

in Acts 11:17—"If then God gave unto them the like *gift*, as he did also unto us," etc. Here, too, the word used for "gift" is *dōrea*. Again, in Acts 2:38, Peter designates the ordinary measure of Spirit-power, that which is received in regeneration, a *gift*: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the *gift* of the Holy Spirit." Here again the word used for "gift" is *dōrea*. As a matter of fact, *dōrea* is the word commonly used in the New Testament for a free general "gift" of God, one which may include within itself many subordinate endowments and blessings. Hence, *dōrea* is the word used to indicate the "gift" of any one of these three general measures of Spirit-power. *Charisma*, on the other hand, is the word used for those special "spiritual gifts" of various kinds (as enumerated by Paul in the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians), which were associated with the reception of the evidential measure of the Spirit. The *charismata* were, to speak in the terms of logic, the kinds included under the evidential species of the genus, *dōreai*. The *charismata* were in a special sense "gifts". They were specifically *gracious* gifts to serve their special function under the oral teaching of the Apostles until the Word of faith—"that which is perfect" could be compiled in stereotyped form for the guidance of the church throughout the rest of time.

5. Purpose of the Evidential Measure of the Spirit

It is quite evident from the New Testament Scriptures that the evidential measure of the Spirit was never conferred upon any person to make him a Christian; that, on the contrary, it was always imparted to those who had been baptized, hence *after they had become Christians*. Like the overwhelming measure of the Spirit, it had no direct connection with regeneration or remission of sins, and very little with sanctification, and that only to the extent that it may have served to establish the early Christians more firmly in the faith.

The design of the evidential measure of the Spirit was twofold: 1. It was to confirm the Word that was preached and to support those who preached it in the apostolic age; and 2. It was to establish the saints themselves in the most holy faith. Mark 16:20—"They went forth and preached every-

where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word by the signs that followed." Rom. 1:11—"For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end that ye may be established," etc. Heb. 2:3-4: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard: God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by distributions of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will." In the infancy of the Church, when the local congregations everywhere were compelled to depend upon the oral instruction of the Apostles and their co-laborers in the Gospel, for guidance in faith and practice, and for all things pertaining to life and godliness, God graciously confirmed the Word by the signs that followed. Hence, said Jesus: "Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up," etc. (Jas. 5:14-15). Clearly the reference here is to the *charismata*. The "prayer of faith" was that of extraordinary or "supernatural" faith (cf. 1 Cor. 12:9), the faith possessed by early Christians that the Holy Spirit was in them in evidential power. Without doubt, elders of the local churches in the apostolic age possessed this faith, which was a *charisma* of the Spirit. And though they obviously could not impart this gift to others, they certainly could exercise it themselves. "Gifts of healings," too, were listed among the *charismata* by Paul (1 Cor. 12:28). These were all for evidential purposes and were the products of the evidential measure of Spirit-power as conferred generally throughout the early churches by the Apostles by the laying on of their hands. The Apostles also exercised these special powers themselves. Hence, said Paul to the Christians at Corinth: "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of

God" (1 Cor. 2:1-5). Cf. Rom. 15:18-19: "For I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, *in the power of signs, and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit*; so that from Jerusalem and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." As a matter of fact, the Apostle labors throughout the entire fourteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians to impress upon the minds of the brethren of the church at Corinth the fact that they were not to exercise their charismatic powers to no effect, but only under circumstances such that the exercise would confirm the Word of the Gospel and strengthen the faith of the saints. This indeed was the twofold design of the Spirit in conferring upon the Christians of the apostolic age the evidential measure of His Divine power. Secondly, and indirectly of course, it also was for the purpose of disseminating the Gospel by means of foreign (unknown) tongues (languages) throughout the (then) known world.

A child just learning to walk often has to rely upon its parents for the additional strength that it needs. In like manner the Church, throughout her infancy, turned to her Founder and Head for the additional strength which she needed to establish herself permanently in the world. This support was graciously supplied in demonstrations of the Spirit and of spiritual power. When the Church was still a child, she spake as a child, she felt as a child, she thought as a child; but when the Church became a man, when she attained "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," she put away childish things (1 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:13-16). When the Body of Christ was fully formed; when the church was permanently established, with her elders, deacons and evangelists; when the Word of Truth was fully revealed and embodied in the New Testament canon for her guidance in all subsequent ages; then the supernatural support by which she was graciously sustained throughout the period of her infancy, no longer being necessary, passed away.

The special endowments bestowed upon the primitive Christians were not given them as toys with which they were to amuse themselves in the presence of a cynical world. Even the Apostles were restricted in their use of these special gifts.

When Paul was shipwrecked on the island of Melita, he gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, and there came a viper out of the heat and fastened its deadly fangs in his hand. But the Apostle merely shook the serpent off into the fire, and no harm came of the bite (Acts 28:3-5). Had not Jesus said: "They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them"? Surely the Head of the Church was not going to forget His promise in the case of this His loyal, fearless, yet persecuted servant, now a castaway on a strange island! But Jesus had also said: "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (cf. again Jas. 5:14-15). Hence, He not only protected His Apostle from bodily harm in this instance, but "it was so, that the father of Publius lay sick of fever and dysentery; unto whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laying his hands on him healed him. And when this was done, the rest also, that had diseases in the island came, and were cured" (Acts 28:8-9). Nevertheless, in 2 Tim. 4:20, Paul himself tells us that on one occasion he left his companion Trophimus at Miletus sick. "Why would Paul leave his friend and traveling companion sick, having the power to heal him? Surely, if he could have done so, he would have cured him. The reason why he did not, can be found only in the fact that he possessed such power only when the glory of God would be exhibited by its exercise."¹ As Jesus, on the mount of temptation, persistently refused to make use of His Divine powers for any selfish purpose, so the Spirit did not permit the Apostles or early Christians to make use of His endowments, temporarily supplied them for purposes of demonstration, for any personal benefit or glory.

The very fact that Jesus designated these special spiritual endowments "signs"—"these signs shall accompany them that believe," Mark 16:17—is proof positive that they were intended to be temporary and transitory. "Signs" were for demonstrative purposes only: the teaching of the Scriptures throughout is to this effect. Nicodemus, for instance, said to Jesus: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2). And Peter said, in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto

1. T. W. Brents, *The Gospel Plan of Salvation*, 605-606.

you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know" (Acts 2:22). Cf. John 20:30-31: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written"—for what purpose? "That ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." Signs and miracles wrought in this twentieth century would have little or no bearing in relation to events which took place almost two thousand years ago, those events which were made basic in the proclamation of the Gospel,—the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The miracles necessary to attest those events were performed *then* or contemporaneously, and the testimony of the miracles recorded in the New Testament Scriptures, as sufficient evidence of the Messiaship of Jesus and of His resurrection from the dead for all subsequent generations.

6. Duration of the Charismata

Jesus said, "These signs shall accompany them that believe." But He did not state *just how long* they should do so. This is a matter which He expects us to ascertain from subsequent developments. Moreover, it is a matter that can be determined without any great effort by appealing to the book of Acts and to the Epistles. We have already learned that the extraordinary endowments of Spirit-power specified in this promise were authenticated, along with the evidential measure of the Spirit, by the laying on of an Apostle's hands. Hence, as none but Apostles had the power to impart this measure of the Spirit, to those who had accepted and obeyed the Gospel, which measure they evidenced only by the laying on of their hands, it follows that when the Apostles closed their earthly labors and went to their eternal reward, the power to impart the evidential measure of the Spirit ceased. And when all those Christians died who had received this measure of Spirit-power at the hands of an Apostle, the accompanying *charismata* naturally ceased to be wrought. This is made very clear in the New Testament Scriptures.

Paul says, Eph. 4:8, quoting and applying the words of Psalms 68-18, that when Jesus "ascended on high, he led