

THE NINE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

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INTRODUCTION.

There is a tremendous need for the manifestation of Spiritual gifts in our day.

The Church is today facing the greatest challenge that it has ever known. We are seeing an alarming increase in sin and lawlessness of every kind. There is an amazing increase of Satanic counterfeit gifts all over the world, and in a short while we can expect those monsters of iniquity, Antichrist and the False Prophet, to emerge with a Satanic fullness of power. There is also the challenge of evangelising countries under the control of militant godless governments, for open intellectual argument and evangelism is forbidden in these countries. The only answer is the gifts that Elijah, Christ and His apostles possessed, miraculous protection and miraculous evangelism is the only answer in such situations.

How do the majority of Christian leaders respond to the challenge of these days?

Most of them hide the key of knowledge of spiritual gifts, by wilful omission, false tradition, sceptical and untrue exposition, and unbelieving example. Lk.11v52. They deprive many Christians of the mighty armoury of spiritual gifts by teaching that the gifts of the Spirit are not needed any more, in spite of the Scriptures stating the contrary. Some teach that the only spiritual gifts that we need now are the word of wisdom, word of knowledge and prophecy, which are explained away as the normal Christian ability to teach and preach. However, these kind of expositions are lacking in consistency and honesty, for one cannot say that spiritual gifts are not for today, and then say that it is right and indeed obligatory to desire spiritual gifts, and in particular the higher gifts, and then explain away these higher gifts as the ability to teach and preach God's Word. Spiritual gifts cannot be explained away so easily as this. Spiritual gifts are God's acts in the world, and God gives us in the Scriptures the record of some of His acts and purposes in history, and we see that whenever the manifestations of God's power and purposes through the manifestation of spiritual gifts were lacking, there was invariably backsliding and apostasy. God has always manifested Himself in signs, wonders and miracles when His people have followed Him with all their heart.

Christ's ministry was a continuous manifestation of signs, wonders and miracles.

God earnestly desires to manifest the spiritual gifts that produce these signs, wonders and miracles, in His Church today. God intends that people should be astonished and caused to think upon spiritual things by the manifestation of His glory and presence, through signs, wonders and miracles, as they were through His ministry while He was on earth. Mk.2v12. 4v41. 6v51. 7v37. Lk.5v26. Acts.3v10,11. However, people are not intended to just be left in amazement and wonder, the wonders and miracles in Scripture, were a sign pointing the way to God, or to God's way. They are directing the watcher to Christ and His Father. Mk.6v14. Jn.2v11. Acts.8v6. 14v3. 19v11. Rom.15v19. Heb.2v4. These signs indicate the desire of God, the presence of God, the power of God, and confirm the good news of salvation in Christ. Jn.5v36. 7v21. 10v25,32,28. 14v11,12. 15v24. Mt.11v2,20. Miracles are the normal work of God, "He is fearful in praises, doing wonders." Ex.15v11. Ps.77v14, 136v4. Dan.4v2,3. God loves to do "wonderful works," "mighty works," and "miracles." Mt.11v20. Mk.6v14. Lk.10v13. Acts.2v11,22. 19v11. 1Cor.12v10,28. This is abundantly demonstrated throughout the Scriptures

Acts of divine power and gifts of revelation were given by God to fulfil His purposes.

God formed His creation by supernatural power. He guided, protected, and gave Abraham children by His miraculous power. Abraham's and Sarah's faith was strengthened by a Divine visitation. Gen.17v15-19. 18v1-

15. Heb.11v11. God equipped Moses with signs and wonders to convince Pharaoh and the Israelites that God had sent him and his message was true. Ex.3v12. 4v1-9. 7v9,10. God gave Gideon the signs of His presence and will. Judges.6v11-40. 7v9-14. Samuel gave Saul signs that God had appointed him to be king over Israel. 1Sam.10v1-9. The unknown prophet gave the sign that the worship of the golden calves of Jeroboam was a abomination to God. 1Kings.12v28. 13v1-5. Elijah called fire from heaven to show that the Lord was God. 1Kings18v36-39. Indeed, the ministry of the prophets consisted of a continual manifestation of signs, wonders and miracles, through the gifts of power and revelation. It is a remarkable fact that on occasions, even angels gave signs to convince people of the truth of their words. Judges.6v21,22. 13v15-21 Lk.1v18-20,59-65. 2v12.

God gave so many signs to His people in the Old Testament, that the Jews expected this of any prophet.

Paul said, "The Jews require a sign," and the Jews asked Christ, "What sign shewest thou?" 1Cor.1v22,23. Mt.12v38. 16v1. Though the Lord would not pander to their unbelief by giving them their own personal signs that they demanded of God, He gave them a multitude of signs through healings and miracles. The apostle Paul tells us that signs and wonders were the means by which the Gentiles were convinced of the truth of his message. These signs and wonders were the normal spiritual equipment of an apostle, and Paul tells us that they were needed by every local church. Rom.15v18,19. 2Cor.12v12. 1Cor.12v31. 14v1. We are told in James.5v14,15., that the elders of local churches are to possess the spiritual power to pray for the sick and see them healed, so we should expect all the other ministries of Eph.4v11., apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers, to pray for the sick and see them healed. Obviously, some ministries are more powerful and specialised in their ministry to the sick, than others, but every New Testament leader and elder was expected to have a ministry towards the sick. Even deacons in the early Church did mighty works of healing. Acts.6v1-15. 8v5-8. Stephen and Philip.

Sadly, many Christians have an ingrained scepticism concerning God's spiritual gifts, and reject them.

In spite of the ministry of Christ and His early Church, many Christians say, "I don't believe in spiritual gifts. I don't need any gifts of power and revelation. I don't believe in signs, they are only demanded by an evil generation." It is true that the Lord Jesus refused to give the sensational sign demanded by the sceptics, but He manifested a multitude of Scriptural signs before the sceptics, that were more than sufficient to convince the sincere seeker. The sceptic does not need a sign, for they will explain away any sign that is given just as Christ's enemies did, they need to repent of their sins and accept Christ and His Word, and then they will accept the signs and wonders manifested through the spiritual gifts. The final defence of the sceptic confronted by an undeniable sign from God, is to say that it is a manifestation of Satan's power. Mt.12v22-32. However, signs and wonders do help a sincere person who is seeking the truth to make up their mind and follow Christ, and are the means of convincing many doubtful waverers. Christ appealed to the miracles and healings that He did as proof of His authority, and He promised the people more of them to help them to believe. Jn.5v20,35-37. 10v37,38. Mt.12v38-42. Do away with the signs and wonders in the Bible and all you have left are the accounts of human failure, sin and unbelief. Do away with signs and wonders for today and you impudently affirm that God is " The Great I Was," instead of "The Great I Am;" but our God and Christ are the very same today in their compassion consecration, activities and abilities as they have always been. Heb.13v8.

Jesus said that people need God's miracles to bring them to a place of faith.

When Christ said in Jn.4v48., "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe," He was stating the fact that many people will not believe in the goodness of God, or the willingness of God to meet their need, without some supernatural evidence. Jesus, therefore, did many signs to encourage people to have faith in God for the healing of their souls and bodies, the greatest of these being the resurrection of Lazarus. Jn.11v42,45. When the Lord Jesus sent out the 12 apostles and the 70 disciples, He gave them power to do signs and wonders. Lk.9v1,2. 10v1-9. Mk.16v17,20. 2Cor.12v12. Rom.15v18-21. These signs are to encourage the faith of beholders, and spring out of the compassion and love of God for the sinful, sick and needy. God desires to openly manifest His presence by the things that He does, God does not intend that we should apprehend spiritual things, or the Holy Spirit's presence, by blind faith alone. God desires that His presence should be plainly seen, in fact, people are brought face to face with the invisible but living God, by the manifestation of spiritual gifts. The healing of the sick, the working of miracles, the secrets of the heart being made manifest, make it very plain that God is in the midst of His people. 1Cor.14v25. Jn.2v11,23. Acts.8v5-8. etc.. Even Simon the sorcerer was amazed at the manifestations of God's power through the gifts of the Spirit, in the ministry of Philip the deacon, and became a believer and many others with him.

Rejection of the Divine miraculous is a rejection of the Scriptures.

Those who say that we do not need the miraculous, for the Scripture alone are all that we needs to work for God, are in reality rejecting the Scriptures. The Old Testament prophets and Christ and His early Church needed the signs and wonders that the Scriptures reveal and deem essential for the proper fulfilment of God's purposes and will. Those who hide behind a false spirituality and say, "All I need is the Scripture," should remember that the Scripture expressly commands Christians to earnestly seek for spiritual gifts, and that much of Scripture is a record of the manifestation of these gifts. The Holy Scripture tells us that Christ desires to do greater works through His Church than He did while He was on earth. Jn.14v12. The Scripture tells us that Christians need spiritual gifts to serve Christ and meet the needs of this dark hour and that Christians can expect the manifestation of them right up to the great day of God's wrath. Acts.2v17-21. God wants to

manifest His love and power to the world and He wants Christians to be channels of His saving and healing power. 1Cor.12v7. There is no such thing as an unsupernatural, non-miraculous Christianity in the New Testament, indeed the Old Testament only manifests a miracle working God. The present non-miraculous Christianity is yet another fruit of the sin and unbelief of the dark ages of the Church. The present unbelief and rejection of the gifts of the Holy Spirit by many Christians will mean that they will be spiritually unprepared for the sin and Satanic miraculous that will be manifested in great power at the end of this age.

The fact that God does signs and wonders does not mean that everybody will automatically repent of their sins and turn to God, even the very mightiest manifestations of power and love of God fail to win some people. The Lord Jesus censured certain cities because they did not repent even though He had done such mighty works there. Mt.11v20-24. Like many of the Scribes and Pharisees, many of the people had clearly seen God, but they did not want Him, they hated both Christ and His Father because their hearts were bound by a love of evil. Jn.15v21-25. This was why the Lord Jesus refused to give them some sensational sign to them, they had quite enough evidence to convince a sincere heart. The confirmation of the Gospel by signs, wonders and miracles is the final appeal of God to the soul, rejection of God and His truth when confirmed by signs, wonders and miracles, is the final act of spiritual suicide. Jn.15v21-25. In pioneer evangelism, and in fact every church, it is essential to see the invisible God being made visible by the things that He is doing through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Paul said to the Corinthians, "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." 2Cor.12v12. In 1Cor.2v4,5. Paul says, "my speech and my preaching of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Paul stated that the message of a crucified Saviour was confirmed by mighty signs and wonders and that it brought great fruit in the wicked city of Corinth. The gifts of the Holy Spirit make the Lord Jesus and the presence of God very real; so much so, that in the early Church, when unbelievers came into the meetings out of curiosity, or even with down-right hostility, they were forced to cry, "God is in the midst of you of a truth," because of the manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit. The same thing happens today where those same gifts of the Holy Spirit are manifested. The gifts of the Holy Spirit enable the presence and will of God to be manifested on earth. 2Cor.14v24,25.

The challenging counterfeit signs of Satan being manifested today, demand that the Church of Christ should manifest their blood-bought inheritance of mighty signs wonders and miracles. Spiritualists, Mormons, and many other false cults have the zeal and power of Satan, and they deceive many. Even as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, and Elymas withstood Paul, these evil workers challenge the experience of the Church of Christ. The Scripture warns us that we can expect further great manifestations of evil power in these last days. Mt.24v11,24. 2Thes.2v8-12. The only answer to the evil of the last days is the power of God. Intellectual argument alone has never been a sufficient answer to the powers of darkness. The anointed preaching of the Word of God and the powerful manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, has always been God's answer to the powers of evil. New Testament Christianity was not, and has never been, mere intellectual gymnastics, it has always been God's truth confirmed by spiritual dynamics.

The vast majority of Churches and denominations do not desire to manifest the powers of God through signs, wonders and miracles, some are quite content to manifest the "pop" of hand-clapping, chorus singing, intellectual argument, or even sheer noise, instead of the power of God through the mighty gifts of power and revelation. Israel ended up in captivity in Assyria and Babylon, because of its sin and unbelief, they are quite unable to fulfil the wonderful purpose of God to be a blessing to the whole world. Much of Christ's Church is in captivity, chained and defeated by the world, the flesh and the Devil because of its sin and unbelief, and God cannot use it to fulfil His beautiful desires to bring salvation and healing to the world. Many, we fear, like the Scribes and Pharisees, will only oppose true New Testament Christianity, but some sincere hearts will accept their Pentecostal Christian heritage and fulfil the beautiful and wonderful purposes and desires of God. Gifts of power under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ through the gifts of revelation, are the greatest evangelising force that the world can know, as the ministry of Christ and His early Church abundantly demonstrates. Nothing glorifies Christ and exalts His kingdom more than Christ manifesting His power and love through His Church and His spiritual gifts. We thank God that Church history proves that men of faith have ministered the saving and healing power of Christ to the sick and sinful, when the rest of the Church has been plunged in unbelief and spiritual gloom., e.g. Tertullian, Irenaeus, Bernard of Clairvaux, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, George Fox, John Wesley, John Welch, Dowie, Price, Branham, and many others. Let us follow their example and minister the love and power of the altogether lovely God of love, to this needy world.

The challenge of Christ's ministry and the experience of the New Testament ministries, is directed mainly at the more mature Christians and the leaders in Christ's Church, for God does not expect too much of spiritual babes. 1Cor.3v1,2. Heb.5v11-14. Lk.6v40. Christ's ministry and the New Testament teaches us that the ministries that God has set in the Church are never intended to function without the manifest power of God. Eph.4v11. 1Cor.12v28-31. Intellectualism is quite inadequate and barren without the power of God. Intellectual argument needs to be anointed with God's power and presence to do any good, they have to be anointed words like the words of Christ, He said, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Jn.6v63. Some have mistaken oratory, earnestness and noise for the anointing of God, but those who live close to God can easily discern between the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the "strange fire" of humanistic endeavour. Lev.10v10.

The Lord Jesus commissioned every preacher He sent forth to work miracles, and every local church to be a centre of revival, salvation and healing, and every gift of the Holy Spirit to be operated there. Some say that this is too demanding, but the example that Christians should follow is the ideal one revealed in the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ and His early Church, and not any man-made substitute. I make no apology for the standard laid down in these pages, it is the standard laid down by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. No one should be a leader in Christ's Church, who is not prepared to accept the standard that Christ demanded for those He sent to teach and preach. To be a mere professional preacher without being a minister of God's life, means that a person is in for great condemnation when we meet the Lord. Jas.3v1. Preachers in the New Testament preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven and manifested the gifts of the Holy Spirit. 1Pet.1v12. We fail to read of one New Testament leader who did not manifest spiritual gifts. The Church of Christ was never intended to be a tower of Babylonian humanistic endeavour, Christ desires it to be a body energised with the power of God. It is imitation, not observation, of Christ and His Church that makes a person a New Testament Pentecostal Christian.

There will be no New Testament revival today unless Christians, and Christian leaders in particular, imitate Christ and His early Church by having a mighty life of communion with God and an earnest desire for full-salvation, holiness, and Christ's spiritual gifts. Some say that 1Cor.12v28-30. teaches that the manifestation of the gifts of power and revelation is mainly confined to the ministry gifts of Christ in Eph.4v8-11.. However, Paul tells us in 1Cor.12v31. that all Christians are to covet the more powerful gifts of the Holy Spirit, and that in the local church the gifts will be manifested through the whole church as a body, i.e. one will manifest one gift and another Christian another gift, whereas the ministry gifts of Christ will experience a regular manifestation of the greater gifts through each individual. It is obvious that the different ministries will manifest certain gifts more than others, in fact one will be able to judge the ministry that Christ has given to a person by their manifestation of spiritual gifts. It is obvious that the more authority a person receives from God, the more they will manifest spiritual gifts, one cannot think of an apostle without thinking of the signs of an apostle, or a prophet without thinking of the gifts of revelation, of a New Testament evangelist without thinking of the gifts of healings. 2Cor.12v12. Rom.15v18,19. The spiritual gifts to a large extent made a person's ministry, and the greater the range and power of the gifts of the Spirit they possessed, the greater was their authority in God and their position in the Church. God says that apostles are first in authority, prophets second, teachers third, workers of miracles fourth, ministries of healing fifth, helps sixth, governments seventh, tongues interpreted for the church eighth. It is interesting to note that the administrative offices of helps and governments, probably the New Testament offices of deacon, come last in the New Testament Church and first in the modern Church.

It is a disaster when people are put in charge of churches who have no spiritual and supernatural ministry. A person who has no spiritual gifts should not oversee a Pentecostal church, for all the ministry gifts should exercise the spiritual gifts. The teachers of the early Church did not discuss technicalities, they led people into an experience of New Testament truth, not a mere intellectual knowledge of it. Like Paul, the teachers in the early Church taught the local churches to act as a body together, the gifts being manifested first by one and then by another to meet the challenges presented to them. The apostle Paul told the Corinthian church that God desired them to manifest the gifts of the Holy Spirit in love as a body. Obviously an apostle or prophet will have to manifest all the gifts in doing the work that God has called them to do, but in the local church, God desires the gifts to be shared among his people, it brings a real sense of inter-dependence, and reduces the possibility of pride, or the grave danger of individualism. The emphasis upon intellectual qualifications at the expense of spiritual qualifications has resulted in a dreadful spiritual death in most Christian denominations and a complete absence of the mighty manifestations of the Holy Spirit in most churches. John Wesley says in Vol.2, page 204 of his works: -

"The grand reason why the miraculous gifts were so soon withdrawn, was not only that faith and holiness were well nigh lost, but that dry, formal, orthodox men, began to ridicule whatever gifts they had not themselves and to decry them all as either madness or imposture." End of quote.

The Scribes and Pharisees of Christ's day did not accept the fact that God had passed them by and chosen ordinary working men to be the channels of His omnipotence omniscience and love, but God will always choose the humble, spiritual and loving soul in preference to the self-sufficient and proud, wise, prudent and intellectual person. God resists the proud and gives His grace to the humble and meek, the first beatitude tells us that it is only those who come as humbly to God as a penniless beggar does for charity, who will receive the treasures of heaven. Humble yourself before God, submit yourself to His Word, be subordinate to the Lordship of Christ, and you will experience the good gifts of the Holy Spirit, the good gifts that God delights to give His children, the lovely gifts that Christ bought for us with His precious blood

**W. H. Turner. December 16th. 1998. Reformatted and Edited again,
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PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

I wrote the first edition of this book in the 1970's, and incorporated much of it into my larger book on the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit. As a result this book covers much of the ground of that book, but in a less technical, and more readable way. My wife says that she likes it, for this very reason, so I am putting out this new edition of this study. I hope and pray that it will prove to be a blessing to those who read and study it.

W. H. Turner January 28th. 2001.

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

In this fifth edition, I have improved the format and grammar, and rewritten some of the material. The need for the gifts of the Holy Spirit is greater than ever. The evil last days are upon us, and the morals of society have rapidly degenerated, just as the Scriptures foretold. God's gifts are God's answer to this wickedness. Let us take up the challenge, and take hold of God's promise, and earnestly and diligently seek Him for His gifts.
W. H. Turner. April 29th. 2005.

THE NINE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. 1Cor.12v7-11.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are called "demonstrations," 1Cor.2v4., "signs," "distributions," Heb.2v4., "operations," 1Cor.12v6., however, it is probably best to call them "spiritual gifts," or "manifestations of the Spirit," as Paul does in 1Cor.12v1,4,7,9,31. 14v1.. In 1Cor.12v1. and 1Cor.14v1., the word translated "spiritual gifts" simply means "spirituals." However, the proof that these manifestations of the Spirit can be called "spiritual gifts" is found in 1Cor.12v4,9,31., for Paul uses "charismata," which means "gifts of grace." The following Scriptures also confirm our right to call these manifestations of the Holy Spirit by the name of spiritual gifts. Rom.12v6. Eph.4v8. 1Tim.4v14. 2Tim.1v6. So it is quite correct to call these "spirituals," "gifts of the Spirit," or "manifestations of the Spirit." The first shows us that "spirituals" are a gift of grace and we cannot earn them, and the second shows that these "spirituals" have their source in God the Holy Ghost. These nine gifts fall into three definite divisions, and these divisions help considerably in the study of the manifestations of the Spirit.

Three gifts can be called "gifts of revelation and information." They spring from God's omniscient love.

- 1. The manifestation of a word of knowledge.**
- 2. The manifestation of a word of wisdom.**
- 3. The manifestation of discerning of spirits.**

Three gifts can be called "gifts of power and demonstration." They spring from God's omnipotent love.

- 4. The manifestation of faith.**
- 5. The manifestation of working of miracles.**
- 6. The manifestation of gifts of healings.**

Three gifts can be called "gifts of inspiration and edification." They spring from God's omnipresent love.

- 7. The manifestation of prophecy.**
- 8. The manifestation of various kinds of tongues.**
- 9. The manifestation of interpretation of tongues.**

The description that we have given to these three groups of gifts show the major characteristics of each group, obviously the description of one group can apply in a lesser measure to the other groups of gifts. The description that we have given shows the major characteristics and uses of these three groups of gifts. It is worth noting that Paul speaks of one Christian having several manifestations of the same gift in one meeting, whereas other gifts are spoken of in a singular to show us that we cannot expect them to be so common.

The co-ordination of Spiritual Gifts.

The apostle Paul divides the manifestations of the Spirit into nine separate divisions, nine gifts that can operate quite separately from each another. However, though these gifts can occur quite separately from one another, very often several gifts can be manifested at the same time. The gifts are various aspects of the love, power, wisdom and knowledge of God imparted to us by the Holy Spirit. These gifts complement and overlap each other in their ministries, sometimes we may need one gift, but at other times we may need several to meet our needs. Sometimes we may need the love and assurance that are given through the encouraging gifts of inspiration, at other times we may need the knowledge and wisdom imparted by the gifts of revelation, and at still other times we may need the mighty power of God manifested through the gifts of power to meet the needs put before us. Paul urges the Corinthians in 1Cor.11 to 14., to earnestly seek God so that all the gifts could be manifested in their Christian gatherings. It is not by chance that Paul discussed spiritual gifts immediately after his instruction on the Lord's supper, the manifestation of spiritual gifts was part and parcel of the communion service. God the Holy Spirit wants to directly meet the needs of Christ's flock as they are gathered together to remember the death of their Lord. A correct reading and exposition of God's Word will lead to a manifestation of spiritual gifts. If we fail to obey God's command in His Word to seek for His spiritual gifts, we shall find little blessing on our Christian gatherings. The Holy Spirit is Lord; He has come to rule, not to take a back seat. 2Cor.3v17,18. If we insist on keeping to our programs, we shall miss the things that God has for us, and very little will be accomplished. Men love to rule and take the place that belongs to Christ alone, Christ is the head of the Church, and the Church should follow His plans and designs, but the Church has to many human designs that God will never put His stamp of approval upon.

The reasons why Paul says, "Follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy," in 1Cor.14v1. is because prophecy is particularly edifying to the Church, and it can be the channel of so many gifts. It can be a channel for words of wisdom and knowledge and reveal the presence of spiritual powers, and as a channel of words of wisdom it can reveal God's desire to manifest gifts of healings, working of miracles, and the gift of faith. The gift of prophecy comforts, encourages and edifies the Church, and as a channel of the word of wisdom it can co-ordinate the manifestation of spiritual gifts. Paul states in 1Cor.12, that the gifts are intended to operate in the local church like the various parts of the body operate together in perfect co-operation and co-ordination. What wonderful things we shall see when we begin to follow the Scripture pattern and see the Holy Spirit manifesting all His gifts in every local church, when this happens the churches will have no difficulty in getting the unconverted to become Christians. In the early Church multitudes of people became Christians when they heard the Gospel message and saw it confirmed by the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the same thing will happen today when those same gifts are manifested. God desires every church to be a centre of revival, salvation and healing, with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit operating in real power and love, a veritable heaven upon earth. This is the meaning of 1Cor.14v1., "Follow after love and desire spiritual gifts." Christians and Christian churches should radiate God's power and reflect God's love to the world. When a church works together in love and the gifts operate in perfect co-ordination together through the members of that church, it means that Christ can perform all that He desires to do through that church and His name is abundantly glorified.

The two main areas of spiritual gifts are defensive and offensive, they protect and they attack, they defend us from Satan's attacks, and they empower us to attack Satan. Usually one experiences the defensive manifestations of spiritual gifts first, and the attacking manifestations later. Indeed, in the Scriptures we read of many people who only experienced the defensive manifestations of the gifts, they never experienced the offensive manifestations of the gifts. In manifesting the gifts of the Holy Spirit we will find that God increases the power of the manifestations as we grow in grace, and that God will develop the revelation gifts by using them in a defensive role in secret before they are manifested in public in an attack upon Satan's kingdom. The Lord Jesus did no miracles before His baptism at Jordan, but He certainly had many manifestations of the gifts of revelation during His life as a carpenter at Nazareth, as it is shown by His mother's words, "Whatever He saith unto you do it." Jn.2v5,11. Once a person is familiar with the operation of the gifts of revelation, the gifts of power can follow, for those who understand and have God's purposes revealed to them, can also receive God's gift of power to fulfil those purposes. It is essential for everyone who is seeking spiritual gifts to get as close to God in prayer as it is possible to do so. It is important to realise that it is not emotion that brings a manifestation of spiritual gifts but rather faith that is nourished and exercised in prayer. Prayer in tongues has a vital part to play in the manifestation of the other spiritual gifts, and this is why Paul said, "I speak with tongues more than ye all," and he thanked God for this means of spiritual edification. 1Cor.14v18. How necessary it is to build the character up in God and love through communion with God, we must earnestly desire "great grace" as well as "great power." We must desire spiritual gifts to bless others, i.e. the motive must be love for God and others and not self-aggrandisement.

1. THE WORD OF WISDOM.

This is the first gift mentioned in the list in 1Cor.12v8-10., and it is without doubt the most important of the nine spiritual gifts. Much confusion has arisen from a purely human explanation of the word of wisdom, so we will start our study of this gift by stating what it does not consist of.

1. It is not wisdom sanctified to the service of God.

No more than speaking with tongues is the consecration of linguistic ability to God, or the gifts of healings are the sanctified ministrations of a Christian doctor. It is not even natural wisdom augmented by divine blessing. The word of wisdom often carries with it prediction, a thing quite outside the realm or range of human wisdom. Human wisdom cannot reveal God's purposes for the future.

It is not the ability to guide and counsel people wisely.

All Christians who know Scriptures can do this in some measure, and those who have had a long walk with God through many years and many trials are especially able to give wise words of counsel and guidance. 2Cor.1v3-10. The apostle Paul does not say that a person is given a gift of wisdom, but rather a gift of a word of wisdom that is entirely supernatural. Usually the guidance for everyday affairs needs common-sense and Christian wisdom, if we need a word of wisdom, God can break into our lives and routines as He did into the lives of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Gideon, David, Elisha, the apostles and many other of God's people, both inside and outside the Scripture records.

2. It is not the ability to rightly interpret the Scriptures.

A word of wisdom is a supernatural process. For example; Daniel, Paul and Peter received the revelation of Christ's second coming by divine revelation, not by consecrated intellect and careful study. In Lk.10v20-24. Christ rejoiced that God's purposes had been revealed to the babes and hidden from the wise and prudent. The word of wisdom is not human wisdom, or even Christian wisdom; it is a fragment of divine wisdom. In 1Sam.9v15,27. the word of God was not an exposition of Scripture, it was a revelation of the will and purposes of God. Lk.11v49. with Mt.23v34-39. 1Thes.4v15.

A word of wisdom is not the ability to preach the Scriptures. All who have felt the power of God when they are preaching will know that they are carried beyond their human ability by the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

However, this is not a manifestation of a word of wisdom, which is a revelation of previously unknown purposes of God, it is the exposition of known truth under divine blessing. This anointed teaching and preaching is a spiritual ministry, but it is not within the sphere of the word of wisdom. Christian exposition of known truth is in the sphere of the ministry gift of a teacher, and some Christians have a remarkable teaching ministry from God. The word of wisdom is in the realm of divine revelation, direction and prediction, and not in the realm of teaching and exposition. A teacher expounds the revealed words of wisdom in the Scriptures under the anointing of God, but if he manifests a word of wisdom, as he sometimes should, it is a previously unknown fragment of the mind and purposes of God.

The word of wisdom is not the guidance into Scriptural truth by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit guides all Christians into truth whether they are a Sunday School scholar or a Bible School lecturer. The word of wisdom works in a much more specialised sphere than the guiding into all truth, which is based upon interpretation and application of Biblical truth. The reception of Scriptures was by word of wisdom, its interpretation needs sanctified common sense, study and the breath of the Holy Spirit, and this will guide one into the knowledge of the truth. The apostle Paul told the Christians at Corinth to seek the greater gifts, and infers that they were very rare or limited in their operation in the Corinthian church, this shows that the gift of a word of wisdom was not the ability to interpret the Scriptures, which all Christians do in some measure. 1Jn.2v25-27. Jn.16v13.

To say that this mighty gift of a word of wisdom is only at work through teaching and preaching and is usually unknown or unobserved in its operation is complete nonsense, and is quite contrary to the whole of Scriptural revelation about this gift. This humanistic interpretation robs much of Christ's Church from desiring or obtaining the most important weapon in its spiritual armoury. It is a fact confirmed again and again by the Scriptures, that the prophets had visions of God and His great purposes in order to give them sufficient strength to perform the tremendous tasks before them. Because of the extreme pressure and great persecution they faced many of the prophets and some New Testament Christians experienced God's truths and spiritual realities by vision, an intellectual appreciation of these truths and realities was not sufficient, Some divine truths and spiritual realities can only be revealed to their full extent by the Holy Spirit manifesting His greater gifts. The Church needs men today who are transformed by the revelation of God and His purposes, men of heavenly vision and spiritual insight, such men make the truth of God live by their confirmation and demonstration of it by the gifts of power and revelation. We need teachers who not only rightly interpret the Scriptures, but above all we need teachers who can fulfil the Scriptures and manifest spiritual gifts, men who have visions of God and His purposes.

N.B. A Word of Warning.

In this present dispensation there is no need for either prophet or priest to come between Christians and their God, we can all be personally led by the Holy Spirit, if we abide in Christ and walk in the Spirit, God will guide us. Rom.8v14. Jn.14v16-26. 16v7-15. We are told in Heb.8v8-13. that the new covenant does away with one person directing another in the will of God for them, for "they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me from the least unto the greatest." Heb.10v19-22., tells us that the blood of Christ has made it possible for every child of God to come right into the presence of God, and in Heb.4v14-16. all Christians are personally invited to come directly to the Father and Son for grace and mercy. To direct others in such things as marriage, or their work for God is quite unscriptural and very wrong in this dispensation, these things are between a person and their Saviour, as Peter found out in Jn.21v20-22., when he tried with genuine concern and love to find out Christ's plan for John. God can use prophecy to confirm guidance, or to reveal a person's crushing problems, or to reveal great dangers ahead, and if they are going out of God's way and into danger. In other words God can use one Christian, or a group of Christians, to deliver another Christian from danger in an emergency, but to direct them in life's everyday affairs is quite another matter altogether; each Christian has a personal responsibility to seek God for themselves for divine guidance. We see in Acts.21v4,10-13., that the Holy Spirit warned Paul "that he should not go up to Jerusalem," through the Christians at Tyre, at Caesarea the prophet Agabus, again warned Paul of the consequences of going up to Jerusalem. Paul ignored these warnings, and the warning that Christ had given to him personally many years before, see Acts.22v16-21., that the Jews would not listen to him, and so he got himself into circumstances quite out of the will of God, because his love for his own people and his desire to see them saved. Rom.10v1. 9v1-5. One is filled with admiration for a man who could say that he wished that he could be cut off from Christ if it meant that it would save his country-folk, but this beautiful love for his people led Paul out of God's will, so we can see that we have to watch even our strong loving desires, otherwise we can be led out of the will of God. The Church can experience direction from God, but great care should be taken when making important decisions, and personal direction from others should be treated with the greatest caution and never swallowed without question. The apostle John had Christ's purposes and desires for the seven churches in Asia revealed to him, and through him Christ reprov'd sin in these churches, however, Christ never told John to try to direct Christians in their private lives or their manner of work for him, this was a personal matter between Christ and themselves.

3. It is not a good administrative ability.

It is not the ability to lead or govern large meetings, conferences, etc., though some leaders of meetings sometimes experience a real word of wisdom from God. e.g. James. Acts.15v12-22,28. It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and us. Some unconverted worldly people are excellent in chairing meetings and have real administrative ability. The ability to administrate is a necessary ministry in the Church of Christ, and deacons

without doubt fulfil the two ministry gifts of helps and governments spoken of in 1Cor.12v28. "Helps," Gr. "antilepsis," suggests, "a taking over," or "a laying hold of to support," and "administration." The word "governments," Gr. "kubernesis," means ability to steer and guide, like a ships master or pilot. Acts.27v11. One could hardly think that Paul would omit a reference to the ministry of deacons in his list in 1Cor.12v28., as this was an important New Testament office, the ministries of "helps" and "governments," ideally describe the office and work of deacons.

4. The word of wisdom must not be confused with the normal gift of prophecy.

The word of wisdom contains either direction or prediction, whereas the normal gift of prophecy spoken of in 1Cor.12v10., does not. Any prophecy that contains either direction or a prediction of God's purposes, contains a word of wisdom, and what we usually call "prophecies" in the Old Testament were really predictions. The simple gift of prophecy edifies, exhorts and comforts; whereas the word of wisdom directs, predicts and reveals the purposes of God. 1Cor.14v3,23,25.

The seer of the Old Testament and the prophet spoken of in Eph.4v8-11., are both the same office, and both experience a regular ministry of the gifts of revelation. They can also manifest the simple gift of prophecy words of edification, exhortation, and comfort. For example David prophesied many times in his psalms to edify, exhort and comfort, but on other occasions he manifested the word of wisdom and revealed the mind and purposes of God. So we can see that the simple gift of prophecy is the same in the Old Testament and New Testament, the person who possessed it ministered words of comfort and edification. Those who continually manifested gifts of revelation had a prophetic office, whether they were an Old Testament or New Testament prophet. The person with a simple gift of prophecy may occasionally manifest a word of wisdom, but that does not make them a major prophet with a prophetic office, it is the continual manifestation of the gifts of revelation that proves a person has this office. Doubtless, the faithful exercise of the simple gift of prophecy will result in God entrusting a Christian with the exercise of the greater gifts of revelation. When Paul in 1Cor.14v1. puts prophecy at the head of the gifts that we should desire, "Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy," he does so because prophecy edifies the Church, and because it can be a channel of the gifts of revelation. The simple gift of prophecy does not hold the pre-eminent place in the gifts; it is the prophecy that reveals the mind, purposes and knowledge of God, that is the most important gift. It is divine sovereignty, grace and wisdom that ordains major prophets and apostle, not human desire. Jer.1v4-10. Acts.9v15,16. Eph.4v8-11. 1Cor.12v28.

5. The word of wisdom is not intended to add to the Scriptures. We read in Eph.2v20 and 3v5. that the Old Testament prophets, Christ and His New Testament apostles and prophets, have given us the Word of God. God has revealed His eternal truths and purposes to us in the Scriptures, those who say that they have a new revelation of truth that replaces, or adds to, the Scriptures, should be rejected. The next revelation of new truth will start with a new dispensation, at the start of the Millennial kingdom. God has revealed His new purposes for each age as the new age has begun. Certain moral truths are eternal, certain dispensational truths have an application within the age they are given. It is true that the Old Testament prophets prophesied truth for our dispensation but we read in 1Pet.1v10-12., that it puzzled them, until they were told that it was for our age.

After God had given the law to Moses, God did not expand the law through the prophets, He revealed His purposes to them in the light of their reaction to the law, e.g. Micah.6v8. "He hath shown thee, oh man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

After the Old Testament prophets, Christ and His apostles and prophets, had revealed New Testament truth, when God gave words of wisdom to the churches, it was to meet local circumstances or personal need, it was NOT to add to the truth of New Testament revelation. We see in Rev.22v19 what God thinks of those who add to, or take away from Scriptural truth. There are many today who are wolves in sheep's clothing; they try to make their false revelation replace the Scripture. They claim a new organisation, a new order and authority, new apostleship, new doctrine, and they deny Christ's deity, death and doctrines. Paul warns us that false teachers can use Christian phraseology, but they preach another Jesus, they are moved by another Spirit, and preach another Gospel, these are "deceitful workers," Satan's ministers making themselves out to be messengers of light and ministers of righteousness. 2Cor.11v3,4,13-15. All the truth we need for this dispensation is revealed to us in the Scriptures without any more being added; Christ and His apostles and prophets give us the only foundation upon which we can build as Christians. Eph.2v20. 3v5. Those who desire to manifest the word of wisdom will have to keep close to God and keep full of the Holy Spirit. Each person will not have the same power or authority in their manifestation of this gift, or for that matter any gift, a person's spiritual growth and authority given to them by God will decide the extent of a person's ministry, To receive direction for one's life is one thing, but to have the revelation of God's eternal purposes like the apostle Paul is something much greater.

The Word of Wisdom is the Greatest of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

a. Because nothing is so great, wonderful, or important as the revelation of the mind and purposes of God.

By words of wisdom we learn of God's plans to manifest the gifts of power. We are instructed, and informed of

God's desires. We come into the secret place of the Most High to hear His secret purposes. God tells His children who seek Him, His secrets and plans. Gen.18v17-19. Jn.15v13-16. Mt.5v6,8. God gives to us His perfect wisdom, wisdom springing out of His omniscience, i.e. His unlimited knowledge God has given the Scriptures to us by this gift, it is the record of God's eternal purposes and His dealing with mankind in the light of these purposes. God has given these revelations of His purposes in the most magnificent and wonderful ways, by mighty vision, dream and spoken word, confirmed by sign and wonder, to stress the importance of the revelation given.

b. Because rejection of God's words of wisdom has always resulted in divine judgement.

Israel and Judah ended up in chains in captivity when they rejected the words of wisdom given through God's prophets. 2Chron.36v15-21. The people in the time of the Judges were oppressed because they would not obey God's purposes. The Jews killed their Messiah and about 30 years later they reaped the results of their folly, in A.D. 70 Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus and 1,100,000 people died, Christ predicted the results of their folly, and sobbed because His intentions to bless and protect them had failed because of their wickedness. Lk.19v41-44. In the time of the flood the people rejected God's purposes revealed by Enoch's and Noah's prophesying and preaching and so the flood destroyed them.

c. Because obedience to God's purposes has always caused God's saints to conquer.

The early Church conquered because their activities were directed by words of wisdom. No church or Christian fellowship can conquer where men rule instead of God; we have to be subordinate to the Lordship of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

DEFINITION.

A word of wisdom is a supernatural revelation given by the Holy Spirit of the mind and purposes of God. It is God's will, commands and plans revealed to man by the Holy Spirit. Through this gift the Holy Spirit has revealed divine truth, and He can still give divine guidance under all circumstances, and can reveal God's plans and purposes for individuals, communities, churches and nations.

SOME EXAMPLES AND USES OF THE WORD OF WISDOM.

1. To reveal the eternal counsels and sovereign purposes of God and vital spiritual truths.

All the divine revelations in Scripture of the purposes of God came through this gift. 2Tim.3v14-17. The Greek word for inspiration means literally "God-breathed" in 2Tim.3v16. Christ said the Scriptures could not be broken; this was because they were breathed by God. Jn.10v35. See how often the phrase "Jehovah said unto Moses" occurs in the books that Moses wrote, he received truths from God by word of wisdom, and this gift is manifested in all the writings of the prophets. The "oracles of God" came through the manifestation of the word of wisdom. Acts.7v38. Rom.3v2. Heb.5v12. Christ was very angry with the religious leaders of His day because their false traditions had made the revealed words of God's wisdom of non-effect. Mk.7v8-13. The Bible claims inspiration, and substantiates its claims. Jer.1v9. 5v14. Ez.1v3. Hos.1v1. Joel.1v1. Micah.1v1. Zeph.1v1. Haggai.1v1. Zech.1v1. Mal.1v1. 2Chron.15v1. Numb.12v6-8. Exod.4v12. Mt.5v18. 21v42. 22v29,31,32. 26v54. Mk.12v24. Lk.16v30,31. 4v4,8,10,17-21. 24v25-27,44,45. Jn.5v39. 10v35. 19v35. Rom.1v1,2. 1Cor.2v10-13. 1Cor.14v37. Gal.1v11,12. Eph.3v1-4. 1Thes.2v13. Rev.22v16-20. 2Tim.3v14-17. etc.

Words of wisdom can be divided into two main groups.

a. Truths and principles for living by, general commands.

God is very interested in how we live, both the law and Christ's teaching, were mainly directed at getting people to live holy and clean lives, i.e. to put love into action. The Scriptures reveal to us the nature and end of sin and contrast this with the glorious end of a life of love and holiness. Christ Jesus came to save us from the penalty and power of sin.

b. To reveal God's hidden purposes and His plan of the ages.

Certain purposes of God are not just for individuals, local circumstances, or even for nations, they are God's eternal purposes and sovereign plans for His whole creation, some of them are not even dependent upon men's reactions. These hidden purposes of God are called "mysteries," this does not mean "mysterious things," it means "secret purposes." These secret purposes of God are revealed unto His children. Eph.1v9,10. 3v3-11. Some of these purposes of God have been kept hidden from all, even the angels, since the foundation of the world. Mt.13v17-35,11. Lk.10v21-24. Rom.16v25,26. Col.1v26. 1Cor.15v51-53. Those who know these hidden truths have a responsibility to tell others. 1Cor.3v1,2. 4v1,2.

God's plan for the ages. Eph.1v21 2v7. 3v11.

The Greek for "eternal purpose" in Eph.3v11., is "plan for the ages." God had a plan for all ages before He started His creation, an incredibly complex and wise plan. Every age up to the Great White Throne judgement has been a preparation for the ages of ages after that great judgement. During the preparatory ages, God is setting the free wills of His creatures and proving that love is the only thing that can make community life a blessing. At the great White Throne every mouth will be stopped, for God will show the perfect justice and wisdom of His dealings, and will prove by past history His loving rule and the rule for love, mutual happiness in community life is quite impossible. The Bible tells us of the following ages, the angelic ages in heaven; the

earth under angelic rule, which ended with the judgement of the earth after Satan's fall; the very short age of divine communion with man in Eden; the age of divine forbearance which ended with the flood; the age of human government in the light of the flood, which ended with Babel; the age of promise, started by the promise given to Abraham; the age of law; the present age of grace; the Millennial age of stern judgement, which ends with the Great White Throne judgement of all free-will creatures; this is followed by endless ages of ages, when God shows His children men and angels the everlasting joys reserved for them. After the captivity in Babylon a period started called the times of the Gentiles, this will continue right up to the establishment of Christ's Millennial kingdom. During this period God is allowing men's own failure to demonstrate the fact that no matter which person or nation rules, happiness is impossible without His loving rule and the rule of love.

The whole of God's great plan of the ages revolved around God's central purpose of creation, redemption in Christ, without which no creation would have been possible, Christ's death was fore-known and planned before the foundation of the world. Rev.13v8. Titus.1v2. We are also told of other hidden purposes of God as children of God, Mk.4v11. Mt.13v11. Lk.8v10. Rom.11v25. 16v25. 1Cor.2v7. 4v1. 13v2. 14v2. 15v51. Eph.1v9. 3v3,4,9. 6v19. Col.1v26,27. 2v2. 4v3. 1Tim.3v9,16. Rev.1v20. 10v7. 17v5,7. We are also told of Satan's purposes and plans. 2Thes.2v7-12. Rev.2v13,24. Is.14v12-14. Most of Satan's children are deceived by their master, we are beloved children of God, and our Father does not deceive us, he tells us His hidden secrets. The Scriptures also reveal Satan's plan to ravage and destroy the earth, and how he will try to compel all the earth to worship him by brute force and violence, how different from the beautiful and lovely desires of the great God of love.

God told many of His Old Testament and New Testament saints of purposes of His which were hidden to other people, Enoch had Christ's second coming revealed to him, Jude.v14.; Abraham had the revelation of Christ's first coming Jn.8v56.; Daniel had the revelation of the first and second coming of Christ, the great judgement throne, and coming ruling world empires, Dan.9v20-27. 7v1-16. The apostle John and the apostle Paul received equally astounding revelations of the plans and purposes of God. Revelation all. 1Cor.15v51-53. 2Cor.12v1-4. These are but a few who experienced the revelation of God's plans and purposes. The wonderful thing is that we have been told these plans and purposes and will have a part in their fulfilment, and will enjoy during the ages of ages the wonderful plans of our heavenly Father, and the unsearchable riches of our dear Lord Jesus Christ. Eph.2v4-7. 3v8,14-21. Hallelujah!

2. To warn of future divine Judgement.

a. Noah was warned of the flood. Gen.6v18-22. The proofs that the flood was universal are:-

1. If it had been a local flood there would have been no need for an ark. Noah built a ship of almost 20,000 tons in weight, as large as some modern ocean liners, this was quite unnecessary for a local flood.
2. We are told in Gen.7v19,20., that the water covered all the high mountains.
3. We read in Gen.7v11,24. and 8v2., that the fountains of the deep played a part in the flood, this speaks of ocean depths.

The flood continued for one year, and it was seven months before Noah could venture out of the ark after grounding on Ararat. Gen.7v11 with 8v4,14. The Scriptures tell us that all men outside of the ark died, Gen6v17. 7v21-23. Mt.24v37-39. Lk.17v26,27. 1Pet.3v20. Only a universal flood can fit the words of Peter in 2Pet.3v3-10., Peter says that the wicked will be destroyed by fire at Christ's coming, as the flood destroyed them in the time of Noah.

b. Abraham warned of the destruction of Sodom and the other cities of the plain. Gen.18v17-33. 19v12,13., by Jehovah the Son, angels perform the judgement, v13..

c. Elijah foretells Ahab's death. 1Kings.21v17-27. This frightens Ahab into a measure of repentance, but Micaiah confirms Elijah's prediction after further sin and rebellion against God by Ahab. 2Chron.18v1-34. 1Kings.22v1-39.

d. God told many prophets that He would judge Israel and Judah by captivity. 2Chron.36v15-21. Ezek.9v1-11. Is.10v5-27. God used the cruel Assyrians and Chaldeans to perform His purpose of judgement.

e. Jesus warned Jerusalem of her coming holocaust, but to no avail. Lk.19v41-44. Mt.23v29-39. He also warned that Jerusalem will reject God's witnesses in favour of Antichrist and will again perish for it. Lk.21v20-24. Rev.17v15-18.

3. To give divine direction before, or during, natural catastrophe or national disaster.

a. Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams and averts disaster. Gen.41v1-44.

b. God rewards the faithful great woman of Shunem by preserving her in famine, she is directed to leave the land while the famine lasts, she has her property restored after the famine by the king. 2Kings.4v8-17. 8v1-6. God rewards her for looking after Elisha.

c. Agabus warns of a coming famine and the saints make plans to meet the coming trial. Acts11v27-30. Famine in the Scriptures is often stated to be the result of judgement from God. 2Sam.21v1-14. 24v13.

d. Paul warns of a storm by word of knowledge and guides the storm by word of wisdom. Acts.27v9-11,21-25,30-34,44. God can deliver us in time of accident.

4. To give divine direction and deliverance in time of persecution and danger.

a. David is protected from Saul, "abide not in the hold." 1Sam.25v5,6.

b. The three kings delivered from sure defeat when fighting Moab. 2Kings.3v4-27.

- c. The wise men, Mary and Christ directed from danger. Mt.2v12,13,19,20.
- d. Christ postpones His visit to Jerusalem, being warned of a plan to arrest Him, He goes up late to escape arrest; the soldiers which are sent to arrest Him when He starts preaching don't do it because of His mighty anointed preaching. Jn.7v1-10,44-53.
- e. Paul is warned to flee from Jerusalem just after his conversion. Acts.22v17-21.
- f. Jeremiah's guidance from God is rejected; the result is death for all. Jer.42 & 43.

5. To give divine defence in trial or persecution for Christ's sake.

Sometimes we can answer our foes by exposition of Scripture truth as Paul did in Acts.24v24-27. Col.4v6. 1Pet.3v13-18., or by giving our testimony as Paul did in Acts22v1-24. 26v1-31., and sometimes our own wisdom can show us the way to answer as Paul did in Acts.23v6-10.. However, in Lk.12v11,12. and 21v12-15., Christ tells us that in murderous persecution WE MUST NOT PREMEDITATE WHAT TO ANSWER, for the Holy Spirit will guide us what to say in the hour of trial, this is obviously not a premeditated clever answer but the impartation of divine wisdom. The writer has had the experience of saying things, which were not in his head, you listen to yourself answer people, or you receive a flash of divine illumination beyond your capacity or outside your knowledge to answer people with. This is obviously what happened to Peter in Acts.4v8-14., he was filled with the Holy Spirit and his answer and the divine wisdom imparted to Peter and John gave them a boldness and assurance that amazed the Sanhedrin and they could only threaten them, they were unable to answer them. v16-22. 5v17-42.

Probably Christ Himself had the same experience when He answered His opponents in Mt.21v23-27., when He was asked the source of His authority, and in Mt.22v15-22. when His foes tried to trap Him over the lawfulness of tribute to Caesar. However, His answer to the Scribes and Pharisees in Mt.22v23-33,41-46. was by Scriptural knowledge.

In Acts.6v10., we read that Stephen had such wisdom and power given to him by God that his foes were unable to answer him, they had to bring false witnesses to lie about Stephen and pervert justice in an attempt to smear his character, however, so great was the presence of God with his faithful servant that Stephen's face was transfigured and like the face of an angel. In Acts.7., we see that Stephen's defence was Scriptural, his dynamic conclusion was the result of a remarkable fullness of the Holy Spirit. 7v55. When God told the Sanhedrin through Stephen, of His reaction to their rejection of His purposes, they killed Stephen, so we can see that when God gives His wisdom and power to us in persecution, there is not always deliverance, but there is always a mighty witness. Rev.2v13. Antipas my faithful martyr.

D. Gee tells in his book on spiritual gifts, of a Scot's covenanting lass, on her way to a secret meeting of Christians, who was accosted by dragoons who were after the Christians, they asked where she was going, she answered that she was going to hear her elder brother's will read; the dragoons told her that they hoped that she would receive a goodly portion. She was speaking of the blessings that come through the death of her elder brother, Christ, and His will was His Word and promises. Heb.2v11. 9v14-24. God can deliver us, but if He does not, He is still with us, and if our foes kill us, they only send us home to Father and heaven and our Saviour all the sooner. Death to the Christian is gain. Phil.21v24. Hallelujah.

6. To give divine direction in the work of God.

a. It can reveal and confirm a call from God to work for Him. Moses, Exod.3v1-13.; Gideon, Judges.7v1-11.; Isaiah, Is.6v8.; Jeremiah, Jer.1v1-9.; Paul, Acts.9v10-17. 13v1,2.. It is only when God calls a person into His work and spiritually equips them that things really happen, for where God guides, He provides and equips. There are too many people in the ministry who have had no real call from God, and there is a tremendous emphasis upon human ability instead of God's divine call and equipment.

b. It can reveal God's strategic plans. Elijah, 1Kings17v1. 18v1-46.; Joshua, Joshua.5v13-6v5. It seemed folly, but it worked because God was in it.; Philip, Acts.8v26,29.; Peter, Acts.10v1-48.; Paul, Acts.13v2. 16v6-10.; 3,000 missionaries, Acts.2v5.; The man born lame healed, many converts, Acts.4v4.; Christ's ministry was directed by revelation, Jn.5v19,20.. How we need to rely on God's plans and not on our own, to many people ask God to put His seal of approval on their plans.

N.B. A word of wisdom can show us how to serve God, but it is not manifested to direct another person's walk with God, e.g. Jn.21v22. "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." In Acts.13v2., a word of wisdom confirmed what God had already told Paul and Barnabus, they received specific guidance direct from God, others confirmed it in a general and vague way. More direct and specific words of wisdom can be given by God in an emergency to preserve us from danger. Acts.20v22,23. 21v4,10-14.

c. It can reveal God's appointed shepherd, leader, or apostle. Saul, 1Sam.9v16.; David, 1Sam.16v6-13.; the twelve apostles, Lk.6v12-19.; Paul, Acts.9v15,16.;

d. It can reveal the solution to a church problem. Acts.15v13-29. However, this does not rule out discussion, "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us." 15v28.

e. To judge or correct sin or a wrong attitude so that God's work can prosper. The apostle Peter's sectarian views were corrected by a revelation of God's purposes for the Gentiles. Acts.10v9-22,30-48. Ananias and Sapphira are exposed and judged by God for their sin. Acts.5v1-11. The churches in Revelation are corrected

and encouraged by Christ. Rev.2 and 3.

f. To reveal blessings that are to come. Abraham, Gen.12v1-7. 17v1-8.; Jacob, Gen.25v23. 28v15.; the promised blessing of the Holy Spirit, Acts.2v16-21. with Joel.2v28-32.

g. To help in home, family life, work or business. God loves to enter our everyday life and meet our needs for divine guidance and direction. 2Kings.4v1-7. Lk.5v1-11. God loves to comfort and assure His saints when they are troubled. Wxod.33v12-17. Josh.1v1-9. Jer.1v4-10. Acts.23v11. 27v22-24. 2Cor.1v3-7. Rev.1v9-18.

f. To help God's people in time of war. One of the staggering things about the history of Israel is the way God helped the Israelites to defeat their foes by divine guidance and power. They were only victorious when they followed the divine purposes and plans, and the Church will only be victorious as it follows the divine purpose and plan.

Some special points to watch over words of wisdom.

a. The time factor in prediction, you may think a prediction or promise from God may be accomplished in days or weeks, when it will be fulfilled in years. 1Pet.1v10-12.

b. There will sometimes be a great discrepancy between circumstances as they appear and God's word of wisdom for the future, and we can experience a real fight of faith until God's promise is fulfilled. Lk.4v1-13. Eph.6v10-20. Heb.6v12. 10v32-39.

c. Unless God tells you to do something in a word of wisdom, wait until God fulfils His purposes, don't try to fulfil them yourself.

d. A prophecy of judgement may not come to pass because a person or persons repent and put things right with God or man, Jonah.3v9,10.; likewise a person may not die who God has said will die, because of a new consecration and prevailing prayer by themselves or others. Is.38v1-22. Promised blessing may also be withheld by God because of sin. Ps.95v8-11. Ezek.18v20-32. 2Cor.6v16 to 7v1.

e. God never intended that we should divorce the manifestation of spiritual gifts from abiding in Christ, keeping God's Word, and praying through, and this is particularly true of the word of wisdom, the greatest of the gifts, it is the love-filled, Christ-centred life, that will minister and fulfil God's purposes and blessing in the way that God intends. Jn.15v1-17. N.B. v7,12,17. The prayer of faith, with or without tongues, usually precedes any powerful manifestation of this gift, or any other gift of any importance. Let us never divorce great grace from great power. Acts.4v33.

THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE.

This is the second gift in the list in 1Cor.12v8-10., and though the word of wisdom is without question the greatest of the spiritual gifts, for it reveals God's plans and purposes, the word of knowledge comes close behind it in importance. Indeed, there is a similar close link between words of wisdom and words of knowledge, as there is between natural wisdom and knowledge. Sometimes we need a word of knowledge to make sense of a word of wisdom, and we often need a word of wisdom to deal with the situation a word of knowledge reveals. A word of wisdom can tell us what to do, a word of knowledge tells us of a fact that we do not know, sometimes it may only need common-sense to act on the revelation of a word of knowledge, at other times we may need the wisdom of God through a word of wisdom.

The three gifts of revelation often occur together, particularly in the ministries of apostles and prophets, we consider them separately because God can and does manifest them separately, and this is particularly true in the local church, where the Lord gives one gift to one and another gift to another to bring a feeling of mutual dependence and love. 1Cor.12v12-31. N.B. v25. The gifts of action rely on the gifts of revelation for information, the gifts of revelation rely on the gifts of power for action, and the gifts of inspiration build up character and spiritual strength for the manifestation of the other gifts. Let us now consider some important facts about a word of knowledge.

1. A word of knowledge is not any kind of natural ability or knowledge.

It is a fact that it is supernaturally given by the Holy Spirit of which the recipient has no knowledge, or very occasionally it may confirm as a fact something a child of God may have been told, felt or feared, as when David asked God if the men of Keilah would deliver him up to Saul, God told him they would. 1Sam.23v1-12. We also see that many of Ezekiel's visions were retrospective words of knowledge that revealed and confirmed the sin that had brought about captivity. God knows all the facts of heaven and earth, of time and space, from eternal past to eternal future, and He can reveal them to His children, as we need them. The wonder of God's omniscience overwhelmed David, he said, "such knowledge is too wonderful for me," Ps.139v9., his mind could not conceive such knowledge, but by faith and through spiritual gifts he had experienced glimpses of that awesome omniscience. The word of knowledge is totally miraculous, it is not the ability to analyse, explain, or think logically, it is a revelation of facts which the senses could not know by natural means, it is a small part of God's omniscience, i.e. God all-knowledge, revealed to us.

An intelligent, educated person is in no better position to receive a word of knowledge than a child or

uneducated person, in fact reliance upon human ability positively hinders the manifestation of this gift, or in fact any spiritual gift. This is why the Lord Jesus chose uneducated fishermen, etc.; they had to rely on God to do the miraculous. Those with natural ability and natural knowledge tend to rely on it to do God's work, so God chose "babes and sucklings" and "unlearned men" instead of "the wise and prudent." Lk.10v21,22. Acts.4v13. God will not let any flesh glory in their abilities in His work. 1Cor.1v26-31. The apostle learned that it was not his great scholarship and intellectual ability that caused God to choose him, Paul learned to glory in his limitations, not his abilities, and so Christ's power rested upon him. 1Cor.12v5-10. God places no premium upon ignorance, but He does the very definitely object to self-reliance, and always resists the proud, whether they are ignorant or intellectual. Ps.138v6. James4v6. 1Pet5v5.

2. A word of knowledge is not even a good knowledge of the Scriptures.

The word of knowledge is not the natural talent of a good and keen mind sanctified to the work of God, nor the accumulation of Scripture facts by study, it does not come by intellectual process, it is a result of spiritual revelation. It is not a spiritual revelation from the Scriptures; it is the revelation of some fact given directly from the Holy Spirit. A word of knowledge may come through diligent prayer and Bible study, as do all the greater gifts, but these are the means of grace whereby we tune ourselves into God, they are not the word of knowledge, it is a divine revelation direct from the Holy Spirit. A word of knowledge is not a good ministry of the Scriptures, or any kind of preaching and teaching ability, it is the revelation of an unknown fact from God, it is a miracle of revelation designed to demonstrate God's omniscience, care and love. It is not Christian scholarship manifested in anointed teaching and preaching, it is our heavenly Father showing us His divine mercy, by giving us a glimpse of His all-knowledge. Those who continually minister Christian truths and doctrines are set in the Church as teachers; those who continually reveal words of wisdom and knowledge are prophets. The teacher expounds known truth, the prophet, by a word of knowledge or a word of wisdom, reveals the mind and knowledge of God, to meet definite needs.

3. A word of knowledge is not given to pry into peoples lives.

This is not a gift for the critical or interfering busybody, as Paul points out in 1Cor.13., spiritual gifts are for those who want to minister God's love and blessing, they are for the long-suffering and kind. God dare not give this gift to a hard, critical, envious, scandalmonger. Even the Christian who is motivated by pure love and manifesting this gift, will not be able to pry into people's lives at will, the spiritual person can only minister this gift when the Holy Spirit desires them to. These gifts are not to condemn, they are given to minister divine life, love and blessing. When God reveals some great need in a person's life it can be to warn you, but it is nearly always so that you may help them and pray for them. A word of wisdom or word of knowledge often do not have to be revealed to others, they can be a personal word from God, or reveal a matter for urgent prayer.

4. Sometimes a person does not realise that they have received a word of knowledge.

Peter said that Christ was the Son of the living God, but it was not until Jesus told him that this was a revelation from God, that Peter realised that he had received a word of knowledge. Mt.16v16,17. Revelations given by words of knowledge can vary very considerably in their method of communication, they can consist of a burden put upon the heart by God, a simple word in the spirit from God, and even visions can vary from a vague and shadowy to a brilliant full colour vision. Those who desire to study the reception of spiritual gifts can read my other book about the gifts.

Definition. The word of knowledge is a supernatural revelation given by the Holy Spirit, that reveals to us facts that we need to know, but which we could not know other than by divine revelation. It includes all area of knowledge except that covered by the discerning of spirits, and the words of wisdom. It can tell us of events or things in the past, present, or future. (Here I disagree with H. Horton, and agree with A. Linford, that the word of knowledge can inform us of future events.)

SOME EXAMPLES AND USES OF THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE.

1. To warn of dangers ahead.

a. David delivered from Saul at Keilah through the revelation of the people's intentions, God told David that the inhabitants of Keilah would betray him even though he had delivered them from the Philistines. 1Sam.23v9-12.

b. Israel is delivered from Benhadad, because God reveals Benhadad's secret plans to Elisha the prophet. 2Kings.6v8-12.

c. The wise men, Mary and Joseph warned of Herod's intentions by dreams. Mt.2v12,13.

d. Paul warned of the danger at Jerusalem, and the storm. Acts21v10-12. 27v10,11,21-26. Paul ignored the warning Christ gave him in Acts.22v17-21. and got in trouble.

e. Paul warns us of latter day iniquity and false doctrine. 1Tim.4v1-3. 2Tim.3v1.

God can warn us of danger ahead, and so deliver us from it, and this is a major use of the word of knowledge. However, sometimes we cannot avoid the circumstances and dangers ahead, they are in the path of duty, but we can be prepared for them by words of knowledge. If we refuse to listen to warnings from God through this gift of the Holy Spirit, we can expect real trouble and spiritual defeat as the following Scriptures reveal.

a. Christ was prepared for His death by words of wisdom and knowledge; however, the disciples were unwilling to accept His revelations and were defeated as a result. Mt.16v21-24. 17v22,23. 20v17-19. with Mt.16v55,56. Mk.16v9-14.

b. Christ warns Peter of his fall, however, Peter refused to accept the possibility of this and so fell. Jn.13v36-38. 18v25-27. Lk.22v31-34,54-62.

c. Christ tells Peter that he would die a martyr's death for Him, and this time Peter believed Him and was doubtless encouraged by the fact that he was going to be faithful to death. Jn.21v18,19. 2Pet.1v13,14. This took the strain and stress out of Peter in prison in Acts.12v5-7., he knew that he was to die an old man, and not a young man, he expected God to deliver him, when the faith of all the rest failed. v13-17. This lovely gift can take the strain and stress out of an unknown future, if we live close to God we can expect our heavenly Father to tell us of great dangers ahead, if He feels that it is necessary. However, God does and can hide great trials from us in His wisdom, He knows which is the best way to help us. God hid the death of the Shunammite's son from Elisha, Elisha had to find out by natural means, and sometimes this is the best for us too, we can rejoice that our lives are in the hands of the great God of love whose wisdom is absolutely perfect.

2. God can reveal a person's character, spiritual condition and thoughts to us. 1Cor.14v24,25.

We can never tell by a person's face, or outside demeanour, what they are like inside, however, God looks upon the heart and can tell us what is there if we need to know it. Without a word of knowledge people can deceive us. Even a mature, discerning and wise man like Samuel would have been deceived by the outside appearance of the sons of Jesse, David's brothers had such fine bodies and good-looking faces, that they would have deceived Samuel if God had not revealed their hearts and His choice. 1Sam.16v6,7.

a. God will not let us be deceived by evil people with a respectable veneer.

Ahijah had the deceit of Jeroboam's wife revealed to him. 1Kings14v5,6. Christ had the slander of Judas revealed to Him; Judas was calling Christ "Lord" to His face and slandering Him behind His back. Jn.6v70,71. "Devil" means literally "slanderer." Simon the Pharisees critical thoughts were revealed to Christ and answered by Him. Lk.7v36-40. On another occasion the Pharisees invited Christ to a meal with the intent of trapping Christ, He answered their evil thoughts and frustrated their plan. Lk.14v1-6. Mk.2v5-8. Lk.5v22. Mt.22v15-22. N.B. v18.

b. God can expose the sinner's heart. 1Cor.14v24,25.

The revelation of the secrets of a person's life has a profoundly moving effect upon a person, revelations of this kind brought David to repentance after his great sin, and the woman at the well to Christ. 2Sam.12v1-9. Jn.4v16-19,29. Nearly always this gift will be accompanied by the forgiving mercy of God, however, sometimes the sin is so serious that judgement is the only end. Elisha revealed Gehazi's dreadful sin and showed God's opinion of it; leprosy was God's judgement upon this sin. 2Kings5v20-27. Peter revealed that Ananias and Sapphira had lied to the Holy Spirit, and they both died for it. It is sometimes necessary for God to expose the sin that is causing defeat to the people of God as He did in the case of the sin of Achan in Joshua.7v1-26. N.B. v5,13,25. 36 men died because of Achan and his family.

Through the apostle John, Christ revealed the sin and sloth in the seven churches in Rev.2 & 3; only two churches were living as Christ intended them to. Here we must remember that God will never reveal sin that has been forgiven and is under the blood, He will only reveal unconfessed sin. Is.44v22. Acts.3v19. Heb.8v12.

3. God can reveal people's situation and needs, to comfort them and inspire them to seek, or trust God.

a. It can reveal a seeking heart and its need.

Ananias had the revelation of Paul's conversion, blindness and earnest praying, and the address where Paul was staying, and so he was able to help Paul. Peter had the revelation of Cornelius and his friends earnest seeking after God, and an angel gave Cornelius the name and address of Peter and told Cornelius to seek Peter's help in finding God. Acts.10v1-48.

b. It can greatly encourage discouraged saints.

Elijah was told of 7,000 more who had stood true to God like himself. 1Kings 19v14-18. The women were told of their risen Christ. Mt.28v6. Paul was told that the Lord had many people in wicked Corinth who wanted God, without this word of knowledge Paul might have felt the position hopeless and moved on, as it was he won a great victory for his Lord. Acts.18v6-11. Josiah and Cyrus had their names revealed, and their works, over two hundred years before they were born, and it greatly encouraged them and the people of God to fulfil God's will. 1Kings13v2. 2Kings.21v24-23v25. Is.45v1-4.

c. It can reveal a broken heart and wounded spirit.

Some people need a healing of their memories, they have had great wounds in the past that have crippled them, and sometimes these wounds have made them physically ill, and they need Jesus to heal their wounded soul before they can be healed or feel the joy and blessing of God. Others have great problems and troubles of the present on their minds and need help with these. These wounds can be the wounds of sin as in the case of

the woman of Samaria, but whatever the cause, Christ has come to heal the broken in heart, and the writer has seen Christ reveal peoples needs and meet them in a wonderful way. Is.61v1-3. Lk.4v18,19. Jn.4v16-19,29. This is one of the most demanding but also one of the most precious uses of this lovely gift of the Holy Spirit.

d. It can reveal a sickness to inspire faith for healing or salvation.

Many people need a revelation from God to inspire their faith as Christ said in Jn.4v46-53. N.B. v48. The writer has seen people saved and healed because they have seen or experienced a revelation from God through another. Christ revealed to Nathanael the facts about him sitting under a fig tree to inspire faith, and it did so, He can inspire people's faith in the same way today. Jn.1v48,49. Lk.13v12-16. The supernatural revelation of a person's sickness can greatly help their faith and often causes them to receive their healing, and causes many to accept Christ

Sometimes a revelation can reveal the cause of a sickness, or reveal the thing that is a hindrance to healing. Some people are ill because of the way that they have treated their wives or children, we should not forget Mt.18v5-7., others are full of a bitter spirit of unforgiveness. v35. God wants to save us and deliver us from the sin that ruins our lives and health.

4. God can confirm a person's call to His work through the word of knowledge.

God can reveal to us a trustworthy and beautiful soul who will help us in God's work, as he did in the case of Nathanael, Andrew, Peter and John. Jn.1v37,40-42,46-51. Christ doubtless chose his twelve disciples by revelation through the word of knowledge and word of wisdom. Lk.6v12-16. Samuel confirmed his prophecy of God's call to Saul by a complicated word of knowledge. 1Sam.9v19. 10v1-16. Paul had his experience and call to God's work confirmed by Ananias who told him of his vision of Christ by a word of knowledge. Acts.9v17-25. 13v2.

5. God can reveal a real need for prayer through this gift.

This gift can greatly help the prayer warrior. Christ prayed earnestly for Peter and Peter came through in spite of his sin and failure. Mk.14v27-31,37,38,50. Paul was full of love for the Christians under his care, so God often showed him needs for prayer and the state of the churches by word of knowledge. This enabled Paul to minister to peoples needs though separated by great distance from them. Col.2v5. 1Cor.5v3. The apostle John also had the same experience in Rev.2 & 3.. Some prayer warriors have brought victory to churches and people again and again, they have received no well done from men, but what a reward and well done they will receive from the Lord Jesus. Many little old ladies in bonnets, and young ones too, have prayed through at great cost to themselves, out of pure love for others in real need, and they will receive a far greater reward than many eloquent loveless preachers. Mt.19v27-30. This is a precious ministry don't miss it whatever you do.

6. Through this gift God can reveal how material needs in His work can be met.

Christ guided His disciples by word of knowledge to the place where they would hold the Passover feast; God can reveal to us a place where Christians can meet. Mk.14v12-16. Christ told Peter how their financial needs could be met, a coin in the mouth of a fish. Mt.17v24,25. It also provided the means of transport that Scripture said the Christ would use to come into Jerusalem. Zech.9v9. with Mk.11v1-7. It also helped Saul when he lost his father's asses, and helped David to recover the property that had been stolen, and the people that had been taken captive by the Amalekites. 1Sam.10v1-8. 30v1-8,18,19.

7. God can deliver the Church from false prophecy, etc., by means of this gift.

The Holy Spirit can confirm that a person's interpretation or prophecy are "soulish" and in hope, and not inspired of the Holy Spirit. Jeremiah was aware that the false prophets had no anointing, and there was no witness within his heart to their prophecies. God told him that their prophecies were out of their minds and the result of their strong desires. Jer.23v16. Ezek.13v2. In 2Chron.18v1-34. 1Kings.22v1-40., we see a telling contrast between the prophets who wanted to gain favour by telling lies, and the man of God who told the truth at any cost. We are also told that on this occasion a lying evil spirit inspired the false prophets. v20,21.

8. This gift has an important place as a sign and wonder.

This gift is often used in Scripture in conjunction with words of wisdom and the discerning of spirits, in the declaration of God's purposes and the manifestation of vital spiritual truths and realities. It was an important part of the Old Testament prophet's armoury and often confirmed their message, and it can confirm the Gospel message. It can have a definite place as a sign and wonder, the revelation by a word of knowledge of Nebuchadnezzar's dream had the most tremendous effect on the Babylonian kingdom, and the revelation of the heart and sin of the woman of Samaria moved the Samaritans to God. Dan.2v21-26. Jn.4v28-42. A word of knowledge from God's all-knowledge can make all the difference between defeat and victory, and even if the revealed knowledge is only a small thing like a coin in a fishes mouth, or a person sitting under a fig tree, it can bring real blessing and meet very real needs. The Church universal needs this mighty weapon from Christ's armoury, and the Christian needs it in their daily life, home life, business and work life, as well as in evangelism, it brings a tremendous sense of the presence and care of God, and greatly glorifies the Lord Jesus.

THE DISCERNING OF SPIRITS.

This is the third of the three gifts of revelation, however, it is seventh in the list in 1Cor.12v8-10. This gift has

a much more limited use than the word of wisdom or the word of knowledge, however, it is a spiritual gift of very great use and importance and can be the ultimate in blessing to the child of God. This gift is an indispensable means of defence from Satan's attacks, and it enables the Church to attack Satan's kingdom and works. The discerning of spirits is entirely supernatural in operation; it is seeing the unseen spiritual realm by Divine revelation, it brings part of the unseen realm into visibility. It is the Holy Spirit enabling us to discern unseen spiritual things by supernatural means. The regularity of the manifestation of this gift varies very considerably with different Christians, some have a regular ministry of this gift, others have a less regular occurrence of this gift, and some we are sorry to say have no desire for this precious gift and so they have no manifestations of the discerning of spirits. Let us now consider some important facts about the discerning of spirits.

1. It is not a critical spirit, or the ability to find fault in others.

This undesirable characteristic or "gift" is condemned in the Scriptures, "judge not, lest ye be not judged," as William's translates it, "Stop criticising others so that ye may not be criticised yourselves." Mt.7v1. This gift is a discerning of spirits, not a discerning of faults. This kind of critical spirit has led some through unspirituality, fear of the supernatural, false tradition, and prejudice to criticise the gift we are discussing.

2. It is not Christian discernment.

Though Christ told us not to have a critical spirit, He also told us to use Christian discernment and test people by the fruit of their lives, so that we might not be deceived by them. Mt.7v5-23. Jesus told us to "be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves, that means, we must use discernment with pure Christian love. Mt.10v16. We must be as wise as a serpent but not be as treacherous as one; we must be harmless as a dove. Some mature Christians, like my old grandmother, can spend fifteen minutes in a person's company and sum them up with great accuracy, however, this Christian discernment of character is not the gift of discerning of spirits. It is also not the Christian ability to understand spiritual truths; it is the discerning of spirits.

It is not the normal spiritual discernment that every Christian has as a result of having a born again quickened spirit. Jn.3v3-7. Eph.2v1. Spiritual things are discerned by the spirit that God gives to man, the unconverted natural man cannot comprehend the things of the Holy Spirit, but by the new birth the Christian can. 1Cor.2v9-16. As the Christian's spirit grows it is able to discern more and more, and it is more and more able to receive the revelations of the Holy Spirit. Lk.1v80. 2v42,52. However, the capacity to receive the gift of discerning of spirits is not the gift itself; nor is it the normal ability that every Christian possesses in some measure because of the new birth, to discern false Satanic inspiration, by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. The anointing of the Holy Spirit, or lack of it, should also be discerned by born again Christians without the need for a gift of discerning of spirits. Doubtless some Christians have never developed the spiritual powers that the new birth has laid at their disposal, because they have accepted false tradition and resisted the workings and leadings of the Holy Spirit.

The apostle John tells us in Jn.2v26,27., that the anointing of the Holy Spirit will reveal the power behind the words of seductive false prophets, and the writer to the Hebrews tells us in Heb.5v13,14., that this ability to discern between good and evil grows with Christian maturity. By Christian discernment a Christian can sense or feel the presence of good or evil powers. By a discerning of spirits a Christian can see in vision the activities of good and evil powers, even at a distance, and in the past and future as well as the present. The discerning of spirits reveals by vision; the anointing of the Holy Spirit that accompanies normal Christian discernment reveals by feeling and inner witness, both have a very important place in the protection of the Church from Satan's wiles. The discerning of spirits is far more specific and illuminating than ordinary Christian discernment, and it has a far wider sphere of operation, and a greater delivering power when in operation.

4. It is not psychology or the study of the workings of the mind.

It is discerning of spirits, not the discerning of minds.

5. It is not to be confused with a word of knowledge.

The revelation of the secrets of people's hearts and minds is in the province of the word of knowledge; the revelation of the influence of good or evil spirits upon a person's mind is in the province of the discerning of spirits.

6. It is not communication with familiar spirits as in Spiritualism.

Spiritualism and associated manifestations such as divination, necromancy, sorcery, occult science, black magic, fortune telling, astrology, and witchcraft, are repeatedly condemned in the Scripture. Lev.19v31. 20v6. Deut.18v8-20. 2Kings.21v2,6. Exod.22v18. with 1Sam.28v6,7. and 1Chron.10v20,21. Gal.5v19-21. 2Thes.2v9-12. with Rev.12v12. and 13v13,14. 1Jn.4v1-5. Rev.21v8. 22v15. God says that all those who do these things are "an abomination unto the Lord" and spiritually defiled. Deut18v8-10. Lev.19v31. Manifestations of spiritual power do exist in Spiritualist meetings, but these are the Satanic counterfeit of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Spiritualist magicians of Egypt had the power given to them by evil spirits to create serpents, and do other miracles, the source of their power was Satanic and they withstood the gifts of the Holy Spirit through Moses. Ex.7v10-12,20-22. 8v6,7 16-19. with 2Tim.3v8,9.

When the supposed manifestations of the dead occur, they are really familiar spirits impersonating the dead.

When King Saul sought the guidance of an impersonating familiar spirit through the witch of Endor, God executed him for it. 1Sam.28v6,7. with 1Chron.10v13,14. The apostle Paul brought judgement upon Elymas for his wickedness and sorcery. Acts.13v1-11. Since the death and resurrection of Christ the souls of the wicked are in Hades and Christ has control of the keys, and there is no communication between the unconverted dead and the living as Lk.16v25,26. makes quite clear. In the New testament dispensation the souls of the righteous dead are now in Heaven, and there is no record of any communication of the dead with the living other than at the transfiguration of Christ. Lk.9v28-36. We need to remember that this was over the redemption of mankind, and Elijah never died, he was translated by God, and that Moses had a special resurrection. Judev9. 2Kings.2v3-11.

Both the Old and New Testament reveal that God does not let the living communicate with the dead 2Sam12v22,23. Eccles.9v5-10. Job.7v7-10,21. 20v5-9. Lk.16v19-31. The Spiritualist is deceived by Satan, and they are only allowed to see what Satan and the powers of darkness allow them to, Satan is a master of illusion and deception, he cleverly uses illusion and deception in order to deceive people. The clever display of the familiar spirit in 1Sam.28v8-21., deceived Saul completely, and Satan used these same powers of illusion to try to deceive the Lord Jesus. Lk.4v1-13. N.B. v5,6. Saul's coming death on the following day was front-page news in Heaven, and Satan knew it. Samuel's prophecy. 1Sam.15v16-28. Saul's fears. 1Sam.20v30. All Heaven knew that God would execute Saul because he had consulted a familiar spirit. Lev.18v29. 19v31. 20v6. **1Chron.10v13,14.** Is.8v19,20.The familiar spirit knew that God would keep his word, even if Saul did not realise it.

Spiritualists deny most of the major doctrines of Christianity, they deny the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures, the Deity, atonement, and resurrection of Christ, and His teaching about Heaven and Hell and eternal punishment. Spiritualists have themselves stated that Christianity and Spiritualism are the very antithesis of each other, and this is certainly true. Christians manifest their gifts by the power of the pure Holy Spirit, the dove; whereas the Scriptures teach that the powers of darkness are the source of the manifestations of counterfeit gifts through mediums. Satan, the roaring lion, destroys; Christ, the Lamb, and the Holy Spirit, the dove, save, heal and bless. Christians can experience the lovely gift of discerning of spirits, through Christ our Lamb, and the Holy Spirit, the gentle dove, who is our Comforter.

7. Discerning of spirits is not to take the place of Scriptural tests of character, or source of inspiration.

Christ said that Christians can and should test a person's source of inspiration, by the fruit of their life, and their doctrine, we need to remember that a person's doctrine is a fruit by which we can test people. Mt.7v15-23. 1Cor.12v3. Isaiah in Is.8v19,20. tells us that if people do not speak according to the Word of God they have no light in them, they are only filled with darkness. The apostle John gives us another striking test in 1Jn.4v1-5., he says that we can test a person's source of inspiration by what they say about the Lord Jesus Christ, do they acknowledge that He is the Messiah who was the Creator, Redeemer and incarnate God of the Old Testament, if they confess this, they are "of God," if they do not they are "not of God." Micah.5v2. Is.9v6,7. 7v14. Neh.9v6. and Ps.102.v25-27. with Jn.1v3. Col.1v16,17. Heb.1v8-12. Is.44v6. 41v4. 48v12. with Rev.1v8,17. 22v13.etc. All Christians can and should test false prophets by doctrine, but not all have the gift of discerning of spirits.

Definition.

The gift of discerning of spirits is the supernatural discerning ability given by the Holy Spirit to temporarily see into the spirit world. It can reveal a fragment or a wide range of activity in the spirit-world, either in the past, present or future. It brings the revelation of either good or evil spirits. It can reveal the presence of the angels of God and the ministrations, activities, and accomplishments of the Holy Spirit, and it can be the ultimate means of encouraging a child of God, when they are given visions of Christ, the Father and Heaven. 1Cor.12v1-4. The gift of discernings of spirits can also reveal the operation of Satanic forces, and can reveal the presence of demon-possessed or demon inspired people, or the demon powers oppressing a person. This gift reveals the unseen source of outward spiritual manifestations, by a vision into the unseen world, so it can deliver us from evil angelic deception. In Eph.6v11. Paul warns us against the "wiles," or rather "stratagems," of the Devil. The gift of discerning of spirits is a God-given gift that can protect individual Christians and churches from the wiles and stratagems of Satan, God can give us visions and reveal the presence and activities of the powers of evil.

Paul warns the Corinthians of Satan's subtle ways of beguiling them, and warns that Satan may come as an angel of light, with another Gospel, another Jesus, another Spirit; in other words Satan would use the same Christian phraseology, but it would mean something entirely different from normal Christian phraseology and doctrine, and all the false cults use this subtle method to deceive people. This gift can on occasions be used to protect us from this kind of seducing doctrinal spirit, or other seducing spirits that attack Christ's Church. Satan tries to make his evil wiles appear to be of God, as 2Cor.11v13-15. informs us, he changes the outward appearance, "meta schemata," but not the inner nature, so what may appear to be of God is sometimes the subtle workings of Satan. People can use the name of God and Jesus in praying for the sick, but because they are not born again Christians, they can be using Satan's power. It is not the use of the name of God or Jesus as a formula that guarantees a person's source of inspiration, it is the conformity to the Scriptures over salvation, holiness and other vital Christian doctrines that prove a person's source of inspiration. Acts.8v13-23. 16v16-18. Gal.1v6-9. Jn.4v1-5. This gift can show us people who are under the influence of a seducing

spirit and a potential menace to the Church of Christ. However, to manifest this gift and deal with evil spirits, a Christian must have a close walk with God and a real humility of mind and heart. Mt.17v1,16,21. Acts.19v11-17. We need God's equipment to deal with Satan's "Iying wonders." 2Thes.2v7-12. We need spiritual gifts just as much as the early Church did.

Some have thought that the discerning of spirits covers the area of human deception and pretension, and the workings of the human mind, however, though man has the ability to communicate with God through the spirit God has given him, Paul is obviously not speaking in this capacity, but rather the spirit beings which cannot be discerned by natural means.

Some Examples and Uses of the Gift of Discerning of Spirits.

1. This gift can reveal if Satan or demon power is the cause of sickness.

a. The Bible tells us that sickness is primarily caused by the loss of the tree of life because of Adam's sin. Gen.2v9,16,17. 3v1-24. Ezek.47v7-12. Rom.5v12-14. Rev.22v2. 2v7. Adam's fall brought sickness and death upon mankind.

b. The Bible tells us that sometimes disease and sickness is caused by demons.

Evil spirits are said to be the cause of some sickness, blindness, dumbness, madness and epilepsy. Mt.4v23,24. 8v28-34. 9v32-34. 12v22-24. 15v21-28. 17v14-21. with Mk.9v23. We read in the Scriptures that Satan takes advantage of the fall of man and oppresses mankind with sickness. Christ came to deliver mankind from Satan's power and malice and to destroy these evil works. Acts.10v38. Jn.8v36. 1Jn.3v8. Lk.4v17-21. 13v10-17. Heb.13v8.

However, we must remember that not all sickness is caused by Satan or demons. In Mt.4v23,24. ordinary sickness is clearly distinguished from demon-possession. Sickness can be the result of natural ageing, neglect of the body, heredity, accident, war, poisoning, infection, etc.; in other words it can be due to natural causes as well as Satan. Epilepsy, mental illness, and nervous breakdown, are not always due to demon - oppression, or demon-possession, these sicknesses can be the result of grief, accident, injury, old age, overwork, and other natural causes. The Bible tells us that some lunacy can be caused by demon powers; however, the Bible also distinguishes between those who are lunatic through natural causes and those who are ill or lunatic through demon possession. Mt.17v15-18. 4v23,24.

Evil spirits have other activities besides causing illness, they try to cause disease of the soul as well as the body, indeed, disease of the soul is their main aim and their most dangerous work. Mt.4v1-12. 2Cor.4v4. Demons manifest themselves as unclean spirits, lying spirits, seducing spirits, familiar spirits, political spirits, religious spirits, as well as spirits of infirmity that cause physical illness. Mk.1v23,24. 2Chron.18v22. 1Tim.4v1-3. Lev.19v31. 10v6. Deut.18v10-12. Dan.10v12-14,20,21. Eph.6v11-13. 2v1,2. Jn.8v33-47. Mt.15v1-14. Rom.1v19-23.

c. The need for spiritual honesty and spiritual equipment when dealing with demon powers.

We need to remember that it is an abomination to God to make a person think that they have a demon when they have not. Some people who are praying for the sick say a person has a demon, just to cover up their ignorance of the true cause. This kind of thing can cause real agony of mind in a person who is suffering from some quite natural cause of sickness and is neither demon-possessed nor demon-oppressed. Particular care has to be taken with people who may be nervous, run-down, unable to cope with life, or suffering from some mental illness due to brain damage or weakness of the body.

A Christian praying for the sick needs to be spiritually equipped to discern whether a person is suffering sickness as a result of demon oppression, demon possession, or natural illness. It is also very necessary to distinguish between sickness, which is the result of demon oppression from outside the body and demon possession from within the body. The best Christian may sometimes suffer sickness as a result of demon oppression. Job.2v4-7. Lk.13v11-16. To hurt people by saying that they have a demon, when they have no such thing, is very wrong, and for this kind of thing we shall have to answer to God.

If a Christian has real power with God it will cause demons to manifest themselves if they are in a person, the demon speaking to the person praying for the possessed one either in the spiritual realm, directly to the mind and spirit, or openly to all through the mouth of the possessed one. Very often a person praying for a demon-possessed person, or demon-oppressed person, will be able to deal with the demon without anybody knowing about it. The revelation of the demon influence and the removal of that demon influence, take place through silent prayer in the heart of the person praying for the sick, without anybody else knowing it, or anybody being hurt or disturbed. At other times demons will openly manifest themselves in public and so they will have to be dealt with openly. Remember that Christ never demanded faith from a person who was mentally sick, or out of their senses because of the oppression or possession of demons. If we walk with the Lord He will give us the power to discern and deal with demons who are causing sickness and opposing the work of God. However, as Mk.9v14-18. makes clear, to deal with some very wicked spirits needs real faith and much prayer.

Some people place too much emphasis on demons when dealing with sickness, we should not always be talking

about demons, we should be positive and talk about God. Whatever you do don't suffer from demonitis, don't be looking for demons in everything, or blame everything upon demons, there can be other causes of sickness, and very often sickness can be due to our own actions and foolishness. We also need to remember that Christ cast out demons with His word, not by the laying on of His hands this was probably because demons can be extremely violent. On occasions He asked the name or names of the demons, on other occasions He cast them out without asking them their names, the Holy Spirit will guide us as He did the Lord Jesus if we let Him.

d. It is a sin to tell Christians that they have an evil spirit in them when they are sick, or experiencing stress.

A Christian may be tempted by Satan, and some may give way to seducing spirits in certain areas of their lives, as the Corinthians did. This is, of course, very deplorable and dangerous and can lead to spiritual apostasy, but we must emphatically state that a Christian who is born of the Holy Spirit and washed in the blood of Christ, cannot be possessed by Satan, for Christ Himself promised that this was impossible. Lk.11v9-13. 1Jn.5v18. Like Peter a Christian may be inspired by Satan to say something that is not right, Mt.16v13-27. N.B. v22., or even to temporarily backslide under persecution like Peter in Mt.26v69-75., because of Satanic oppression, but it is quite wicked and wrong to say that they get filled with an evil spirit. The Lord Jesus told us that a Christian cannot receive an evil spirit; they can only receive the clean and pure Holy Spirit. Lk.11v11-13. The apostate Christian who has lost all faith and hates God and righteousness may become demon-possessed, but not the Christian who is walking with God. 1Jn.5v18. It is the empty Christ-less life that gets filled with evil spirits. Mt.12v22-32. Mk.3v22-30. Mt.12v43-45. Those who said that Jesus had an evil spirit were in danger of eternal damnation, and those who say Christians are filled with evil spirits are heading for severe judgement. It is quite wicked to pretend that one has this gift and go around casting demons out of everybody including good Christians. Though I have often seen demon powers attacking Christians, I have never seen a demon in a Christian, nor do I ever expect to.

2. It can reveal a Satanic oppression of the mind.

The first place that Satan attacks in the Christian is the mind, the discerning of spirits can reveal Satan's attacks on the minds of Christians and so bring deliverance and blessing to them. We need to remember that Satan viciously attacked Christ in His thoughts, Satan nagged and derided Him and tried to destroy His faith and character, and deter Him from His mission. It is not a sin to be tempted by Satan; victory over His attacks makes us stronger Christians. Satan often plays upon a Christian's limitations, and tells them "You will never do any good," or "You will never do anything for Jesus," or "You will never learn the Scriptures." The writer has seen Christians helped again and again through the revelations of Satanic attacks on their minds and the Holy Spirit's ministry by word of knowledge etc. Sometimes it reveals a Christian who has given way to a seducing spirit and is living in sin, or their mind and thought life is perverted and their doctrine corrupted as a result. The Church of Christ cannot afford to be without this precious ministry.

3. It can reveal a servant of Satan and the power behind Satanic miracles.

The Scriptures warn us that in the last days there will be a great deal of demon activity through false prophets and so we shall need the gift of discerning of spirits even more than we do now. Mt.24v4,5,22-26. 2Thes.2v4-12. Rev.13v11-15. 16v13,14. As we have seen before false prophets can be tested by their life and doctrine, Mt.7v15-23. 1Jn.4v1-9., but sometimes you need to know the spirit moving a person before you can know their lives or doctrine. Sometimes false prophets are so crafty that they hide their true doctrine, but the Holy Spirit can reveal the evil spirit that is with them and so protect us from them. Acts.16v16-18. One of the major obstacles that the early Church had to face was servants of Satan masquerading as servants of God. Acts.8v9-23. 13v6-12. 16v16-18. 19v17-20. When Antichrist and the False Prophet arise the Christian Church will have to face the greatest challenge it has ever known. I believe that God is trying to prepare His Church for these days.

4. It can guard the spiritual life of a Christian or a Church.

a. It can reveal Satan's attempts to corrupt and hinder God's work.

Satan tries to infiltrate churches with His children, or corrupt churches from within; he tries to bring in unscriptural religion and low standards. He tries to divide the churches by party spirit and bigotry. Acts.5v3,4. 2Cor.11v3,4,13-15. Eph.6v11. The apostle John received the revelation of Satan's activities in the seven churches in Asia and so he was able to warn the churches. Rev.2 and 3. Paul warns us of the activities of evil spirits in these last days and tells us to take heed. 1Tim.4v1-7. 2Pet.2v1-4. Peter had a revelation from God, and then shortly after he had one from Satan, Christ through the Holy Spirit perceived the source of both. Mt.16v22,23. To protect the church and ourselves we often need the same experience. The Holy Spirit can preserve us from evil by revealing the source of a doctrine, revelation, statement or action within a church.

By the discerning of spirits and a word of knowledge the Holy Spirit can reveal the source of a struggle for power in a church and the strategy behind it. 1Cor.1v10-13. 3v1-4. The Devil loves to have the carnal in control of a church or a denomination, and central government is Satan's delight, because he can control so many people with a few unspiritual or carnal people. He has only to corrupt a few people to influence a great number of people.

b. It can reveal the power behind persecution, blasphemy and slander.

Paul's thorn in the flesh was a messenger of Satan, i.e. an angel of Satan, which stirred up persecution and

trouble for Paul wherever he went. 2Cor.12v9. Gal.6v17. 2Cor.11v23-12v12. Christ explained that the persecution that He endured was from Satan. Mk.3v22-30. Jn.8v44. 2Chron.18v22. We can be prepared for persecution before it happens by the revelation of the activities of evil spirits stirring up trouble against us.

c. It can check manifestations that occur in meetings.

The wise leader will be very careful when strangers manifest spiritual gifts in meetings, for Satan can send in fanatics, Spiritualists, or people speaking in known languages to deceive. There are also the arrogant who are determined to manifest tongues and other spiritual gifts whether the Holy Spirit moves them or not, by word of knowledge and discerning of spirits this abuse can be discerned.

We also have to be careful that we don't miss the moving of God's Holy Spirit by spiritual lethargy, deafness and insensibility. Open Satanic manifestations through Satan's children do not occur very often in Christian meetings, though they have occasionally occurred in big public meetings. We are more likely to get into trouble by failing to discern a genuine move of the Holy Spirit, as the late Donald Gee says on page 51 of his book "Concerning Spiritual Gifts: -

"Much harm has been done, and the work of God grievously hindered, by unspiritual or prejudiced people judging and condemning a real work of God because it did not conform to their personal standards of just how the Almighty should manifest His power."

Revivals have been hindered by ministers and others who objected to the strong workings by the Spirit of God upon the emotions, and this has hastily been put down as "false excitement," "hysteria," etc. Note an experience of John Wesley's taken from his Journal under the date of Dec. 24th., 1739: "Toward morning, one of them was overwhelmed with joy and love, and could not help showing it by strong cries and tears. At this another was much displeased, saying, 'It is only nature, imagination, and animal spirits.' O thou jealous God, law not this sin to her charge; and let us not be wise above what is written." Wesley had need of that prayer today for some we have met. ---- Those who pretend to pass judgement in spiritual matters must be prepared to show their credentials of personal spiritual experience. Unfortunately a great many people condemn wholesale manifestations and experiences connected with the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts who have practically no personal experience of either. We bluntly ask. Are they in a position to judge? Both the New Testament and common reason agree in giving a negative reply."

We have to be very careful lest we hinder the workings of the Holy Spirit by unscriptural tradition, prejudice, unbelief, fear of the supernatural, and a determination to run to time or the plan or order that we have previously arranged. We need above all things to discern the plans and movings of the Holy Spirit.

d. It can deliver the church from deadly persecution.

The apostle Paul was converted by a vision of Christ as he was travelling to Damascus to persecute the Christians there. The vision of the risen Christ accomplished what augment and even miracles could not accomplish, it brought Saul to immediate repentance. Acts.9v1-25. This is an unusual way for people to be converted, but it is certainly by far the most powerful way that God can speak to the soul of man.

e. The discerning of spirits can be the ultimate in encouragement to the Christian.

It can reveal God our heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus, and good angels and this can have the most tremendous effect on a person's life, it always transformed the ministries of the prophets and New Testament apostles, indeed it was the visions of God that made the Old Testament prophets what they were. Exod.3v1-6. Numb.22v22-32. Judges13v3,8-21. 1Kings.22v19. 2Kings.6v17. Is.6v1-13. Ezek.1v1-28. Lk.1v10-38. Mt.28v2-7. Acts.7v55. 12v7-10. How this gift inspires to new heights of service and new holiness of life, and how valuable it is in persecution. Ezek.33v18-23. Lk.9v27-36. Rev.1v9-18. What a comfort and assurance this gift can bring! It makes the unseen world real and vivid and makes the Bible come alive. For those who have a difficult task to do for God it is almost indispensable, for this gift can give us the strength to do the will of God even in the most difficult and impossible situations. Lk.22v41-46. Acts.27v21-26. Paul suffered the most consistent murderous persecution, five times he received 39 stripes, three times he was beaten with rods, and he suffered a multitude of other sufferings; what was it that kept him going? A vision of the glorified Christ on the Damascus road, another vision of Christ at Jerusalem, a vision of the glories of Heaven, and other wonderful spiritual experiences of his Lord's presence and power. Acts.9v3-6. 22v17-21. 2Cor.11v16 to12v7. N.B. 12v4. Paul experienced the ultimate in Christian encouragement, he saw his Lord, and this vision lived with him through the tremendous persecution he suffered down through his life.

We can see that the gift of discerning of spirits varies a great deal in the way it is manifested, it is one thing to have a simple revelation of a demon, it is quite another to see the Lord upon His throne and hear direct commands from Him, this is the ultimate in Christian experience.

All the realms of knowledge come within the scope of these three gifts of revelation, the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge and the discerning of spirits. These three gifts of revelation have brought to us all the revelations of God found in the Scriptures; the book of Revelation is a result of the continuous manifestation of these three mighty gifts. What power they possess. What a blessing they can be. Beloved, let us earnestly desire these lovely spiritual gifts. These three gifts guide the gifts of power in their ministrations, and provide

the Church of Christ with the wisdom and knowledge to attack the evil works of Satan, without them the Church is comparatively powerless and quite unable to perform the works that its Lord desires it to. Beloved earnestly desire spiritual gifts, so that Christ's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

THE THREE GIFTS OF POWER AND DEMONSTRATION.

Paul says that these three manifestations of the Holy Spirit are faith, gifts of healings, and workings of miracles.

1. These three gifts give the Church the power to fulfil its New Testament evangelistic commission.

The New Testament commission included the command to heal the sick in body and mind as well as the command to preach the Gospel. These three gifts are the active manifestations of divine love and power; they are the gifts of deliverance and power. The Lord Jesus and His early Church experienced a continual manifestation of these three gifts of the Holy Spirit, they needed them and so do we. These gifts inspire faith and godly fear by a revelation of God's power, love, justice and wisdom, and cause people to glorify God. How can we fulfil the New Testament evangelistic commission unless we possess the gifts that Christ considered indispensable for Himself and His Church?

2. God's sovereign acts and the gifts of power.

Some operations of God's power are outside the operations of the power gifts, they are not channelled through men, they are God's sovereign dealings with His creation. God can work without any person being the channel or recipient of His power. We think particularly of God's purposes in creation and His judgements in history, God's judgements upon nations have taken place without any record in Scripture, or any prophet to foretell them, we will learn of them in glory. However, in this Church age God desires His Church to go to every nation and preach the Gospel and confirm the Gospel by signs, wonders and miracles. Though God still deals directly with nations and people, God has in this age of grace given the responsibility of manifesting His power and love to His Church.

3. The tremendous contrast between Satan's counterfeit gifts and the Holy Spirit's genuine pure gifts.

Satan tries to counterfeit the gifts of God the Holy Spirit in an attempt to deceive people and damn their souls. The Holy Spirit's gifts are a blessing to the channel and recipient, but Satan's gifts are a danger to, and spiritually defile, both the channel and the recipients. It is very dangerous to have dealings with a roaring lion whose only aim is to devour and destroy, and his masquerades as an angel of light are only to further this evil aim. We have the self-sacrificial Lamb of God and the gentle dove, the Holy Spirit, to guide and empower us, if we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ and born-again and filled with the Holy Spirit. Those who say that the gifts manifested by Christians redeemed by the blood of Christ, are Satanic, have a great deal to answer for. Christ said that those who attributed the works of the pure Holy Spirit, the dove, to the manifestations of Satan, the roaring unclean lion, were committing a very grave sin, and putting themselves in the gravest spiritual danger, Mk.3v22-30. Mt.12v22-32,43-45. It is a staggering fact that demons said Christ's authority and power was from God, and the religious leaders said it was from Satan, and went on to eternal judgement. Jn.15v18-25. 8v24. Some today scoff, ridicule, oppose and blunder on where even wicked angels fear to tread.

4. The three gifts of power are all manifested by a supernaturally increased faith.

"The faith of God" spoken of in Mk.11v22. seems to speak of the faith that is given by the Holy Spirit to manifest the gifts of power. Christ was encouraging the apostles to have faith and expectancy that would enable the anointing of the Holy Spirit to produce a miracle faith for the gifts of power. In the Scriptures we read of people having a special filling of the Holy Spirit to manifest spiritual gifts. Exod.28v3. 31v3. 35v31,35. Lk.1v41,67. Acts.2v4. 4v8,31. 9v17. 13v9,52. 5v18. With all the gifts, and particularly the gifts of power, there is a deepening of faith by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, all of them are operations of the power of God to perform miracles. Because of this divinely increased faith Christians can manifest far greater spiritual power over Satan's false prophets, as the ministry of Moses, Elijah, Philip, the apostles, and our Lord's ministry demonstrates.

The Three Spheres of Operation of the Power Gifts.

As we consider the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we realise that the gifts of revelation and inspiration fall into easily recognisable departments and their spheres of operation are easily distinguishable from each other. However, as we come to the gifts of power we have to think more carefully about the sphere of operation of each gift, and we have to give particular thought to which areas the workings of miracles and the gift of faith cover. The important thing, of course, is to have the gifts of power in operation, for possession of the gifts of power is far more important than the correct definition of them, as C.L. Parker says in his book "Covert Earnestly:" "It is not an absolute correct definition of each gift that is of first importance; it is possession and use that is vital. It does not matter whether Lazarus came out of the tomb by a gift of healing, or a miracle, or a word of faith. What does matter is that he came out! The mourner's did not try to place the miracle in its exact category; they believed on Jesus, and their lives were changed by the companion miracle of Jesus leaving His tomb." The reason why I am going to try to define the area of operation of the gifts of power, is because truth is intended to be a gateway to experience, and a correct definition of the power gifts can help us to an experience of them, and there are some very important spiritual truths that we can learn from a correct definition of the

gifts of power. Having considered many definitions of the areas of operation of the power gifts, the writer considers the following interpretation to be the most consistent and most Scriptural.

1. The gifts of power are the effects of the power of God operating in three different spheres of authority.

The three gifts of power all produce miracles, they are all acts of spiritual power, they are all the result of a faith strengthened by a special anointing of the Holy Spirit, they can all three be manifested on one occasion in one burst and display of God's power, however, Paul tells us that they can be looked upon as separate gifts operating in different spheres of authority.

The gifts of revelation give us the knowledge that we need to possess of the spiritual, intellectual, physical and material world; through them we can receive the knowledge of God's purposes and wisdom, the knowledge of people and things, and the knowledge of the activities of spirits. The gifts of power give us authority and power, as we need them, in these same spiritual, intellectual, physical and material areas. The gift of healing obviously only deals with the healing of the body and physical well-being, so the other two power gifts cover all the other needs for spiritual power that a Christian requires in the other areas of his life and ministry.

If we say that the workings of miracles produces miracles in the unseen spiritual world as well as the material world, we are left with no reason for a gift of faith its area of operation would be covered by the workings of miracles. The gift of faith is not saving faith, the fruit of faith, or the prayer of faith; it is a supernatural imparted faith and power for miracles. It is third in the list in 1Cor.12v8-10. and is undoubtedly of greater importance than the other power gifts. I suggest that Paul calls this gift the gift of faith: A. because it deals with the spiritual realm and spiritual things, where only faith can see and minister: B. because it describes the nature of the gift, it trusts God to manifest His power in us, for us, and on our behalf, rather than through us in miracles visible all to see, as in the workings of miracles. I also suggest that man being a creature with a spirit and capable of communing with God, is in a different category and sphere of authority than animals, vegetables, or mineral substances. The gift of faith obviously covers the spiritual realm and beings capable of having faith and spiritual experience and capable of communing with God. The gift of faith gives the power to bind heaven and earth, a power only given to apostles, whereas the ministry of workings of miracles being 4th in the list in 1Cor.12v28., carries with it no such authority and is a less powerful gift. Each gift has its own area of authority and will not minister in the area of another gift.

The gift of faith gives one authority in the spiritual realm, it gives authority over men and angels. The working of miracles gives authority and power over material things and nature apart from man, it affects man's environment. The gifts of healing give one authority and power in the physical realm over infirmity, disease and sickness. However, we need to remember that we cannot manifest these gifts at will we only have this power and authority when the Holy Spirit gives it to us.

2. The three gifts of power operate directly and exclusively upon their sphere of authority.

The gift of faith operates directly upon men and angels, except in physical healing, which is the sphere of gifts of healings. The workings of miracles operate directly upon man's environment, i.e. upon material things and nature apart from man. The gift of healings operates directly upon man for physical healing. So we can say

a. The gift of faith will protect a child of God by clothing them with supernatural power.

It imposes spiritual power, but does not change material things or alter natural law. The workings of miracles protects by altering material things and by influencing nature. e.g. The three Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace were protected by supernatural power; the heat of the fire was not changed. If the fire had been extinguished by supernatural power it would have been a working of miracles and a lesser miracle and sign.

b. The gift of faith provides for a child of God by dealing directly with men or angels to meet the need.

the working of miracles provides by directly affecting nature, either by creation, alteration, or direction of nature. e.g. The angel bringing food to Elijah was a gift of faith, the ravens bringing food was a working of miracles.

c. The gift of faith in the areas of protection and provision causes God's power to act directly on our behalf.

This is in contrast to a manifestation of power through us. e.g. Paul's deliverance from the storm was an operation of angelic protection, that was manifested by God on Paul's behalf, rather than a manifestation of power through Paul. It directly protected Paul and the others on board, but it did not stop the storm. If, like Christ, Paul had commanded the storm to be stilled it would have been a working of miracles. God did not give Paul the authority to stop the storm, He wanted Paul to evangelise Malta, so the gift of faith protected Paul and the working of miracles did not operate. God's wisdom directs the manifestation of the greater gifts not our desire.

d. The gift of faith and the working of miracles can both be the means of judgement.

The direct judgement on man by supernatural power, which results in sickness and death, is in the realm of the gift of faith. The indirect judgement of man through nature is in the realm of the working of miracles, it first

affects nature and then man. This authority was only given to the greatest of the Old Testament prophets and New Testament prophets and apostles.

e. If there is a creative miracle of healing, it is still in the sphere of a gift of healing.

The destruction of germs, the removal of cancer, the recreating of organs removed by surgery or injury, and all other physical healings by divine power, are in the realm of the gifts of healings.

3. Christians will vary very considerably in the power and authority they manifest through the gifts of power.

Paul tells us in 1Cor.12v8-12., that in a gathering of a local church, all the power gifts can be operated by different members of the church acting together as a body. However, this does not mean that they will be operated with the same power or regularity as the higher ministries of the Church. Every Christian can expect God to manifest a power gift through them, if they are in need of it, and a Christian in the local church can minister a power gift to others, but it is quite another thing to have a regular ministry of power gifts entrusted to you by God.

Paul's list in 1Cor.12v28., shows us the order of spiritual authority in the Church of God, all the higher ministries in the New Testament, teachers, manifested spiritual gifts, indeed, the extent of their authority from God was shown by their manifestation of spiritual gifts. Christian authority, "exousia," in the New Testament is proved by spiritual power, "dunamis," and the miracles that spiritual power performs. We also see from 1Cor.12v28., and other Scriptures, that a person may have the authority from God to have a regular ministry of one gift, but no authority to manifest another gift as a regular ministry. The person, who has authority from God to have a ministry of gifts of healings, may not have the authority from God to manifest the more important and more powerful ministry of workings of miracles. Even those with the gift of workings of miracles as a ministry, will not be allowed by God to manifest this gift on its highest level of power in the judgement of people or nations, this authority was only manifested by the greatest of Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles.

The authority given to the apostles to bind and loose in heaven and earth, was greater than the authority given to the 70 who had "power over all the power of the enemy." Mt.16v18,19. Jn.20v21-23. Lk.10v19. Both groups had authority over evil powers, but the apostles had the authority to raise the dead, which the 70 did not have. Mt.9v1,2. 10v1,7,8. with Lk.10v1,9,17. The apostles also had authority to bring judgement upon people who were committing grave sin, such as Ananias and Sapphira, Elymas, Hymenaeus and Alexander. Acts.5v1-11. 13v6-12. 1Tim.1v20. The authority that was given to apostles as individuals could only be manifested in the local church by all the Christians acting as a body. Mt.18v15-19. with 1Cor.5v1-7.

In 1Cor.12v28., Paul gives us the order of authority in Christ's Church; apostles first; prophets second; teachers third; workers of miracles fourth; those with gifts of healings fifth; helps sixth; governments seventh; diversities of tongues eighth. We particularly need to remember that New Testament teachers had spiritual gifts and ministries of spiritual gifts, their equipment was not mere intellectual gymnastics, they preached with the Holy Spirit and the gifts sent down from heaven. 1Pet.1v12. The higher ministries of the Church have the greater gifts operating through them at a greater level of power through one person, than the local Church will manifest them as a body. It is one thing to have a miraculous provision of ones needs by a catch of fish, or the multiplying of oil, it is quite another thing to raise the dead, or to judge a person or nation through God's power. We have to recognise that it is God and God alone that sets His ministries in the Church, much of the present failure in Christian work is due to the fact that men have assumed God's prerogative, and set their standards for the ministry instead of God's standards. Christ and His early Church had to fight the most dreadful battles with religious leaders, who had replaced God's word and authority with their traditions, and those today who have authority given to them by God will experience a similar kind of opposition from those who follow the traditions of men instead of the Word of God.

The manifestations of the Holy Spirit's gifts grow in power as we grow in grace, faith and maturity. Christian authority can only be kept by fervent prayer and abiding in Jesus, as the apostles found out to their shame. Lk.9v1, 2, 40. with Mk.8v28,29. It takes real prayer and consecration to keep a God-given authority, as Christ said to His disciples, it is only as we have communion with Him, are obedient to Him, and have faith in His name, that we have His authority. Jn.15v7.

To summarise then, we can say: The gift of faith, believes, commands and directs in the unseen spiritual realm, and deals directly with men and angels. The workings of miracles, believes, commands and directs in the material realm, it deals directly with man's environment. The gifts of healings operate in the physical realm, and deal with disease, infirmity and sickness.

THE CLOSE CO-ORDINATION OF THE GIFTS OF POWER IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES.

As we have seen, all the power gifts are the result of the same power of God operating in different spheres of authority, they are the varied manifestations of God's power in different areas of our experience. Just as we can have all three of the gifts of revelation operating in one manifestation of God's knowledge and wisdom, we can have the manifestation of all the power gifts in one burst and display of the power of God. In the Scriptures we see many cases of what we may define as two separate gifts of the Spirit being manifested in one burst and

display of the power of God, we will now consider some of them.

1. The gift of faith and the workings of miracles often gave Israel protection and victory in war.

On many occasions the power of God protected the Israelites and at the same time gave them the power, or worked miracles to defeat their foes. The most notable example of this is probably Exod.17v11-13., where we see that it is only the operation of the gifts of power through Moses that brought victory against the army of the Amalekites. Joshua conquered Jericho through the gifts of power. Joshua.6v20.. Samuel's power gifts were mightier than Saul's picked army. 1Sam.7v4-14. 13v1-23. God helped Jehoahaz out of pure compassion and not because he or Israel deserved it. 2Kings.13v1-6. Both Asa and Jehoshaphat were given marvellous victories by divine grace and power. 2Chron.14v9-13. 15v6. 17v3. 20v1-25. Time would fail us to tell of Abraham, Gideon, Samson, Jonathan, David, and many others, who defeated "invincible" foes through God's power. Gen14v1-17. Judges.7v16-25. 15v7-20. 1Sam.14v1-14. 17v11-58.

2. The gift of faith and the workings of miracles have provided supernatural means of transport.

Elijah was well known for it. 1Kings.18v11,12. 2Kings2v16-18. We also see that Ezekiel, Philip, and the whole apostolic band experienced this also. Ezek.3v12-15. 8v3. Acts.8v39,40. Jn.6v20,21. also Rev.12v14. The same burst of supernatural power transported both materials and men.

3. When ministering to the sick and needy, gifts of faith and gifts of healings can operate in one burst of God's power.

A good example of this is seen in Acts.19v11,12., where pieces of linen and clothing which Paul had handled were laid upon the sick and demon-possessed and they were made whole. Elisha's bones were so full of God's power that they raised the dead. 2Kings.13v20,21. A person who is both sick and demon-possessed, will need both a gift of faith and a gift of healing to meet their needs; this can be given in one burst of power from God that meets both needs. Lk.4v17-19.

4. In deliverance from danger or death.

The apostles and Peter were delivered from prison by angelic ministry that brought into operation both the gift of faith and the workings of miracles in one display of God's power. Acts.5v16-24. 12v1-17. It was prayer that brought the manifestation of this spiritual power and the deliverance of Peter, even if the faith of those praying was not to high.

5. In the resurrection of the dead.

The resurrection of the dead manifests at least two of the gifts of power, and possibly all three. The gift of faith returns the soul and spirit to the body, the workings of miracles and gifts of healings seem to be both involved in the recreation and healing of a composed body, so what we could define as three separate gifts are really one burst and display of God's power. In the New Testament only the apostles were given the authority to raise the dead. Mt.10v8.

This is one of the greatest signs that God can give to convince people of the truth. However, even this great sign will fail to win some people to God, for if people don't want to believe, nothing will make them believe, some people fight God to the bitter end. Lk.16v19-31. N.B. v28-31. Jn.12v37-41. 15v22-25. Acts.7v51-60. Rev.19v19,20. At the second coming of Christ, Heaven and earth will shake with the glory, might and power of Christ's coming, and this glory will be seen by all; millions of saints will be raised from the dead in a moment of time, but in spite of all this, Antichrist and his armies turn to fight against the Lord. Our God is omnipotent, it is an easy thing for Him to raise the dead, and Christians should not think that this is incredible. Acts.26v8. However, in the New Testament, this kind of ministry was only given to those who had the greatest ministries, in the Scriptures only men with apostolic and prophetic ministries have raised the dead. 1Kings17v17-24. 2Kings.4v32-37. Lk.7v11. Mk.5v22. with Lk.8v41. Jn.11v41,47. Mt.28v1-10. with Mt.27v51-53. Acts.9v36-42. 20v9-12. 14v19,20.

N.B. Some have felt that prolonged provision of one's needs, as Elijah being fed by ravens, and the never-failing barrel of meal, are a combined manifestation of the gift of faith and the workings of miracles; however, I feel that these are probably manifestations of the workings of miracles. In cases like this we cannot be too dogmatic, as we have said before the important thing is to have possession of the gifts not just a correct definition of them. We shall not know all the facts about spiritual gifts while here on earth; we shall have to wait until we meet our Lord for the full and perfect explanation of their workings.

THE GIFT OF FAITH.

This is third in the list in 1Cor.12v8-10., and it is the greatest of the power gifts. Faith is the only thing that is mentioned in both the list of the fruit of the Spirit and the list of the gifts of the Spirit. Abbot and Smith say in their lexicon that the Greek word "pistis" can mean:

1. In active sense, faith, belief, trust, confidence; in the New Testament always of religious faith in God or Christ or spiritual things: ---- 2. in passive sense, a. fidelity, faithfulness:--- b. objectively, plighted faith, a pledge of fidelity.

Christian faith is both passive and active, and surely Gal.5v22. is speaking of both passive and active faith; whereas the gift of faith is speaking only of a very special area of active faith. As there are several different

kinds of faith that are mentioned in the Scriptures, we have to carefully define what the gift of faith does, and does not, consist of.

1. We must not confuse the gift of faith with the other kinds of faith mentioned in the Scriptures.

a. It is not the faith of an Heathen.

The Heathen have the faith to live a normal life, e.g. to sow seed, conduct business etc., and Paul in Romans.1v18-32. tells us that they all know that there is a God and a day of judgement, but this is not Christian faith. 2Thes.3v2.

b. It is not a demon's faith.

Evil spirits believe in God and His power, they cannot do otherwise, but they resist God's power, purposes and ministries. As James tells us they believe and tremble, indeed, they believe what they often tell men about. James.2v19.

c. It is not saving faith.

Though this saving faith is the basis and foundation of all other kinds of Christian faith and character, as Peter tells us in 2Pet.1v5.. (Mr. A. Linford says that the grammar of Eph.2v8. would direct us to think that it is the salvation that is a gift, not the faith. However, saving faith is the result of repentance and the new birth, at which God gives a person the ability to apprehend spiritual things and believe, by giving them a new spirit, so saving faith can be looked upon as a gift also.) Christ said that we should rejoice over our saving faith more than over miracle working faith; He gave the 70 "power over all the power of the enemy" and they rejoiced over the miracles that were performed in Christ's name, Christ told them that their greatest reason for rejoicing was because their names were written in Heaven. Lk.10v17-20. Saving faith is the most important kind of faith because it brings us into a right relationship with God and gives us eternal life. All the other gifts and blessings that come to us as Christians, are the result of this primary gift of salvation in Christ. 2Cor.8v9. 9v15. In Hebrews 11 we have a catalogue of the three kinds of godly faith, saving faith, the fruit of faith, and the gift of faith, it is faith in general, and shows us the three kinds of faith that please God. Heb.11v6. As saving faith is the basis of all the other kinds of godly faith; no one can please God unless they have this saving faith.

Though saving faith is a divine benefaction and is miraculous in its effects upon the human personality, it is not within the sphere of the gift of faith; saving faith is limited to the sphere of salvation and forgiveness, i.e. to redemption through faith in Christ's death upon the cross. The spiritual gift of faith is limited to the area of supernatural miraculous power, and it is a temporary faith given to produce a specific miracle. Saving faith is a continuous thing, which starts when a person comes to Christ, and accepts Him as their saviour.

d. The gift of faith is not the fruit of faith.

The seed of faith is sown in our hearts by God's word and the new birth, can and does grow; the fruit of faith is the growth of the seed of saving faith. 1Pet.1v23. Rom.1v17. "from faith to faith." The fruit of faith is the natural growth of the seed of saving faith; it is the extension of one's faith in Christ's death, to faith in God in all other areas in our life. The fruit of faith is the foundation upon which the gift of faith operates. Indeed, the full manifestation of the glorious fruits of the Spirit spoken of in Gal.5v22,23., will bring a glorious manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit. This is what Paul is saying in 1Cor.11., he says love is the foundation for the correct manifestation of spiritual gifts. Paul brings all the fruits of the Spirit under love, for the fruit of love, really contain all the other fruits. In the Scriptures we can see that God has taken great pains to prepare the characters of His great servants, before He gave them great spiritual power. Great spiritual power inevitably brings great stresses into a person's life and demand some measure of spiritual maturity. The supernatural gift of faith needs the fruits of faith to sustain it, and it needs Christian Character to make its manifestations profitable to us as 1Cor.13v2. makes it quite clear.

The more of the fruit of faith you have, the easier it is to manifest the gift of faith and the other gifts. All the gifts operate more easily and more powerfully when they are manifested through a faith that is nourished by prayer, Bible study and consecration, as the Lord Jesus said, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Jn.15v7. 14v12-14. A living fellowship with Christ our Lord, and obedience to His words will nourish faith and character, and provide a safe spiritual foundation, and this applies to the mightiest apostle as well as the babe in Christ. The fruit of faith, which is a quality of character, triggers off the gift of faith, which is an act of power, it is a divinely supercharged fruit of faith. The gift of faith is the temporary miraculous manifestation and extension of the fruit of faith in relation to a specific purpose of God, by the power and faith of the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is pure mustard seed faith impregnated with divine miracle faith. It is God's faith poured into the soul of a Christian.

A Christian can, and should, manifest the fruit of faith all the time by being obedient to the Holy Spirit, whereas, the gift of faith is an occasional and temporary impartation of the Holy Spirit's faith and power to us, to fulfil a specific purpose of God. He manifests through us His miracle working faith and power; it is to enable the Holy Spirit to do what He desires. The gift of faith, like all the other gifts, is to fulfil the plans and purposes of God. To manifest the gifts like Christ and the early Church demands the same God-directed life that they had, apostolic power and immaturity do not accompany one another, and rebellion and disobedience are in God's eyes as bad as idolatry, iniquity and witchcraft. 1Sam.15v22,23. The fruit of faith is an attitude of mind that trusts God daily in every area of life, and this spiritual frame of mind is essential for a powerful exercise of

the gift of faith. To operate the gifts at full power needs real spiritual preparation and a development of the fruit of faith, Christ said the demons in the lunatic boy of Mk.9v20-20., could only be cast out by a prayerful person at the peak of spiritual power. Paul tells us in 1Cor.13., that we cannot divorce character from spiritual power and get away with it; those who try to end up with a shallow ministry of the gifts like the Corinthians, or even in complete spiritual shipwreck like Balaam, Judas, and Demas. 2Tim.4v10. Even the gift of faith does not profit us if we lack faithfulness and love. We see from Samson, that a person can exercise the power gifts for a while, even after grave sin, but Samson continued to play the fool and did not repent, God divested him of His spiritual power, let us "follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts" and we shall be spiritually safe.

e. The gift of faith is not the prayer of faith.

The prayer of faith is a manifestation of the fruit of faith; and the prayer of faith often precedes, or even normally precedes, the operation of the gifts of power. There is a very close link between the fruit of faith, the prayer of faith, and the gifts of power; they are all vital partners in Christian experience. We read in James.5v14-18., that it was Elijah's earnest prayers of faith that brought into operation the gifts of power. In Kings19v41-45., we see that Elijah prayed earnestly seven times before the answer came. It is interesting to note that James exhorts elders in Christian churches to pray through like Elijah for the sick, this kind of persistent prayer, is sometimes necessary for those who are seriously ill, and it is the responsibility of the elders of the churches to pray through for those who are seriously ill.

f. The difference between personal faith and a faith to minister to others.

We can ask ourselves what was the "great faith" of the Centurion and the little Syrophenician woman of Mt.8v10. and Mt.15v28.. It could not have been a natural faith, for natural faith, and the natural man cannot perceive the things of God. 1Cor2v14. Christ was the object of their faith, they both called Jesus, "Lord," they both believed that Christ's authority was of God, they both had a great personal faith in Christ, and a saving faith without any doubt. Mt.8v10-12. Mt.15v21-28. Both the Centurion and the Syrophenician woman were driven by the very best of motives to come to Christ, They had a deep concern for one they loved, a desperation of faith because of love, they both had a great faith, but they were not able to meet the need of their loved one, it took Christ's faith and the gifts of the Spirit that were manifested through Him to meet their need. It seems a person can have great faith that God will meet their need, or a loved one's need, but it is another matter to believe that God will meet other peoples needs through them, in other words to have a ministry to others, Peter did what the Centurion and the Syrophenician could not do, he believed God for miracles through his ministry, he even walked on water, but Christ said his fruit of faith was still small compared with what it could be. Mt.14v31.

The traditions of men can greatly dull a person's faith. It is a striking thing that Zachariah, who God said had a blameless life, was judged by the angel for his lack of faith, whereas, young Mary pleased God by believing for a far greater miracle and pleased God by her faith. It seems that continual contact with the tradition-bound religious leaders of his day, had dulled the faith of Zachariah. Our faith shows our capacity for God, and every kind of Christian faith thrives on a genuine repentance, real seeking of God, humility, simplicity, and sincerity, and above all a genuine love for others. However, it is one thing to have a great personal faith for God to meet our own needs, and quite another to have faith to minister to other people's needs by virtue of a ministry which has been given by God.

2. The gift of faith is not to be confused with the gift of workings of miracles.

As we have considered the area of operation of the power gifts in our introduction to the power gifts we will only briefly consider this now. The gift of faith acts in a wider sphere of action than the gift of workings of miracles, and exercises a higher degree of spiritual power, for the gift of faith deals with spiritual laws, and the workings of miracles with natural laws The gift of faith is the most important of the power gifts, for it deals with unseen spiritual forces and men, whereas the workings of miracles deals only with material things. The gift of faith gives one an authority and power in the spiritual realm, in areas where faith is necessary to see, whereas, the working of miracles gives one authority and power in the material realm where all can see. The workings of miracles usually results in an immediate miracle, whereas, the gift of faith often operates over a prolonged period, e.g. Jacob blessing his grandchildren. Gen.27v27. Heb.11v20.

3. The gift of faith does not remove a person from spiritual conflict.

While the gift of faith is given a person is full of God's faith through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, but once this anointing has gone a person can have great spiritual conflict. The supernatural extension of faith that comes with all the power gifts, does not make it impossible for a person ever to fear, fail or doubt God again, as the story of Elijah demonstrates. 1Kings.18v37-39,41-46. 19v1-18. God will never let us be independent of other Christians; even Paul had to have the fellowship of other Christians to lift his spirits. Acts.28v14,15. 1Cor.12v12-25.

The gift of faith often works in co-ordination with the gifts of revelation.

The gift of faith is often preceded or accompanied by a discerning of spirits, for both deal with the spirit world. The gift of faith is also often needed to bring to pass the purposes of God revealed by the word of wisdom, or to deal with the circumstances that have been revealed by a word of knowledge. The gift of faith depends on the gifts of revelation for information and instruction, and they depend on it, and the other gifts of power for the fulfilment of God's purposes.

5. The gift of faith is certainly not a ceremony, ritual, or mere pretension.

You can be a Papal or Pentecostal pretender and impart nothing to people, even though you go through all the motions and say all the right words or prayers when asking God's blessing upon a person. In the same way a person can be excommunicated by a church, denomination or fellowship, in the name of God, when God has had nothing to do with it and in fact has considered the excommunication a sin. Christ said the religious leaders who excommunicated the blind men who Christ had healed, were sinful and blind and said that judgement awaited them. Jn.9v32-41. Many of God's great men of church history had the same experience. Jn16v1-4. How much wickedness has been done in the name of God, but those who curse those who God has blessed will find God's curse coming upon them. Gen.12v3. Mt.5v44. Rom.12v14. 1Cor.4v12. 14v16. There is a genuine Christian excommunication as Paul states in 1Cor.5v1-7., but the followers of Christ long to restore and bless, not to judge. 2Cor.2v1-8. Lk.23v34.

Definition.

The gift of faith is not natural faith, saving faith, or the fruit of faith. It is a supernatural confidence and power imparted by the Holy Spirit, which enables a child of God to be protected in danger, or to be provided for when in need. It can be the means of bestowing blessing upon the children of God, or the means of judgement upon the enemies of God. It gives one the power to cast out, restrain and constrain evil spirits. It can defend us from evil angelic powers, and direct good angelic powers to our aid to meet our needs. This gift can enable us to overcome all natural and evil powers that come against us, we can either experience deliverance out of, or from trial, or experience a supernaturally sustained faith that can overcome a; trial, persecution and physical pain.

The gift of faith is an intermittent spiritual gift, that is imparted to us at the will of the Holy Spirit; and it is the Holy Spirit's faith and power imparted to us to meet a specific need. The gift of faith relies entirely on God's power and not upon human effort. It is not my faith struggling, it is God's faith working through me, it is the out-shining of the indwelling Holy Spirit's faith and power. It is a special faith for a specific task, and it mainly operates in the sphere of danger and great need, and in the path of Christian service.

Some Examples and Uses of the Gift of Faith.

1. The gift of faith can give divine protection in danger.

- a. It protected Moses from Pharaoh's wrath. Ex.3v10 7v10. 14v19.20.
- b. It protected Jonah in the whale's stomach. Jonah.3v4,9. Jonah knew that God would deliver him and bring him into His Temple. A word of knowledge plus a gift of faith.
- c. Samson was protected from the swords and spears of thousands of Philistines, but it could not protect him from his own sin. Judges.15v9-20 16v1v21. N.B.v20.
- d. It protected Daniel from the lions; angelic power protected Daniel from the lions it did not change the lions, which ate up Daniel's enemies. Dan.6v16-23. N.B. v22.
- e. A gift of faith protected Daniel's three friends in the fiery furnace. Divine power preserved them from a heat that would have melted gold. Dan.3v17,18,25. We see in Dan.3v17,18., the fruit of faith which triggered off the gift of faith.
- f. Christ was protected by this gift on several occasions. From His towns-people who just about to throw Him over a precipice. Lk.4v29,30. From attempts to stone Him and arrest Him. Jn.7v44-46. 8v59. 10v39. Christ was hidden from their site by supernatural power in Jn.8v59. Christ said in Jn,11v8-10. that God's protecting power goes with those who walk in the light.
- g. In the book of Acts we see angels delivering the apostles and others from great danger. Acts.5v17-26. N.B. v19. 12v1-11. Ats.27v22-25. Heb.1v14. In the setting free of the apostles from prison, what we would call two gifts of the spirit, the gift of faith and the workings of miracles were operated through the ministry of the angel.

2. The gift of faith can give divine comfort and peace in devilish persecution.

We read in the Scripture of those who have been upheld in murderous persecution and devilish torture, they were tortured, not accepting the deliverance offered them if they would but deny their faith, they stood true in "the test of public mockery jeers and flogging," and "shackles and imprisonment." Some "were stoned to death," others were "cut in pieces with knives or swords." Others were so impoverished that they had only sheepskins and goatskins to clothe them, and suffered want, oppression and cruelty from a wicked world. Heb.11v35-39. Without doubt all these dear children of God experienced divine strength, peace and comfort, such as Stephen received when he died for his faith. Stephen had a special filling of the Holy Spirit, as well as wonderful visions of Heaven. Acts.7v54-60. 6v15. The Lord Jesus was strengthened at the transfiguration and in Gethsemane by God's power and angelic ministry. Lk.9v27-36. 22v42-44. We are certainly not on our own in persecution, God is with us.

3. The gift of faith can meet our material needs.

Some think that Elijah being fed by the ravens was a gift of faith. I feel that as God's power operated upon the ravens and led them to Elijah, it was a working of miracles. I feel that the feeding of Israel by the quails, and the coin in the mouth of the fish seem to be a working of miracles too. 1Kings17v1-16. Exod.16v13. Numb.11v31. Mt.17v24-27. However, we should not be too dogmatic about this, the gifts do fringe upon one another in certain areas, and make definition difficult.

I feel that miracles of provision met by divine power through human and angelic channels come within the scope of the gift of faith. We think of Christ's miracle of provision through the ladies spoken of in Lk.8v1-3.; the manna, which the Scripture tells us was the food of angels. Ps.78v24,25.; and Elijah being fed by an angel when he was completely exhausted. 1Kings.19v4-8. The greatest of modern day miracles performed by the gift of faith is probably of George Muller's needs for his orphanages; and one hears of many more miracles of provision done by our great and wonderful heavenly Father in our own time besides this. Hallelujah.

4. The gift of faith can bestow spiritual blessing.

Here we need to remember that a person's faith and character very often decides what a person receives from God; and we need to remember that we cannot impart a blessing if we do not have an anointing and authority from God; this is a very demanding ministry. This gift is very often manifested in the ministry of the laying on of hands, and in the ministry of the prayer warrior.

- a. Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. Gen.27v27-41. Heb.11v20. Jacob blessed his sons and Joseph's children. Gen.47v31. 48v8-28. Heb.11v21.
- b. Christ blessed the children, and something was imparted to them. Mk.10v13-16.
- c. Moses blessed Joshua and the 70 elders when they were ordained to their respective ministries, the result was a real spiritual experience of the greatest worth. Numb.27v18-23. with Deut.34v9. Exod.18v25. Numb.11v24-29. 1Sam.10v1-13. 16v12,13.
- d. Christ ordained His apostles and the 70, and gave them power to accomplish God's purposes, and the New Testament Church followed His example, this was certainly no ceremony or mere formality, spiritual power and authority were imparted. Mt.10v1-8. Lk.10v1-24. Acts.6v1-7. 13v1-4. The Samaritans, Paul and the Ephesians received the baptism in the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. Acts.8v14-19. 9v17. 19v1-6. This gift can bring real victory to prayer warriors, for it can bring revival blessing to a church, an outpouring of the Spirit in answer to a prayer of faith, as we often see in the early Church. Acts.4v23-31. 10v44-48.

5. The gift of faith can be used to curse and bring judgement.

- a. The death of all of Egypt's firstborn, and the boils upon the Egyptians were both caused by the gift of faith. Exod.9v8-12. 11. all and 12v1-36.
- b. Elisha's judgement on Gehazi. 2Kings.5v25-27.
- c. Elijah bringing fire from heaven upon men, was the direct operation of spiritual power to judge men, so this was a gift of faith, whereas, the fire on the altar was a working of miracles, because it affected nature and was in a different sphere of authority. Likewise the cursing of the rebellious young men of 2Kings2v23,24., the Hebrew word for "children" in A.V. is used of people up to the age of 40, is a working of miracles because it effected nature, then, men.
- d. There were several people who were judged through this gift in the New Testament, Acts.5v5,9-11. 1Tim.1v20. 1Cor.5v1-5. However, we have to remember that Christ came not to judge or condemn, but to save and bless, and the manifestation of this gift in judgement will be very rare. God loves to bless and save, judgement is His "strange act." Is.28v21.

6. The gift of faith is the means of casting out, rebuking and restraining evil spirits.

Does the casting out of demons come within the scope of the workings of miracles or the gift of faith? We read in Mk.9v38,39., that the casting out of a demon is an act of "dunamis." However, "dunamis," i.e. "power," operates in all the gifts of power, it is the sphere of operation that decides which gift they are, and I feel that the gift of faith speaks best of spiritual power operating in the unseen spiritual realm. I would like all readers to think upon this, but I think that you can't put casting out of demons under any other gift other than the gift of faith. We can most certainly say that you have to live close to God to deal with evil spirits, as even the apostles found out. Lk.9v1,2. 37v42. with Mk.9v14-29. N.B. v28,29. Like the sons of Sceva found out, you can be in real trouble if you treat demons lightly. Acts.19v11-17. Christians are defended by God from attacks of evil, but it is quite another thing to attack evil powers, particularly if you are not prayed up; and every Christian has not got authority over "all the power of the enemy" as the 12 and 70 had. A Christian may have a discerning of spirits, but not the gift of faith to expel the demon. You can only deliver people from demons if they desire it, the Scribes and Pharisees did not want to be delivered from the evil spirits that inspired them, and so Christ could not help them. Jn.8v32-44. Demons that are cast out of people will return if the person still desires to live in sin and does not accept Christ as their Saviour. In the same way you can only bring deliverance to those who believe false demon-inspired doctrine, if they desire it.

1. Unclean demons that take over a person's body can be cast out by the gift of faith.

These demons control a person's mind and body to perform their evil desires. Lk.4v31-37. 8v26-39. Sometimes Jesus forced demons to give details about themselves, Lk.8v30., on another occasion He asked the details from the relative. Mk.9v20-22.

These unclean demons can also cause sickness, for whatever they touch, they defile and damage, and love to destroy. As we have seen under the discerning of spirits, evil spirits can be the cause of some sickness, deafness, blindness, dumbness madness, and epilepsy. Mt.4v23,24. 8v28-34. 12v22-24. 15v21-28. 17v14-21. with Mk.9v23. However, demons are not the sole cause of sickness and we must take great care not to become fanatical and foolish about this, and go around casting demons out of every sick person. Satan caused Job to be sick without possessing him, but he had to get the permission from God to do it. God protects His children

from the powers of darkness; He puts a hedge about us. Job.1v9,10.

2. Unclean spirits that attack the mind can be dealt with by the gift of faith.

Evil spirits attack the mind, and take real pleasure in causing people anguish of mind by their continual nagging; a Christian by the gift of faith can bind demons, who are doing this, or consign them to the pit. A Christian who has the gift of faith can help people who are too weak to fight for themselves against the lies, naggings, and seductions of evil forces.

We can see from the above uses of the gift of faith, that it is a very precious gift from God, let us all earnestly desire this greatest gift of power, for without it the Church of Christ cannot fulfil its New Testament commission as Christ intended.

THE WORKINGS OF MIRACLES.

The workings of miracles comes after the gifts of healings in the list in 1Cor.12v8-12., but before the gifts of healings in 1Cor.12v28. It is fifth in the list in 1Cor.12v8-19. The words "workings of miracles," are a translation of the Greek words "energemata dunameon," both words being in the plural. The word "energemata" is the plural of "energema," of which Robinson says; "energema, 'what is wrought,' i.e. 'effect produced,' 'operation'; 1Cor.12v6. v10 'energemata dunameon,' 'operations of miracles,' put for miraculous effects, the gift of working of miracles." Arndt and Gingrich say "energemata dunameon," means 'activities that call forth miracles.'"

The Greek word "dunameon" is the plural of "dunamis," which in the A.V. is usually translated as "power," as in Acts.1v8.. However, the Holy Spirit's power is manifested in all the gifts of power, they are all acts of "dunamis," it is the sphere of the operation of that power that decides what we call each gift of power.

1. The gift of workings of miracles should not be confused with the other power gifts.

a. A gift of healing is a miracle of healing; an act of dunamis, but it is not a gift of workings of miracles. All physical healing comes within the scope of gifts of healings, which is wholly concerned with miracles in relation to physical well-being and health, and even creative miracles of healing are within the sphere of the gifts of healings.

b. The gift of faith deals with the unseen spiritual world where faith is necessary to see, the workings of miracles deals with miracles seen in the material world. "Workings of powers" could obviously refer to the operation of all the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit, but Paul tells us that this gift works in a specialised area. It is not in the realm of knowledge, edifying gifts, physical healing, or the gift of faith. The gift of faith is placed before the workings of miracles in importance, because miracles with material things are less important than spiritual blessings given by a gift of faith. The gift of faith operates in the unseen spiritual realm on spiritual forces and men's spiritual state, whereas, the workings of miracles is an operation of spiritual power that changes natural law and material things and produces seen miraculous effects.

2. The workings of miracles is the least common of the gifts of power.

This is because one does not have to deal with material things, or material needs, as often as seen with people's spiritual and physical needs. Indeed, most of people's material needs can be met by human resources, it is usually only in severe emergency that miracles of provision become necessary.

There have also been times when great signs and wonders have been performed through the gift of workings of miracles, and the other power gifts. These great manifestations of divine power have taken place at the start of the covenants of Law and Grace, and at other times when Satan's power has been manifested in an alarming way. However, these manifestations of divine power should have continued, but human sin and failure has hindered God's plans and desires. Whenever God's people have returned to Scriptural simplicity God has restored all the power gifts, including the workings of miracles to His people. The pattern for this Church age is not the many centuries of the Old Testament when no miracles were performed by God because of human failure and sin; our pattern is the ministry of Christ and His early Church.

In the Old Testament the gift of workings of miracles was very often used in bringing judgement upon people through nature, however, this gift is almost totally used as a blessing in this present age of grace and mercy. In this Church age, the emphasis is upon forgiveness of sin and healing of the body, and so in the New Testament we see that workings of miracles that bring blessing are outnumbered by gifts of healings, by at least a thousand to one. However, the workings of miracles comes before the gifts of healings as a work of greater spiritual power and authority, as Paul states in 1Cor.12v28., for it has a tremendous effect in influencing people to righteousness by revealing God's power and glory. God, in His compassion, has put physical healing to the forefront of the New Testament commission, and so the workings of miracles is much less common than the gifts of healings. Mt.10v8. Lk.9v1,2. 10v1,9,17. Mk.16v17-20.

The workings of miracles are manifested at God's desire and will, not at the desire of the human will, the Holy Spirit gives "severally as He will." God is very gracious and may allow Peter to walk on the water to show the possibilities of his faith, or deliver Samson from Gaza just because He is merciful, however, like Christ, we should normally expect these gifts to be manifested under the guidance of words of wisdom, so we walk in the way and wisdom of God. Mt.14v22-33. Judges.16v1-3. Jn.2v4. 5v19,20. with 6v1-21. 7v7. 4v1-4,34. etc. It is

sovereign grace and wisdom that decides the manifestation of this gift, we cannot always expect God to manifest this gift even if we are in great need, e.g. James was killed, but Peter was delivered by a workings of miracles through angelic ministry. Acts.12v2,11.

3. The workings of miracles should not be spiritualised away.

Some of the miracles in the Bible are interpreted in a purely spiritual sense to illustrate a spiritual truth, by some preachers; this is quite all right, as long as we recognise the challenge of the miracles of the Bible and pray to God for the same gift to be manifested in the Church today. Others have tried to say, without any Scriptural warrant, that the miracles performed by the power gifts, have been replaced by miracles of salvation. Miracles of salvation and grace are truly the most wonderful of God's miracles, and all of those who are saved rejoice in the grace that has saved us; but God is not limited to these miracles of salvation and regeneration, He has saved people in every age, nor has He replaced the workings of miracles by the miracle of salvation. God is still on the throne and works miracles of every kind.

Definition.

The gift of workings of miracles is a supernatural ability given by the Holy Spirit, to interrupt, suspend, or control the laws of nature. It is the operation of the power of God upon material things, for the purpose of being a sign, blessing, or judgement. It operates upon the elements, vegetation and the rest of the animal world apart from man.

Some Examples and Uses of the Workings of Miracles.

1. As a sign.

a. To cause people to see the might and majesty of God.

This is, of course, the primary reason for all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but it has a particular application to the gift of workings of miracles. This gift was particularly manifested with this purpose in mind delivering Israel from Egypt, even the spiritualist magicians of Egypt had to admit, "This is the finger of God." Eod.6v6,7. 8v19. 9v16. God hardened the heart of Pharaoh by letting him off, and probably by allowing him to be deceived by a lying spirit as Ahab was in 2Chron.18v20-22. Rom.2v2-6. with Exod.7v13,14,22. 8v15,19,32. 9v7,12,34,35. 10v1,20,27. 11v10. 14v8. 4v21. 7v3. 14v4,7. The miracles were also a sign to the surrounding nations. Exod.15v11-16. Deut.4v34. 5v15. with Joshua.2v9-11. 5v1. Elijah brought fire from heaven through a gift of faith and brought Israel face to face with the majesty and might of God. 1Kings.18v36-39.

3. To conform the message of a prophet to a nation.

Many prophets did not work any miracles to confirm their messages; they confirmed their prophecies by words of wisdom and knowledge that came to pass. However, there are numerous cases of prophets confirming their message from God with miracles. The unknown prophet who prophesied against Jeroboam. 1Kings.13v1-10. Samuel's prophecy of thunder. 1Sam.12v16-25. Elijah and the fire from heaven. 1Kings.18v36-39. The many miracles and signs that were performed through Moses to the Egyptians and Israelites.

c. To confirm God's word and call to a person.

It is a striking thing that even the angels worked miracles as signs of the truth of their word. Gideon had an offering consumed by heavenly fire, the sign of the fleece, in order to build up his faith. How gracious God is. Judges.6v1-23,36-40. Judges7v9-14. Isaiah's word to Hezekiah was confirmed by a remarkable miracle. 2Kings20v1-11. Aaron's rod budded to show he was God's choice. Exod.7v10. Numb.17v8. Elisha's authority was proved by a great miracle. 2Kings.2v13-15. The call of Peter, James, John and Andrew was confirmed by a miraculous catch of fish. Lk.5v1-11. If Christ and angels needed signs and wonders to convince people of the truth of their message, we certainly do. Lk.1v20-23,63,64. 2v1--12,34. Heb.2v3,4.

d. To establish faith and confirm the preaching of the Gospel.

When Christ turned the water into wine it greatly helped to establish their faith in Christ. Jn.2v1-11,23. The feeding of the 5,000 convinced many of the truth of Christ's words, but also failed with many others who did not want spiritual things. Jn.6v1-14,26,27., also the feeding of the 4,000. Mt.15v32-39. When Christ and Peter walked on the water the aim was to establish faith. Mt.14v22-36. We see that both Christ and the apostle Paul looked upon miracles as signs that helped people to believe, and this is why the Church needs them. Jn.5v19,20,36,44. 14v9-12.

2. To provide for those who are in need.

We read of many cases of miraculous provision in the Scriptures. Water out of solid rock at Rephidim. Exod.17v1-7. Manna for Israel in the wilderness wanderings, Exod.16v15-35., and quails. Exod.16v13. Numb.11v31. In 1Kings17v1-16., we see Elijah provided for by God. We also see the miracles of provision through Elisha's ministry; water and land healed, 2Kings2v19-22.; the widows oil multiplied, 2Kings4v1-7.; the poisoned food healed, 2Kings4v38-41.; the loaves multiplied, 2Kings4v42-44.; the lost axe recovered, 2Kings.6v1-7.. Elisha was saved a long walk and great inconvenience by a remarkable miracle. 2Kings2v13-15. We have already seen our Lord's great miracles of provision when He fed the multitudes and provided miraculous catches of fish. Mk.6v32-44,48. 8v1-9. Lk.5v1-11. Jn.21v3-11. The coin in the mouth of the fish is also a wonderful miracle. Mt.17v24-27.

3. To deliver from danger.

God took the wheels off the chariots of Pharaoh and opened the red sea. Exod.14v16,21. 15v23-25. Samson killed a lion and carried off the gates of Gaza. Judges.14v5,6. 16v1-3. David killed Goliath by working of miracles. 1Sam.17v37,45-50. The Lord Jesus twice stilled the storms that threatened the disciple's safety. Lk.8v22-25. Nt.14v24,30-33. 6v18-21. God sent an earthquake to set Paul and Silas free and covert the jailer. Acts.16v25-34. God delivers Paul from the poisonous snake. Acts28v1-6. with Mk.16v18.

4. To bring judgement.

One cannot help but think of the judgements and plagues of Egypt. Aaron's rod swallows up the magician's rods. Exod.7v10-13. The river, etc., to blood. Exod.7v14-25. The frogs upon Egypt. Exod.8v1-15. The dust became lice. Exod.8v16-19. Here the magicians confess that this is the finger of God. Swarms of flies. Exod.8v20-32. The cattle die through disease. Exod.9v1-7. (The next plague I have called a gift of faith because it directly affects man, some might disagree with this. The boil upon the Egyptians Exod.9v8-12.) The great hail and fire upon men and cattle, which kills many of both. Exod.9v13-35. (This could be a gift of faith plus working of miracles, I leave the reader to judge for themselves.) The locusts. Exod.10v1-20. Thick black darkness for three days, made it impossible to see. Exod.10v21-29. (The death of the firstborn through angelic judgement, I have called a gift of faith, some may disagree, I leave the reader to decide for themselves. Exod.11 and 12v1-36.

The ground opened up and swallowed up the sons of Korah. Numb.16v19-35. God stopped the sun setting for Joshua to make sure of judgement upon the Amorites. Joshua. 10v6-14. Elijah brought a famine upon the land to judge them for their sin. 1Kings.17v1. 18v1,42-46. and James.5v14-20. (Some think that this is a gift of faith.) Christ caused a tree to wither away because of its empty profession, and to give an illustration of faith's power. Mk.11v12-14,20-24.

As we have said before, the emphasis during this age of grace is upon God's love and mercy through the gifts of healings, and not upon judgement. However, at the end of this age when sin and Satanic power become more prevalent, the Church will again receive power to judge their foes under certain circumstances. The two witnesses of Rev.11v1-8. have power given to them to bring suffering and death upon their evil foes. This kind of power will be absolutely essential to deal with the wickedness in the world due to Antichrist and his followers. The workings of miracles through nature have a powerful effect upon people's consciences, the direct judgement of God through angels, or the power of God, is also very awe-inspiring. Both the gift of faith and the workings of miracles can have a very powerful effect when used in judgement. In the near future the Church will need these precious gifts of the Holy Spirit, very much. Beloved, let us earnestly desire the Holy Spirit's lovely gifts.

THE GIFTS OF HEALINGS.

This is fourth in the list in 1Cor.12v8-10., it is in the plural, "gifts of healings," in the original Scriptures. It is in the plural because one person can be the channel of many gifts of healings, some have seen hundreds and even thousands healed in one Christian gathering, through one person's ministry. We should remember that:

1. Gifts of healings should not be confused with medical care.

Christians should be the last to disparage the work of doctors and nurses who are dedicated to the relief of suffering, there is a definite place for natural healing, and God Himself gave the Israelites sound medical law. The world's wisest man said that medicine could do as much good as a happy disposition. Prov.17v22. Ezek.47v12. Rev.22v2. However, gifts of healings are quite separate from the good and best that medical care can accomplish, they are supernatural healings from God.

2. Gifts of healings from God must not be confused with Spiritualism or Christian Science.

Neither of these are Christian, and indeed they attack the vital Christian doctrines, they are both Satanic in origin. See the note on discerning of Spirits. Those who go to Spiritualists for healing are in the gravest danger.

3. The gifts of healings are the most common of the gifts of power.

The command to heal the sick is one of the primary commands of Christ, it is strongly emphasised in the command to evangelise. It is a striking thing that God used workmen to perform mighty healings, and this caused many of the powerless professional religious leaders of Christ's day to turn green with envy and bitterness, because it exposed their failure and spiritual defeat. It is the most common because divine love desires to meet the needs of suffering humanity, and this is probably why gifts of healings are placed before workings of miracles in 1Cor.12v8-10., even though Paul tells us in1Cor.12v28., that workings of miracles come before gifts of healings in Spiritual power and importance. People certainly matter to God. There is no judgement in healing, it is a manifestation of divine love, and this is why gifts of healings occur more commonly in the New Testament than in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, the age of grace and mercy, we see God performing His desires for grace and mercy.

4. The gifts of healings must not be confused with the other gifts of power.

All miracles of healing come within the scope of gifts of healing, whether they are simple healing or mighty miracles of creation of new organs. Gifts of healings only deal with man's physical condition, though of course, any healing has a profound spiritual effect on a person. The casting out of demons comes within the scope of the gift of faith, not within the scope of gifts of healings.

5. The gifts of healings cannot cause a person to heal everybody who is sick.

It is certainly true that the floodtide of our Lord's and the early Church's ministry, everybody that was prayed for was healed, and Mt.8v16-18. tells us that this is the extent of God's promise. However, Christ only healed one out of a multitude at the pool of Bethesda, this makes it quite clear that all did not come to Christ for healing, and that Christ could not heal all at will. See Jn.5v1-14. A measure of faith and repentance preceded the healings that Christ performed. Mt.8v13. 9v22,29. 15v28. Mk.5v36. Acts.6v5. Heb.11v5,6. The faith of friends or relatives can also be the means of bringing healing to a needy loved one. Mk.2v5. 9v22-24,28,29.

Sometimes people under the discipline of God like Gehazi come into meetings for prayer and expect to be healed; we need to remember that God can make sick as well as heal. 1Cor.11v29-32. 2Kings.5v20-27. Deut.32v39. Serious sin definitely hinders healing as does spiritual sloth and unbelief. Heb.6v12. 11v6. An unforgiving hard-hearted attitude can stop Christians from receiving healing or blessing from God. Mt.18v35. Mk.11v25,26. There is divine sickness as well as divine healing, and the purpose of this discipline is reformation of character. Ps.73.all. Ps.119v67,71-75. 1Cor.11v28-32. However, if we repent of our sins we can be healed of our sicknesses, for it is certainly not the will of God, for a Christian to be continually sick or afflicted, our heavenly Father wants to give us "good gifts" and to bless us. James.5v15,16. Lk.11v11-13. You cannot press a gift of healing upon a person who does not want to receive one, the people who Christ prayed for were people who believed in His ministry, and came to Him for healing. Faith is needed not only in the person who is the channel of the gift of healing, but also the person who is receiving the gift of healing, unless of course they are mentally sick, or demon-possessed. Mt.8v5-13. Mk.3v10. 5v29-34. 6v1-6. with Mt.13v58.

6. Gifts of healings do not enable us to avoid the consequences of intemperate living.

Some people ask God for healing, when what they should really do is change their manner of life. Many people make themselves ill by over-stressing their body with overwork, lack of rest and sleep, and by foolish diet. We need to remember that the Bible states that we have to take care of our bodies or reap the consequences. Phil.2v25-30. Ps.127v2. 107v17-21. In Ps.103v3,5. we read that God expects us to eat good food to renew our health, as well as look to God for healing. The Law gave very good practical advice on sensible living, and we need to take very careful heed to it. There is so much sickness that we can avoid by temperate living, and so much ill health that could be changed to good health by temperate living. Finney said that one of the things that could bring a revival to a halt was the intemperate living of Christians; he said that Christians could have breakdowns in their health through placing too great a strain on their bodies. However, sometimes even under these circumstances, God can be very gracious and heal us; but let us use wisdom, for it is not glorifying to God for the world to see Christians ill through foolish intemperate living. Ps.107v1-43. Phil.2v25-30. 1Cor.6v20. Eph.5v29.

7. Sickness is primarily due to the loss of the tree of life through Adam's sin.

Sickness is not God's intended lot for humanity; God's perfect will is perfect health. Gen.2v9. 3v22-24. Ezek.47v6-12. Rev.22v2,14,15. However, though we are at present cut off from receiving perpetual and perfect health from the tree of life, we can receive divine healing direct from our heavenly Father; and so even under the old covenant there were some very definite promises of divine healing. Exod.15v26. Ps.105v37. Ps.103v1-5,8,13-18. Numb.21v5-9. 2Kings.5v8-17. 20v4-11. The Old Testament prophets were told that one of the outstanding activities of the promised Messiah was going to be His ministry of healing, Is.53v4. with Mt.8v16,17. Is.35v5,6., and His manifestation of spiritual power. Is.61v1,2. with Lk.4v40,41. Deut.18v15-19. Ps.45v6,7. with Heb.1v8,9. When the Lord Jesus started His ministry, He showed that it was the will and desire of God to meet the needs of the sick and oppressed, by spending a large part of His time ministering to those who were ill or oppressed of the Devil, and He gave the same commission to His early Church. Jn.5v29,30. Acts.10v38. Lk.4v40,41. Mt.10v8. Mk.16v15-20. (The verses in Mk.16v9-20. are certainly part of Mark's Gospel. There are over 600 Greek manuscripts of the Gospels, and only two do not have these verses; the Vaticanus, which has a blank space left for these verses, and the Sinaiticus. These are the oldest Greek manuscripts, but there is strong evidence that these verses were in other older manuscripts, because about 100 Church Fathers who wrote before our oldest Greek manuscripts, have all said that these verses were written by Mark in his Gospel, and about 200 Church Fathers who lived between 300 to 600 A.D. confirm their testimony. The Syriac "Peshitto" version, 150 A.D., contain these verses, as do the Latin, Gothic, Egyptian, and Armenian versions. The Vatican manuscript has also, doubtless through age, got considerable other parts of Scripture missing, Gen.1 to 46. Ps.105 to 137. Heb.9v14 to 13v25., all of 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon and Revelation. The overwhelming mass of evidence is in favour of these verses, those who make the loss of ancient documents the excuse for doing away with Christ's commission to His Church to heal the sick, have the most fragile reasons for doing so.)

Definition.

Gifts of healings are the supernatural workings of the Holy Spirit, that enable the sick to be healed of any disease or infirmity. It is not to be confused with healing through medicine, or any other natural means of healing, no matter how commendable or praiseworthy they may be. There are several ways in which a person can receive a gift of healing from the Lord to restore their health.

1. Through personal prayer. Is.38v1-22. Jn.14v11-15. 15v4-14.

2. Through church elders praying a prayer of faith.

James.5v13-16. This is the usual way that a Christian should expect to be healed. The Greek word for "sick" in James.5v15. is "kamno," is translated "wearied" in Heb.12v3., and "Fainted" in Rev.2v3.; it speaks of a person being "worn out" by sickness, and does not necessarily mean that a person is bed-fast. Some say that we have no warrant to anoint unbelievers, as Mk.6v13. was to Israel, and Mt.15v26. tells us that healing is "the children's bread." However, these same Israelites were looked upon in Mt.10v6. as "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," who needed Christ's salvation. The anointing with oil signifies the power of the Holy Spirit, and this comes upon both unbelievers and believers to heal them. If the elders pray for Christians and there is a succession of failures in healing, the church should really seek the Lord to find out why this is happening, a church should not rest content until it is seeing the sick healed.

3. Through any believer.

Mk.16v18. Any believer who really believes can lay hands on the sick and see them recover. However, if there is no faith or spiritual power, nothing will happen, we cannot give what we have not got. We have to be in close touch with God, we can't expect the gifts of healings to manifest themselves if we are careless or prayerless. If we try to bring healing to people when we are in a powerless spiritual condition, and have nothing to give, we shall discourage both the sick person and ourselves as well. To know ourselves is very difficult but necessary task when we are dealing with the sick. 2Cor.13v5. James.1v22.

4. Through an evangelist who has a continual healing ministry to the sick.

This gift is part and parcel of New Testament and apostolic ministries, 1Cor.12v28. 2Cor.12v12. Rom.15v18-20. Mk.16v15-20. Lk.9v1,2. 10v1-9. These greater ministries are usually entrusted with the greater manifestations of the gifts of healings.

So we can see that whether we are an Elder, Evangelist, or ordinary Christian, if we live close to God we can pray for the sick in the name of Jesus. Jn.15v16. 16v23. Acts.3v6,16. 4v10,12. Each healing is a separate gift, i.e. if we pray for ten people and all of them are healed, ten gifts of healings have been ministered. A gift of healing can be ministered by the laying on of hands, by a touch, by a word, or even by garments that have been prayed over by a person who is full of God's power. Mt.8v8,13-17. 9v24,25,29,30. Mk.6v5,6. Acts.19v11,12. Peter was so full of the power of God that when he got close enough to people for his shadow to fall on them, those who were sick were healed. Those who would minister to the sick must be full and keep full of the Holy Spirit. Acts.5v15,16. The great value of gifts of healings in evangelism is clearly seen in the Scriptures.

1. They display the wonderful character and grace of God.

The God of love longs to meet the needs of fallen humanity, God does not like to see people suffer; He longs to save and heal fallen humanity. Christ came to destroy all the works of the Devil, and to show the world what He and the Father were like. 1Jn.3v8. Acts.10v38. Lk.4v18,19. Jn.14v7-10. The healing of disease and infirmity by this gift greatly glorifies the Lord, and makes a powerful appeal to people to return to such a wonderful and loving God. Mk.2v3-12. Acts.4v21. Paul tells us that people are blinded by Satan and need these signs and wonders to see what God is like. 2Cor.4v3-7. Rom.15v17-20. This brings us to our next point.

2. Gifts of healings confirm the Gospel message.

This is the most common of the New Testament signs and wonders, it makes people come and see what is happening and compels them to listen to the Gospel message. Mt.4v23-25. This gift shows that the Gospel is true and the Lord Jesus is alive and can save and forgive sins, and that the tremendous truths about Heaven and Hell and sin and judgement are true. Mk.2v1-12. Jn.10v36-38. Acts.3v13-16,18-26. This gift certainly turns people to the Lord. Acts.8v5-8,13. 9v32-35. The manifestation of gifts of healings really inspires the people of God and gives them a holy boldness in the preaching of the Gospel. Acts.4v29-31. This gift makes all the difference between defeat and victory to the saints, particularly in time of persecution. The thing that we should always remember is that we are channels of gifts of healings purely because of the grace of God and shed blood of Christ, the Lord Jesus is the only one who has manifested spiritual gifts because He merited them. For those who are sick we will now do a brief study on why we can expect God to heal us, those who want a more detailed can read my book "Jesus Christ the Healer."

GOD DESIRES TO HEAL YOU.

Your sickness may be due to heredity, Satan, your sin, neglect or overwork of your body, natural ageing of your body, worry, the pressure of life, emotional stress, infection and disease, industrial poisoning, injury, accident or war. However, whatever the cause of your sickness, unless your time has come to die, God desires to heal you, as the following facts and Scriptures clearly show.

1. The original creation shows God's desire and will for mankind to enjoy perfect health.

It is the fall and sin of man that has made creation subject to sickness and unreality. Rom.8v19-22. God not only made the human body self-healing, He also gave the tree of life to preserve perfect health. Adam's sin deprived mankind of the tree of life and physical well being, and by breaking God's moral and health laws, mankind has suffered further physical deterioration. Gen.3v22. Deut.28v15-29,45-48,58-68. Prov.13v2,15. Gal.6v7. Christ came to redeem us from the curse of a broken law, and by accepting Him as Lord and Saviour we can be saved and healed. Gal.3v13,14. The Scriptures tell us that one glad day God's kingdom of love will come to earth and God's earthly creation will enjoy perfect health forever. Rev.21v3-5. 22v2.

2. God looks upon sickness and death as evil things and enemies of mankind and His perfect will.

1Cor.15v26. 1Thes.5v23. 3Jn.v2. Sickness, like any other trial and temptation, may produce spiritual strength in us, when we overcome it by God's grace, but it is still an evil thing. God speaks of sickness as an oppression of Satan, a curse, a bondage and captivity, from which Christ has come to deliver us. Lk.4v17-21. 13v10-17. Acts.10v38. 1Jn.3v8. Job.2v7-13. 42v10.

3. God so desired the Israelites to enjoy good health, that He gave them sound medical laws to preserve their health.

God gave the Israelites laws of rest, food, and hygiene, sanitation and quarantine, as well as moral law, to preserve their health. Prov.4v20-22. Lev.23v1-44. 25v1-24. with Mk.2v23-28.; Lev.11v32,39,40. 15v1-33.; Deut.23v12,13.; Lev.13v1-59. Numb.5v1-4.; Lev.11v1-47.. God also gave them the promise of divine healing. Exod.15v26. If physical neglect or overwork has made you ill, then you need to observe the practical medical advice given in the Law of God, and give your body adequate food, rest and sleep. Ps.103v3,5. 127v2. God can heal you if you have neglected your body, but he does expect you to be sensible and to use your common sense. Phil.2v25-27. Ps.107v4-6,8,17-21.

4. The character, compassion and love of God assure that God earnestly desires to heal us.

See Ps.103v1-22. 146v5-10. Mt.6v25-34. Jn.1v14. It is not sickness, but the healing of sickness by the power of God, that glorifies God and shows His perfectly loving will and character. Sickness is Satan's will for God's creation. Acts.10v38. It causes many people to love and glorify God when they realise God's complete dedication and sacrificial love for His creation, and divine healing makes them realise this glorious fact. Mk.2v12. Lk.13v10-17. Mt.15v31. Jn.11v4,40,45. 1Jn.4v8. Rev.4v8.

5. The cross of Christ shows how earnestly God desires to save and heal us.

We can claim healing for soul and body through Christ's atonement. Is.53v4. with Mt.8v16,17. Bumb.21v5-9. with Jn.3v14-16. 1Pet.2v24. Exod.15v26. God desires to deliver us from sin and sickness and give us His good gifts. Mt.7v11. Lk.11v9-13.

6. Christ revealed God's willingness to heal you by healing all who came to Him, and His early Church did the same.

See Mt.8v16,17. 14v13,14. Acts.5v12-16. Christ is alive, and He desires to do the same miracles today that He did while He was on earth; He is just as able and willing to heal you today. Jn.20v21. Mk.16v15-18. Heb.13v8. You can receive healing from Christ through your own prayers, Is.38v1-22. Jn.14v11-15. 15v4-14.; through the prayers of others, even if you are separated from those praying for you by a great distance, Mk.16v17,18. Mt.8v5-13. 9v29,30. 14v35,36. Jn.4v46-54.; by a prayer cloth, etc., prayed over and sent to you, Acts.19v11,12. 2Kings.13v20,21.; through a spoken word of commanding faith, Mt.8v8. Acts.3v6.; or by an act of obedience at Christ's direction. Mk.7v32-37. Lk.17v12-19. Jn.9v1-15. Numb.21v5-9. God can use any of these channels to heal you, so bring your sins and sickness to Christ He earnestly desires to save and heal you. Carefully and prayerfully consider the next three points.

a. Repent of all your sin and come in sincere repentance to Christ.

Accept Jesus as your Saviour, if you do not already know Him as Saviour. Acts.3v19. 13v38,39. Jn.1v12. 3v16. Heb.7v25. Christ emphasised the supreme importance of getting right with God and being "born again," and He told us that there is a vital connection between repentance, forgiveness and healing. Mk.2v5,9,10. Jn.5v1-9,14. Rom.12v1,2. 1Jn.3v21-24. 1Cor.11v27-32. If you have any bitterness or enmity against others, forgive them, for God has to forgive your sins, otherwise it could well hinder or stop you receiving your healing. Mt.6v12,14,15. 18v35. Mk.11v22-26. Lk.17v1-17. Get right with God and man and come in full assurance of faith for healing to God, through Christ's shed blood your sin can be forgiven and your body healed. Mt.5v22-24. Lk.24v47. Rom.8v32. 1Pet.2v24. 1Jn.1v9. Heb.10v19-22.

b. Be absolutely positive in your faith in Christ and God the Father.

See Heb.11v5,6. Mk.5v25-34. 6v56. Praise and thank God for His promise to heal you. Mk.11v20-24. 2Cor.1v19,20. Don't come to God with doubting hope; come to Him with positive faith. Don't wait for thrills, feelings or sight, before you believe, believe God's Word and resist Satan's lies and God will meet with you. God really wants you to be well, so reject false tradition that teaches that God wants you to be sick. 1Pet.5v6-11. James4v7. Let your confession of faith be as positive as the Word of God, and believe God's Word even when circumstances seem to deny it. Jn.20v27-29. 2Cor.4v18. 5v7. Rom.4v20. God is faithful, He is able and willing to heal all those who truly repent and come to Him in full assurance of faith, no matter what Satan, false church tradition, senses, or circumstances may say. 1Jn.5v9-15. Mk.9v22,23.

c. Continue to trust Christ for a miracle even when healing is not immediate.

Sometimes healing is delayed or is gradual, but remember that God promises that real faith never goes unrewarded. Mk.11v20-25. Imitate the persistent faith and prayer of the woman of Mt.15v21-28., the Shunammite woman of 2Kings.4v18-37., the sick woman of Mk.2v25-34., the blind men of Lk.18v35-43., the friends of the palsied man of Mk.2v1-12.. Remember, even God's great servant Job experienced a delay in healing, and that Epaphroditus was not healed immediately, even though Paul prayed for him. but they were both healed. Job.42v10. Phil.2v25-30. Lk.17v11-19. Even the Lord Jesus prayed for one blind person twice,

and other people received their healing a short while after being prayed for. Mk.8v22-26. Lk.17v12-19. Jn.9v1-15. Above all you must remember to direct your faith to God, and not to the person who prays for you and when God heals you, give Him ALL the glory. Acts.3v11-13. 14v7-21.

We will finish this study on the gifts of healings with a quotation from page 57 of C.L. Parker's book "Covert Earnestly"; "There is no instance in the Bible refusing either salvation or healing to anyone who was able to accept it: and delay is not denial."

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY.

The gift of prophecy is sixth in the list in 1Cor.12v8-10., however, Paul tells us that prophecy is the gift that Christians are to desire the most, because it can greatly edify the church. 1Cor.14v1-3.

1. The normal gift of prophecy must not be confused with prediction.

This is the province of the word of wisdom and knowledge. A prophecy may contain these greater gifts, but normal prophecy through the simple gift of prophecy is to edify, exhort, and comfort. 1Cor.14v3. Unless a person has a ministry of words of wisdom and knowledge, they have no right or authority from God to be called a "seer" or claim a prophetic office, which brings us to our next point:

2. The normal gift of prophecy must not be confused with the office of a prophet.

The prophet in the local church with the simple gift of prophecy and perhaps an occasional manifestation of the gifts of revelation, has a prophetic ministry to the local church; the prophet with a continual ministry of the gifts of revelation as well as the simple gift of prophecy has more than a local ministry and has a prophetic office in the universal Church, and is second only to an apostle in authority. Eph.4v11. Acts.13v1. In the Old Testament those who had a vision ministry were called "seers," i.e. they were taught by visions, those who have a ministry to others by means of a continual vision ministry are not manifesting the simple gift of prophecy, they are manifesting the gifts of revelation, some have no authority from God to manifest this kind of ministry. Rom.12v6. There is a considerable difference between the prophetic ministry of Agabus and the prophetic gift of Philip's four daughters in Acts.21v9,10. Some have no authority to predict like Agabus and must not try. Rom.12v6. Eph.4v11. Even those with a prophetic ministry can vary a great deal in their manifestation of spiritual gifts; some have much more authority than others. Numb.12v6-15.

3. Prophecy is not to be confused with preaching or preaching.

Those who preach expound God's revealed Word; those who prophesy speak the mind of the Holy Spirit under His direct influence.

Grimm and Thayer in their New Testament Lexicon, (1896 Ed.) say: "Propheteuo" (to prophesy) is.... d. To break forth under divine impulse in lofty discourse or in praise of the divine counsels."

And under the word "prophetes," Grimm and Thayer explain that the Christian prophets were those who "in religious assemblies of the Christians, being suddenly seized by the Spirit (whose promptings however do not impair their self government, 1Cor.14v32.) give utterance in glowing and exalted but intelligible language to those things which the Holy Spirit teaches them, and which have power to instruct, comfort, encourage, rebuke, convict and stimulate their hearers."

Bishop Ellicott, in his critical and Grammatical Commentary on 1 and 2 Thessalonians (4th. Ed. 1880,) on 1Thes.5v20. points out that prophecies were "declarations of the divine counsels and expositions of God's oracles, immediately inspired by and emanating from the Holy Spirit.... The difference between ordinary didache and propheteia consisted in this, that the latter was due to the immediate influence of the Spirit, the former to an exoikeias dialegesthai (speaking out of one's own mind."

In the A.V. the word "propheteuo" (to prophesy,) is never translated as "preach." Mt.7v22. 11v13. 15v7. 26v68. Mk.7v6. 14v65. Lk.1v67. 22v64. Jn.11v51. Acts.2v17,18. 19v6. 21v9. 1Cor.11v4,5. 13v9. 14v1,3,4,5,24,31,39. 1Pet.1v10. Judev14. Rev.10v11. 11v3., **nor is "propheteia" (prophecy) ever translated as "preaching," and "prophetes" ((prophet) is never translated as "preacher."**

The Greek words for "preach" are not used to speak of a person prophesying. They clearly speak of the telling forth of truth out of the mind by process of thought. The words that are used are: "Dialegomai," which means, "to speak throughout." Acts.20v7,9. 24v12,25. 17v2,17. 18v4,19. 19v8,9. "Diangelo," which means to tell or announce thoroughly. Lk.9v60. "Euangelizo," which means, "to tell good news, or good tidings." Lk.3v18. 4v43. 16v16. Acts.5v42. 8v4,12,35,40. Eph.3v8. Heb.4v2,6. Rev.14v6. etc. "Katangelo," which means "to tell thoroughly," it occurs in Acts.4v2. 13v5,38. 15v36. 16v17,21. 17v3,13,23. 26v23. Rom.1v8. 1Cor.2v1. 9v14. 11v26. Phil.1v16,18. Col.1v28.. "Kerusso," which means "to cry or proclaim as an herald." Mt.3v1. 4v17,23. 9v35. 1Pet.3v19. etc. "Laleo," which means "to talk, discourse, or speak." Mk.2v2. Mt.13v3. Acts.8v25. 11v19. 13v42. 14v25. 16v6. etc. Paul said that God had ordained and appointed him as a preacher, ("kerux," a crier, or herald,) and Peter tells us that Noah was a "preacher of righteousness." "Kerux is only used in 1Tim 2v7. 2Tim.1v11. and 2Pet.2v5.. See Rom.10v14., "preacher," "kerusso," to herald, as a public crier, especially divine truth (the gospel), in the K.J.V., it is translated as, preacher, preach, proclaim, publish.

The Old Testament also distinguishes a preacher from a prophet. The Old Testament prophet was a "nabi," or if

a prophetess a "nebiah," they were also sometimes a seer, a "chozeh." Gen.20v7. Ezra.5v1. Exod.15v20 2Sam.24v11. 30v10. Ezek.13v9,16. Amos.7v12. These prophets prophesied, or should have prophesied the mind of God, sometimes God was very angry with people because they said they were prophesying when they gave their own thoughts instead of God's thoughts. 2Chron.18v11. Jer.14v14. 23v21,25,26,32. 27v10,14. The prophet is one who allowed God to flow forth His thoughts through them, "naba" means "flow forth," sometimes these words were good tidings, sometimes they were words of judgement, and the true prophets were not afraid to proclaim what God had told them. There is a great difference between the prophet, who told God's thoughts, and the preacher who proclaims obvious wisdom like Solomon did, Solomon was a preacher, a "qoheleth." Eccles.1v1,2,12. 7v27. 12v8,9,10. Both preacher and prophet proclaim, but the source of the prophet's message is the Holy Spirit, the source of the preacher's message is his mind. Ps.40v9. Is.61v1. Neh.6v7. Jonah.3v2. So we can see that to call "prophecy" by the name of "preaching" is quite unjustified, they are looked upon as two quite distinct things in the Scriptures.

Robinson's Lexicon makes the following helpful note on "prophetes," (prophet):

"In Sept. and New Testament "prophetes" corresponds to Hebrew "nabi," one who speaks from a divine influence, under inspiration, whether as foretelling future events, or as exhorting, reproving, threatening individuals or nations, i.e. as the ambassador of God and the interpreter of His will to men;... With the Jewish use of "nabi" and "prophetes" was connected the idea, that the prophet spoke not his own thoughts, but what he received from God, retaining however his own consciousness and self- possession." End of quote.

Prophecy and preaching are two quite distinct ministries in the Scriptures; those with a prophetic ministry are next to apostles in authority, and before teachers, Greek "didaskaloi." 1Cor.12v28. Eph.4v11. Paul was an apostle, prophet and teacher. 1Tim.2v7. 2Tim.1v11. 4v3. 2Cor.12v1-4. 1Cor.15v51-53. This shows that God can give to some both ministries of prophet and teacher, even though they are usually quite distinct ministries.

4. Prophecy can have many purposes and vary a great deal in importance.

Prophecy can be used in prayer and worship as well as in the edification, exhortation and comfort of believers. The Scriptures also show that the message of some prophets is much more important than the message from other prophets. Rom.12v6. God gives some prophets prophecies that are of a local and only temporary significance, however, He gives other prophets prophecies that are of national or international importance. As we have seen some prophets have a prophetic office and are used by God to continually minister on the level of words of wisdom and knowledge, and they have a prophetic ministry that goes beyond the bounds of the local church,

There is a real danger of being sceptical about prophecies, and Christians can look upon prophecy as a rather beautiful and pleasant thing, but without any real importance, however, even though the simple gift of prophecy is not as important as the prophetic office, it has an important place in the local church. Even Timothy was not attaching the importance to prophetic revelation that he should have done. 1Tim.4v14,15. 2Tim.1v6-8. We should never despise genuine prophesying. !Thes.5v19,20. The idea that no real notice should be taken of prophetic utterances is quite perilous and reveals a real spirit of scepticism and unbelief. The people who ignored the Old Testament prophets got into real trouble and ended up in defeat and captivity. 2Chron.36v15-21. Jehoshaphat knew that to prosper, you had to believe the Word of God through the prophets of God. 2Chron.20v20. The fact that prophets are placed second to apostles in the New Testament, shows the importance of prophecy in New Testament churches. The New Testament apostles are really a kind of prophet, they manifested spiritual gifts, that in the Old Testament would have resulted in them being called prophets, but they also have the New Testament commission from Christ to evangelise and pioneer churches. If we ignore genuine prophetic utterances, it can have the most serious consequences; Paul got into real trouble by ignoring the prophecies of local believers and prophetic warning of Agabus the prophet. Acts.21v10-13. 22v17,18,21. 16v29. If the seven churches in the book of Revelation had only taken heed to the Holy Spirit as He spoke through the prophets in these churches, they would have not got into the shocking state that some of them did get into. However, having said all this, we have to recognise that false prophecy took place among the Old Testament people of God, and it has also plagued the New Testament Church, and so we need to take heed to the following warnings.

a. We must not surrender our right to judge prophetic utterances.

We have the right and duty to judge prophetic utterances. 1Thes.5v19-21. 1Cor.14v29-33. This not only means that we should decide which part of a prophetic message applies to ourselves, it also means that we have the right to judge if a prophecy is from the Lord. We can, and should, reject anything that comes from the human mind alone, or from evil spirits. Jer.23v16,25-34. 1Kings22v19-30. Even Ahab knew that only Micaiah was telling the truth, and the Holy Spirit will always witness to the truth. 1Jn.2v26,27. Rev.2v20-25. Important prophetic truth will be confirmed out of the mouths of two or three reliable witnesses. Deut.19v15. 2Cor.13v1. with 1Cor.14v29. The mature spiritual members of the local church will preserve their church from error due to immaturity and fanaticism, if they keep close to God. Most of the false cults that have arisen have come into being by someone making a false claim to exclusive inspiration from God or the spirit world, and multitudes have been deceived by Satan, because they have unconditionally surrendered their right to judge these "revelations." Christians should not make this same dreadful mistake, Paul tells us to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1Thes.5v20,21.

b. Prophecies, which tell us what to do, should be regarded with caution and carefully. Examined.

For in the New Testament, direction usually comes direct to the sons of God from their heavenly Father. Rom.8v14. Heb.9v10,11. However, God may speak through others by the gifts of the Spirit to confirm guidance that He has already given to us, or He may use others to warn us in an emergency or danger, as Agabus warned Paul. Notice, Agabus did not tell Paul what to do, even though the Christians at Tyre warned Paul not to go to Jerusalem, Agabus confirmed what had already been revealed to Paul. Acts.20v22,23. 21v3,4,10,11. We thank God for the guidance that He gives us through the gifts of the Spirit, it can be very precious, and it will be none the less precious if we approach other Christian's revelations about ourselves with caution. Acts.11v28. 16v6-11. (I consider other Scriptural safeguards in the manifestations of spiritual gifts in my book "The Baptism and Gifts of the Spirit," under the heading "Reception of the Gifts," so those who desire further information upon this point can read this book.)

The simple gift of prophecy is not given for guidance, though it may sometimes confirm guidance, if it is a channel of the revelation gifts. The New Testament prophet foretells, warns in emergency, but does not direct Christian's lives; the New Testament Christian with the simple gift of prophecy does not usually foretell.

c. Prophecy does not replace or take precedence over Scripture.

Prophecies have to be checked by the Scriptures, it is a false reverence to accept prophecies without any Scriptural test or question. 1Jn.4v1-5. A person may say "Thus saith the Lord," but we still have to check what they say by the Scriptures. It is quite all right to say, "Thus saith the Lord," for anybody who prophesies, should not prophecy unless they absolutely feel that they have a message from God. It is not the words "Thus saith the Lord," that decide the authenticity of a person's prophecy, it is their conformity to the Scripture and their manifest power and authority. In Jeremiah's day people professed to speak for God, but their words were light and untrue, so different from God's words, "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Jer.23v28-32. God's words are full of life and power and quicken and challenge the soul, Heb.4v12., and in this respect the Scriptures are supreme, those who tamper with the Scriptures do it to their own destruction. 2Pet.3v16. The Church is built upon the Scriptures given to the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles, and particularly the truth revealed by our Saviour. Eph.2v20. 3v5. No one can receive truth that will add to or supersede the New Testament revelation. Rev.22v18,19.

Definition. Prophecy is a supernatural utterance given by the Holy Spirit that can take the form of exhortation, encouragement, prayer or song. It is not the product of a person's processes of thought; it is a revelation from God. Its main purpose is to edify and encourage the church. There may be prediction channelled through this gift on occasions, when the prophecy contains words of wisdom and knowledge. Prophecy enables God to meet hidden needs in the church. A prophecy may contain something that the prophet already knows, which God desires to be spoken to help others, or it may contain some revelation that the prophet was previously unaware of. However, whatever the content of the prophecy, a true prophecy will be endured with Divine life and power. Prophecy enables God to speak to man; the word "prophet" describes someone who is the mouthpiece of God. 1Cor.14v2. A church is not Pentecostal if it does not manifest spiritual gifts, and in particular the gift of prophecy. There is a spirit of expectancy if the gifts are powerfully manifested, and when the Holy Spirit speaks words of tender comfort through a loving heart, the very peace of Heaven is ministered.

THE USE OF PROPHECY.

1. It enables God to edify, exhort, and comfort the Church. 1Cor.14v3-5.

Paul says that the first use of the simple gift of prophecy is to "edify" the Church, i.e. prophecy is used by God "to build up" the Church in character, love and spiritual strength. If the divine Architect is to build up His Church, as He desires this gift must be in operation, for lacking it the Church cannot be built up, as it should. Mt.16v16,18. Eph.2v21,22. Rev.2v7,11,17,29. 3v6,13,22.

The Greek word for "exhortation" in 1Cor.14v3. is "paraklesis," which means "a calling to one's side, a calling near, an invitation," and it is used in the New Testament in the following ways. a. As an appeal, petition or entreaty. 2Cor.8v4,17. b. As an exhortation, encouragement, and admonition 1Thes.2v3. 1Tim.4v13. Acts.13v15. Heb.12v5, 13v22. c. As a consolation, comfort and solace. Lk.6v24. Acts.9v31. Rom.15v4,5. 2Cor.1v4-7. 7v4,7,13. Phil.2v1. 2Thes.2v16,17. Philemon.v7. Heb.6v18. Prophecy may take any of these three forms and can bring tremendous blessing to the churches. The word "paraklesis" is closely related to "parakletos," which is translated as "Comforter" in Jn.14v16,26. 15v26. 16v7., and "advocate" in 1Jn.2v1., both words speak of a care, comfort and consolation that is most precious.

The Greek word for "comfort" in 1Cor.14v3. is "paramuthia," which means "to speak near or close to anyone," and carries an even greater degree of tenderness than the word "paraklesis." "Paramuthia" only occurs here in the New Testament, however, "paramuthion" occurs in Phil.2v1., and is translated as "comfort" in the A.V.. By using the word "paramuthia" Paul was showing us that the Holy Spirit comes to speak very kindly to the people of God, to soothe, pacify, and speak very graciously, persuasively and tenderly to the Church. Prophecy from the Lord builds up and comforts, it is gracious and tender, and is not critical or harsh. There may be rebuke, as in Rev.3v16,17., but Christ will be gracious with His own, even in His disciplines.

C.L. Parker writes in his book "Covert Earnestly"; "There will from time to time come into any assembly

members with hidden conflicts, fears and needs, which not even the best Pastor can, or ought to know. But again through a prophet, the Holy Spirit can reach where man cannot, and can say the very thing that needs saying. The letters to the seven churches supply many examples of this use of prophecy. The messengers of the seven churches, sent no doubt to convey the love of the churches to John in prison - for there was no postal system in those days - took with them what the Lord wished to say to each church in its own peculiar situation at the time. Thus the churches were built up or exhorted or comforted as the need might be."

We can all "learn" and all be "comforted," by the use of this gift. 1Cor.14v31. By this gift we can have prophecies given to us that enable us to fight a good fight against the powers of darkness. 1Tim.1v18. They can warn us of dangers to come, or encourage us with "exceeding great and precious promises."

2. The simple gift of prophecy can have a great effect when it is a channel of the gifts of revelation.

a. It can on occasions be of great value in winning the lost.

A prophetic utterance may contain a word of knowledge, the Holy Spirit can reveal the secrets of men's hearts, and so make it quite plain that God is speaking to them, the woman at the well was converted by this means, Jn.4v15-19,29,39-42. 1Cor.14v24,25. If this happened more often in evangelistic services a great many more people would be saved.

b. A prophecy may contain a word of wisdom or knowledge and so it can predict and warn of future events.

See Acts.11v27-30. 20v23. 21v4,10,11. 17v9-11,21-44. 21v5-28. Prophecy is spoken of as "a light in a dark place," and it can prepare one for either a great blessing or for great trouble, and can be the means of showing the people of God what to do under certain circumstances. 2Pet.1n19. Not every word of wisdom or knowledge has to be spoken out to the church, or spoken at all; but sometimes it is necessary for them to be spoken to meet the needs of the members of the church.

c. Prophecy was used by God to form much of the Holy Scriptures. 2Pet.1v18-21. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Obviously no prophecy can carry the same authority or importance as the Scriptures, but prophecy can meet real needs in the churches of God.

There is a limit laid down to prophesying in the local church.

God does not desire one prophet to give all the prophecies and monopolise a Christian meeting. In 1Cor.14v29., Paul says "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge," Paul is saying, among other things, that after two or three prophets have spoken, the local church should deliberate and weigh what has been said. The utterances of two or three prophecies will usually meet the needs of the local church, and contain quite sufficient material for the members of the local church to think upon and remember. However, Paul does say in 1Cor.14v24,31. that all the prophets in a local church meeting can prophesy, "If all prophesy," and "ye all may prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted," v31.. However, here we need to remember that in 1Cor.14., Paul is not thinking of a large evangelistic or convention service. Paul is writing on the manifestation of spiritual gifts in the context of the communion service of 1Cor.11v18-34., which in Paul's day almost always took place in a home and was, therefore, a comparatively small gathering. N.B. 1Cor.16v19. Col.4v15. Philemon.v2. All the prophets in a large public gathering certainly can't be allowed to prophesy, but in a small house or church meeting, where there are only a small number of prophets it may occur. The Scriptures contain several instances where many people have prophesied at one time during special outpourings of the Holy Spirit. The 70 elders of Israel prophesied at one "meeting." Numb.11v24-29. See 1Sam.10v10-13. 19v18-24. 2Kings2v3,5. Acts.19v6. However, this is the exception, not the rule; we should not make this the Christian norm; nor should we say it is out of order when it does occasionally take place.

When Paul said in 1Cor.14v24,31., that all the believers could prophesy in one meeting, he was not only speaking in the context of a comparatively small house-meeting with a limited number of prophets present, he was speaking of a very much longer meeting than the short 1 hour services of today. We see in Acts.20v6-12., that Paul's meeting at Troas lasted right through the night for at least eight hours and included long preaching by Paul, prayer and worship during the breaking of bread, and long spiritual conversation and discussion. We can see in the light of such a long meeting how Paul could say that the limited number of local prophets could all prophesy if they observed his rule to judge, weigh and assimilate what had been prophesied. How few churches really consider and weigh what has been spoken in prophecy.

Are we to restrict all services to three prophecies regardless of their type or length?

If we do then we have to answer the following searching and pertinent questions. Are we to treat a day or night of prayer to the same restriction as a one-hour meeting devoted to Bible study? Is it all right to have three more prophecies if we have a small break in the service or prayer time? Does the number of prophecies allowed depend on how many artificial breaks we make in a service, or between services? Can we have twelve prophecies by dividing one six-hour service, up into four services? How big a break do we have to have between meetings before we can have three prophecies again, two hours or ten minutes? I am not being sarcastic, I am just pointing out the difficulties and problems that arise if we try to limit every meeting to two or three prophecies regardless of its nature or length. Paul's approach is by far the best, we should only have as many prophecies as we can judge, weigh, assimilate and remember. In the normal 1 or 2-hour services that are devoted to preaching, three prophecies and three interpretations of tongues are usually more than enough

for most people to assimilate and remember.

We should not allow ourselves to get into the state of the Corinthians, spoken of by Paul in 1Cor.14v26., where everyone wanted to monopolise the meetings and they all usually suffer from a lack of spiritual gifts, not an excess of them, but let us avoid like the plague any kind of spiritual selfishness. Let us endeavour to keep a sensible balance and order and aim at the building up and blessing of others. Those who walk close to God may be able to tell or prophesy of many things that the Lord has spoken personally to them since their last gathering together in Christian fellowship. However, these personal dealings of God may not be intended for others, so in a Christian fellowship we have to follow Paul's rule and speak out and prophesy only what is relevant, important and essential at the time, and what the Holy Spirit inspires us with at the time. Prophecy does not come as an uncontrollable or irrepressible utterance, nor is there any suspension of the mind and will; the spirit of the prophet is subject to the control of the prophet and to the judgement of other prophets. 1Cor.14v29,31.

Prophecy has a greater ministry in the church than the gift of tongues. So Paul writes in 1Cor.14v1., "Make love your quest, and be eager for spiritual gifts, but chiefly for prophecy." Weymouth. See also. 1Cor.14v39.

THE GIFT OF TONGUES.

This is spoken of in the New Testament as "new tongues," "other tongues," "divers kinds of tongues," and even as "the tongues of men and angels." Mk.16v17. Acts.2v4. 1Cor.12v10,28. 13v1. It is a precious gift from God.

1. The gift of tongues is certainly not gibberish.

To say that speaking with tongues by a blood-washed, Spirit-filled Christian is "gibberish," or "of the Devil," is to come very close to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Nothing could be further from the truth than to call speaking with tongues, "gibberish," for those who have been able to understand the languages that Christians have spoken while speaking with tongues, have said that they are perfect. For example, a ten-year-old girl named Irene Piper was enabled by the Holy Spirit to speak to a Chinese man in his own language. He was told that he was to come to church and accept salvation. The Chinese man said that "her accent was perfect, and her forms of speech were so exact that ten years study would not give the average Occidental such knowledge of the language." This is confirmed by Acts.2v6,8., where it is said that the 120 disciples spoke in not only different languages but in different dialects. These believers were mainly illiterate people who knew only one dialect of one language, yet they were speaking in different languages and different dialects of the same language. We are told that the Medes and Elamites (Persians), spoke the same language but with different dialects. "Dialektos" occurs only in the book of Acts, Acts.1v19. 2v6,8. 21v40. 22v2. 26v14., the other word for language is "glossa," i.e. "tongue," and is used for the organ of the body known as the tongue, the tongues of fire, as well as a language. Mk.7v33,35. 16v17. Acts.2v3,4,11,26. 10v46. 19v6. 1Cor.12v10,28,30. 13v1,8. 14v2,4,5,6,9,13,14,18,19,22,23,26,27,39. Rev.7v9. etc.

"Glossolalia," speaking with tongues, is certainly not like the incoherent, unmeaning, broken ramblings of some wild false religions. It is the intelligent speaking of God's mysteries, i.e. God's hidden secrets and purposes. The disciples at Pentecost spoke fluently and powerfully of God's wonderful works, it was only those who did not understand the language who said that it was drunken gibberish, those who did understand it said it was perfect and inspiring language and were converted as a result. It was the hearers of tongues who were "beside themselves," amazed and "ecstatic," not the speakers in tongues. "existemi," Acts.2v7,12. 10v45. "ekstasis." Acts.3v10. Mk.5v42. 16v8. Lk.5v26. Acts.10v10.11v5. 22v17. The person who is worshipping God in tongues will sometimes have real depths of feeling, but the Holy Spirit will never cause them to lose control of themselves, He is a perfect gentleman.

Sometimes even Christians who have been filled with the Spirit and spoken in tongues doubt their experience because they seem to repeat again and again certain sentences or phrases in their unknown tongue. These Christians should realise that in their native tongue they do not use an extensive vocabulary when they are praising the Lord. Many Christians just say, "Praise the Lord," "Wonderful Jesus," etc., they do not use a great many words to express their worship and praise.

Here is an extract from page 32 and 33 of W.F.P. Burton's book "Signs following." This extract shows that on occasions the Holy Spirit may inspire us to speak only a few words, but that these words can reach the very highest levels of praise and express the very deepest love and devotion for God.

"In 1921 the Pastor of a meeting in Toronto, Canada, confided in me, "Brother Burton, there is something I do not understand in our assembly. When the meeting is warmed up into a real fervency of spirit a woman bursts out into an ejaculation. It never varies, and it seems to me like nonsense. She says in a kind of intonation 'Kalombooo Vidye. Vidyeeee Kalombo.' I don't like to stop her. What would you do about it?' I said, 'Oh, do let me hear it, brother. That is an expression used by our natives in the highest respect to their big chiefs.' On my return to Lubaland I was much struck by the monotonous regularity with which the village counsellors keep up an excited 'Kalombo Vidye,' in reverence to their chiefs during sessions of the court, and one can well understand both what an ejaculation of loving worship it was on the woman's part and also how it might have puzzled her Pastor." End of quote.

This shows how careful we have to be in judging utterances in tongues that seem repetitive and sound very peculiar. Many languages sound like utter nonsense to those who do not understand them, indeed, some sound so primitive, that even the best and most intelligent linguist might doubt the genuineness of what is in reality a complicated, beautiful and meaningful language. Even the very greatest linguist knows but a fraction of the world's languages. "World Digest" informs us that there have existed at least 6,760 languages, and only 2,296 are still spoken. There are, then, 4,464 dead languages on earth, which one could speak in other tongues, besides the tongues of angels of which we are told nothing except that there are obviously many of them as Paul speaks of them in the plural in 1Cor.13v1.. It is a fact that children of God have spoken by the Holy Spirit's inspiration, both modern and ancient languages, and linguists have understood them. However, we need to remember that God does not cast His pearls before swine; such manifestations like this are usually for the sincere and seeking heart. The gift of tongues was not given to enable people to preach in languages that they did not know, in Christ's time Greek was known throughout the Roman Empire, but it has always had a great effect as a sign to confirm the Gospel. The gift of tongues is certainly not gibberish; it is a lovely and precious manifestation of God the Holy Spirit.

2. The gift of tongues is certainly not a useless, unprofitable, and unimportant gift.

Every gift of God is precious and good, and the gift of tongues is certainly no exception, it can bring great blessing to us.

a. Diligently used the gift of tongues transforms our ability to pray and worship.

The gift of tongues enables the Christian to utter and fully express the otherwise indescribable longings of their soul and their unspeakable feelings of love for God. It gives the Christian the ability to pray to God and worship God as we ought, it frees us from the limits of human speech and knowledge, for the Holy Spirit Himself gives us the vocabulary and blessing to fully express the needs, feelings and desires of the soul. The gift of tongues enables the Christian to pray on a new level of prayer, for it is God praying through us to perform things exceeding more abundantly than we can ask or think.

b. Diligently used the gift of tongues transforms our appreciation of spiritual things.

It brings a new realisation of the value and power of the Scriptures, and a new insight into their meaning; indeed, it is only the Spirit-filled Christian who can really understand much of the experience of the New Testament early Church. The diligent use of the gift of tongues enables us to have a deeper level of fellowship with Christ and His Father, and to see and worship them in a new and deeper way. Through the use of this gift God the Holy Spirit edifies the soul and spirit and makes spiritual things real to the soul. Which brings us to our next point.

c. Diligently used the gift of tongues transforms the character and blesses the whole personality.

It is given to build faith and love in the soul and edify, bless and transform the character and life of the believer, as Paul said the person who speaks in tongues "edifies himself." 1Cor.14v14. It has the same effect in the prayer life and devotional life that prophecy has in the church. In blessing the soul and spirit it can have the most beneficial effect on the body, it can throw off conscious and subconscious worries, and can relax and refresh a tired body and mind as well as bless the soul. Is.28v11,12. with 1Cor.14v21. and Rom.8v11. The gift of tongues can defend us from spiritual foes and give us the victory over them, for through this gift the Holy Spirit Himself comes to our aid and ministers to our spiritual needs and makes the soul strong, i.e. edifies the soul.

d. Diligently and properly used it can transform a Christian meeting.

A powerful, love-laden tongue can greatly bless the church even before it is interpreted, and if the interpretation carries the same benediction, it can bring showers of blessing.

So we can clearly see that God intended the gift of tongues to be an immense aid to the devotional life and prayer life, and it is also very profitable in the church when it is correctly used. This explains why Paul used the gift of tongues more than any of the Corinthians. 1Cor.14v18. We will consider the value and use of the gift of tongues at greater length later; this will involve some repetition, but it will serve to impress upon our minds, the great blessing and benefits that the Holy Spirit can bestow upon us through the use of His precious gift.

3. The apostle Paul certainly did not reject, despise, or belittle the gift of tongues, and neither should we.

The apostle Paul spoke in tongues more than any of the Corinthians, he obviously looked upon it as absolutely indispensable and necessary for his spiritual welfare. 1Cor.14v18. Paul criticises the Corinthians selfish and noisy misuse of tongues in their public meetings, not the gift of tongues, and he instructs them to use the gift in the correct way. Paul certainly does not say in 1Cor.13v1., that the gift of tongues is unprofitable, he says that the selfish and noisy use of the gift of tongues in public does not profit the church. "The more excellent way" that 1Cor.12v31. tells us to walk in, is not the way of love severed from, or separate and distinct from all the other gifts, graces, attributes and talents; it is love as the motivating force and guiding principal of all these lovely and desirable things. It is certainly not, as some would have us to think, love in opposition to the gifts, or love without the gifts. It is the gifts of the Holy Spirit being sought and used out of the love of God and others.

It is very foolish to say, "You can seek the gifts, but I am going to seek for love." Those who seek for love from the God of love will also seek HIS gifts. The fact that a Christian lacks spiritual gifts does not mean that they possess love, indeed it may mean the very opposite, for it is impossible to follow after love and despise or criticise our heavenly Father's spiritual gifts. If we really desire and follow after love, we shall desire, follow after, and encourage spiritual gifts. We are not glorifying God by extolling love at the expense of the gifts that He has given. Paul does not say in 1Cor.13. that the gifts are "nothing" without love, for they are given by the God of love and are wonderful, it is the possessor that is "nothing." 1Cor.13v1-3. Spiritual gifts manifested in love profit both the recipient of the gift and others who are ministered to. It must be remembered that Paul said that without love, not only spiritual gifts, but also knowledge of sacred things, gifts to the needy, and even martyrdom for Christ's sake, are profitless to us without love. Though spiritual gifts lose some of their value without love, love is helpless without them. Love needs God's power to meet the needs of the broken in heart, the sick in body and the oppressed, and in the ministry of Jesus we see the lovely co-ordination of divine love and divine power meeting the needs of suffering humanity.

Paul does not say that the gift of tongues and other spiritual gifts are of little consequence because they are only temporary. In Heb.6v5. the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit are spoken of as "the powers of the age to come," so we can see that the gifts of the Spirit are a temporary and partial use of the powers of the eternal kingdom. The gifts of the Holy Spirit do not cease in the sense that there will never again be any miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit; the temporary manifestations of the Holy Spirit and the partial manifestations and revelations of God are swallowed up in the continuous and eternal enjoyment of the supernatural power and blessing of God. The part is swallowed up in the whole. The same way are present knowledge will come to nought, or vanish away, in the sense that our limited knowledge will be swallowed up in the infinite knowledge of God. Paul is telling us that the temporary and occasional manifestations of divine power through the gifts will be swallowed up in the continual, permanent and eternal manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Paul emphasises the need for gifts as well as love until the Lord Jesus comes and the kingdom of God is set upon earth. The temporary gifts help to produce eternal love and when they give way to the eternal and permanent manifestations of divine love power and wisdom. The gift of tongues is important because Paul says that it is given to produce love and faith in the soul, it is given to edify the believer, it is only like "roaring brass and clashing cymbal" when it is used in a selfish way by an unconsecrated and loveless Christian.

When Paul speaks in 1Cor.12v31. of prophecy and the other gifts as being "greater gifts" than the gift of tongues, he is speaking in the context of public meetings of Christians. For Paul makes it quite clear that the greatest gift in the devotional life of the believer is the gift of tongues. The diligent, devotional and loving use of the gift of tongues in the secret place will result in other gifts being manifested in public. 1Cor.14v2,4,18. with 2Cor.12v12. Paul spoke more in tongues than any of the verbose Corinthians so that he might edify his fellow-Christians in public; this was one of the secrets of Paul's spiritual power and godly character. From his own experience Paul tells us that the gift of tongues will build love, faith and spiritual strength in the possessor of the gift, if it is used diligently and devotionally. Indeed, Paul states that it is the one gift whose primary aim is the spiritual well being of the possessor. A Christian cannot manifest the other gifts of the Spirit when he desires, and when they are manifested they are nearly always for the benefit of others, but he can speak in tongues when he desires and be spiritually edified as a result. Paul certainly did not disparage or belittle the gift of tongues; he used it very diligently and was greatly edified and spiritually blessed as a result.

It is a great tragedy that many Christians do not appreciate their heavenly Father's provision for them in His gift of speaking with tongues, indeed, it is a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to many Christians. Here are some of the reasons why they do not want to speak in tongues.

a. Some Christians are ignorant of the great blessing that this gift can bring.

They say, "What is the good of speaking with tongues? It is the least of the gifts." they feel that it is of no real benefit. This attitude shows that a person is ignorant of the Scriptures upon the subject, for the great benefits of this gift are shown in the New Testament. However, even if a Christian does not know the benefits of this gift as revealed in the Scriptures, they should not question the wisdom of God in giving this gift. They should say, "My heavenly Father has given this gift, so there must be some very good reason for it and some very profitable results of its manifestation, for God only gives good and perfect gifts." James.1v17. The gift of tongues may be the least important gift as regards to public ministry, but it is the greatest gift in relation to the devotional life and prayer life, which is the source of an anointed public ministry, so we can see that there is certainly nothing little about the gift of tongues.

b. Some Christians love the praise of men more than the praise of God. Jn.12v42,43.

Some Christians count the cost of losing friends who reject the Pentecostal experience, and so they also reject the lovely gift of tongues. Two young men who had dictated to the Lord, "We want the baptism in the Holy Spirit without speaking in tongues, were asked why they prayed in this manner, they replied that it was because speaking in tongues was unpopular. It is a sad thing that many more Christians are choosing to please men rather than God by criticising, avoiding and condemning the gift of tongues given by their Saviour and heavenly Father. Acts2v4,33.

c. Some Christians have a fear of the supernatural.

Some Christians are frightened by the operation of spiritual forces, and they cannot trust God to give them

"good gifts," to preserve them from dangers in the spiritual realm, so they prefer to stop in the wilderness instead of conquering their spiritual Canaan. The Lord Jesus stated that this attitude is due to a lack of faith in our heavenly Father's love and power. Mt.7v7-11. Lk.11v9-13. Comp. Heb.3 and 4.

Paul certainly never belittled speaking with tongues, and neither should we, he said that the gift of tongues, like any other gift, should be correctly used by Christians, and this brings us to our next point.

4. The gift of tongues should certainly not be misused.

Paul tells us that we should take special notice of the following.

a. We should not monopolise church meetings with speaking in tongues.

The aim in the church should be public and not private edification; therefore, we should curtail noisy or excessive speaking in tongues and seek God for a prophecy. 1Cor.14v5,18,19. We can use the gift of tongues in the church, but Paul says that we should usually speak quietly to ourselves and God. A background murmur of praise or speaking in tongues is quite all right as long as it does not hinder others praying or prophesying.1Cor.14v40. Though the whole church may on occasions burst out in praise and worship and sing and speak in tongues; in a church meeting, speaking with tongues should generally be quietly spoken between ourselves and God. 1Cor.14v28. A Scriptural order will result in a greater measure of blessing on the church.

b. We should exercise special restraint when the unconverted or unlearned are present.

When the unconverted or people who are unlearned in spiritual gifts come into a Pentecostal meeting, the Pentecostal believers must act wisely and restrain themselves from any loud outbursts in tongues, otherwise the visitor will say that everybody is mad. 1Cor.14v23. If there is to be any public manifestation of the gift of tongues in such circumstances it must be by tongues and interpretation, however, Paul makes it quite clear in 1Cor.14v24,25., that prophecy is by far the best gift to manifest under such circumstances. The noisy use of the gift of tongues is particularly wrong when an outsider is in a meeting, and it will invariably produce consternation and criticism whereas, the use of the gift of prophecy may well result in the conviction and conversion of the "outsider." The gift of tongues is only a sign to the unbeliever when he can understand the language spoken in tongues.

c. We should set a definite limit to the number of tongues for interpretation.

Utterances in a tongue in the church that are for interpretation should be limited to three utterances, and if there is no interpreter in the church there must be no public utterances, the person must speak quietly to themselves and to God. 1Cor.14v27,28. Only one person should interpret each utterance even though several might be able to do so. It also definitely seems from 1Cor.14v16., "everyone hath a tongue," that Paul said that one person should only give one tongue; it is certainly a good thing to share the ministry of spiritual gifts. We should not speak an utterance for interpretation at all unless the Holy Spirit moves us in a very definite way, those who do insist on speaking without the Holy Spirit's direction, will find that there is very limited blessing on it.

Paul had several reasons for limiting tongues for interpretation to three. Paul did not want the Corinthians to have an excessive emphasis upon utterances in tongues; he desired them to have a correct and sensible balance, and to seek after prophecy and the other gifts. Paul also knew that three tongues for interpretation was as much as the Christians could remember, weigh and profit from. It is certainly a very sensible limitation, and if we observe this and the other limitations that Paul lays down, we will be preserved from fanaticism, selfishness and disorder, and we will enjoy a profitable manifestation of speaking with tongues.

5. We must not confuse devotional tongues with tongues given for a ministry to the Church.

It is a proven fact that only a small percentage of Christians, who speak with tongues, have a ministry in the church of "divers kinds of tongues." 1Cor.12v10. Only a small percentage of Christians who speak in tongues, speak out a tongue that is interpreted in the church. This is what Paul is speaking about in 1Cor.12v30., when he asks, "Do all speak with tongues?" The failure to distinguish between tongues that are for private edification, and tongues that are interpreted as a ministry to the church, has caused some critics of the Pentecostal experience to seize upon 1Cor.12v30., as an excuse for not speaking with tongues. However, Paul in 1Cor.12v27-31. is speaking of ministries that God has set in the church to build up the church, people with God-given gifts for public ministry, and the ministry of speaking tongues for interpretation is mentioned amongst them. There are Christians who have been given outstanding ministries of speaking with tongues, Christians whose utterances in tongues are of such great beauty and carry such a divine benediction that one feels that they are upon holy ground, even before there is any interpretation. The gift of tongues that is interpreted and ministers to the needs of the church is an enlargement of the ability to speak in a tongue, or tongues, that a Christian receives when they receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. However, all are not given this ministry, some quite properly, only use their tongue for private prayer and devotion, while others have in addition to this ministry for the church.

Definition.

The gift of tongues is the supernatural ability given by the Holy Spirit to speak in a tongue that is unknown to the speaker. The primary purpose of this gift is devotional; it is intended to be a divine aid to the prayer life. For though this gift can be used by God to speak to people in their own language, and when interpreted it can speak to the church; the person who speaks in an unknown tongue almost always, "Speaks not to men, but to

God; for no man understands him." 1Cor.14v2.

THE VALUE AND USE OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES.

Let us now consider the great blessing that come through the correct manifestation of this gift of Holy Spirit, these will clearly show why every Christian should desire to speak in tongues, and why God desires every Christian to speak with tongues.

1. Speaking with tongues brings into play the highest faculty of the Christian, the spirit.

Christ said that we must worship God with our spirit if we are to worship Him acceptably, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Jn.4v23,24. The most elaborate and highly organised worship is only a dead form if the spiritual worship that Christ spoke of is missing. However, by the simple act of speaking with tongues we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to worship God on the very highest level, it is truly acceptable worship if we let love for God and others direct our lives. When the Holy Spirit enables us by this gift to magnify and bless God and to give God the love and worship of our hearts, He enables us to do the greatest thing that the Christian can do, for worship of God is the greatest act of the creature. Acts.10v46. Mt.22v35-40. Mk.12v28-34. The use of the gift of tongues lifts the Christian into a new realm of worship; it enables us to worship God to the limit of our capacity. Eph.4v18. Rom.8v26,27. We can also pray with our spirit, "If I pray in an unknown tongue my spirit prays." 1Cor.14v14. We can sing with the spirit, "I will sing with the spirit." 1Cor.14v16. So that we can see that the gift of tongues enables us to reach the highest levels of worship in spirit and truth, the very thing that Jesus said God desires. Jn.4v23,24. Spirit and truth worship is the most important act of the Christian life. How then, can some despise the gift of tongues and call it "The least of the gifts?"

2. The gift of tongues brings into the personal prayer life the ability of the Holy Spirit.

When you speak in tongues you are not limited by your own ability, God the Holy Spirit takes our needs, prayer, praise and desires, and the needs of other people and brings them to the Father. When we pray in tongues we can pray for deep needs that we do not know, and the burdens that would be too big for us and would shatter or overwhelm us if we knew them, we can bring them to God and have complete assurance of victory through the Holy Spirit's aid.

The gift of tongues is as important in the personal prayer life as prophecy is in the church. In the secret place the gift of tongues is the most important gift for personal deification, and the youngest convert and most mature Christian can build themselves up in their most holy faith by the use of this lovely gift. Jude.v20,21. 1Cor.14v4,18. A diligent use of the gift of tongues in the private prayer life will result in a very blessed and fluent use of this gift. On occasions a completely new language will be given by the Holy Spirit, which possesses all the phonetics and rhythm of a perfect and complete language. However, whether the Holy Spirit gives us many or few words to express our praise or prayer, the exercises of the gift of tongues will bring great blessing and mighty power in prayer. When we use the gift of tongues our devotional life, we pray or praise as the Holy Spirit directs and in the way that He thinks best. We always pray for the right things in tongues, because we pray as the Holy Spirit directs, whereas, in our own tongue we can pray selfishly, ignorantly, incorrectly, and even with unsanctified ambition and denominational pride. When a Christian prays in tongues, it is prayer and worship on the very highest level. The balanced prayer-life demands praying and singing in tongues, as well as prayer and singing in one's own language. 1Cor.14v15.

In 1Cor.13v1. Paul implies that the Holy Spirit may cause us to speak in the tongues of angels. If an angelic tongue can express the praise of a great angelic being living in the eternal and uncreated glory and splendour of God's majestic presence, it can surely express the praise of the redeemed children of God living in this dark and sinful world. How wonderful it is to be freed from the limits of our own small vocabulary and limited eloquence, into the excellence and eloquence of earthly and even heavenly languages by the aid of the Holy Spirit. How wonderful to speak our praise on such a high plane. A gift that is of such importance in the prayer-life of the Christian should not be disparaged or termed little, least, or unimportant; such talk is a slight upon God, who is the giver of this good gift.

3. Speaking in tongues brings into operation the other gifts of the Spirit.

Prayer and praise builds up the spiritual life of the Christian to the place where they are able to manifest the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. The greater a person's ministry is, the more they need to speak in other tongues. One well known evangelist found that miracles were ceasing in his services because he had been neglecting speaking in tongues. Another well-known evangelist tells us that he does not expect much to happen unless he prays for several hours in tongues before he goes to the services. The Holy Spirit's ministrations through this gift in the secret place of prayer will result in a blessing upon one's public ministry. Mt.6v5,6. with 1Cor.14v4,18.

4. Speaking with tongues makes the Lord Jesus and God our Father very real to us.

Those who use this gift of tongues diligently in the secret place can testify that speaking with tongues really brings one close to our heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus, and it really deepens our love for them. What a precious gift this is! This alone would be a more than sufficient reason for desiring this gift. Jn.16v13-15. A gift that makes God the Father and God the Son more real and precious to the Christian should never be disparaged or belittled.

5. Speaking with tongues edifies the church when it is interpreted. 1Cor.14v5.

An anointed message in tongues can be a really wonderful blessing, and the interpretation can bring great comfort, solace and needful instruction. God has set this gift in the church as a valuable means of public as well as private edification.

6. The gift of tongues nourishes the spirit with divine truth.

Some people have said that the gift of tongues is the least of the gifts, or that it was "infant prattling" and not for mature Christians. However, the apostle Paul 24 years after his conversion was speaking in tongues more than the verbose Christians at Corinth and he was certainly not immature. 1Cor.14v18. Paul tells us that when we speak in tongues we speak "mysteries," i.e. the hidden counsels and secrets of God, which were once hidden, but are now revealed to the children of God. Mt.13v11. Lk.8v10. Rom.11v25. 16v25. 1Cor.2v1,7. 4v1. 14v2. 15v51. Eph.1v9. 3v3,4,9. 5v32. 6v19. Col.1v26,27. 4v3. 2Thes.2v7. 1Tim.3v9. Rev.10v7. Ps.25v14. When we speak in tongues, we speak hidden and exalted spiritual truths; this is an exalted sphere of utterance. The hearers at Pentecost called these "mysteries," "The wonderful works of God;" they looked upon the utterances of the disciples as anything but "infant prattling," those who understood the languages were so awed and moved by the sublime words that they heard, that they became Christians. In 1Cor.13v11,12., Paul speaks of our present limited knowledge of the future heavenly "mysteries" as "infant prattling," but he never refers to speaking in tongues in this way.

Our minds are limited in their ability to absorb and appreciate heavenly realities, our spirits are not limited in this way. Speaking in tongues enables our spirits to appreciate and feed on spiritual realities and Divine mysteries, and our spirits grow through the spiritual truths and blessings that come through speaking with tongues. This by-passes and rests the mind, so that even when we are too tired to think upon truth with our minds, our spirits and souls are nourished by the use of this gift. Is.28v11,12. 1Cor.14v21. However, we cannot grow in God if we neglect the Scripture, its truth feeds our minds; so we should. "As new-born babes, for the pure milk that is for the mind eagerly crave, that thereby ye may grow unto salvation." 1Pet.2v2. Rotheram.

We will now give two instances where people have actually heard Christians speaking of the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" as they spoke in other tongues.

H. Horton writes on page 160 of his book, "The Gifts of the Spirit," what a missionary in the Congo heard when he was present at the baptism in the Spirit of a young coloured man. The missionary was amazed to hear the young man speaking in perfect English and repeating Old Testament instances of creation and history. The young man did not know a word of English and what is more, nothing of the accounts of Scripture that he was repeating. The missionary left the hut to search for his wife so that she could witness this remarkable manifestation of the Spirit. When he returned with his wife the young man was still speaking in English, and was speaking of the New Testament revelation concerning the second coming of Christ.

W.F.P. Burton gives an account of another inspiring incident that occurred at Mwanza in the Congo, on page 30 and 31 of "Signs following." When the churches were getting spiritually cold it was their practice to gather the believers together for several days of prayer, ministry of the Word and waiting upon God. During one such occasion Mr. Burton was keeping "a quiet eye" on the meeting to make sure that there was no "undue excitement or extravagance," when he was struck by the earnest expression of a young man named Ziba, who was obviously being deeply affected by the real power of the Holy Spirit which was moving upon the men gathered there. Mr. Burton quietly moved around to where the young man sat and was surprised and moved to hear Ziba speaking in absolutely perfect English of Christ's second coming to earth to reign and the glories of His millennial kingdom. Ziba was a simple village lad without any knowledge of the English language, but here he was speaking in perfect English without any ungrammatical expressions or any trace of foreign accent, and what he said was absolutely true to the Scriptures.

So we can see that when the Holy Spirit enables a Christian to speak in tongues it nourishes their spirit with divine truths and builds them up spiritually. It is foolish and wrong to forbid Christians to speak with other tongues, for this is a good and lovely gift of God the Holy Spirit, and God ordained that we should have this gift and use it for our spiritual benefit.

7. Speaking with tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Spirit.

At the outpourings of the Spirit mentioned in Acts.2v4. 10v45,46. 11v17. and 19v6., when the Christians received the baptism of the Spirit, they spoke with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. They received one common evidence that they had been baptised in the Spirit, speaking in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. With the exception of the outpouring at Ephesus, we do not read of any other manifestations of the gifts, and there they prophesied after speaking with tongues.

A. Linford writes on the outpouring of the Spirit at Ephesus on page 55 of his book, "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit." "Again the construction of the Greek (in Acts.19v6.) determines the fact that they all spoke in tongues. The expression is 'elaloun te glossais kai epropheteuon.' When 'te' is followed by 'kai' it may be rendered 'both,' or 'not only... but also.' Closest union is expressed by 'te kai.' We could translate thus: 'The Holy Spirit came at once upon them, and they began not only to speak with tongues but also to prophesy.'....

sliding joyously and naturally from inspired language they did not know to inspired language they did know-but speaking by the same Spirit." End of quote.

From humble housewives to mighty apostles the initial evidence of the baptism in the Spirit was speaking with tongues. At the baptism in the Spirit of these believers the Holy Spirit did not give various gifts as the evidence of the baptism in the Spirit He gave the gift of tongues to all. If the Holy Spirit had decreed that the manifestation of any Spiritual gift indicated that a Christian was baptised in the Spirit, then He would certainly have manifested them all on the day of Pentecost, but tongues was the only initial evidence of the Spirit's baptism at Pentecost. When Paul speaks in 1Cor.12v11. of the gifts being given "severally as He will," he is referring to the manifestations of the Spirit in a church meeting or to the other activities of the church. He is not speaking of the baptism in the Spirit, for at Pentecost, the house of Cornelius, and Ephesus, the gift that was given to all was the gift of tongues. In the other two cases in the Acts where it is stated that Christians received the baptism in the Spirit, even non-Pentecostal commentators agree that what Simon saw in Acts.8v18., was the Samaritan Christians speaking in tongues, and we know that Paul spoke in tongues from 1Cor.14v18.. Acts8v14-20. 9v17.

To those who question that tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism in the Spirit, we would ask, "What other evidence can you supply from the Scriptures that will prove that a person is baptised in the Spirit?" All the other gifts, except the gift of interpretation of tongues, were used by the Old Testament prophets and the disciples of Christ before Pentecost. If a great ministry or many conversions were to be used as a claim for the possession of the baptism of the Spirit, John the Baptist and the apostles could have claimed that they were baptised in the Spirit before Pentecost, however, Jn.7v39. assures us that this was not so. The Holy Spirit was WITH them but not IN them with His permanently abiding presence, they had not received the baptism of the Spirit, as the Lord Jesus states in Jn.14v16,17..

The Holy Spirit has even given revelations to the unconverted, e.g. Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, and Cornelius. Cornelius received words of wisdom and knowledge, and a discerning of spirits, before he was converted or baptised in the Spirit. Peter did not say that the household of Cornelius had received the Spirit because they were filled with joy, or were living sanctified lives, desirable as these are; Peter said that they were unmistakably filled with the Spirit because they had spoken in tongues like the 120 on the day of Pentecost. Acts.10v1-6,43-48. 11v17,18. Joy, peace, sanctification, or love for the brethren cannot be looked upon as a claim for being filled with the Spirit; these are a result of abiding in Christ and being led of the Spirit.

The baptism of the Spirit is a conscious experience and should be an overwhelming experience; to be immersed in the mighty power of God the Holy Spirit is just as real an experience and spiritually more uplifting than being baptised in water. The book of Acts shows us that meeting and being baptised with the gracious and mighty Holy Spirit is a great and overwhelming experience. Some Christians think that they have received the baptism of the Spirit when they have received a temporary anointing of the Holy Spirit. However, the Old Testament saints had this experience, and the apostles too, before the baptism of the Holy Spirit was given. Ezek.2v2. 3v24. Judges.14v6. 15v14. Numb.11v25. Lk.1v67. 2v27. 2Pet.1v21. with Jn.7v37-39. The gift of speaking with tongues is the evidence that we have received the New Testament experience of the baptism of the Spirit. Speaking with tongues gives the Christian undeniable and unmistakable evidence that they are filled with the Holy Spirit, and it also enables them to express the "unutterable gushings" of praise, and worship and adoration that fill the soul when a Christian receives the mighty baptism in the Holy Spirit. The other spiritual gifts and graces do not certify that a Christian has received a Pentecostal experience of the baptism in the Spirit, the only certain Scriptural proof of a Pentecostal gift of tongues.

We do not always need a word of wisdom or a gift of healing, or some of the other gifts, however, we always need to build up ourselves in our most holy faith, and this is why after the baptism in the Spirit, God enables us to manifest this gift whenever we desire to do so. The apostolic band did not quibble about the gifts of tongues, or God's choice of it as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Spirit, they accepted it and rejoiced in the use of it, and all Christians should do the same. The only safe pattern of Christian experience is that written in the New Testament, the good and best can lead us far astray, the Word of God alone can lead us safely on.

Some Christians teach that the Christian receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit at conversion; however, this can be shown to be incorrect by many passages of the New Testament Scriptures. The apostles were converted before Pentecost, their names were written in heaven, Lk.10v20.; they were "clean," Jn.15v3.; they were Christ's flock and Christ's brethren, Lk.12v32. Jn.20v17.; they belonged to God, Jn.17v6,9,23., but it was after Calvary that these disciples received the baptism in the Spirit that had been promised to them. Acts.1v5-8. Pentecost was not the time when the apostles were saved, they were rejoicing in their salvation before Pentecost. Lk.24v52,53. They received Christ and believed in His name and so they were saved, Jn.1v12., even though it was not until the resurrection that they understood the atoning work of the Lord Jesus. Lk.24v44-49.

Paul was saved when he met the Lord Jesus on the Damascus road, he owned the Lordship of Christ, he said, "Lord, what will thou have me to do?" Acts.9v6. Ananias was able to call him "Brother Saul," and he was sent that Paul might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit; this was three days after Paul's conversion. Acts.9v9,17. At Samaria the people accepted Philip's message of salvation and became joyful believers; it was

several, or many days later that Peter and John came to Samaria to lay hands on the converts so that they might receive the baptism in the Spirit. Acts.8v5-18.

Even if, as some say, the "disciples" at Ephesus in Acts.19v1-6., were disciples of John Baptist, who became Christians when Paul spoke to them, (a thing that I do not myself believe,) it still follows that they were baptised in the Holy Spirit some time after their conversion. For it would take some time to find a suitable place where they could baptise the disciples, and some time must have elapsed between this and the baptism in the Spirit, even if it were only a matter of minutes or hours. Their baptism in the Spirit occurred, therefore, some time after their conversion, when the apostle Paul laid hands upon them. The apostle Peter tells us in Acts.2v38,39., that as a general rule, the baptism in the Spirit takes place after repentance and faith in Christ. The exceptions to this rule are found in Acts.10v44-48., and possibly Acts.9v18..

We see in Jn.1v29,33., that the experience of salvation is looked upon as a quite distinct experience from the baptism of the Holy Spirit, a fact confirmed by Eph.1v13., where it states that "after ye had believed (in Christ,) ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." This promise of the Spirit was not the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, which all Christians enjoy before the baptism in the Spirit as a result of salvation and the new birth; it was the promise of the baptism of the Spirit, the promise of the Father, the endowment of power from on high. Lk.24v49. The baptism in the Spirit can occur a few seconds after conversion, as at the house of Cornelius, or many years after conversion, as was probably the case of the Ephesian believers of Acts.19v1-6.. There are thousands, indeed, millions of Christians today who have proved the truth of the Scriptures, that after conversion a Christian can experience the mighty baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul desired every one of the Corinthians to experience their personal Pentecost and speak with other tongues. 1Cor.14v5. This must have been the will of God or Paul would not have dared to say such a thing. Paul was not content until Christians had received their personal Pentecost and spoken with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. It is very sad that many Christians are as ignorant today of their Pentecostal heritage as the Ephesian believers of Acts.19v1-6., they do not know Christ as the baptiser in the Holy Spirit. Jn.1v33. Acts.2v32,33. However, those of us who are filled with the Holy Spirit can rejoice in this precious experience and rejoice in the gift of tongues, which is the initial evidence of the baptism in the Spirit.

8. Speaking with tongues can be a powerful sign to people when they understand the language.

Though this is not the normal use of the gift, the gift of tongues is predominantly devotional; it can produce remarkable results when God manifests this gift as a sign as He did on the day of Pentecost. It can convict and convert the sinner, and be a great encouragement to the believer. 1Cor.14v22. Acts.2v4-12. Mk.16v17-20. The gift of tongues is not intended to replace the preaching of the Gospel however, on rare occasions God does use the gift of tongues to confirm the Gospel message by speaking in a language that the listener understands. This sign is intended to prepare the listeners for the preaching of the Gospel. The disciples at Pentecost spoke in tongues that were unknown to them, but many listeners recognised the languages and were captivated and amazed at hearing the rapturous praise of God and His wonderful works in their own language. The listeners at Pentecost knew that these disciples did not know their language, and so when Peter explained what had happened they were instantly willing to accept the Gospel Peter preached. The tongues gained the attention of the people and prepared them for the preaching of Peter. We will now give some well-documented modern instances where the Lord has used the gift of tongues as a sign to convert the unbeliever and encourage the believer.

W.F.P. Burton gives the following testimony. "We used to hold gospel services beside Lytham lifeboat house on Sunday evenings. One Sunday when a big crowd was listening to the preaching, the power of God fell on a Mrs. Whiteside, and she began to speak in a strange language. This dear sister would certainly not mind my stating that under ordinary circumstances she was far from grammatical, even in her own language, and she never learned any other. As she spoke I found that I could understand all that she was saying. A solemn silence fell on the crowd as Mrs. Whiteside spoke in tongues, and I gave the interpretation in English. As soon as we had finished a big, middle-aged man stepped into the ring of listeners and, falling on his knees cried to God to save his soul. He had been a prominent tailor in Lytham, with a big business, but had lost practically everything through his craving for liquor. He was more often inebriated than sober, but he was as sober as a judge and declared that every word of that message in tongues and interpretation went straight to his heart.

Now it happened that a young Japanese man, who was studying shipbuilding in Lytham shipbuilding yard, had stood listening among the crowd outside the lifeboat house. He went home and asked his landlady, "Who are those people who preach and sing on Lytham beach?" She replied, "They are a lot of fanatical, religious enthusiasts. Some say that they are religion mad," he remarked, "but I heard a most remarkable thing. One spoke in perfect Japanese, while another gave the exact equivalent in English."

There one had both the tongue and the interpretation corroborated, while the result, in a soul won for the Lord Jesus, was ample evidence that the thing was from God." End of quote.

Another account of this same incident is given in Mr. Burton's book "Signs following," on pages 28 and 29.. The writer recommends all readers of this book to obtain this excellent booklet. This booklet gives the additional information that Mrs. Whitehouse spoke in tongues about the death of Christ on the Cross for us. Mr. Burton goes on to tell on page 29 and 30 of his book, of a highly respected Methodist minister who heard

Pentecostal Christians speaking in praise and adoration to God in seven languages which he knew, they were speaking about the death, resurrection and second coming of Christ, and extolling Christ's blood and His risen power. This so moved the minister that on his way home on the train he longed for the same experience, he through his pipe and tobacco out of the train window, he earnestly sought and received the baptism in the Spirit with speaking with tongues before the train reached his station. There are other instances, which could be quoted to show the use of the gift of tongues as a sign, those who would like to read of a few more can read my book "The Comforter has come."

We can clearly see that there are many reasons why every Christian should desire to speak with other tongues as the Holy Spirit gives them utterance, the gift of tongues is one of God's good, valuable and perfect gifts. God has given the gift of tongues to His Church because He considers it to be absolutely indispensable and necessary for the spiritual welfare of His Church. God does not give any gifts that are mean or paltry, they are all priceless, magnificent, good, beautiful and precious, and we should bow the knee at His wisdom, love and authority. Who are we to criticise the "good and perfect" gifts that our heavenly Father has given to us? He is the Lord, let us recognise the value and importance of what He has given. How dare we criticise His gifts, or neglect to seek them, when He has commanded us not only to pursue after love, but earnestly seek spiritual gifts as well? 1Cor.14v1. The gift of tongues is one of His gifts, let us recognise its value and use.

THE INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES.

This is the last gift spoken of in 1Cor.12v8-10. 1Cor.14v5,13,27,28. This is the supernatural ability given by the Holy Spirit to interpret an utterance of speaking with tongues, the person who receives the interpretation having no knowledge of the language spoken. The interpretation of tongues can take the form of a prayer for heavenly help, a prayer of dedication, a statement of faith and assurance, an expression of praise and worship, as well as words of exhortation, edification and comfort. The interpretation can be addressed to God as well as to man, and sometimes the interpretation can be the answer to the prayer, or statement of faith, etc., that has been spoken out in tongues, and on these occasions it would be more accurate to call it a prophecy more than an interpretation. However, we do not have to be too technical in our definition, the Holy Spirit will interpret the tongue as He thinks best.

The late C.L. Parker makes the following helpful comment on the gift of interpretation of tongues on pages 19 and 20 of his book "Covert Earnestly."

"The Greek word 'interpretation' does not primarily mean 'translation.'" It is used for example in Lk.14v27. of our Lord 'expounding' the Old Testament Scriptures, and it is normally translated, 'expound,' 'give the meaning of.' The interpretation may then be longer or shorter than the tongue of which it may give a longer or shorter exposition. The interpreter may receive his gift before, during, or after, the tongue: he may launch out upon a single sentence, and receive the rest thought by thought as he is speaking. In any case he recognises the reception of the gift, whenever and however it is given, by the unction, which is coming upon him: and this unction abides upon those listeners who are filled with the Spirit. As Peter says, 2Pet.1v21., 'Holy men of God spake as they were carried along by the Spirit.' There is no effect in such speaking: no searching for words, no wondering what to say next. As long as the unction is upon you, you speak with ease and delight. When it lifts you have no more to say and come to a stop. This is a beautiful gift since it brings two members of an Assembly into a combined ministry of love and edification for the rest of the Church.

One member may not have the faith to speak in his own language words which can be understood, and yet be perfectly free to speak in a tongue words of which he does not know the meaning. For as soon as one utters words which one understands, one is responsible for what one says: but when one speaks in a tongue the responsibility for the meaning of the words rest upon the interpreter, and it is indeed a very responsible thing to utter words which purport to come from the Almighty." End of quote.

The person who speaks in tongues should pray that they might receive the gift of interpretation, they should not be content to see the other interpret all the time. 1Cor.14v13,14. However, Paul tells us that only one person should interpret even if several have the interpretation. 1Cor.14v27,28.

Sometimes there is quite a difference between the length of a tongue and its interpretation, the interpretation can be much shorter or much longer than the tongue, this can be explained by the following facts.

1. Because of the difference in human personality.

Some Christians interpret with many words some with few words, because of their difference in temperament and vocabulary; some Christians are wordy, whereas others are brief and precise in what they say. The Holy Spirit uses Christian's distinctive characteristics to convey the interpretation, and so a Christian's disposition, vocabulary, and spirituality will effect their interpretation or prophecy. This can be confirmed by comparing the prophecies of the Old Testament. e.g. Isaiah and Amos.

2. Because of the difference in the Holy Spirit's method of communication.

As we have seen the Holy Spirit expounds the interpretation as it pleases Him. The Holy Spirit can give the same interpretation to different Christians in different ways. One may have a pictorial vision and describe what they see in simple words, another may have words spoken to them in their spirit, while another may

understand the tongue as it is spoken. The interpretation is communicated in different ways but the theme is the same. God will very often give picture visions to those Christians who are not wordy or verbose, and this is probably the best form of interpretation because it is so striking and so easily remembered. When some mature Christians interpret their "inspired oratory" is profoundly moving, and at large public meetings these Christians are the ones who interpret.

A. Linford tells us on page 15 of his excellent book, "Spiritual Gifts."

"One who recognised a tongue interpreted by Mrs. Crisp, an early Pentecostal leader, stated that the full sense of the message was given, but the style was loftier and the language more beautiful than a literal translation of the language would have been." End of quote.

Those, who like Mrs. Crisp, have a real ministry of this gift, 1Cor.14v28., should be left to interpret in large public meetings, and those whose gift of interpretation is more immature, should humbly and graciously sit back and listen, they can manifest their gift in the smaller church or house-meeting.

3. Because sometimes a Christian may not give the full interpretation.

A Christian may only give part of the interpretation, because God only wanted them to listen to and conform the interpretation, not give it, or they could have been distracted by something and so lose touch with God. Sometimes a Christian will carry on far longer than they should do when they are speaking in a tongue for interpretation, and because they are blessed carry on praising God in tongues even though their message has finished.

4. Because the "interpretation" may really be a prophecy or contain a prophecy in addition to the interpretation.

Sometimes a Christian may feel so moved and blessed by an outstanding sermon or an anointed singing item, that they feel that this is an indication for them to speak in tongues for interpretation. However a surge of emotion or a genuine blessing of the Holy Spirit does not mean that we should always speak out a tongue for interpretation, it may be a blessing to uplift us, or to help us to pray, or praise, and worship God. On these occasions a burst of praise may be interpreted as praise, or the Holy Spirit may give a prophecy in answer to this praise. On other occasions the Holy Spirit may interpret a tongue and give a prophecy in addition to the tongue, and so the "interpretation" will be considerably longer than the tongue.

5. Because sometimes, unfortunately, a Christian may invent an interpretation.

Sometimes through ignorance, wrong teaching, or wilful determination to give an interpretation when you do not possess it, a false interpretation can be given. We cannot interpret tongues at will, the Holy Spirit will not give an interpretation to the regular interpreters in order to start someone else interpreting. Spiritual Christians easily discern extempore preaching paraded as interpretation from true interpretation; true interpretation carries the power and blessing of God and greatly edifies and blesses the church. It is a gift greatly to be desired.

APPENDIX A. HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS IN SCRIPTURE ARE VALUABLE FOR FORMULATING DOCTRINE.

Some anti-Pentecostal Christians have tried to say that 1Cor.12v13. is the only Scripture that we can use for doctrinal purposes in deciding whether believers receive the baptism in the Spirit at conversion, They say that the historical accounts in the book of Acts, cannot be used as a basis of doctrine, as historical accounts are unreliable for formulating doctrine. That this is completely wrong is seen from the following facts.

a. The historical parts of the Scriptures show the out-workings of the doctrinal truths that God has given.

The historical parts of Scripture are the proof and actual demonstration of Scriptural truth. They reveal God's desires by His acts. Christ's acts and life revealed God's purposes for men far better than any doctrinal statement could have done on its own. Are we to lay Christ's actions on one side as having no doctrinal importance? All true Christians will deny such a dangerous and pernicious theory. Paul in 1Cor.10v1-15. tells us that God has instructed His people through history, and taught vital doctrines by this means. It is only the historical passages that give us the right interpretation of Scriptural truth in some cases. Indeed, such things as demon activity would hardly be dealt with in the Scriptures without the record of their activity and exorcism. It is the historical passages that show us how to deal with demon-possessed people. Christianity is built upon example as well as precept, the best way to demonstrate doctrine is by example and practice. Christ taught His apostles spiritual things by His example and performed the miraculous.

It is dishonest exposition to say that 1Cor.12v13., is the only means of finding the Christian norm in relation to conversion and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The trouble is that these expositors find the accounts in Acts far too plain in their theology, and they desire a Scripture that is ambiguous enough for them to manipulate to justify their own lack of Pentecostal experience. If a person said that you cannot get doctrine for preaching or living from the historical portions of Scripture, they would be looked upon as demented and unbalanced. Christ gave His disciples the doctrine on the baptism of the baptism in the Spirit before the day of Pentecost, in the accounts in Acts we see the out-workings of that doctrine, and the manifestations that one can expect when a Christian is baptised in the Holy Spirit.

b. It is a fact that the epistles are mostly dealing with the actual conditions in churches, as so they are as much historical as the book of Acts. They are mainly dealing with practical problems in the churches, and not just with theoretical problems. Indeed, the first epistle to the Corinthians is almost completely given over to Paul's answers to the problems of the Corinthians. Are we to reject the teaching in the epistles that is historical? Of course not! Paul tells us in 2Tim.3v16., that all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, and that includes the historical portions.

c. In the New Testament receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit was not just a theory or an intellectual test.

The baptism in the Spirit was a living vital experience, everybody knew when he or she had received this experience because it was an overwhelming supernatural experience, and the Holy Spirit enabled all those who He had filled, to pray and praise on the highest possible level, by giving him or her the gift of tongues. God shows His will for us by the experience of Christians in the Bible, and shows us the way to experience God's will for us. So we can see that we cannot dispense with the historical portions of the book of Acts, when formulating doctrine on the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

John the Baptist promised that Christ would be the baptiser in the Holy Spirit. Mt.3v11. Mk.1v8. Lk.3v16. Jn.1v33. Every Christian needs to be baptised in the Holy Spirit by Christ their Saviour. The risen Christ called this baptism "the promise of the Father," Lk.24v49. Acts.1v4., and instructed His disciples to tarry until they received it, promising that they would only have to wait a few days to receive the mighty baptism in the Spirit. Acts1v5. We read that this baptism was promised to every Christian, Acts.2v38,39., and the Samaritans, Paul, Cornelius and his friends, and the Ephesians, are directly stated to have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Acts.8v14-17. 9v17,18. 10v44-48. 11v1-18. 19v1-6..

The Holy Spirit is said to have "baptised" people seven times in the New Testament; two in Acts, once in the epistles, and four times in the Gospels out of the mouth of John Baptist. Acts.1v5. 11v16. 1Cor.12v13. Mt.3v11. Mk.1v8. Lk.3v16. Jn.1v33. However, the synonymous phrases "filled with the Holy Spirit," Acts.2v4.; "the gift of the Holy Spirit," Acts.2v38. 10v45.; "received the Holy Spirit," Acts.10v47. 19v2. 1Cor.2v12. Gal.3v2. (Possibly Rom.8v14-16); "the promise of the Spirit," Gal.3v14.; "the promise of the Father," Lk.24v49. Acts.1v4.; and the seal of the Spirit, Eph.1v13. 4v30.; are also used to speak of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

All the above Scriptures show the great value of the historical accounts of Scripture, in explaining and formulating doctrine about the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

We prove that 1Cor.12v13. does not teach that Christians are baptised in the Holy Spirit when they are saved.

We declare that the following facts prove this to be true.

a. Some scholars state that in 1Cor.12v13., "baptised," refers to water baptism and not to the baptism in the Spirit.

Olaf M. Norlie in his "Simplified New Testament" translates in 1Cor.12v13. in the following way, "And by one Spirit we have through baptism been made members of one body- Jews and Greeks alike, slave and free,- and all have been given to drink at one Source, and the one Spirit."

A. Linford writes that in 1Cor.12v13., "baptised," speaks of water baptism, not the baptism in the Spirit.

"That there are here two separate historic experiences is shown by the fact that both words are in the aorist tense, the tense that speaks of events as completed in time, incidents that are rounded off and complete. It is the historic tense. The connective ("kai,) and makes it quite clear that the events are regarded as distinct and consecutive." End of quote.

The words "baptised into one body" speak of water baptism, the Holy Spirit being the agent of regeneration, the baptism in water being the outward sign, the words "made to drink into one Spirit" speaks of the baptism in the Spirit. The Greek word for "drink" is "potizo" which Vincent says means, "originally to give to drink, from which comes the sense of to water, to irrigate"

Arndt and Gingrich say that when used of plants "potizo" is used in the sense of irrigate much more often than it is used to speak of "water," plants, field, garden, etc. 1Cor.3v6. It gives the thought of saturation, as in the picture of Is.44v3., "For I will pour water on Him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." The Spirit-flooded life, is the Spirit baptised life. The word "potizo" here, can really only speak of the time when the Corinthians were baptised in the Holy Spirit. So in 1Cor.12v13. we read of two experiences, baptism in water and the baptism in the Spirit.

b. In the second part of 1Cor.12v13, "made to drink one Spirit," Paul is teaching, not that all Christians have received the baptism of the Spirit at conversion, but that all Christians who are baptised in the Spirit are filled with the same Holy Spirit. The main emphasis is upon the recurrent word "one," "one body," "one Spirit." In the King James Version, "one" occurs seven times in 1Cor.12v11-13., the "one" body of Christ has "one" Spirit

as the source of its manifestations.

c. The context of 1Cor.12v13. is not showing how people become Christians.

The apostle Paul is discussing the relation of the unity of the body of Christ, to the manifestation of spiritual gifts. Paul is not discussing how they became Christians; he is reminding the Corinthians that they are all members of the one and only body of Christ, and that they are all filled with the one and only Holy Spirit.

d. The all's of 1Cor.12v13, were true of the Corinthian Christians of Paul's day, but are not true of all Christians today.

With many present day Christians, neither the first "all" referring to water baptism, nor the second "all" referring to the baptism in the Spirit, are true. In the Corinthian Church all Christians were baptised after they had believed by immersion, this is certainly not true of many Christians today, in some churches none are baptised in the New Testament way. In the Corinthian church, and any church that Paul founded, Paul led those who had been baptised in Water in to the baptism of the Spirit, from Acts.19v1-6. we can see that Paul looked upon baptism in water as the introductory step to the baptism in the Spirit, and he immediately remedied any deficiency in connection with baptism in water, or the baptism in the Spirit. If the churches today followed Paul's example in connection with water baptism and the baptism in the Spirit, then could then apply these "all's" of 1Cor.12v13. to their present day churches, however, many oppose believers baptism in water by immersion, and they forbid to speak with tongues and despise spiritual gifts, instead of earnestly desiring spiritual gifts. How can Christians devoid of spiritual gifts claim this Scripture, that is speaking of a water baptised and Spirit filled church? This dishonest interpretation is the result of people trying to make the Scriptures conform to their experience, instead of making their experience conform to the Scripture. The sad thing is that they rob other Christians of vital New Testament experiences by their unbelieving exposition and example. Lk.11v52.

Some will still insist that the first part of this verse in 1Cor.12v13. is speaking of the baptism in the Spirit, they say that the Greek word "eis," translated in the King James Version as "into," shows that all Christians are baptised in the Holy Spirit at conversion. Paul is stating that even in the Corinthian church, baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues, was the norm. Those who resist this pattern are more rebellious than the rebellious Corinthians. There is nothing sacrosanct about the translation of the Greek "eis," it can be translated as "for," "unto," "in relation to," "towards," as well as "in" or "Into." e.g. "for the remission of sins." Mt.3v11. Mk.1v4. Lk.3v3. Acts.2v38. 19v3-5. In the A.V. "eis" is translated in over 10 different ways. Olaf M. Norlie gives a good interpretation of this verse in his translation, "And by one Spirit we have through baptism been made members of one Body- Jews and Greeks alike, slave and free,- and all have been given to drink at one Source, and the one Spirit."

APPENDIX B. THE GREEK WORDS USED TO DESCRIBE THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

A. Spirituals. "Pneumatikon." In 1Cor.12v1. and 14v1., "pneumatikon," is translated as "spiritual gifts," in the King James Version. Paul informs us that Christians should not be ignorant about spiritual gifts; and in 1Cor.14v1. he tells us to eagerly seek spiritual gifts as well as pursue after love. A truly spiritual ("pneumatikos") Christian manifests both gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit. 1Cor.2v13,15. 3v1. Gal.5v22. Spiritual gifts are part of our spiritual blessings in Christ. 1Cor.12v7. 14v37. Eph.1v3. 1Pet.2v5. Eph.5v19. Col.3v16.

B. Grace gifts. "Charismata." Spiritual gifts have an important place with God's other "charismata:" God's gracious eternal purposes and callings, Rom.11v29.; God's gift of salvation and eternal life, Rom.5v15,16. and 6v23.; and the various kinds of ministries God gives to the members of His Church. Rom.12v6. Paul states that self-control can be a grace gift of God, as well as a fruit of the Spirit. 1Cor.7v7. Gal.5v22,23. Paul uses "charismata" to definitely speak of spiritual gifts in Rom.12v6. 1Cor.1v7. 12v4,9,28,30,31., and Rom.1v11., where "charisma" and "pneumatikos" occur together. See 1Tim.4v14. and 2Tim.1v6., where a ministry gift or spiritual gift was imparted to Timothy .by prayer. Paul was delivered from death by a divine grace gift ("charisma") by the prayers of Christians. 2Cor.1v10,11. Spiritual gifts cover one aspect of God's great gifts of grace, and make us the stewards and channels of God's grace to a needy Church and world. 1Pet.4v10.

C. Distributions.

1. "Diaireseis." In 1Cor.12v4-7., Paul states, v4. "Now there are distinctive varieties and distributions of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit. v5. And there are distinctive varieties and distributions of ministries, but the same Lord. v6. And there are distinctive varieties and distributions of operations ("energematōn," the effect of a thing wrought, from "energeo," to operate, perform, energise), but it is the same God who energises and inspires them all in all. v7. But to each one there is constantly being given the clearly seen operations of the Spirit for the profit of all." In all three cases, "distinctive varieties and distributions" is the noun "diaireseis," from "dia," "apart," and "haireo," "to take;" and is akin to the verb "diaireo," "to take asunder," "to divide into parts, to distribute." The God, who upholds and energises the Universe, divides and energises His Church with various aspects of His abilities, as we need them.

In 1Cor.12v11., Paul writes, "All these gifts are inspired and energised by the one and same Holy Spirit, who distributes to each person individually and separately as He wills." "Distributes," is "dairoun," the present active of "diaireo," the present tense shows the active and continual distribution and dividing of His spiritual gifts

among Christ's Church by the Holy Spirit. "As He wills," is "kathos bouletai;" "bouletai," is the present indicative middle of "boulomai," "to will, to determine;" the present tense again shows the repeated and continual action of the Holy Spirit's giving. He comes to bind the body of Christ together in love by the distribution of His gifts, so that each member feels the need of each other's gifts and ministries. 1Cor.12v11-27.

2. "Merismois." In the King James Version "merismois" is translated as "gifts" in Heb.2v4., it speaks of "a sharing out, a dividing, a distribution." The Holy Spirit shares out some of His abilities to the Church. "Merismos" only occurs in the New Testament in Heb.2v4. and Heb.4v12., where we read of the ability of the Word of God to divide and discern our innermost thoughts, motives and intents, and to divide between soul and spirit. The Holy Spirit's gifts enabled the early Church to serve God effectively; boldness in preaching came as a result of the Holy Spirit's mighty workings and miracles. Acts.4v30,31.

D. Ministrations. "Diakonion." 1Cor.12v5. "Diakonion," is derived from "diakonos," and has the general meaning of service. It is used of Paul's description of his apostolic office and of the other ministries of the Church. Acts.6v4. 12v25. 20v24. 21v19. Rom.11v15. 12v7. 4v1. 5v18. 6v3. Eph.4v12. Col.4v17. 1Tim.1v12. 2Tim.4v5,11. In Rom.16v15. it is used of the household of Stephanas addicting themselves to the service of the saints. It is used for the ministration to the poor. Acts.6v1. 11v29. 1Cor.16v15. 2Cor.8v4. 9v1. In Lk.10v40. both the noun "diakonia," "serving," and the verb "diakoneo," "to serve," are used of Martha's loving service and thoughtful meal preparation for Christ and His apostles. The Holy Spirit's ministrations are even more practical, loving and thoughtful than Martha's thoughtful and caring ministrations.

E. Manifestation. "Phanerosis." "Phanerosis," is derived from "phaneroo," "to make manifest," it only occurs in 1Cor.12v7. and 2Cor.4v2.; it means, "a manifestation, a making known, a shining forth." Paul says that Christians should manifest the love and power of the invisible God by spiritual gifts as well as manifest the truth by diligent preaching, witnessing, and holy living. 1Cor.12v7. 2Cor.4v1-7. Spiritual gifts are the active manifestations and acts of Almighty God in His Church. Our gracious Almighty Lord has come to manifest Himself in His Church through His spiritual gifts; He has not come to be an idle bystander, while we manifest our limited human abilities.

F. Demonstrations. "Apodixis." "Apodixis," only occurs in 1Cor.2v4. in the New Testament, and speaks of a manifestation, demonstration and proof. Paul's intellectual appeal at Athens bore little fruit, so when he went from Athens to Corinth he knew that the gross evil of Corinth demanded more than human oratory and non-miraculous evangelical preaching and reasoning, so he determined to preach Christ and Him crucified, and rely on God demonstrating the truth of the Gospel by the miraculous. Paul compelled the Gentiles to believe in Christ and obey the Gospel through mighty signs, wonders and miracles. Acts.17v15 to 19v12. 1Cor.2v2-4. Rom.15v18-20. Christ and Paul needed the full equipment and demonstrations of the Holy Spirit, and so do we. Let us pray for apostolic labourers to be sent to reap God's harvest. Mt.9v38.

G. Operations. "Energematon." The singular "energema," speaks of, "that which is wrought through energy, the effect produced, operation;" from "energeo," "to work in, to be active, to perform, to energise and operate." "Energematon" occurs in 1Cor.12v6., where it speaks of the varieties of operation of ALL the gifts. In 1Cor.12v10., "energemata" is used with "dunameon," to speak of ONE of the power gifts, the "workings of miracles." Because the working of miracles deals with the operations of God's power on nature and man's environment; it has a powerful and lasting effect on people and nations. This is clearly demonstrated by the effect of the plagues on Egypt and the opening of the Red Sea. Many generations later ungodly nations were still trembling at the memory of them. Josh.2v9-11. 1Sam.4v6-8. Is.26v9. Our Lord's nature miracles also had a profound effect on those who saw them. Christians should be energised by God and manifest spiritual gifts.

H. Works. "Erga." This is used in the New Testament to speak of the deeds of men, both good and evil; but it is used by Jesus in John's Gospel, to speak of God's miraculous works. Jn.3v19-21. 4v34. 5v20,36. 6v28,29. 9v3,4. 10v25,32,33,37,38. 14v10-12. 15v24. 17v4. Acts.13v41. 1Cor.3v13-15. Rev.2v2. 20v10. etc.. God's normal works are mighty miracles. We should not limit the mighty workings of the Holy One of Israel by our small expectations and abilities; this was Israel's sin, and it is a major sin of the Church today. Ps.78v41. Eph.3v19-21.

I. Signs. "Seemia." In the New Testament, "seemion" speaks of a sign, mark, token, wonder and miracle. Spiritual gifts are a sign from God and a signpost to God. God desires to show the world that He is a living God, and to answer Satan's lying signs and wonders. 2Thes.2v9. Mt.24v24. 2Tim.3v8. Rev.16v13,14. etc.. Jesus refused to grant the personal signs of His enemies, but He asked the people to accept the miracles and healings that He did as a sign and proof of the Divine source of His ministry and authority, and He promised the people more signs to help them believe. Jn.5v20,35-37. 10v37,38. Mt.11v20-30. In Mt.12v38-45., Jesus did not condemn miraculous signs; He condemned the people who had such evil hearts of unbelief, that they would not believe after seeing a multitude of signs, wonders and miracles through His ministry. Jesus warned that unbelief and hatred of the truth in the light of mighty signs and wonders can be a final act of spiritual suicide, and is the unforgiveable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Jn.15v21-25. Mt.12v22-32. Mk.3v20-35.

Signs, wonders and miracles are a vital part of the armoury of the Church of Christ. Mk.16v17,20. Lk.9v1,2. 10v1-9. Acts.5v12-16. 8v5-8. Rom.15v18-21. 1Cor.2v4,5. 14v25. 2Cor.12v12. The early Church did not depend upon oratory, but upon the truth confirmed by the signs and wonders of God. Lk.9v1,2. 10v1-9. Mk.16v17,20. Acts.4v16. 5v12. 6v8. 8v5-8. 2Cor.12v12. Rom.15v18-21. 1Cor.14v25. Paul told each local Church to covet earnestly the gifts of the Holy Spirit. 1Cor.1v7. 12v7,31. 14v1,5,18,39. The command to desire spiritual gifts is as binding as the command to follow after love. 1Cor.14v1. Spiritual gifts and their accompanying signs and wonders are promised to the Church until God's kingdom comes upon earth at Christ's second coming. Acts.2v17-21,38,39. Jn.14v12-14. Rev.11v1-15.

J. Miracles. "Dunameis." The singular "dunamis" speaks of ability, power, strength, it is used of works of a supernatural character and origin, which could not occur, or be produced by natural laws or natural agents. In the King James Version it is translated as "power" seventy seven times; "mighty work" eleven times; "miracle" eight times; "strength" seven times; "might" four times; "virtue" three times; "mighty deed" once; "ability" once; "wonderful works," once; etc.. Every gift of the Holy Spirit is miraculous, however, in the Bible the word "miracle" usually refers to the operation of the gifts of power and demonstration. When God's power operates it produces miracles.

K. Wonders. "Teras." "Teras," occurs 16 times in the New Testament, and is always associated with either "signs," "seemia;" or "miracles," "dunameis." It is used to speak of God's wonders twelve times, Acts.2v19,22,43. 4v30. 5v12. 6v8. 7v36. 14v3. 15v12. Rom.15v19. 2Cor.12v12. Heb.2v4.; of Satan's lying wonders three times, Mt.24v24. Mk.13v22. 2Thes.2v9., and on another occasion, in Jn.4v48., Christ states that signs and wonders establish faith in otherwise faithless people. See Jn.5v19,20. Satan is doing many "lying wonders" through false cults, the Church has the complete answer to these "lying wonders," if it will seek and manifest God's spiritual gifts. Satan and the powers of darkness fear the Holy Spirit's gifts, and try to stop Christians from seeking them; or try to make Christians fanatical and proud when they manifest them, even as Satan tried with the Lord Jesus. Mt.4v1-11. It is vitally important to remember that Christ has guaranteed that as God's children, we cannot receive anything evil when we are worshipping God, or seeking God, for His gracious gifts. Mt.7v7-11. Lk.11v9-13. 1Jn.5v18. God has not left the field of the miraculous to Satan; we can still have the gracious gifts of Divine illumination and guidance, and Divine inspiration and power. God still does wonders, He is not "The Great I Was," He is "The Great I Am," The Great Yahweh, who changes not; He still manifests wonders, marvels, portents, and prodigies through His spiritual gifts.

Wonderful things. "Thaumasios." In Mt.21v15., the neuter plural of the adjective "thaumasios," "wonderful," is used as a noun, to speak of the "wonders," or "wonderful things," that Jesus did in healing the blind and lame in the Temple; which really incensed the Holy-Spirit-resisting chief priests and scribes.

L. "The works of power of the age to come." Heb.6v5. In Heb.6v5., Paul tells us that spiritual gifts are a partial manifestation of the powers of the coming age, "dunameis te mellontos aionos." In 1Cor.13v8-13., Paul is certainly not saying that spiritual gifts would cease with the apostles, or with the completion of the Scripture canon; for Paul tells us, in this same Scripture, that spiritual gifts will continue until "that which is perfect is come;" that is, until Jesus returns, and God sets up His kingdom on earth. To say, as some do, that, "that which is perfect" is the canon of Scripture, does violence to the context, for "shall fully know," "epignosomai," the future middle indicative of "epiginosko," speaks of the time in the future when we have a full and "face to face," ("prosopon pros prosopon") perfect knowledge of God. This future "face to face," "full knowledge;" can only occur at the "perfect day," when God's kingdom of love comes to earth at Christ's return. Prov.4v18.

Ellicott says of 1Cor.13v10., "This verse shows by the emphatic 'then,' that the time when the gifts shall cease is the end of this dispensation. The imperfect shall not cease until the perfect is brought in." End of quote.

Paul states that spiritual gifts only cease in the sense that the partial use of heavenly powers is replaced by a perfect use of those powers. The partial use of "the powers of the age to come," will continue until they are exchanged for the full, complete and perfect use of those powers in God's kingdom. The occasional manifestations of the power gifts will be replaced by the permanent, continual and complete manifestations of those powers. The permanent possession of what we now call supernatural powers will be a fact. The supernatural transport of Elijah and Philip is a rare and exceptional thing in the Scriptures, but it is the everyday norm in the kingdom of God. 1Kings.18v12. 2Kings.2v11. Acts.8v39,40. The partial words of wisdom and knowledge, and discernings of spirits, will be replaced by the continual and perfect revelation of the wisdom and knowledge that comes from the face-to-face vision of the person of God. The ability to know and worship in all the tongues of angels and men will supersede the ability to speak in and interpret unknown tongues. The partial revelations of a prophetic gift and ministry will disappear in the fullness and perfect revelation of face-to-face communion with God.

In "A Bible Commentary For Today," edited by Howley, Bruce and Ellison, Paul Marsh makes the following comment on "when the perfect comes," in 1Cor.13v10., he says it: - "Anticipates the Parousia, the culmination of this 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,' or any of its cognate forms. Such an interpretation exists only by the virtue of the need to explain the absence of certain 'charismata' in many churches today.---At His coming we shall see and know with an immediacy as yet unknown, 'face to face.'" End of quote.

Paul said that his 23 years of mature Christian experience and knowledge was like babyhood compared with the experience and knowledge of God's kingdom, when our hazy image of God will be replaced by the glorious experience of a face-to-face vision of God. 1Cor.13v10-12. Until that wonderful day comes, God has promised to give us the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The effect of the gifts of the Spirit in the Scriptures was wonder, fear, amazement and astonishment, Mk.1v27. 10v24,32. 9v6. "thambeomai;" Lk.4v36. 5v9. Acts.3v10. "thambos;" Mt.12v23. Mk.2v12. 5v42. 6v51. Acts.2v7,12. 8v9,11,13. 10v45. 12v16. "existemi;" Mk.9v6. "ekphobos;" Lk.5v9. "perieko;" Mk.5v42. 16v8. Lk.5v26. Acts.3v10. 10v10. 11v5. 22v17. "ekstasis;" Mk.7v37. Lk.9v43. "ekplesso;" Lk.2v9. 5v26. 7v16. etc. "phobos;" Mt.9v8,33. Mk.12v17. etc. "thaumazo;" Mk.13v17. God compelled people to listen by mighty signs, wonders and miracles. God still desires to make people wonder and be amazed by the things that He is doing, the purpose being to make them listen to, and receive the Gospel message.

CONCLUSION.

I will now close this study on the gifts of the Spirit with the following facts and observations. The apostle Paul led Christians into a Pentecostal experience right throughout his ministry, in all the churches he founded. In 1Cor.12-14. we read that Paul is giving instructions regarding spiritual gifts and telling the Christians at Corinth to earnestly seek them, about 26 years after the outpouring on the day of Pentecost. Just before Paul died he was exhorting Timothy not to neglect or despise the revelations that had been given through spiritual gifts, and the ministry of spiritual gifts, this was about 33 years after Pentecost. 1Tim.1v18. 2Tim.1v6-8.

John was still experiencing spiritual gifts about 63 years after Pentecost, indeed, he was then enjoying the greatest manifestation of spiritual gifts that he had known in his life. Through the apostle John the Lord Jesus was exhorting the Christian church to take heed to the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit and His gifts. Rev.2v7,11,17. etc. We cannot do better than to follow the example of these great men of God in relation to spiritual gifts, and we should "covert earnestly" the lovely gifts of the Holy Spirit. 1Cor.14v1.

As Pentecostals we do not over-emphasise the gift of tongues and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit, we just give them the place that the New Testament tells us to, we recognise the place that the Holy Spirit and His gifts are given in the Scriptures. It is the critics that say, and quite wrongly, that this is our only theme. Pentecostals fervently believe in the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures, and affirm that these Scriptures teach the virgin birth, true deity, compassionate humanity, redeeming and atoning blood, and glorious second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, every doctrine that the Scripture and the evangelical Christian holds as "fundamental" and "precious" is held by Pentecostal Christians. Pentecostal Christians claim that the Scripture also teaches the Pentecostal experience is for today, and that the evidence for this is absolutely unassailable. Pentecostal Christians also believe that a true fullness of the Holy Spirit will cause the Christian to flee evil things and "follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." 1Tim.6v11. May "great grace" as well as "great power" rest upon every reader of this book, I pray that every reader may come to experience their Pentecostal Heritage. Acts.4v33,34. Seek to meet with Christ the baptiser in the Holy Spirit and fire, and take the precious and mighty gifts He offers. Mt.3v11. Mk.1v7,8.

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