

Cessation of The Charismata

Tongues – The Real Thing

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Tonight we need to look at these gifts that we read off in 1 Corinthians 12 and we need to identify them. Are they phony gifts? Are they counterfeits or are they genuine, genuine in the times of the apostles, and if so, why are we not using them here? We're going to discover that there are nine gifts recorded. Does anyone here tonight claim to have one of the gifts recorded in 1 Corinthians 12? Does anyone here claim to have that apostolic gift that is right here in Acts 12? If so, then we put a difference between the people of God, we put a difference between those who have and have not. The Charismatic tells us that he has apostolic gifts today, whichever one it might be or more, claims to have the office of an apostle and not only the office, but the authority and therefore the leading that the apostles had in the Old Testament.

Now, these gifts that we see in 1 Corinthians 12 are, number, one apostolic; secondly, they were performed also by people who lived during the times of the apostles. In Acts chapter 10, I want you to turn to this chapter. Acts chapter 10 and verse 44 we have converts in the house of Cornelius. They were new converts. Peter comes in verse 44 and, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water?" So I want you to know that there were others who exercised these gifts, the speaking in tongues.

Now remember what that gift was and if you flip over to chapter 11:15, you'll notice that as Peter later rehearses this event concerning Gentile, these converts in Cornelius' house were Gentile and he says in Acts 11:15, "as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning." In other words, the same phenomenon, the same gift that was given in Acts chapter 2, which was to reach men in their own language. It was not a heavenly language. It was not an angelic language. It was not an ecstatic language. It was not a secret language. It was an earthly language. Those who had the gifts in Acts chapter 2 were able to speak to men directly. What we have here in Acts chapter 10 is the same gift. It was exercised by apostles and those who were present in the time of the apostle. Now the point is that Peter as an apostle was present. They did not have this gift until Peter was present.

Now turn to Acts 19 verses 1 to 6, and here we have another account in the church at Ephesus where again we have this speaking with tongues and prophesying. Acts 19, you'll notice in verse 1 that they were certain disciples. Right down in verse 7 you'll notice that they were 12 of them and they were under the ministry of Apollos. Now Apollos was not one of the 12 apostles. Apollos was an evangelist, an orator. He was a mighty preacher, but he was not an apostle, and the point I want to point out here is that there was no transmission of these gifts without an apostle present. Unless one of the apostles was present, the gift was not transmitted to others but if you look down in verse 6, "when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." Before this, they didn't know whether there was any Holy Ghost but now through the laying on of the hands of an apostle, the presence of an apostle, these New Testament converts who were not apostles but because they were given through an apostle, these gifts they were able to speak in other languages to communicate the message of the gospel.

Now when we turn to 1 Corinthians 12, verse 8 right through to 10, you'll notice that we have these gifts. They're all itemized for us. Now these gifts were obviously genuine. They were good, usable, permissible. Paul did not say to them that, "What you are doing here is seeking something that's not rightfully yours." We do not doubt for a moment that they were supernatural. We do not doubt for a moment that they were exercised by what you might call believers in the church, although they themselves were not apostles, yet they received these gifts through the blessing, through the very transmission of an apostle.

Now let's read these gifts. Let's look at what they are. Let's identify them, first of all. The verse 8, "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge," then we have faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning spirits. Then it goes on to talk about kinds of tongue. Now that word "kind" means families of tongue. It doesn't mean unknown tongue or ecstatic tongue. It means tongues that are discernible, knowable, but they are in different languages; just as in Acts 2, they spoke in various people's dialects and languages. So here we have the ability to communicate the gospel in various languages, diverse kinds of tongue, to another, the interpretation of tongue.

Now I want you to notice in verse 7 that these gifts are not just for experience sake. They are not for emotionalism. They are to profit the church. They are to edify the church, verse 7, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." And so let's clarify what we have here. We have gifts that were utilized in the New Testament church during the times of the apostles by apostles and by those who were with apostles to edify, to minister to the church. Not for a roller coaster emotional experience. Not for some heel-kicking frenzy. This was a controlled, this was a blessing to the people that built them up in the faith of the Lord Jesus.

Now the question comes: are these gifts which were used in the church of Corinth, they were good gifts, they were intended for profit, although there were other super-apostles as we learned last week, who came in and abused them and used them for their own ends,

which was undoubtedly wrong, but we do not debate nor doubt that there were good gifts here permissible for these people. Are these gifts not for us today, nine of them? Why do we not have these miracles in the church? Why do we not see people healed? Why do we not have this ability to suddenly communicate in another language? Why do we not have this interpretation of tongues? We could go right down the line on this.

I remember about four years ago, I was preaching through the book of Acts and on a Sunday evening I was preaching on Acts chapter 3 on Peter and John as they went to the temple and how they healed the man that was lame sitting at the temple, and I remember my horror as I came probably through this door, I just don't quite remember I went to the pulpit, but I remember the horror of seeing right here in the front there was a short bench here and room for a wheelchair and there was a young man in a wheelchair who was a quadriplegic. He had no use of his arms or legs. He seemed to be powerless from his neck down. And I looked at him and I looked down at the subject that I was going to preach, Peter, healing the lame man at the beautiful temple gate and I said, "How am I going to preach this to this poor man, a paraplegic? He's going to listen to what these apostles could do in their day and what can I do for this young man?" If ever I would have desired such a gift, that would have been the night that I would have said, "Lord, give me the gift to see this man walk out of the wheelchair and go home perfectly healed." But that young man, as I came to know him as a believer, understood the distinction of these things was not by any means upset with what I preached. I went ahead and preached what I had prepared to preach, didn't change it at all. There was I preaching about what great miracles God can do and this teaches us what God can do and it applies to sinners and so on, but I couldn't say to this man, "Now it applies to you." And it is on this hook that the Charismatics say that we don't have the full gospel. They say that if we had the full gospel we would be able to help that young man if he was a believer and had any faith at all, that we would be able to see him throw away his wheelchair and just walk home or go home as others do. And I visited him many times afterward and that young man wonderfully shone forth with the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus.

But do you know what the kicker of all this is? That in Charismatic churches they also have ramps and they also have wheelchairs. I'm not talking about the parachurch Charismatic type, I'm talking about those churches that now are preaching these things weekly and they have in their buildings people that are handicapped, people with various infirmities and they preach these things but they still have people with wheelchairs sitting in the aisles or sitting in their place and they go in in a wheelchair and they go out in a wheelchair. And all I'm saying is that it is exceedingly strange that people who believe and are convinced that these apostolic gifts are still for today are not exercising as the apostles did.

I think of Joni Eareckson Tara, that's the name she goes under. You probably hear the program Joni and Friends. In 1967, Joni was injured in a diving accident and for 33 years now, that young woman has lived in a wheelchair by day, unable to move any of her four limbs. But what a marvel of grace her life story is. What persistence and acceptance of the will of God that she is called of God to live as a paraplegic, live with her infirmity,

and yet magnify her Savior. Now she was awarded, in 1993, Church Woman of the Year. She is known abroad as one who has not lain down, given up, thrown in the faith, but has pressed on to be a great witness for the Lord Jesus. Now, the strange thing is that amongst some people that she even would fellowship with, Charismatics and healers and so on, they would say that Joni Eareckson Tada is a failure because if she had sufficient faith, she would no longer be in a wheelchair, the Lord would heal her. And according to their doctrine, according to their belief that these gifts, healing included in Acts and 1 Corinthians 12, that they are still for us today, they are to be used today, and as we do so we should be exercising an apostolic ministry.

There's a whole denomination called the Apostolic Church. There's the Full Gospel Church which for many years has been claiming that others who do not accept these gifts as for today do not have the full gospel. Now according to their theology they have two great problems. Number one, they say healing is in the atonement, that if you have faith in Christ to save your soul, then you ought to also be healed, and if you are sick or infirm, it's unbelief because healing is in the atonement. It's the will of God for every Christian to be perfectly healthy. Then, of course, the other false doctrine is that they say that God has given gifts to heal from sickness and infirmity to his church today, and from a wheelchair, this woman, Joni Eareckson Tada, has shown God's great grace, and yet, according to the doctrines, the teachings, the thinking of Charismatics, she is a failure. I'm saying all of this just to point out that there's something terribly wrong with this way of thinking. I don't believe for a moment that Joni Eareckson Tada is a failure in that sense. I'm not altogether happy with the circles in which she moved religiously. I think that she has fellowship far too broad. But according to her own ability to be a witness with all the handicap that she lives with, what a marvel she is.

I think of a young man that was in this church. Was he a failure because he left our church that evening and to the best of my knowledge is still living with a wheelchair? And then the other implication, are we as a church a failure and am I as a minister of the gospel a failure because I do not possess such gifts to see that man walk in the aisle returning home perfectly healed? The truth is that apostolic gifts died with the apostles. That's the Reformed Protestant, historic view of the Christian church and that is where, as I say, we draw the line. This is the crossroad between Charismatics, between those who claim that they possess the gifts, and those that fit into orthodoxy in the Protestant meaning of that term.

Now this is the whole thrust of the 13th chapter in 1 Corinthians. I want to read with you again verse 8 through to 13.

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail;
whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it
shall vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But
when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done
away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I
thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.
12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I

know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Now just before we get into an exegesis of this passage, as we seek to open up what the Apostle Paul is saying in verse 8 to 13, I want to set before you some reason, some more general reason for the cessation of the gifts, these Charismatic gifts, these what, nine gifts you might call them here in 1 Corinthians 12, why they died with the apostles.

My first general reason is this, that today, and in the church right down through the ages, the most godly men do not use them. So if we were to merely go by example, we would have to say that these gifts are not being used. The present-day servants of God who are faithful to the gospel do not claim to have apostolic gifts of healing, communication, inspired knowledge, revelations. They don't claim these things at all. I could name you tonight a hundred outstanding Christian leaders from the Reformation to today, men who no doubt were used in revival, were used in the power of God, saw a great work done for God, but did not even claim to have apostolic gifts. Martin Luther would be one, the man of the German Reformation. He never claimed one of these gifts. John Calvin never claimed one of these gifts. John Owen, said to be the greatest English theologian, he writing in 1679 said, "Gifts which in their own nature exceed the whole power of all our faculties, that dispensation of the Spirit is long since ceased and where it is now pretended unto by many, it may justly be suspected as an enthusiastic delusion." That was 1679. Then Matthew Henry, probably the commentator most known, most read by this congregation. He said in 1712, "The gift of tongues was one new product of the spirit of prophecy and given for a particular reason, that the Jewish pale being taken down, all nations might be brought into the church. These and other gifts of prophecy being assigned, have long since ceased and been let aside and we have no encouragement to expect the revival of them, but on the contrary are directed to call the scripture the more sure word of prophecy." In other words, the written word is more sure than words of knowledge, revelations, miracles, signs and wonders. Then Jonathan Edwards, the man of American revival, he wrote in 1738 that the extraordinary gifts were, "in order to the founding and establishing of it in the world. But since the canon of the scripture has been completed, and the Christian Church fully founded and established, these extraordinary gifts have ceased." Then I come to George Whitefield, a little later now. He was charged at one time with enthusiasm. He was locked out of the Anglican Church. He was not allowed to preach in the churches, so he preached in the open air. He preached to twenty and thirty thousand at a time. He is the man that truly changed the Western nations, especially in England, North America. What did he believe about apostolic gifts? He said, "I never did pretend to these extra operations of working miracles or speaking in tongues." Another man highly respected amongst evangelicals, C. H. Spurgeon. In one of his volumes of the Metropolitan Tabernacle he preached, "men who were selected as witnesses because they had personally seen the Savior," that's one of the marks of an apostle, by the way, an apostle must have seen the Savior. He said that this is "an office which necessarily dies out, and properly so, because the miraculous power also is withdrawn." Again he said, "those works of the Holy Spirit which are at this time vouchsafed to the Church of God are every way as valuable as those earlier miraculous gifts which have departed from us. The work of the Holy Spirit, by which men are

quicken from their death in sin, is not inferior to the power which made men speak with tongues."

And so this is the answer to the Full Gospel movement. They say to us, "You don't have the full gospel, the gifts that you have preaching the gospel, seeing a soul saved here, a soul saved there, a life changed here and there by the grace of God, these are inferior." Spurgeon said that's not inferior if you can see a whole man changed, because the gifts were passing. Abraham Kuyper, Dutch theologian 1888 said, "Many of the Charismata," that is these Charismatic gifts, "given to the apostolic church are not of service to the church of the present day."

Now does it not seem strange that the many great evangelists and leaders of Christendom and Reformers were far from claiming any such powers? In fact, they, what's the word, cleared themselves from any involvement with any such kind of fanaticism. And of course this was a problem in most ages down through the church because from the fourth century in particular, many claims were made to miracle working. In the writings, the history of the Roman Catholic Church, their practice and doctrine is filled with outlandish miracles, miracles upon miracles. One of those strange things is the claim that the stairs in St. Peter's was really the stairs that our Lord Jesus descended from Pilate's Hall out to be crucified, that somehow or other those stairs were transferred from Jerusalem to Rome by the angel. They claimed many apparitions, of course, and of later time, statues and images of Mary weeping and then there's the other miracle claim that real milk was coming from a statue from the breasts of Mary. And of course, this is used to hold a superstitious people. And of course, it was necessary down through those ages when you're preaching the gospel to clarify that you are not involved in these miracles, you're not interested in these miracles, that we have the word of God, we preach the gospel.

And so we ask the question, was Moody, Spurgeon, Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards inferior men because they denied the use of such miracles and said that they were only for the period during the apostles on Earth? Another question we must also look at is that gifts are no sign of spirituality. Here in Corinth they had these nine gifts. As I say, I believe they were usable, permissible. They were meant to edify and do good and be profitable. But was the church at Corinth spiritual? Was it not a church with all kinds of dreadful problems, divisions, fornication, idol worship, desecration of the communion? So whatever these gifts did for the church, it did not make them spiritual giants. It was necessary because they did not have all of the New Testament. Let's always remember that. The Christians living in the days of Paul when he wrote to the church of Corinth did not have the New Testament compiled, canonized, and settled; many of them were dependent upon the Old Testament scriptures only, therefore these words of knowledge, these revelations, these words of wisdom and these gifts were necessary to aid a church in its infancy. And we're going to get to the point where Paul says, "When I was a child I spake as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things." This is what we call the ceasing of these gifts. They became unnecessary later.

But the point I make is that this church which had these gifts was not a spiritual church. It was carnal, fleshly, and so we must not be guilt-ridden and guilt-tripped to think that if

we don't have these gifts then we're inferior. I would like to think that tonight that this church is in no way inferior to the church of Corinth or any other church in the New Testament because we have in our hands the completed Bible, the full revelation of God to men. We are not inferior. In fact, we have superior knowledge, the complete inspired word. That brings me now to the purpose of miracles was to give the written scriptures. It is important that we grasp this doctrine, this point, that the purpose of miracles, signs and wonders in the Bible was always to confirm the revelation of God's word. I want to give you three scriptures for this.

Turn with me to Mark 16 and verse 20. Mark 16 and the verse 20. Here we have, of course, the commission of these early apostles to go out and to preach and we're told in Mark 16 20, the very last verse, "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, confirming the word with signs." The purpose for the signs is linked to the word. These men were going out into a world that did not have the completed Bible. They were going out into a world that never heard the gospel before. To get the New Testament Church on its feet, the Lord gave these temporary miracles. The Lord confirming the word with signs, no doubt, they were great wonders that were performed. These apostles could perform such miracles.

In Acts 14, and the verse 3, we see again this link between the word and the miracle that is given. Acts 14 and verse 3, "Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands." What were the signs and wonders for? Because they were giving out the word of God. Not as we give out the word of God, they were preaching under inspiration. The apostles did that. Paul the apostle was an inspired man. John was an inspired man. Peter was an inspired man. The signs and the wonders accompanied the revelation, the inspiration of God's word.

The third scripture I want to give you is Hebrews 2 and verse 3. Hebrews 2 and verse 3. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" What were those gifts for? What were those miracles for? What were those signs and wonders for? They were for the confirming of the word.

Do we need a sign and wonder to tell us today that the Bible is God's word? No, we don't. This Bible is a completed, finished revelation. W. G. T. Shedd writing in 1888 said, "All the doctrines of Christianity had been revealed to the apostles, and had been delivered to the church in a written form. There was no further need of an infallible inspiration, and the credentials and authority given to the first preachers of Christianity in miraculous acts, did not need continual repetition from age to age." Let me put that in a nutshell: it simply means that one set of miracles is enough; we don't need ongoing miracles every day before our eyes to know that Christianity is God's message. It has been confirmed. It has been confirmed by the death, the resurrection, the message of these apostles, the miracles that they performed, the power of God that was upon them. And then, when the

word of God is completed, the book of Revelation, the last verse, the last period is written, do we now need the signs to continue when the Revelation is already complete? Can we not understand that when the Bible is complete, the signs and wonders are also complete? We don't need a repetition of these things to lay the foundation of the gospel. Indeed, the Lord has taught us that a wicked and evil generation seeketh after a sign.

Now the Charismatic ideology is really a denial of the sufficiency of scripture. They tell us that we need more than just the Bible. We need more than just the quoting, the preaching, the exposition of scripture. We need a word of knowledge. We need a revelation. We need some miracle to substantiate what we're preaching. But that denies that the Bible is a completed book, a finished book, because we're not looking for some new word of knowledge, we have all knowledge compiled in this word from A to Z, Genesis to Revelation. Now, if the scriptures are complete, why do we need these extraordinary gifts of revelation? The purpose for such miracles is gone, and because there is no more revelation, the Bible is completed, it's to be received by faith. This Bible is now our miracle. This is our miracle because every day God speaks to me through this book, through this word. I don't need to pray for some subjective emotional experience to know the mind of God. We're to search the scriptures to see if these things be so.

One simple example that has come my way has really helped me in this, is the whole idea that when you erect a building, perhaps it's a large cathedral or an edifice, and the workers, the construction workers, they need a scaffolding to put up the building, how could they ever reach those high places, how could they ever finish the building without such a scaffolding erected around? But once the building is completed, it's all done, what do you do with the scaffolding? It becomes unnecessary. It becomes a detriment to the beauty of the building and so the scaffolding is removed. It's taken away. It served its purpose. It was necessary at that time to get the building erected but once that building is complete, you take down the scaffold. Likewise, when the Bible is complete, signs and wonder, miracles, these extraordinary gifts, which we see in 1 Corinthians 12, were permissible gifts, are not to be perpetuated and continued age after age after age when the Bible is already completed.

Now if a man was to come into our church tonight and say, "I want to talk to the elders and the office-bearers of this church because I have a word of knowledge. I've had a revelation from God." And he says, "I have something very important to tell you because God has given me a message for you." And he sits down with us and he says, "God has told me that you are to sell this building and give all the money to missionary." By some way, people's way of thinking that would be a very honorable thing to do. It may very well be a message of God and if we don't obey, then we're not going to live by faith. What kind of a board meeting do you think we might have? Democracy goes out. You don't have democracy anymore. You don't have discernment anymore. You don't have men sitting down and saying, "Now is this the long term best thing for us to do?" You do not act rationally anymore. All you can do is, if you're going to believe the messenger, God has spoken and contrary to everything else you have in the Bible, you follow the word of one man who claims to have a word of knowledge from God. Can you run a church on that basis? No. Because the so-called gift, the word of knowledge from an

individual supersedes the word of God, supersedes the authority within the church, and becomes the one thing that we must all run after. You can't run a church on that basis.

At Corinth, even there, it was a most difficult thing. It was a childish way. It was the immature way to run a church. Now that we have the full revelation of God in his word, we now are men and we no longer see through a glass darkly but we see face to face. We have the full revelation of God here. That leads me, thirdly, to the subordinate place of miracle to the word of God. I know I've generalized on this and I've said a few things on this but I want to nail this one home. When signs and wonders are promoted, how do we know and discern what is a true wonder and what is a lying wonder? Because that's the problem, isn't it? If they were all true wonders, we would have no problem. But the Bible warns us, especially in the last days, 2 Thessalonians 2:9, that there will come in the last days those that will perform signa and wonders.

Turn to Matthew 24:24, the warning of our Lord Jesus. Matthew 24 and the verse 24, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Now we believe the elect will not be deceived. The people of God who are taught of God will not run after these false wonders. But what will give them discernment? What will open the minds of the elect, the people of God, as opposed to the worldly, the carnal and the undiscerning? What is it that puts the brakes on Christians who are not going to follow after these mad signs and wonder? Well, do we not have the very word of God itself?

Turn now to Deuteronomy 13 verses 1 to 3. Here we have a warning given right at the very beginning of Israel's history. Deuteronomy 13, "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder," here we have now in the Old Testament signs and wonders, revelations, words of knowledge, all these things, if someone comes into your midst and he claims this and the sign or the wonder come to pass, I want you to notice that the powers of darkness can produce signs and wonders, the devil can give us signs and wonders, and the thing can come to pass. What then do we do? He says to us, "Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you." How do we know not to go after him? Because the word of God says, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them."

The word of God must supersede any sign or any miracle at any period in the Bible. The Bible is always transcendentally above signs, miracles, or visions, dreams, words of knowledge, whatever they may be. We must never place a miracle above the word. That is what Romanists have done for centuries. They claim that the picture of Mary, which weeps tears, real tears, they say, and they're convinced that this is not a phony thing and, of course, from around the world or around the nation flock people to see this and they become all excited and motivated to the worship of Mary. Should we follow? Should we be taken up with these things? What if the devil really did give a true sign and wonder through the supposed eyes of Mary? Should we also become Mary worshippers? Not at all. because we are not followers of signs and wonders, we're followers of the written

word of God. That is our absolute final guide and that's why we do not follow these superstitious ways. The principle must always be maintained that everything must be brought to the light of the word and tested.

Now Rome hates the doctrine of the finality of scripture. Down through the centuries, Rome has fought this with her pen, with her blood, with her emissaries around the world that the Bible is not the final revelation. Now we have a new movement, the Charismatic movement and others of their ilk, and they tell us we also need signs and wonders. Are we going to follow running after them and accept what has been the norm of Orthodox Christianity to the law and to the testimony if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them?

Now these Charismatics, they do this today, they put more emphasis on sensational messages, on so-called words of knowledge and revelations than they do upon the Bible and that's how they drum up their support, their followers. And you have men like the Kansas Seven who claim to be apostles, men like John Wimber who claim to be an apostle, and he could almost say anything and who's going to question? Who's going to oppose? In fact, we don't have to go to Kansas, we only have to go half a mile north of here to the Cloverdale Bible Way and you have the followers of William Branham. William Branham started out a Baptist, became a Pentecostal, and then became a leader of a cult, Brahminites. Cloverdale Bible Way. They deny the Trinity. They deny the finality of scripture. They have placed now William Branham who is dead, 1950 something he died, they place his tapes and writing alongside of scripture. It is claimed that once when he was preaching there was a halo over his head. They have a photograph on the window of their church as you go in through their front door showing what God did with this prophet. They call him a prophet, this God's prophet. What is that doing? It's adding to the final revelation of scripture and it's where the cults go wrong. It's where so many have gone wrong and we cannot follow that road.

That brings us now to the chaos and the compromise caused by the persistence in use of these gifts. Why do we have all this confusion today? Why do we have such a decline in what Paul calls the preaching of the simplicity of Christ? In our evangelical world, there is now more interest in Charismatic gifts than in the exposition of scripture. Why is this? Because there has been of late and this century, 1900 in particular, a revival of the idea that the apostolic gifts are still for us today, and when people imbibe that ideology, they run with it to all kinds of confusion.

I think of the harm that it has done to individuals. I have a letter on file from a man, at one time he attended this church and he was converted into a Charismatic church or at least as a new convert he attended a Charismatic church and, of course, he was preached to all the time that he needed to have these gifts He must speak in tongues. He must manifest some of these gifts if he is going to be a mature spiritual man. And much as he accepted that teaching and wanted these gifts, he never had such an experience. He never did speak in tongues. He never did receive some word of knowledge or revelation. And try as he might and believe as he might and listen to his leadership as he might, he only recoiled into guilt and frustration and denial until later when he left he saw the folly of

the whole thing. And I am sure tonight there are countless Christians, I'll call them believers, who live with that kind of frustration, "There's something I haven't yet received," and it leaves people in dreadful despair and guilt.

Then there's the harm that it has done to Orthodox Christianity. It has carried churches and ministries away from godly ministries to sensational circus-like entertainment centers. Reverent worship that used to be the norm in such churches has been given over now to trends that are chaotic, and we could trace so many of these trends to this seeking gifts and a refusal to see that these gifts were peculiar and special to the apostolic time of the apostolic people.

Then there comes the ecumenical thrust of the Charismatics. When the Charismatic movement began in the 1960s, Pope John at that time sought as an instrument for ecumenism to bring Protestants and Evangelicals into the Church of Rome. At that time he gave his blessing to the Charismatic movement and to its leader at that time, David du Plessis. He was a South African Pentecostal leader and his name, he was dubbed Mr. Pentecost. Now speaking in Lausanne in July 1977, Mr. Pentecost or David du Plessis exulted, "We have finally come to the age when it is happening." Describing his visit to the Vatican in 1976, du Plessis said, "The Bishops and Cardinals raised their hands, jumped and shouted, the Catholic movement took the baptism of the Spirit and the manifestation of the Spirit. Every Catholic order is now leavened with renewal and they are taking it to 92 countries around the world."

Now we know about the Roman Catholic renewal. We have heard reports of nuns and priests who supposedly speak in tongues. They claim to have this baptism of the Spirit, this peculiar phenomenon of being filled with the Spirit and speaking in tongues and other such so-called gifts. I, of course, have great difficulty with, first of all, these are unbelievers. These are not converted people. Then also, the fruit of Roman Catholic people receiving this Catholic renewal, or that branch of the Charismatic experience, what did it do to them? It made them all the more devout worshippers of Mary. It made them appreciate the Mass as not before. It confirmed them more and more in the errors of the Church of Rome. So it's obviously a false spirit, and as we have searched the Bible here tonight, from Deuteronomy right through to 2 Thessalonians, the devil, the evil spirit, is able to give people any amount of experiences. And he does and it becomes a deception, it becomes chaos and it becomes a tool for the promotion of ecumenism and unity with the Church of Rome.

I had a pastor from the Vineyard movement, he wanted to meet with me and I invited him to my home, and he came right in and he wanted to invite me to a pastor's luncheon with a number of pastors here in the Cloverdale area, and my first question was, "Well, who all will be present?" And he went down a list of the local churches and their ministers, Anglican as well, United as well, and then of course the Roman Catholic priest was also to be there and there would be a prayer time. And of course, I expressed my difficulty with attending such a gathering, accepting a man who is promoting error and a false gospel, and I would be obliged to call on my brother in Christ. Now that man gave this church a check for over \$700. He said it was taken up as a love offering a few days

before and it was meant to be given to this church. I wrongfully took that check into my hand and he wouldn't take it back again, and I eventually had to deal that check right back to him because I realized that I and if I, this church, was being brought into some kind of a spurious fellowship, and of course, if you take money from a person, dare you ever open your mouth and say, "Look, what kind of a group is this?" Once you take your money, you're hamstrung, you're silenced.

Now again, my point is that these delusions, I speak of the Vineyard movement because you ought to know the Vineyard movement. They are heavily into signs and wonders. They are into seeking all these possible gifts. But they're also into ecumenism. They are also into the destruction of doctrinal preaching and replacing it with emotional charges that make people feel oh so good under a delusion. And my point is that this is only happening because people have rejected what was always, what was always understood, the Reformed Christian doctrine, the gifts ceased with the apostles in their age. That's why the evangelical church is in the mess that it's in today.

Now to point out that this is the Protestant historical position, I want to read to you the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 1, Section 1, written in 1647, which maketh the Holy scripture to be most necessary, "those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased." That's the Protestant record. That's the creed of this church and upon this we stand. The point being that there be no more revelation beyond the canon of scripture. There is no more purpose for the apostolic miracles in the church and once people depart from that historical Protestant position, we end up with the evangelical chaos that we have in the churches today.

Now surely this will be the very delusion that shall come upon the world and we're seeing so much of it today, and through this emphasis on biblical gifts, signs and wonders, many will be swept away to follow after lying wonders when that man of sin shall come upon the stage. That's what the Charismatic church is doing, it's preparing our nation, the religious element of this nation, the evangelical element, to follow after signs and wonders, and take our eyes away from the written, final record of God's word. This seeking for signs and wonders, as I say, has also been the error of cults. Every cult you look at have gone wrong right here. Gone wrong right here. That's why we take our stand, we can do no other.

How's my time doing? I realize that I have enough here tonight to preach in about three weeks, but I have looked at this from end to end and I said if I try to split this up, I'm going to ruin the continuity of it. So I ask you, I beg you tonight to persevere with me. I've got a few things I want to say, then I want to get back to 1 Corinthians 13 and show that this is the doctrine of the passage.

Now in this argument, there are some people we must talk to because we must think about those people who lived in the period just after the apostles died, what we call the early church fathers, and if we have their witness, their testimony about this, we ought to know whether in reality the miracles that were exercised, as we read off here in 1 Corinthians 12 and by the apostles themselves, we ought to know did they continue or did

they cease? Well, I have a whole number of quotes. I don't think I have time for them all. I have a quote from John Chrysostom who lived in 347 to 400. Augustine. Each of them did disclaim the use of miracles and tongues. Then we want to get a little closer to the apostles' age. Irenaeus, who lived in 125 through 202. He was the bishop of Lyons in Asia Minor. And Origen, he was the bishop of Egypt, 185 onward. Cyprian was the bishop of Carthage. He died in 258. Now in a very scholarly book, B. B. Warfield points out, these early church leaders or fathers testified of no specific cases but ascribed miracle-working to all who were truly disciples of Jesus. That means that they were living during the life of Christ. When those people, apostles and some others who were under the power and grace of the apostles, when they died out, gifts died with them, as we read in 1 Corinthians 12.

Another book that was written by a man called Conyers Middleton, it was written in 1745, and he took a very clear stand on this whole issue and he pointed out that no known writer of that early period, just after the decease of the apostles, no known writer claims to have himself wrought miracles or names any of his predecessors as having done so. Now that book written by Conyers Middleton, who was an Anglican, 1745 he wrote this, has never been refuted. It was hated. It was despised. It was contested, especially by the Romanists. But that book, till this day, stands unrefuted.

And so we see from church history, the actual practice of the church in the early age, the gifts ceased. These miracles no longer continued, healings, revelations, speaking in tongues and so on. So the point is this, if the apostolic gifts were not claimed and practiced by the church leaders in the second century and the third century, why was that? Is it not logical to conclude that they ceased to exist in the church when the apostles ceased to exist and those who received the gifts directly from them? You see, only an apostle could transmit these gifts to another. Apollos couldn't do it. Philip the evangelist could not do it. Only an apostle could. So when they were gone, the experience of these miracles were also gone because they were no longer necessary.

Now let's look at the biblical argument. Let's turn to 1 Corinthians 13 verses 8 through to 13, and in a few moments I want to give you the sense of these words. Now this passage is dealing with the ceasing of the gifts when the New Testament is completed. How can we be sure of this? Well, my first reason is the whole context is dealing with gifts. That's 1 Corinthians 13. Then into chapter 14, it talks again about spiritual gifts. So you'll see that the context is all about gifts. Remember that every time you read a passage, study a passage, you must keep it in its context and before and after these verses are all about gifts.

Now in verse 10, it says, "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." I want you to notice the word "perfect" there means mature, filled out. In Philippians it talks about Christians being perfect, it means they are mature. It comes from a Greek word *teleion* from which we get telescope, and you can have the telescope cranked in or you can have it extended fully out. It is perfect. It is complete. It is mature. It is brought out to its fullness. That's the Greek word here for perfect and when Paul was writing to Corinth, the scriptures were not completed. They were begun,

of course. The Old Testament scriptures were complete. Already there were parts of the New Testament in writing but the New Testament was not complete. It was not yet filled out. It was not yet perfect. They did not have all the books of the Bible and so what the apostle is saying, when that which is perfect is come, when the whole Bible is finished, then that which is in part shall be done away.

Now some interpret that word "perfect" to mean heaven, but it cannot refer to souls in heaven because in verse 12 it goes on to talk, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." When we get to heaven we will not have omniscience but when you come to the Bible and you want to know yourself, if you want to know yourself, read the Bible, you'll find out more about yourself than you care to know. God speaks to you, who you are, what you are, what you need, right through this book.

Then in verse 13, I want you to notice, "now abideth faith, hope, charity." These three things are going to abide and that's Paul speaking in his day. These three things are going to abide. All the other things are going to pass away. They're going to cease. What are these three things that are going to abide? Well, of course, charity but also faith and hope. Do you need faith and hope in heaven? I don't think so. When you get to heaven, you're not going to live by faith anymore, you're going to live by sight, you shall see him as he is. And while there will be one sense of hope in heaven, it will be an endless eternity. But what we hope for tonight is the return of our Lord. What we hope for is that glorious day when Christ comes. But it tells us here that hope is going to abide, it's going to remain, so it's speaking of a period of time from the finishing of the scriptures, the completion of scriptures, until the end of time. Faith, hope and charity will abide until the end of time. From the closing of the canon of scripture to the return of our Lord, faith, hope and charity will abide. The greatest of these is charity. And so when you read these verses, don't think this is heaven. Think the Bible. Think of that canon of scripture.

Look at verse 12, "For now we see through a glass, darkly." What is that? Are you and I uncertain about the things of heaven? Not at all. We have the Bible. There are those things about heaven that are absolutely clear. I'm not looking through a dark glass when I look into the Bible, but when the Corinthian Christians were listening to words of knowledge and gifts and miracles and tongues and healings and so on, they only had a little part of the knowledge. One had a miracle, one had a tongue, one had a revelation, another had a word of knowledge, and everyone had only a little part and Paul says in these verses, he goes on to say there, verse 9, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part." And that was true in the day of the Apostle Paul, that was true of these Christians at Corinth, but when we have the Bible we don't have a part of God's word, we have all of it, a full, a final revelation. And so the now and the then refers to the completion of the Bible.

You'll notice in 11, Paul's analogy of maturity. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." Tell me this, if that does not refer to the cessation of the miracles, the ceasing of tongues and healings and all these other Charismatic gifts, what could it possibly mean?

What could it possibly mean? Is it going to be heaven and when I speak as a child, then I'm a man fully grown. What could it possibly mean? Paul is referring here that until the Bible is complete, there are these childish, what he would call inferior gifts, these gifts of the Spirit. They're only in part. They didn't have the full gambit of truth. And we use those things when you're a child, but when you become a man, when the Bible is complete and you have the full picture before you, you put away childish things. The Charismatics are going back to childish things. When you see the foolishness, you see the circus-like worship, you see the evil of their ways, they're going back to the childish ways. We seek to have the full word of God which makes us men and mature and certain of God's word to our hearts.

And for the Charismatic, there ought never to be sickness and death. Where is John Wimber today? John Wimber is the man who commenced the Toronto Blessing Experience. He took ill and died. He's gone. He's no more. If John Wimber ever healed anybody, there's one man he couldn't heal and that was John Wimber. These experiences that they claim, I say that they are phony, that they are doing a great deal of damage and harm to the Christian Church today, that they are causing a mockery and a scandal to the church of Jesus Christ. They're going back to childish things, foolish things, nonsense when we have the light of the completed word of God.

Now this doctrine of the ceasing of the apostolic gifts directs us to seek the grace of God and to walk and work for God in his grace, and what Paul received when he prayed about his thorn in the flesh, that problem with his health and his body, the Lord says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." The Lord says to us tonight, his grace is sufficient. We should seek God's grace to be men and women filled with the Spirit, that walk in the light and power of God's grace. But if we seek those things that are childish, these things that were necessary to the establishing of the New Testament church, those apostolic gifts, we will become fools rather than mature men and women. We will be going backwards instead of forward with God.

And let me tell you something else, the doctrine of the ceasing of these gifts does not mean that God has not visited his church in power. Jonathan Edwards was a man who knew power. Whitefield knew power. Spurgeon knew power. We desire that power of God, but not through childish means. And God does do miracles in his church. God does heal people. We have James 5:14 that, "Is any sick among you?" let him pray, let him call for the elders of the church; anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick." But you'll notice that those elders are not called apostles. And the Lord will raise them up and there are times that we, as a church, have resorted to anointing individuals with oil, to praying with them. In my home church, the elders and minister did so over one of their men who was an elder. He was a man diagnosed with cancer at a very late stage. The doctor said, "There's no point in even treating you." The man says, "You mean you're going to leave me to die? There's nothing you can do?" And he insisted that he would go through a course of treatment. The man insisted. The doctor didn't insist, but the man insisted. Brian Ferguson is his name, and he went to the minister and elders and called them together, had them pray for him. That man just before Christmas was declared completely well. The doctor now says that it was

misdiagnosed at the beginning. He's confused. We do believe in miracles, but the miracles is in the corporate church. It's not in leaders and individuals who claim that they're apostles and prophets sent by God. Rather, the Lord gives us grace to serve and believe and work and worship.

This has been a big subject. I have covered it hastily, in spite of the length of time, but it is so important. If we go wrong on this as a church, there's no telling where we'll end up, and if you get sucked into the guilt trap of Charismaticism, you will be in big trouble. You will find that the exposition of scripture is no longer enough, you need something sensational, you need some sign or wonder and who can tell whether you'll be following a lying sign and wonder. May the Lord guard us and keep us in these confusing and evil days.