

MIRACULOUS GIFTS and THEIR PLACE IN THE CHURCH TODAY

Has God removed the "sign gifts" from the church of this age? Are the professed gifts of our charismatic brethren but fleshly, and possibly satanic, counterfeits?

We have no desire to misrepresent the teaching of the Word of God or to misjudge those who, in all good conscience, believe that the miraculous gifts are as much for today as they were for the period covered by the book of Acts. To face this problem honestly we must study the Word of God. Experience should be explained in light of "Thus saith the Lord." It must not be allowed to replace it, or to be the basis for its interpretation. But we must also study the Scriptures dispensationally, rightly dividing the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

DISPENSATIONAL DISTINCTIONS

That God deals differently with men under different circumstances is shown by the following contrasts (listed by Charles Baker in "A Dispensational Synopsis").

- "Don't take a purse" --- "Take a purse" (Luke 22:35, 36).
- "Eat only herbs" --- "Eat every living thing that moveth" (Gen. 9:3).
- "Every male circumcised" --- "If ye be circumcised Christ will profit you nothing" (Gen. 17:10 & Gal. 5:2).
- "Go ye therefore ... baptizing" --- "Christ sent me not to baptize" (Matt. 28:19 & 1 Cor. 1:17).
- "Go not to the Gentiles" --- "Preach to every creature" (Matt. 10:5 & Mark 16:15).
- "Heal the sick" --- "Use a little wine [as a medication] for thy stomach's sake and thy frequent infirmities" (Matt. 10:8 & 1 Tim. 5:23).

We must observe these distinctions and follow the instructions for our own age. What is the "truth of God" for one age can be the "doctrine of demons" for another. Contrast Lev. 11:4 - 8 (for a past age) and Isa. 66:17 (for the coming Tribulation) with 1 Tim. 4:1, 3 - 5 (the program for today).

How can we be sure we are following the right orders for this Age of Grace? The general rule is, "Listen to Paul," for he is the Apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13). To him was committed the dispensation of the grace of God (Eph. 3:2) and the revelation which is for this age (Eph. 3:3; Col. 1:25, 26).

KEY SCRIPTURES

In Paul's epistles we find several important passages on this matter:

- The historical occasion and the gracious purpose for this Age of Grace are found chiefly in Romans chapters nine through eleven, with the book of Acts as background.
- The doctrinal significance of this change of dispensation is given in Rom. 16:25, 26 and in Ephesians chapters three and four.
- Many practical effects of the change in dispensation are set forth in First Corinthians.

In First Corinthians God lets us know which parts of the program in force during the "transition period" (the latter part of the book of Acts) will continue and which will be dropped. This book indicates, for instance, that water baptism is to be deleted, but that the Lord's Table is

to continue "until He come." It is in this intensely dispensational book that three chapters are given over to a discussion of the sign gifts. The center chapter of the three teaches that these gifts were temporary and are to be replaced with something "more excellent."

First Corinthians twelve through fourteen is the key passage on the miraculous gifts. Though some of the gifts listed in this section are "sign" gifts and some are "revelatory" (See "Tongues and the Sign Gifts" by Vernon A. Schutz) -- most are openly supernatural in character. The issue must eventually be decided largely on the basis of these chapters. We must clearly see the message set forth here. It is suggested that the following outline, interspersed with explanatory comments, be **studied**, not merely **read**.

OUTLINE STUDY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS TWELVE THROUGH FOURTEEN.

- 1A.** (1 Cor. 12:1 - 3) Introduction to these three chapters.
- 1B.** 12:1-a. The subject of the chapters is stated. It is the "spiritual gifts" or "spirituals" -- matters in which the Holy Spirit is manifesting His leadership.
 - 2B.** 12:1-b. The basis for the study is knowledge (the opposite of "ignorance"), not experience or feelings.
 - 3B.** 12:2, 3. A necessary distinction to be noted.
 - 1C.** 12:2. It is possible to be led by spirits other than the **Holy Spirit**. The Corinthians were totally under such "spiritual" leadership when they were unsaved idol worshippers.
 - 2C.** 12:3. Both the leadership of the Holy Spirit and of the other spirits can be experienced by believers (see 1 John 4:1).

COMMENT -----

The way to recognize the leadership of the **Holy Spirit** is by the subjection to **Christ** as **Lord**, which He produces in the believer.

Saying, "Jesus is Lord" is more than merely pronouncing the words. This is clear from several passages.

-- Men who "say" (present tense) and "will say" (future), "**LORD, LORD,**" -- and who do what they consider "**wonderful works**" are told by Christ at the judgment, "**I never knew you**" (Matt. 7:21 - 23).

-- The foolish virgins, who took no oil in their lamps, cry out, "**LORD, LORD,** open to us," and receive the answer, "**I know you not**" (Matt. 25:11, 12).

-- **Satan himself**, speaking through Peter, says, "Be it far from Thee, **LORD**" (Matt. 16:22, 23).

The meaning of saying, "Jesus is Lord" is indicated in Luke 6:46. "Why call ye me 'Lord, Lord' and do not the things which I say?" Linking this with 1 Cor. 14:37, the Holy Spirit's leadership today can be recognized by accepting the writings of Paul as the Word of God, and basing our actions on the truths given to us in these chapters in First Corinthians.

- 2A.** 12:4 - 11. The **diversity** of **gifts** given to believers. Here is **diversity** without **division** --the answer to **denominationalism**.

- 1B.** 12:4 - 6. In spite of the difference in "gifts," "administrations," and "operations" it is the triune God who is the unifying **source** of the program. (Here the three

Persons of the Trinity are listed in the order -- Spirit, Son, and Father. In 2 Cor. 13:14 it is -- Son, Father, and Spirit, and in Matt. 28:19 it is "Father, Son and Holy Spirit").

- 2B.** 12:7. The underlying **purpose** unifies the program. The gifts are given "to profit withal" or "for the common good" -- NASB (New American Standard Bible).
- 3B.** 12:8 - 10. The gifts **TO** men listed (cp. 4A, 2B below).
- 4B.** 12:11. That which determines which gift is given to a believer is the sovereign will of the Holy Spirit.

- 3A.** 12:12 - 26. The **unity** of the Body of Christ **in spite of differing gifts**. Here is **unity** without **union** -- the answer to **ecumenicalism**.
 - 1B.** 12:12 - 14. Unity of the Body **accomplished**, through the baptism by the Holy Spirit.
 - 2B.** 12:15 - 26. Unity of the Body **illustrated** by comparison to the human body.

- 4A.** 12:27 - 30. **Diversity** of gifted **men** set in the Body.

COMMENT -----

The gifts are listed in the order of importance, "First ... secondarily, ... thirdly." So listed, tongues is last (least important). Also there are two orders of importance indicated by the expression, "-- after that --." The second group of gifts (miracles, healings, helps, governments, tongues) seems to be in a different category of importance, significantly less important than the first three. Both healing and tongues are in this latter group.

- 1B.** 12:27. The unity in diversity -- one Body many members.
- 2B.** 12:28. The list of gifted **MEN**.
- 3B.** 12:29, 30. No gift possessed by everyone. They are distributed among the believers.

- 5A.** 12:31 -- 14:25. The **priority** of gifts.
 - 1B.** 12:31 -- 14:1-a. Their priority in light of the temporary nature of the whole miraculous gift program. There is a "more excellent way" than this total program.
 - 1C.** 12:31. The best gifts are to be preferred (while the program is still in force), and there is something better than all of these gifts put together.
 - 2C.** 13:1 - 13. Love is more excellent than the miraculous gift program: --
 - 1D.** 13:1 - 3. Because the miraculous gifts are of **NO** value without **love**, even while they are still in the church.

COMMENT -----

The items in these three verses are listed in order of increasing importance. Paul is building up his case by saying, in effect, "The **least** of the gifts is of no value without love -- without love, even the **best** of them is of no value!"

- 1E.** 13:1. Tongues without love is just "noise pollution."

- 2E.** 13:2. The more important gifts are also of no value without love.
- 3E.** 13:3. Even the **outward indication** of love is of no value without **LOVE!**
- 2D.** 13:4 - 7. The miraculous gifts do not, and cannot, produce the traits of godly Christian living that love produces.

COMMENT -----

It is noteworthy that the Corinthians were practicing all of the gifts (1 Cor. 1:7) yet failed completely to fit the description of Christian character outlined in these verses. In First and Second Corinthians Paul had to scold them for failure in these very matters. In spite of all these gifts, they were **NOT** spiritual, but **CARNAL** (1 Cor. 3:1). If we learn from this chapter **only** that the miraculous gifts have been removed, we have missed the most important lesson of the chapter. If we do not have and enjoy the gift of **LOVE**, then even the knowledge we have about the gifts being withdrawn will be of no real value!

- 3D.** 13:8 - 13. The miraculous gifts are to be **removed** from the church by God, but **love** is to **remain**.
- 1E.** 13:8. The miraculous gift program **will cease** (be discontinued).

COMMENT -----

The three gifts mentioned here are representative of the **whole program**. Tongues are mentioned because this gift is the least of the gifts; prophecy because it is the greatest of them; knowledge, perhaps, because it is the one which would seem most likely to continue. Both tongues and (the supernatural gift of) knowledge were a problem in Corinth (see 1 Cor. 8:1, 7, 10 and many other verses in chapter fourteen concerning tongues). To see that the whole miraculous gift program is represented here, see what **remains** when this eighth verse is fulfilled. "Faith, hope, and love, these three [meaning **only** these three] remain:" not "faith, hope, love, **healing, tongues, etc.**"

- 2E.** 13:9, 10. **When** the program is to cease.

COMMENT -----

The miraculous gift program was an incomplete revelation, and will be done away when the complete revelation comes. "That which is perfect" does not refer to **Christ** coming, for the Greek word for "that" is neuter gender ("that **thing**"), not masculine. It is not **us being caught away** at the Rapture, for it is not us going to that which is perfect, but that which is perfect coming to us. It is not really speaking about that which is **perfect** in contrast to what is **"imperfect,"** but that which is perfect (**complete**) in contrast to what is **"in part."** (See "Treasures from the Greek New Testament" -- Kenneth S. Wuest, pages 117, 118).

The word translated "men" (in contrast to "children") in 1 Cor. 14:20 is the same word translated "perfect" in 13:10. The subject is revelation (which comes by prophecy and results in knowledge -- 13:9). Therefore "that which is perfect" is a complete, mature revelation which would come to the church to replace the partial revelation through the miraculous gift program.

- 3E.** 13:11, 12. **Why** the program is to cease.
- 1F.** 13:11. Because it is only intended to meet the temporary needs of the Body of Christ during its changing childhood (the transition period).
- 2F.** 13:12. Because it is insufficient to meet the needs of the "adult" church (The church from the end of Acts to the Rapture).
- 4E.** 13:13. **What remains** after the miraculous gifts are withdrawn.

COMMENT -----

The "now" in verse thirteen refers to the time mentioned in verse eight. The verse could be paraphrased, "And **now** [after the temporary program is removed] there will remain faith, hope, and love -- these three [**only**]: but the greatest of these [three] is love."

Three periods are in view in First Corinthians thirteen. There is a time when the miraculous gifts are in the church and so also are Faith, Hope, and Love. There is a second period when the miraculous gifts have been done away and only Faith, Hope, and Love remain. At the Rapture, however, Faith becomes sight (Heb. 11:1), Hope becomes realization (Rom. 8:24), and only Love remains (1 Cor. 13:8). Love is the greatest of the three (since **duration in time** is the characteristic in view in this section). The removal of the miraculous gifts cannot come at the Rapture, or there would never be a time when Faith, Hope and Love would be **present** with the miraculous gifts **missing**. They must disappear previous to the Rapture. The first time period above is from the beginning of the Body of Christ until its maturity at the completion of the Pauline revelation: the second is from then until the Rapture: the third extends from the Rapture on into eternity. "Love **never** faileth!"

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- 3C.** 14:1-a. Follow after love. That is, it is best not to get one's heart set on a program that is to be removed, but rather on that which will remain.
- 2B.** 14:1-b - 25. Priority in light of the comparative value of the miraculous gifts (while the program is still in operation). Prophecy is better than tongues:
- 1C.** 14:1-b - 5. Because tongues minister to self, prophecy ministers to the church.
- 2C.** 14:6 - 12. Because tongues do not accomplish a purpose in the church, prophecy edifies the church.
- 3C.** 14:13 - 19. Because tongues require an interpreter, prophecy does not.
- 4C.** 14:20. Because tongues are linked to immaturity and childishness.
- 5C.** 14:21 - 25. Because tongues are a sign to condemn **Israel** and may cause the unbelieving Gentiles to stumble. By contrast, prophecy may lead either or both to the Lord.
- 6A.** 14:26 - 40. Rules for the exercise of the gifts (while they are still active).
- 1B.** 14:26 - 28. Rules for those who speak in tongues.
- 2B.** 14:29 - 33. Rules for those who prophesy.
- 2B.** 14:34, 35. Women's place in the program.
- 4B.** 14:36 - 40. Paul's place in the program.

- 1C. 14:36. The Corinthians are **NOT** the authority. The Word of God did not originate **with** them, nor was it preached only **to** them.
- 2C. 14:37. **Paul** is the authority.

COMMENT -----

True spirituality is shown by those who agree that Paul **IS** the authority. The one who makes Christ truly Lord (see 12:3) will obey His messenger. This refers not only to the rules for using the gifts (14:26 - 35), but also to his teaching that the program is to be done away (13:8 - 13)! One who ignores Paul's teaching in chapter thirteen and tries to carry on a program which **God Himself** has removed from the church is not really spiritual, not **really** calling Christ "Lord"!

- 3C. 14:38 - 40. Closing instructions.
 - 1D. 14:38. Concerning the one who ignores Paul's authority -- he is to be ignored.

COMMENT -----

"If any one does not recognize this [the truth of verse 37] he is not to be recognized" -- NASB. The thought is that no one is recognized to have a ministry in the church who does not follow Paul's instructions regarding such ministry.

- 2D. 14:39. The **best** gifts are to be **desired**, while the gift of **tongues** is to be **tolerated** (not forbidden) as long as the program remains in the church.
- 3D. 14:40. Orderliness is to characterize the church ministry (both before and after the miraculous gifts are removed).

FINAL COMMENT -----

Many have turned to the miraculous gift program thinking to find in it something **REAL** and **satisfying**. If they had seen the gift of **LOVE** in the church, they would have found **TRUE reality** and that which **abundantly satisfies**. Let us not be content merely to proclaim that the miraculous gifts are gone. Let us also **demonstrate** that which is "more excellent" -- **LOVE** -- and let them find satisfaction and spirituality through our churches and us!

SOME QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS

1. Doesn't 1 Cor. 13:12 indicate that the time when the gifts will be removed is when the Rapture takes place?

--- **Answer:**

No. (See **5A, 1B, 2C, 3D, and 2E** in the outline of First Corinthians twelve through fourteen).

1 Cor. 13:12 is a contrast between the incomplete knowledge of the truths of God made possible by the miraculous gift program, and the fulness of knowledge which would come with the completion of Paul's epistles.

"- Through a glass darkly - " is translated "- in a mirror, in an enigma [riddle or puzzle]"

by the Scofield margin. The "mirror" has to do with the **eye**, the "enigma" with the **ear**. Compare 1 Cor. 2:9, "-**Eye** hath not seen, nor **ear** heard ... the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." The "things" in this verse have to do with the "mystery" as 1 Cor. 2:7 indicates. The eye and ear received but an incomplete revelation of these "things" through the miracle gift program. However "God hath revealed them unto us -" (1 Cor 2:10). How? By the Rapture? No, but "by His Spirit." Then they were spoken (or, more permanently, "written") "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but [words] which the Holy Spirit teacheth" (1 Cor. 2:13). The complete, permanent revelation in view here comes not through seeing Christ with our eyes, but through **words** given by His Spirit.

The expression "face to face" is a figure of speech with which Paul must have been very familiar. According to Ezek. 20:35, 36, when Israel was in the wilderness God pleaded with them "face to face" -- and He will do so again during the Tribulation. But Israel never literally saw God's face during their wanderings, and in the Tribulation Israel will not see His face at the time He "purges out the rebels" (Ezek. 20:38). It is later, in the land, that they will literally look on Him whom they have pierced and will be saved (Zech. 12:10). In Ex. 33:11 it says, "The Lord spake unto Moses **face to face**" -- yet, in the same chapter, it says, "**My face shall not be seen,**" and Moses saw only His "back parts" (v. 23).

A similar figure of speech is used in Num. 12:8. "With him [Moses] will I speak **mouth to mouth ... not in dark speeches** [enigmas or riddles]."

These expressions have to do with directness (as in His judgments in the wilderness), friendly frankness (as in Ex. 33:11), and completeness and clarity (as in Num. 12:8). Clearly, this is the way the expression is used in 1 Cor. 13:12 also. It is a contrast between the incomplete and indirect revelation available through the miracle gift program and the complete and direct revelation that will be theirs through Paul's completed written ministry.

2. Is there a verse stating that the gift of healing has been removed from the church?

--- **ANSWER:**

No. (See **5A, 1B, 2C, 3D, and 1E** of the outline). There is also no verse saying that God is a Trinity, yet we believe this is clearly taught in the Word of God.

The evidences that the gift of healing has been removed from the church include, briefly, the following:

-- The Whole miraculous gift program is looked at as a unit in First Corinthians. In 1 Cor. 13:8 three gifts are specifically spoken of as being removed but, after the removal, the gifts remaining are only Faith, Hope, and Love. Healing must have been removed also or it, too, would remain.

-- The gift of healing is never mentioned in the epistles written after Paul arrived in Rome.

-- Paul, who had the gift of healing before (Acts 19:12), did not use such a gift after his arrival in Rome. Instead, he prescribed simple medication for Timothy who was **often sick** (1 Tim. 5:23), and left a spiritual helper behind him, **sick** (2 Tim. 4:20). When a beloved helper did recover from a **sickness "nigh unto death,"** he attributed it to God having mercy rather than to God's power exercised through a healer (Phil. 2:26 - 30).

3. How can the healings that take place today be explained if they are not brought about by God?

--- **ANSWER:**

An article appeared some time ago in a Manila (Philippines) newspaper telling of healings by a thirteen-year-old Catholic boy. He required people to wear a rosary and recite novenas. Then he rubbed them with coconut oil or blew on the affected part and **healed** them. The same article says, "long before the coming of the Spaniards [when the Philippines was completely heathen] faith healing had already been a practice."

In a news leaflet, "The Church around the World," for Dec. 1974, this item appeared. "Some **medical doctors** in South Africa are proposing that **witch doctors** [heathen] should work as paramedics [helpers to the doctors] among the blacks, over whom they exert tremendous control. These doctors claim that witch doctor rituals cure some psychosomatic symptoms."

Now we ask, "How can **these** healings be explained if they are not brought about by God?" The article about the thirteen-year-old healer went on to say, "The central factor in this kind of healing is the faith and confidence of the patient, according to a Priest. There are diseases that are psychosomatic [mental only] and therefore may be subject to faith healing. The cure, then, is not necessarily and directly attributable to God. But, there are organic diseases, and only medical science (or a miracle from God) can remedy these."

Let us look at various types of "healings."

-- God sometimes genuinely undertakes in answer to prayer. A healer is not involved. Any believer can pray for himself or for others. The healing comes only as God sees fit to grant it, and is on the same basis as any other answered prayer. We believe in divine healing, but not (for the normal course of this Age of Grace) in Divine healers.

Some healings result from convincing a hypochondriac that he is not sick. In this case a "healing" can be a "face saving" device if the patient is tired (even subconsciously) of playing sick. Many medical doctors say that a large part of their patients (at least in the more affluent countries) are not really sick, they just think they are. A hypochondriac is one who has a depression of mind, usually centered on imaginary ailments (which may manifest real "symptoms").

-- Defective mental attitudes can produce real sickness. When the mental attitude is changed, by whatever means, the sickness goes.

-- The body has a great ability to heal itself. Many people who go to doctors (or healers) would get well just as quickly if they stayed home and rested. Once a doctor or healer has been consulted, however, he gets credit for what the body has done for itself.

-- Sincere testimonials to healing may be false -- due to a mistaken idea of what faith is. The idea that if you **say** you are healed ("by faith") you **are**, or **will be**, healed leads many people to testify of healings that have not happened. They are only saying so in hopes that it will be so. The basis for their testimony is pious wishful thinking rather than actual experience. This view may arise from a false interpretation of Mark 11:24, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." An illustration of this kind of faith genuinely at work is given in Luke 17:14, 15. "He said unto them [the ten lepers], 'Go shew yourselves unto the priests.' And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he **saw** that he **was healed**, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God." The **testimony** to healing in these verses came **after** the healing was a **reality**. I know of a girl who testified that she had been healed of Tuberculosis, and died the next week -- of Tuberculosis! How sad. Tragically, many will recall her testimony to healing, but forget or ignore her death the following week.

-- "Healings" may be deliberate frauds. Many healings are just an act which people are

paid to go through to try to convince folks they have been healed. They only pretend to be sick or crippled and then leave the meeting "well" or "healed" -- because they were never sick or crippled in the first place. I know personally of at least two "healings" in Southern California where the "healer" paid someone to pretend to be injured or crippled so they could be "healed" in the meetings.

-- We must not rule out possible satanic intrusions. We cannot doubt that Satan has at least some limited power to heal. Cornelius Stam writes, "But now let us see how this [the working of Satan during the Tribulation] affects us today. In the very same passage about antichrist and his 'power and signs and lying wonders,' [2 Thess. 2:9] the apostle warns that 'the mystery of iniquity **doth already work**' (2 Thess. 2:7). What does this tell us about the multiplied miraculous manifestations we are seeing all about us as the days grow darker; **tongues, healing, prophecies, ESP, witchcraft, Spiritism, etc.**, not to mention false doctrine? Obviously it tells us that these are not of God, but of Satan. A wondrous manifestation is, to some, the end of all argument. 'So and so must be of God or he couldn't work these miracles' (they say). But ... the Bible tells us differently. Satan has power, he can work wonders, but he does so to deceive and draw people away from the truth of God's glorious purpose and grace."

Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis writes, "- counterfeit manifestations in 'miraculous gifts,' prophecy, **tongues, healings**, visions and supernatural experiences of every kind possible to the **satanic powers**, may be given to the **believer**, with abundant 'texts' and 'proofs' to confirm their 'divine origin.'" She adds, "The safe path for believers at the close of the age is one of tenacious faith in the **written Word** as the sword of the Spirit, to cut the way through all the interferences and tactics of the forces of darkness, to the end." (From "War on the Saints" by Jessie Pen-Lewis. Emphasis mine)

Thus it appears that most "healings" are not really miraculous at all. Those that are miraculous -- **and linked with a "healer"** -- are very possibly part of Satan's counterfeit "sign gift" program along with tongues, visions, etc. When God sees fit to grant a truly "miraculous" healing, it will come as a result of prayer alone, and that not of a "healer" (as such) but of a simple believer petitioning his Lord. Such healings are not a part of the **program** for today, but **exceptions** granted by His gracious response to prayer -- **when it is His will.**

4. Even if the gifts listed in First Corinthians twelve have been removed: -- Couldn't God grant miraculous gifts to someone, as an exception, if He wished?

--- ANSWER:

No, for if God makes exceptions, and does not tell us what those exceptions are, then **any** man with **any** gift could claim that his gift, too, is an exception. We would have **no scriptural authority** to reject **any** of them. When God told us in His Word that the miracle gift program was to cease, He limited Himself to do what He had said. He expects us to believe and follow His Word. Therefore He must follow it Himself so that we **can** believe it. Heb. 6:3, "And this will we do **if God permit**" is not referring to God permitting (as an exception) something that is contrary to His Word and program, as the context indicates.

5 Couldn't God revive the gifts to meet the growing unbelief in the "last days"?

--- ANSWER:

No, for the book which was specifically written for our guidance during those last days (Second Timothy) does not once mention any miraculous gifts. God's only answer to the growing unbelief is to "preach the Word." In a book that predicts, so fully and accurately, the

evils of the last days it would be unthinkable that God's answer to these evils would not also be fully and accurately revealed there.

6. Couldn't God give miraculous gifts that are not even mentioned in the Bible?

--- ANSWER:

No, for He lists the **non**-miraculous gifts that are for us today to replace the miraculous gift program (Rom. 12:6 - 8 & Eph. 4:11). If these are carefully listed, how much more important it would be to list any supernatural gifts. If He gives miraculous gifts not mentioned in the Bible, then the Bible is not a complete revelation. It would leave us with no Scriptural guidance as to what the gifts were, what they were for, how they should be used, or how to recognize the counterfeits of them. No man is foolish enough to sign a check and leave it up to the one who receives it to fill in the amount. God is not a fool. He does not give us a "blank check" for gifts and leave it up to us to fill in the blanks with the kind of gifts we want -- or think we already have.

7. Couldn't God do the healing in answer to prayer?

--- ANSWER:

YES! However, when God works in answer to prayer it will be when we **JUST PRAY**. We must also remember that prayer for healing should not ignore the natural means at our disposal. God expects us to use the resources such as doctors, medicines, rest, good diet, sensible exercise, etc. While others may pray with us, and for us, there will be no circumstances which will link the answer to a **particular man** and his **professed supernatural powers**, but only to **God** and **His mercy**. We are to pray for physical healing just as we pray for our other needs. The basis for an answer is God's will: the means to accomplish the answer will, almost always, be the working of things together for our good rather than what we would call a true "miracle." He can, and does from time to time, work a true miracle to heal in answer to prayer, but it is the exception, not the rule, in this Age of Grace.

8. Isn't the list of gifts in Eph. 4:11 an incomplete list?

--- ANSWER:

This verse is a complete list of gifted **MEN** given to the **CHURCH**. There is a list of gifts given to **INDIVIDUALS** in Rom. 12:6 - 8, and these two passages together give us the complete list of non miraculous gifts given to replace the miraculous gift program. The lists of **miraculous** gifts in 1 Cor. 12:8 - 10 and 1 Cor. 12:28 are to be in effect until the completion of the Pauline Scriptures (1 Cor. 13:8 - 13 with Col. 1:25, 26). These two lists of **NON miraculous** gifts are to last until the completion of the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:13).

The word "some" in Eph. 4:11 does not mean that these are just "**some**" of the **gifts** -- that there are others not listed. Rather the thought is that **some churches** would be given one gifted man and some another. One church might be given several gifted men -- as God saw the need.

9. Since the Greek word "dunamis" appears as "miracles" in 1 Cor. 12:10, 28, 29, doesn't the use of this same word in Eph. 1:19 (translated "power") indicate that miraculous gifts are still present in the church?

--- ANSWER:

No. The word "*dunamis*" means "power," "strength," or "ability" -- according to

Thayer's Greek Lexicon. It can also mean "a manifestation or instance of power" as in Acts 8:10 (concerning Simon the sorcerer who was known as "The great power of God"), Rom. 1:16 (concerning the gospel as a manifestation of the power of God), etc. The word is translated "power," "ability," "virtue," "strength," "might," "violence," "miracle," and "abundance." Since it can be translated so many ways, we **must** depend on the context to determine its meaning in any particular verse.

Paul speaks of this same power working in him in Col. 1:11. "Strengthened with **all might** (*dunamis*) --." What did this *dunamis*, **all dunamis**, produce in him? Miraculous gifts? No, but something **much** better, something consistent with the program for today "--unto **all patience** and **longsuffering with joyfulness.**"

Thus, the context of Eph. 1:19, and the cross references, indicate miraculous gifts are not in view. It is **resurrection** that is in view: His, a physical resurrection to live forever in heaven; ours, in **this** passage, a spiritual resurrection to a heavenly kind of life down here. (Of course other passages teach that we, if we die, will also have a physical resurrection)

10. Doesn't the meaning of the words "Holy Spirit" (without articles in the Greek) indicate that miraculous gifts are still in the church?

--- ANSWER;

No. According to the Companion Bible (Appendix 101-14) "'Holy Spirit' ... (without articles) occurs 52 times in the New testament and is always wrongly rendered 'the Holy Spirit' (with the definite Article and capital letters). ... *Pneuma hagion* (without articles) is never used of the Giver (the Holy Spirit), but only and always of His gift. What this gift is may be seen by comparing Acts 1:4, 5 with Luke 24:49, where 'the promise of the Father' is called (in the former passage) '*pneuma hagion*,' and in the latter is called 'power from on high.' This 'power from on high' includes whatever *gifts* the Holy Spirit may bestow 'according to His own will.' What particular gift is meant is sometimes stated, that is 'faith,' 'power,' etc."

The Companion Bible has a lot of good information in it, but it must be used with great care, for some of Dr. Bullinger's conclusions, we believe, are in error. If the notes in this Bible were followed completely, one would believe in soul sleep, the Body of Christ beginning at Acts 28:28, no Lord's Table for today, the Rapture **not** our hope, Paul's early epistles **not** for us, and two Bodies of Christ instead of one. In this part of the Appendix, quoted above, we see one of his errors. Since the only verses in the prison epistles having to do with this note in the Companion Bible cannot refer to miraculous gifts (even if Dr. Bullinger's note were true, which it is not), we will not take the space here to refute it. See the article in the January 1979 issue of "The Berean Searchlight" by C. R. Stam entitled "The Holy Spirit: does He Indwell the Believer?" for a study of this matter.

11. Can a man preach the gospel, emphasize the blood of Christ for salvation, have conversions, and still be deceived by Satan in part of his ministry?

--- ANSWER:

Yes. In First Corinthians twelve one of the gifts mentioned is the "discerning of spirits" (v. 10). This gift was the ability to tell whether another gift being exercised was really of the Holy Spirit or a counterfeit gift produced by some other spirit. This discernment was needed because Satan was busy trying to counterfeit the true gifts by his own power. The imitation gifts were so similar to the real ones that it required the gift of discernment of spirits to be able to tell them apart. If these false gifts (produced by satanic forces) were only found with the unsaved,

the teachers of false doctrine, or those with no effective testimony for the Lord, then it would have been easy to spot them. However, the true and active believers could be deceived into receiving these imitation gifts, necessitating the gift of discerning of spirits. Today this gift is not needed. After God has told us that **His** miraculous gifts have been withdrawn, **any** such "gift" **has to be from another spirit** and can be rejected on the basis of the written word of God.

There is the possibility of Satan working through a man who (even though he is an unbeliever) is preaching the truth, as in the case of Judas. Judas evidently taught and preached the truth just like the other apostles, and just as effectively too. If not, he would have been suspected immediately as being the one Christ was speaking about when He said, "One of you shall betray me." But they didn't suspect him. Not one of them did.

Even true believers can have this experience, as Peter found out. Peter, the very leader of the apostles, was so deceived by Satan that when he spoke out against the crucifixion and resurrection, Christ did not answer him, but answered Satan who was using his mind, heart, and voice on this occasion (Matt. 16:21 - 23).

The whole charismatic movement is full of sincere men who proclaim the gospel, preach the blood of Christ for salvation, have true conversions and, in some cases, put some of us to shame with their dedication. However they are involved in a program which, in some respects, is contrary to the Word of God for this age, but which appears to have supernatural power behind it. Surely God is not giving **His** power to that part of a program which is contrary to His Word! He blesses and uses His Word in much of their ministry **in spite of** any fleshly or satanic delusion that may have ensnared them in the area of the "gifts." These brothers in Christ stand in need of our love and prayers and -- as much as they will receive it -- our patient teaching of the Word of God dispensationally considered.

12. Can Christ and Satan both live in the same person?

--- ANSWER:

Of course not! We are not saying that Satan is living in our charismatic brethren. A believer may, in ignorance, allow Satan to use him in some ways, but God will not allow Satan to indwell him. Satan could not "**enter into**" Peter as he did with unsaved Judas, but Satan could, and **did, use** him on at least one occasion.

CONCLUSION

What should our relationship be with those who believe the miraculous gifts are still in the church?

We should recognize them as fellow members of the Body of Christ, if they are truly trusting Christ as their Savior. Salvation (fortunately for all of us) is not based on faultless doctrine, but on faith. As fellow members of the Body of Christ we should love them, pray for them, and have as much fellowship as we can with them. But we must not compromise or deny the truths of the Word of God we have been privileged to understand.

We should, as the Lord gives us opportunity, seek to lead them into the knowledge of the mystery. This should be done in keeping with Paul's directions in 2 Tim. 2:24, 25. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

We should continue to preach and teach the Word of God rightly divided. Paul urges us to "speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). We must not be so concerned with not offending our

charismatic brothers that we fail to speak the truth: but also we must not be so determined to make the truth clear to them, that we hit them over the head with it. This **balance** between speaking the **truth** and speaking **in love** can only be brought about under the direction and in the power of the Holy Spirit of God. May we, by the grace of God, attain to this balance in our ministries!