiplied through "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" ([Rom. 8:2](#)), so that all Christians now enjoy that life without miracle. It was given by miracle; it is perpetuated by law.²

² David Lipscomb, *New Testament Commentary – A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles: First Corinthians*, ed. J.W. Shepherd, (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1987), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 205-208.

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8–12 Love is permanent, in contrast with prophecies, tongues, and knowledge—all of which will cease to exist because they will cease to be needed. In v. 8, Paul uses the verb (*katargeō*, “abolish”; hence “cease,” “pass away”) to describe the cessation of prophecies and of knowledge; of tongues, he says “they will be stilled” (NIV). Here the verb is *pauō*, which also means “cease.” The reason these three will cease is that they are imperfect and partial (vv. 9, 10) compared to perfect knowledge and prophetic understanding in heaven. He does not say when they will cease. Some think he meant that the need for miraculous gifts would cease to exist at the end of the apostolic period. This view is based in part on the implications of the meaning of the term *teleion* (“perfection”) v. 10, which is taken to refer here to the completion of the canon at the end of the first century A.D. With this view, the term “prophecies” in v. 8 is taken narrowly as referring to direct, inspired revelatory communication from the Holy Spirit or possibly to some special aid given by the Spirit to understand and present truth already revealed, as given in the written Scriptures (cf. Hodge, in loc.). All this, then, was done away when the canon was completed about A.D.100. This cessation would apply also to tongues and to the special gift of knowledge (vv. 8, 9)—the “gift correctly to understand and properly exhibit the truths revealed by the apostles and prophets” (Hodge, in loc.).

There is something to commend this view as an argument against the position that the gifts mentioned in vv. 8–10 continued, beyond the apostolic period, especially prophetic revelation. For if such revelation is held to continue, then might not the Koran, *The Book of Mormon*, and *Science and Health* be considered inspired revelations from God?

Nevertheless, it is difficult to prove the cessation of these gifts at the end of the first century A.D. by taking *teleion* to refer to a completion of the canon at that time, since that idea is completely extraneous to the context. While *teleion* can and does refer to something completed at some time in the future, the time of that future completion is not suggested in v. 10 as being close.

On the other hand, in a number of contexts the related words *telos* (“end,” “termination;” “last part”) and *teleō* (“bring to an end”) are used in relation to the second coming of Christ. This is true in both non-Pauline writing (cf. James 5:11; Rev 20:5, 7; 21:6; 22:13) and 1 Corinthians 1:8; 15:24. Since in the contexts of the Second Coming these related words are used and since Paul himself used *telos* in talking about the Second Coming elsewhere in 1 Corinthians, it seems more normal to understand *teleion* in v. 10 to mean that “perfection” is to come about at the Second Coming, or, if before, when the Christian dies and is taken to be with the Lord (2 Cor 5:1–10).

There are other problems regarding the completion-of-the-canon view of *teleion* here. The conditional temporal *hotan* with the subjunctive form of the verb, “[whenever the end] should come” (v. 10), suggests that Paul felt an indefiniteness about when the end he has in mind would come. But he shows no such indefiniteness in regard to the written Scriptures or the special position of the apostles (9:1, 2), whose work would be assumed to be coming to an end shortly upon their death. Similarly, the *hotan* with the subjunctive clauses and *telos* used of the Second Coming in 15:24, are also indefinite and open-ended: “then ... when [or, whenever] he hands over the kingdom....” Here again, Paul does not know exactly when this will occur. In contrast, the *hote* with the indicative clauses in 13:11 are quite definite as to the time of their occurrences: “When I was a child ... when I became a man.”

One more problem with taking *teleion* to refer to the completion of the canon is found in the *tote*, (“then,” “at that time”) clauses in v. 12. Did Paul really expect to live to the time of the completion of the canon and then expect to “know” or “know completely,” when other apostles (e.g., John) might (and actually did) live longer than he and it would be they who at that time would “know completely”?

All things considered, it is better to argue for the cessation of the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and the special gift of knowledge on the basis of the larger context of Paul’s writings and on the basis of the grammar of vv. 9, 13: prophecies, tongues, and knowledge will pass away soon. Paul’s viewpoint seems

to be that it would be when the important office of apostle with its requirement of men having seen the Lord and having been a witness to his resurrection (Gal 1:14–24) is no longer exercised. But “now” (*nyini*) faith, hope, and love continue to remain (*menei*, present continuous sense).

Paul’s illustration of a child’s thoughts and speech, real but inadequately conceived and expressed in comparison with those of a mature person (v. 11) aptly conveys the difference between the Christian’s present understanding and expression of spiritual things and the perfect understanding and expression he will have in heaven (v. 12). The metaphor is that of the imperfect reflection seen in one of the polished metal mirrors (cf. James 1:23) of the ancient world in contrast with seeing the Lord face to face (cf. Gen 32:30; Num 12:8; 2 Cor 3:18). Paul’s thought in 12b may be expanded as follows: Now through the Word of God, I know in part; then, in the presence of the Lord I will know fully, to the full extent that a redeemed finite human being can know and in a way similar in kind to the way the Lord in his infinite wisdom fully and infinitely knows me. The Corinthians, Paul implies, must not boast now of their gifts (cf. 13:4), for those gifts are nothing compared to what is in store for the Christians in heaven.³

COMMENTARY CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

- Jamieson, R., Fausset

8. never faileth—never is to be out of use; it always holds its place.

shall fail ... vanish away—The same *Greek* verb is used for both; and that different from the *Greek* verb for “faileth.” Translate, “Shall be done away with,” that is, shall be dispensed with at the Lord’s coming, being superseded by their more perfect heavenly analogues; for instance, *knowledge by intuition*. Of “tongues,” which are still more temporary, the verb is “shall cease.” A primary fulfilment of Paul’s statement took place when the Church attained its maturity; then “tongues” entirely “ceased,” and “prophesyings” and “knowledge,” so far as they were supernatural gifts of the Spirit, were superseded as no longer required when the ordinary preaching of the word, and the Scriptures of the New Testament collected together, had become established institutions.⁴

³ Mare, W. H. (1976). 1 Corinthians. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Romans through Galatians* (Vol. 10, pp. 268–270). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

⁴ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 289). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.