

CHAPTER TWELVE

Analysis

- A. Paul explains the basic principles of spiritual gifts (1-11).
1. He shows how the Corinthians were to determine when one was speaking under the direction of the Spirit of God (1-3).
 - a) He did not want them to be without knowledge about these things. Evidently this was because of the confusion and division in the church over these gifts.
 - b) He reminds them of their experience when they were led away to the dumb idols. They had been led to believe that they were receiving divine direction from their pagan gods.
 - c) He makes known to them the test by which they were to know when one was speaking under the direction of the Spirit of God:
 - (1) No one while he was speaking under the power of the Spirit of God could say ANATHEMA JESUS.
 - (2) No one could say LORD JESUS except under the direction of the Holy Spirit. God did not permit the "unclean spirit" to say LORD JESUS.
 2. He explains the variety, manifestations, and classification of the gifts (4-11).
 - a) The various things of spirit are related to the Spirit, the Lord, and to God.
 - (1) There are various gifts, but the same Spirit.
 - (2) There are various services, but the same Lord.
 - (3) There are various workings, but the same God.
 - b) These manifestations of the Spirit are for the benefit of all.
 - c) Nine gifts are mentioned. They fall logically into three groups:
 - (1) Those referring to the revealed truth:
 - (a) The word of wisdom.
 - (b) The word of knowledge.
 - (2) Those referring to the confirmation of the revealed truth:
 - (a) Faith, in the same Spirit.
 - (b) Gifts of healing, in the one Spirit.
 - (c) Working of miracles.
 - (3) Those referring to methods of proclaiming the Word:
 - (a) Prophecy.

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- (b) Discerning of spirits.
 - (c) Tongues (languages).
 - (d) Interpretation of tongues.
 - d) The one Spirit distributes these gifts as He wills.
- B. Paul explains the necessity of maintaining the unity of the church, the body of Christ, although the many members of the body possess different spiritual gifts (12-31).
1. He explains this oneness by referring to the human body with its many members (12-26).
 - a) He lays down the basic principle of unity (12-13).
 - (1) He declares that the principle of the oneness of the body applies to Christ, that is, to His body which is the church (12).
 - (2) He explains how they became one in the church (13).
 - (a) The oneness was the result of all—whether Jew or Greek, whether bond or free—being baptized in one spirit into one body.
 - (b) In so doing, all were made to drink of (participate in) one spirit.
 - b) He explains the necessity for the many members in the one body (14-19).
 - (1) He indicates that the distinction between the foot and the hand and between the ear and the eye does not remove the fact that each member is a necessary part of the body (14-16).
 - (2) He asks questions that point out the same thing: What if the whole body were one member, as an eye or an ear, where would the body be? (17-19).
 - c) He explains certain principles that must be observed in order to prevent schism in the body (20-26).
 - (1) The principle of dependence: each one needs the other (20-21).
 - (2) The principle of honor: the relation of the honorable to the less honorable parts of the body (22-24).
 - (3) The principle of divine arrangement: God is the author of the arrangement that promotes mutual concern and allows no schism in the body (25-26).
 2. He applies these principles to the church (27-31).
 - a) He reminds his readers of this important fact: We are the body of Christ, and each member is a part of the body, but not the whole body (27).

- b) He reminds them that God set the following in the church:
 - (1) Persons: First, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers.
 - (2) Gifts: Miracles, healings, governments, tongues.
- c) He asks a series of questions implying negative answers to show how the principles apply to the situation at Corinth (29-30).
- d) He concludes with a two-fold suggestion (31).
 - (1) Desire earnestly the greater gifts.
 - (2) Follow a most excellent way which he is about to show them.

Text

12:1-11. Now concerning spiritual gifts. brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2 Ye know that when ye were Gentiles ye were led away unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led. 3 Wherefore I make known unto you, that no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all. 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal. 8 For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: 9 to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings, in the one Spirit; 10 and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits: to another divers kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will.

Commentary

Basic Principles of Spiritual Gifts (1-11)

Now concerning spiritual gifts.—For the expression, “Now concerning” see comment on 7:1. We should remember that the italicized word “gifts” is supplied by the translators. Since Paul is discussing services and workings as well as gifts, there seems to be no good reason for adopting the word “gifts” to cover the whole subject. Up to this point in the epistle Paul has discussed such things as marriage,

meats, idolatry, and worship. He now turns to the things that belong to spirit—the miraculous powers which were present in the early church and the subject of the resurrection of the dead. He wanted them to know the truth about these things because certain abuses and misunderstandings had caused strife and division in the church. This was true in particular of the gift of tongues.

Ye know that when ye were Gentiles ye were led away.—The section from chapter twelve through chapter fourteen should be studied as a unit. Paul presents basic principles in chapter twelve that must be kept in mind when reading chapter fourteen. It is possible to get a different view of the subject of tongues if we begin with chapter fourteen instead of starting with chapter twelve where this gift is listed among the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Again, chapter thirteen should not be taken out of context and used only as a lesson of the great theme of love, for it is an essential part of the discussion of the issue of tongues that confronted the church at Corinth.

Before the Corinthians became Christian they were accustomed to being led away to speechless idols. Paul is now to point out the contrast between the pagan oracle and the divine revelation given to the church through the Spirit of God. He had explained in chapter two how the apostles were enabled to reveal the Word of God: they were under the control of the Holy Spirit. Converts from paganism would remember that their priests had claimed to give divine direction from the pagan gods. They had been carried away by popular belief and custom like so many prisoners to their execution. It was like being carried away by some irresistible flood. False doctrine does the same thing today. Many are being swept off their feet by the pressures of popular religious movements which claim to have the power of the Holy Spirit just as the apostles and the early church did.

The problem faced by the church at Corinth was: How could they know that those who had the gifts were actually speaking under the direction of the Holy Spirit? How could they know that it was not deception just as that to which they had been accustomed under paganism? The issue was clear: Under the Spirit of God one could not say ANATHEMA JESUS. Why? Because the Holy Spirit, which Jesus called the Spirit of truth would not permit one under His direction to utter a falsehood. Note the case of Balaam whom God did not permit to pronounce a curse on His people (Num. 24:11-13). On the other hand, no one could say LORD JESUS under the direction of a spirit except the Holy Spirit. Pagan pretenders did not confess Jesus

as Lord. Of course, anyone might utter these phrases, but one did not need to assume that such a person was under divine direction in doing so. The test was for those who claimed to speak under the power of God's Spirit. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "He shall glorify me" (John 16:13). It must not be assumed that the utterance of pious words and references to the Holy Spirit and claims to be led by the Spirit today are valid proofs that one is speaking under the power of the Spirit. Certainly God's Spirit, the Spirit of truth, will not lead one to say things today that are contrary to that which He caused to be written in the Bible. The spiritual gifts enabled the Corinthians to recognize the pretender in their day; the truth of the Bible enables one to do the same today!

unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led.—Pagans assumed that their gods communicated with them in three ways. (1) Through their priests who "interpreted" various kinds of signs. In this way they were led to believe that the gods were pleased or angry. (2) Through those who uttered unintelligible sounds in a state of ecstasy. Under emotional stress induced by various methods the priest or priestess was supposed to deliver a message from the gods to the one seeking guidance. (3) Through attempted or actual communication with the spirits of the dead. The Old Testament gives some basis for the assumption that this may have been possible. God had legislated against "familiar spirits" (Deut. 18:11). In the days of Saul, those who had "familiar spirits" were put out of the land, but, in the end, Saul himself sought information from the woman of Endor (I Sam. 28:7). Demon possession in the New Testament period may also indicate that "evil spirits" were permitted to communicate with the living. Paul indicated that the idolaters were actually worshipping demons (I Cor. 10:20). The apostle John said, "believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are from God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world (I John 4:1). The criterion by which they were known was their teaching about Jesus Christ.

The Corinthians must have been thoroughly familiar with this pagan procedure. Lest there be any doubt about the source of a communication, Paul gave them the rule by which to test any one who claimed to speak by the Holy Spirit. A person speaking under the direction of the Spirit of God could not say ANAMETHA JESUS, and no one could say LORD JESUS except by the Holy Spirit. This meant, of course, that no one under the power of an evil spirit could say LORD JESUS.

This is an important distinction between paganism and Christianity. God did speak to the fathers in the Old Testament days and at the end of the days of revelation He did speak with finality and completeness and authority through the one whose exalted character is seen in the name "Son" (Heb. 1:1-2). Since God spoke the message, it was authoritative; since it was spoken through the Son at the end of the days of revelation, it was final; since it was final, it had to be complete. This divine communication came through the Holy Spirit who spoke through the inspired apostles and prophets. The Bible is the written record of that communication. The issue is: Do we accept the Bible as the final, complete, and authoritative revelation of the will of God? This is not a plea for blind submission to authority, but a plea for an intelligent, loving, and obedient submission to God.

no man speaking in the Spirit of God.—The ability to speak in or under the control of the Holy Spirit is mentioned throughout the Bible. Jesus plainly taught that the Holy Spirit would speak through His apostles (Matt. 10:20). Peter mentions the fact that "the Holy Spirit spake by the mouth of David" (Acts 1:16). On the Day of Pentecost, the apostles "were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). The record of what was said at that time is given in the second chapter of Acts. When Paul had laid his hands on the twelve men at Ephesus who responded to his instruction and were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, "the Holy Spirit came upon them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:6).

The Holy Spirit did speak through men to give an intelligible message for the guidance of those who were seeking to do the will of God and follow His truth. (John 16:13-14). How to distinguish this from the pretended claims of the pagan priests was the problem which the Corinthians faced.

Jesus is anametha.—Anametha means accursed or completely devoted to destruction. Those who hated Him in His lifetime sought to do this very thing, but God raised Him up from the dead. Those who also hated Him as He was proclaimed by His apostles cried ANAMETHA JESUS. But Paul reminded the Corinthians that this could not be done by one who spoke by the Spirit of God.

Jesus is Lord.—The ancients were used to the phrase LORD CAESAR. It suggested complete devotion to the emperor and implied that he was deity. But the Christians said LORD JESUS and by so doing acknowledged Him as God. To say that He is Lord and mean it is to say that He is to have complete direction of one's life.

diversities of gifts.—The charismatic gifts mentioned in this chapter were the various miraculous powers distributed by the Holy Spirit to individuals in the church upon whom the apostles had laid their hands. They were to serve during the period in which the New Testament was being written. "The word that was spoken through the Lord was confirmed by them that heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and manifold powers, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will (Heb. 2:3-4). The apostles "went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed them" (Mark 16:20). The word "gift" in other contexts means simply "gracious gifts." Eternal life is God's gracious gift to the believer in Christ (Rom. 6:23). Paul wanted to impart some "spiritual gift" to the Romans—probably the encouragement that his faith would be to them (Rom. 1:11). He mentioned the fact that each one has his own gracious gift from God—self-control (I Cor. 7:7).

"Diversities" actually refers to the fact that the Holy Spirit distributed the various gifts, the Lord distributed the services, and God distributed the workings which effectively accomplished His purpose. These distributions enabled those who received them to perform the necessary work for the benefit of the whole church. For example, there were the apostles, prophets, and teachers who had the gifts of wisdom and knowledge; these and others worked miracles and healed the sick to prove that God was directing the church by the Holy Spirit. Some spoke in foreign languages, others translated, and still others had divine power to decide correctly concerning the spirits that spoke.

the same Spirit.—All the gifts were given by the same Spirit; all the services were rendered under the direction of the same Lord; and all the effects produced by divine power were from the same God. Since the apostle mentioned the same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God, the Corinthians could easily see that there was no excuse for anyone to have a spirit of jealousy or arrogance because of any gift that he might have received. Division over tongues would have been avoided if they had remembered that service and not personal honor was the principle involved in the distribution of these gifts.

the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal.—The apostle stresses the fact that the Holy Spirit had distributed these gifts and powers. They were to help the whole church and not just the individual who received them. They enabled some to speak in foreign languages to

convince the unbeliever that God was with them; miracles were performed to confirm the spoken word; the gift of discerning of spirits was exercised to protect the church from the "spirit of error" (I John 4:6).

word of wisdom, word of knowledge.—These gifts had to do with the revealing of the truth of God. For the meaning of "wisdom" see the comments on chapters one and two. The word "knowledge," which we may not be able to define with absolute accuracy, was probably the ability to understand the revealed message of wisdom. The Corinthians who possessed these gifts knew exactly what was meant by each of these terms. Our uncertainty in some instances is a positive proof that we do not possess them. An example of the meaning of wisdom and knowledge is given in Peter's message on Pentecost. It came by direct revelation through the Holy Spirit. But the expression, "to you is the promise, and to your children and to all that are afar off," was not completely understood by the apostle. Later the Lord had to give him a demonstration that this meant Gentiles as well as Jews. See Acts 10:15, 34-35. This helps us see why the early church needed the gift of knowledge. We have the information in the whole Bible to guide us in the understanding of any given problem today.

faith, healings, miracles.—The second group of gifts pertained to the confirmation of the revealed message of wisdom.

Faith, as it is used in this context, is the belief through which the power to perform miracles was made operational for those to whom such power had been given. J. W. McGarvey, in the *New Testament Commentary on Acts*, says that no amount of faith ever enabled one to perform a miracle to whom such power had not been given. It was the Spirit who distributed these gifts. He did it through the laying on of the apostle's hands (Acts 8:18; II Tim. 1:6). One should distinguish carefully between the use of faith in connection with miracles and the faith that saves. The latter is the belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, based on the testimony of the Bible, expressed in obedience that leads to eternal life. Faith may also refer to the whole body of Christian doctrine that is to be believed. See Gal. 1:22-23 and Jude 3. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews presents faith as the acceptance of God's instruction upon which the great men whose names are mentioned there built their lives that were characterized by trust in God and victory through obedience to Him. Faith is a complete commitment—intellectual, volitional, and emotional—to the Lord through obedience to His Word. For "faith to remove mountains" see notes on 13:2.

The gift of healings had to do with miraculous recovery from illness. All healing, of course, comes from God, but this was miraculous. "Miraculous" means that it occurred instantaneously. No long period of convalescence followed the healing as in the case of ordinary recovery from sickness. We often hear the word "miraculous" applied to those cases today in which some unexplained change takes place, such as an unexpected passing of a crisis. But this is not the same as the Bible miracle. In the apostolic period, miracles were performed by the apostles and others upon whom they laid their hands. Complete and instantaneous recovery is the mark of the genuine Bible miracle. James 5:15 is often cited to support the claim of "faith healing" today. A full translation of that verse will help us to see what it means: "The prayer of that kind of faith will heal him that is sick." The article used with the word "faith" indicates that it was the faith of the elders—the same faith about which we read in I Cor. 12:9—that produced a miraculous healing. James cites the miracles in the days of Elijah to prove his point. No elder today has had the apostles' hands laid on him, and we can confidently say that no elder has that power of miraculous healing today. That gift was for the primary purpose of confirming the Word. See John's plain statement of the purpose of miracles in John 20:30-31. But let us thank God for those trained doctors and nurses who are doing so much to relieve the sick today, and thank God also for His Word which He demonstrated to be true, for it tells us how to be made free from sin so that we may hope for that glad day when death and pain and mourning will be no more (Rev. 21:4).

Working of miracles had to do with miracles other than healings. A good example is the miracle by which Elymas was punished for his interference with Paul's effort to bring the gospel to Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:6-12).

prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues.—Prophecy was more than prediction of future events. But for prophecy in the sense of prediction, see the reference to Agabus in Acts 11:27-30. The primary work of the prophet was to proclaim the message of God, that is, to speak forth under the direction of the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:19-21). In this way, the prophet edified the church (I Cor. 14:4).

Discerning of spirits enabled the one who possessed this gift to diagnose a case of demon possession. This required divine power for the symptoms of demon possession were often exactly like those of

some physical or mental illness. See Luke 9:37-43 and 8:26-39. This gift enabled the early church to protect itself against false teachers who claimed to speak for God. The truth in the Bible enables us to do the same today!

The gift of tongues was the gift that enabled one to speak an intelligible message from God in a foreign language. See notes on chapter fourteen for a full discussion of this gift.

Interpretation of tongues was the ability to translate a foreign language. It was not some power to "interpret" nonsense so as to make sense out of it. Two examples of the meaning of the word "interpret" are seen in John 1:41-42, where it clearly means "translate." *worketh the one and same Spirit.*—It was necessary for the apostle to point out that all these gifts were the work of the Holy Spirit in order to offset the claims of some that the gift of tongues was an indication of superiority of the one who possessed the gift. It was the Spirit Himself who distributed the gifts. There was, therefore, no excuse for the spirit of arrogance which some who possessed the gift manifested.

Maintaining the Unity of the Church (12-31)

Text

12:12-31. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. 13 For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now they are many members, but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary: 23 and those parts of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; 24 whereas our comely parts have no

need: but God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked; 25 that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 have all gifts of healings? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But desire earnestly the greater gifts. And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you.

Commentary

so also is Christ.—Division threatened the life of the church at Corinth. It was divided over men and doctrine; it was divided over custom and conduct; it was divided over the abuse of the spiritual gifts. The latter produced the most serious schism. This section of the epistle was written to prevent splits over the possession of these gifts. They were not given as a token of personal honor of the one who received them, but for the building up of the body of Christ through promoting the preaching of the gospel. Paul used the figure of the human body to illustrate the lesson they needed so much. Just as the body is one and has many members, so Christ has one body of believers made up of many members with different tasks. There was no more reason for schism in the church than there was for such an unthinkable thing as strife and division among the members of the human body.

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.—The oneness of the church was produced by all—whether Jew or Greek, whether bond or free—being baptized in one spirit into one body. On the Day of Pentecost, the three thousand who were either Jews or proselytes were baptized in water in the name of Christ for the remission of their sins. On the occasion of Peter's speaking to the household of Cornelius, the Holy Spirit fell on all that heard his word. Because God had poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit on that group of Gentiles, Peter asked, "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he

commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:44-48). Thus both Jews and Gentiles were brought into the body of Christ by the act of baptism in water. See Acts 18:8 and I Cor. 1:14-17 for additional information about the baptism of the Corinthians. Paul wrote to the Galatians and said, "Ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Jesus Christ. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27). There is no doubt that the expression "baptized into Christ" refers to their baptism in water in the name of Christ for the remission of their sins.

What, then, is the meaning of the expression, "in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body"? To answer this question, we must consider this important fact: The Book of Acts, which gives the history of the founding and progress of the church in the first century, records only two cases of baptism in the Holy Spirit. The first was that of the apostles on the Day of Pentecost, and the second was that of the Gentile household of Cornelius (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-11:18).

The following facts of Scripture on the subject of the baptism in the Holy Spirit will help to answer our question:

1. Christ is the administrator of baptism in the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11). Baptism in the Holy Spirit and in fire are two different baptisms. Since the burning up of the chaff can only refer to the destruction of the wicked in hell, the gathering of the wheat into the garner must refer to the baptism in the Holy Spirit that enabled the apostles to reveal the terms of salvation. See Jesus' promise, its fulfillment, and its effect as given in Acts 1:5, 8; 2:1-4, 37-39.

2. The Holy Spirit is the element in which this baptism took place (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5). Just as water was the element in which John baptized, so the Holy Spirit was the element in which Christ baptized the apostles on the Day of Pentecost. But this expression must be figurative since the Holy Spirit is a person. The literal meaning of it is to be found in Jesus' own words when He spoke of the power which the apostles were to receive when the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 1:8). They were immersed in that power.

3. According to Acts, the apostles and the household of Cornelius were the only ones baptized in the Holy Spirit. Christ promised this baptism to the apostles (Acts 1:5). Only the twelve—not the hundred and twenty—were present when the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:26-2:4). Only the apostles spoke in tongues on that day and performed miracles (Acts 2:4, 14, 43). Only the apostles who had been baptized in the Holy Spirit laid hands on

others to give them miraculous powers (Acts 8:18; II Tim. 1:6). Peter clearly states that the Gentiles were baptized in the Holy Spirit while he was speaking to them (Acts 10:44-47; 11:15-16).

4. The purpose of the baptism of the apostles in the Holy Spirit was to enable them to recall what Jesus had said (John 14:26); to guide them into all the truth (John 16:13-14); to speak in other languages (Acts 2:4, 11); to perform signs to confirm their spoken message (Acts 2:43; Heb. 2:3-4).

The purpose of the baptism of the Gentiles in the Holy Spirit was to prove to those who accompanied Peter and to the apostles at Jerusalem that God had granted repentance unto life to the Gentiles (Acts 10:47-48; 11:1-18).

Since "in one Spirit" refers to all who were baptized into the one body of Christ, it cannot mean baptism in the Holy Spirit. Both the King James and the R. S. V. translate "by one Spirit." But the fact remains that the Greek says "in." While there are situations in which this Greek preposition must be rendered "by" or "with" in English, it seems most doubtful that this is one of them. Those English versions that have "by" seem to suggest that this has something to do with the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But the context has to do with the spirit of oneness of the believers in Christ who were baptized in water into His body. It makes good sense if we translate "in one spirit—small 's'—all were baptized into one body." That spirit was not the spirit of a Jew or the spirit of a Gentile, it was not the spirit of a slave or a free man, but it was the spirit or attitude of faith in Christ which characterized all who were baptized into the one body. Since it was in this attitude of oneness that they were baptized, the apostle urges them to maintain this unity and overcome the jealousy and faction that had arisen over the abuse of the spiritual gifts. This "one spirit" forbids the unchristian conduct of the ear that would say, "I am not a part of the body because I am not the eye."

drink of one Spirit.—All that has been said to indicate that the word "spirit" in this context is to be spelled with the small "s" applies here. All who were members of the body of Christ were made to share in this oneness in Christ—the great spiritual blessing that removed all distinctions such as Jew or Gentile and made one new man in Christ (Eph. 2:15).

For the body.—There are three steps in the apostle's argument for the necessity of preserving the unity of the body of Christ: (a) the body is not one member, but many (14); (b) they are many mem-

bers, but one body (20); (c) ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof (28). No one member, regardless of the gift he possessed, could say that he was the body. There were many members with many gifts and functions, but there was just one body. The church is the body of Christ, and each member is a part of that body, not the whole body.

God set the members, each one of them, in the body.—Just as God had a purpose for each member of the human body, so He had a purpose for each of the gifts distributed by the Holy Spirit to the various members of the church.

God tempered the body together.—Just as honor to one member honors all the body, so the gifts given to any one honors the whole church.

God hath set some in the church.—If one member said, "I am not a part of the body" that did not make it so. The member can't exist apart from the body. Why then should some assume a spirit of arrogance instead of the spirit of faith and trust in Christ because they had gifts that differed? What if the whole body were an eye? What if all spoke in tongues? What would become of other functions such as helping the sick and needy? No member of the human body could say, to another, "I have no need of you." Yet some of the people of Corinth seemed to think that they could get along without the others. Speaking in tongues was their only concern, but Paul reminded them that God had placed all the gifts in the church for a purpose.

apostle, prophets, teachers.—The history of the church in Acts shows that these were the ones to carry most of the work in the beginning. As the work grew and spread throughout the world, others were given the necessary gifts to assist in the work of the church. The impersonal reference to gifts seems to indicate that the gift, rather than the person who received it, was the important thing. This left no cause for division over gifts.

helps, governments.—"Helps" were the various kinds of helpful deed which were done by deacons. The term "governments" comes from the word that among other things referred to the piloting of a ship. In some way, it had to do with those who gave leadership and direction to the work of the church. It may suggest the work of elders and deacons.

Are all apostles?—Each in this series of questions requires a negative answer. If all were apostles, where would the church be? If all spoke in tongues, what would become of edification?

But desire the greater gifts.—Each gift served a purpose, but some brought greater benefit to the church than others. The latter were the ones to be sought although the others were not to be neglected. Prophecy, for example, was of greater benefit to the church than speaking in a foreign language unless the message was translated for the edification of all.

a most excellent way.—Paul is now prepared to present a superior way to a strife-torn congregation. They had been following the way of jealousy and division over spiritual gifts. The way he is about to show them is the way of love.

Summary

Up to this point, Paul has dealt with the problems of divisions and derelictions as reported by those from Chloe; he has answered the questions raised in the letter of the Corinthians about marriage, meats, and worship. The two remaining problems of major importance that require his attention are spiritual gifts and the resurrection of the dead. The familiar "now concerning" seems to connect this section with the portion of the epistle that began in 7:1.

As he begins the chapter, Paul reminds the Corinthians of the days when they were being led away to the speechless idols that were supposed to give them divine guidance and instruction. They now face the privilege of being led by the inspired message from the Holy Spirit. Their problem was how to know when one was speaking under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The criterion by which they were to determine the source of a message was what the speaker said about the Lord Jesus. There were two tests to be applied: No one under the control of the Holy Spirit could say, "Let Jesus be accursed." No one could say, "Jesus is Lord" except under the control of the Holy Spirit. These words, of course, could be uttered by anyone, but God did not permit an unclean spirit to speak through a man and say these things. The case of Balaam illustrates this point.

This chapter presents a comprehensive view of the miraculous activities in the church at Corinth. There were the gifts distributed through the Spirit; there were the services distributed through the Lord; and there were the workings distributed by God. Nine gifts are mentioned. For convenience, they may be presented in three groups: (1) Those that have to do with the revelation of the will of God: wisdom and knowledge; (2) those that were given to confirm the Word: faith, healings, miracles; (3) those that were used in the proclamation

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of the Word: prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues, and discerning of spirits. All these gifts were distributed by the one Spirit as He determined and for the benefit of the whole church. But these gifts that were given in order that the gospel might be revealed, established, and proclaimed became an occasion for dividing the Corinthian church.

Paul uses the human body with its many members to show that the spiritual body of Christ with its many members should preserve the unity of Christ's followers. All of them in one spirit were baptized into the one body of Christ. In the church, there cannot be a spirit of the Jew and a spirit of the Gentile. There can only be the spirit of faith in the Lord Jesus which characterizes every one who is baptized into the one body. This spirit should be the controlling factor in the life of the church to make division impossible. Just as the hand and the foot have different functions, so the various members of the church had different gifts and different functions, but they still belonged to the same body. The fact that one had the gift of tongues and another the gift of healings was no ground for assuming a spirit of arrogance that led to the division of the church. Apparently, however, this was the thing that was done, and it was for this reason that Paul wrote these chapters to correct the strife and faction in the church at Corinth.

By a series of questions that called for negative answers, he showed how impossible it was for all to be apostles, or prophets, or teachers. He did not say that these gifts were not to be desired for they had been given for the benefit of the church, but he did indicate that there was a superior way for them to follow which he was about to show them, the way of love.

Questions

1. With what thought does Paul begin this chapter?
2. How did he indicate its connection with what had been written so far?
3. How did the word "gifts" come to be in the opening phrase?
4. Why would it be better to adopt some other heading for this chapter?
5. What subjects are discussed under the general heading of things that belong to spirit?
6. Why was Paul concerned that the church know the truth about these gifts?

CHAPTER TWELVE

7. What is the proper way to study these chapters? Why?
8. What was the background of the Corinthians that made this explanation necessary?
9. What could the converts from paganism be expected to remember about claims to divine direction?
10. What figure of speech did Paul use to describe their former experience?
11. How does it illustrate the effect of false doctrine today?
12. What, then, was the problem which the Corinthian church faced?
13. What test could they apply to one claiming to speak under the power of the Spirit of God?
14. How does the case of Balaam illustrate the thing Paul taught about speaking under the control of the Holy Spirit?
15. What did Jesus say the Holy Spirit was to do?
16. Does the frequent use of pious phrases indicate that one is under the control of the Holy Spirit today?
17. What does indicate His control today?
18. What enables one to recognize a pretender today?
19. In what three ways did pagans assume that their gods communicated with them?
20. What evidence is there in the Bible that the spirits of the dead might have communicated with the living? Note: This, of course, remains a controversial question.
21. How did John say that the church was to know about the false prophets?
22. What tests did Paul give for the same purpose?
23. What proof is there that God did speak by the Holy Spirit through men?
24. Where do we find the record of what He said?
25. What are the characteristics of the message of the Bible as the written revelation of God?
26. What did Jesus say as to the fact that the Holy Spirit was to speak through the apostles?
27. How did He speak through David?
28. What caused the apostles to speak on the Day of Pentecost?
29. What happened when Paul laid his hands on the twelve men at Ephesus?
30. According to John 16:13-14, what kind of a message did the Holy Spirit reveal and what was it for?
31. What does anametha mean?

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32. What does it mean to say LORD JESUS?
33. How did this compare with what the pagans had been used to saying?
34. What is meant by charismatic gifts in this chapter?
35. In what other ways was this term used in the New Testament?
36. According to Heb. 2:3-4, what was the purpose of miracles?
37. Why did Paul stress the fact that the Holy Spirit distributed these charismatic gifts?
38. What principle was involved in the distribution of these gifts?
39. What was to be accomplished by the use of these gifts?
40. What is meant by wisdom and knowledge?
41. How does the experience of Peter just before he was to speak to the household of Cornelius illustrate the meaning of the gift of knowledge?
42. What was the gift of faith?
43. In what other ways is the term faith used in the New Testament?
44. What was the characteristic of the effect of the gift of healing?
45. How did it differ from cases today that are sometimes called "miraculous"?
46. Whose faith did James refer to in James 5:15?
47. What should be the attitude of Christians towards doctors and nurses who relieve the suffering of the sick?
48. When will pain be abolished?
49. What was the difference between working of miracles and the gift of healings?
50. What was done through the gift of prophecy?
51. Why did they need the gift of discerning of spirits?
52. What was the gift of tongues?
53. How does John 1:41-42 help to understand the meaning of the gift of interpretation of tongues?
54. What was the nature of the division in the church at Corinth?
55. What was the basis of the oneness of the church?
56. What act brings all into the body of Christ?
57. What are the facts of Scripture about baptism in the Holy Spirit?
58. What did Paul mean by "In one Spirit all were baptized into one body"?
59. What are the three steps in Paul's argument for the necessity of preserving the oneness of the church?
60. How does God's purpose for the members of the human body illustrate His purpose for the gifts distributed to the members of the church at Corinth?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

61. What is the significance of Paul's impersonal reference to gifts?
62. What is meant by "helps"?
63. What background illustrates the meaning of "governments"?
64. To whose work did "governments" refer?
65. What was the basis of determining what the greater gifts were?
66. What was the most excellent way?

For Discussion

1. How do the reported cases of faith healing today compare with the Scriptural facts about miraculous healing?
2. Which, in your opinion, would have the greater effect on the unconverted world today, a miracle of physical healing or the miracle of a transformed life (Rom. 12:1-2).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Analysis

- A. In a series of conditional statements with their conclusions, Paul argues for the necessity of following the most excellent way of love as a means of avoiding schism over spiritual gifts (1-3).
 1. He assumes the possibility of using the gifts of tongues—the ability to communicate in foreign languages or even to use language that is on the angelic level—without being controlled by love; as a result, he says, "I have become echoing brass or a noisy cymbal."
 2. He assumes the possibility of using the gift of prophecy, and having knowledge of all mysteries, and having the gift of knowledge without love as the controlling factor; as a result, he says, "I am nothing."
 3. He assumes that he might go so far as to dole out all his goods to feed the poor or even suffer martyrdom and still not have love; as a result, he says, "I gain nothing."
- B. Paul explains what love does and what it does not do (3-7).
 1. He mentions two things that it does:
 - a) Love suffers long.
 - b) Love is kind.
 2. He lists a series of things that love does not do:
 - a) It doesn't cause one to be filled with jealousy.
 - b) It doesn't cause one to brag.
 - c) It isn't puffed up with arrogance and pride.
 - d) It doesn't behave unbecomingly.
 - e) It doesn't seek its own things.
 - f) It doesn't become irritated.