

kind is employed to accent a change in gift listing (cf. v. 9). This is the gift which has gained most prominence and discussion in modern times. Contemporary scenes are filled with claims for this gift. Few have time for the other gifts mentioned in the Bible, but this one is high on the priority list! Actually, the word itself "glossalia" is used 25 times in the New Testament to refer to the gift (Mark 16:17; Acts 2, 10, 19; 1 Cor. 12-14). In all of these instances it seems clear that genuine and specific languages are envisioned. Indeed, the use of "kinds" in this verse suggests the thought of various ethnic groups being considered, as was clearly the case on the Day of Pentecost.

2) Interpretation of tongues. As in the matter of prophecy, this is a safeguard for the gift of tongues. It is its true complement. The one needs the other. "Interpretation" is only found twice in the New Testament (here and 14:26).

Conclusion The Spirit of God will never lead anyone to blaspheme the Lord Jesus Christ (vv. 1-3). The importance of the Person of Christ is absolutely beyond comprehension! The triune God provides the gifts, lordship, and dynamic with gifts. All is designed for the benefit of the entire church of Jesus Christ, our ascended Lord. The Spirit of God is sovereign, in harmony with His own perfections as God, to divide to every individual Christian the gift(s) He wills (v. 11). None can claim self-merit nor discontent, for the Spirit has willed the gifts as they are in the Body of Christ. Hence, all never have had nor ever will have the same gifts, but the Source and purpose of the gifts is always the same Holy Spirit! To correct the self-will of the Corinthians who had utterly unscriptural attitudes and ideas, the apostle Paul was charged of the Spirit of God to write these chapters. They are in a real sense a rebuke and a correction! The carnal, immature, childish assembly at Corinth were the recipients of this strong rebuke. Their selfish desire for special manifestations is a warning to today's believers to avoid emotional and psychological substitutes for a vital witness unto the Person of Christ. The tragedy is that these very phenomena have been presented as the offer of God for a dying world! Signs and wonders are not salvation, but faith on the work of a divine Savior will redeem your soul (John 5:24). Amen.

## THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

### "Gifts by the Holy Spirit I" 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

#### Introduction

1. Here is a subject which has gained wide and popular interest. In man's search for the spiritual requirements of his heart, he has been attracted to the phenomenological and the psychological.

2. The world-wide interest in this subject, even amongst people who do not believe the inerrant Bible, makes it imperative that the Scriptures be studied for the Biblical testimony. The core of Scripture teaching on the subject is found here (1 Cor. 12-14).

3. To get the study moving, it is helpful to mark that Paul brings to the Corinthians, a group of Greeks who sought after "wisdom" (1:22), a general overview. He mentions three basic facts:

#### 1. The LIMITATION of spiritual gifts vv. 1-3.

a. For those who are informed v. 1. The church at Corinth had many questions (cf. 7:1) and one of them concerned this topic (12:1). God provides the answers! Since "gifts" is in italics, it is evident the word is not in the original text. "Spiritualities" would be a better rendering of "spiritual." It is neuter and not masculine, hence "things" and not "men." The word "gifts" may be supplied as suggested by the context. Though they had misunderstanding, Paul refers to the believers as "brethren" and they must know the truth. There is no virtue in ignorance. The verse begins with a Greek particle which notes that although certain items could wait for his visit to the city (cf. 11:34), this subject bore an emergency tag on it. He must deal with it now. There is that same urgency for us!

b. For those who are separated v. 2. Before their conversion, the Corinthians were involved in Satanic idol worship. The last phrase of the verse is temporal and suggests that "as often as they were led in this direction," they were "carried away" as by an overwhelming current. Satanic force operated behind voiceless idols (cf. 10:19ff.) and this the Corinthians knew innately! "Gentiles" is used here in contrast with "believer" or "Christian."

c. For those who are dedicated v. 3. Inasmuch as the

unconverted days did not provide full understanding of the work of the Spirit, Paul makes it clear that God wants them to "understand" men can be carried away by supernatural influences and it is important to know how to discern the true from the false. "Jesus is anathema" and "Jesus is Lord" are the battle cries of the spirits of error and of truth. There is nothing mystical here, but a straight forward clear and intelligent confession which speaks of genuineness (John 16:14). The historical Jesus is declared to be "Lord." Here is a terrific statement to the absolute deity of Christ. In the early days of the church, Cerinthus distinguished between Jesus and Christ in the Person of our Lord. His heresy persists today! Ophites asked those who entered their church to curse Jesus. This species of heresy also persists today. The Person of Jesus Christ is critical to the operation of the Spirit of God in a life!

## 2. The DISTRIBUTION of spiritual gifts vv. 4-6.

The work of the Trinity is marked clearly here.

a. By the Spirit v. 4. The word "diversities" means both "distribution" and "differences." It is used three times here (vv. 4, 5, 6). The idea is that the Spirit provides a variety of capabilities for service and He does so in repeated dealings out of His store (as the plural shows). "Gifts" are divine enablements which God gives through the ascended Christ by the Spirit for the edification of the church and to assist in the proclamation of the Gospel (Eph. 4:7-16).

b. By the Son v. 5. "Lord" is a reference to Jesus Christ's role in assigning "ministries" or "administrations." Thus the usefulness of a gift is brought under the direct Lordship of Christ! The original Greek for "ministries" is the root from which "deacon" is derived.

c. By the Father v. 6. The word "operations" or "working" is a hapaxlegomenon and denotes the dynamic for the gifts. Their outward manifestations and results come from the Father. God the Father superintends the whole arena of "gifts" - both their exercise and results.

NOTE: "Spiritual gifts" are to be understood within the framework of the Word of God. Personal experience, extra-Biblical evidence, and activities of persons unrelated to the Person of the Lord Jesus are entirely without the compass of this truth. Indeed, only true Trinitarians get the thrust of the argument of Paul!

## 3. The MANIFESTATION of spiritual gifts vv. 7-10.

With such a variety, assignment under the Lordship of Christ, and dynamic for operation, it is clear that there must be some harmonious goal (v. 7). God definitely states it is for the "profit of all" (cf. 6:12; 10:23, 33 for same word). There is nothing here for the selfish individual, but all is lost in the collective benefit of the church. Nine gifts are mentioned (cf. Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4:7-16; Gal. 5:22, 23).

### a. Those related to intellect v. 8.

1) Wisdom. This is intelligence and is related to "word" hence concerns ability to use in a practical fashion what one knows.

2) Knowledge. Speaks of insight and is provided "according to the standard" of the Spirit of God. He is the Regulatory Agent!

### b. Those related to volition vv. 9-10.

1) Faith. The pronoun "another" connotes that of a different kind, hence a transition in the chain of gifts listed is indicated (cf. same word and transition before the word "tongues" in v. 10). This is not saving faith, but a special wonder-working or accomplishing faith (cf. Rom. 12:3; Acts 3:16).

2) Healing. This is preceded by the term "gift" which emphasizes the fact that God's grace is prominent in the exercise of this activity. The plural probably marks the diversity of sicknesses which are to be healed (cf. Acts 4:30). Healing cannot be in the atonement, as some erroneously teach, if there is a gift of healing! People cannot be accused of "lack of faith" when the gift is provided as is the case in much of the modern healing movements.

3) Miracles. The original Greek term employed here suggests the display of strength rather than grace as in the case of healings (cf. Acts 19:11 for the same word).

4) Prophecy. This is both a reference to forth-telling and foretelling (cf. Acts 11:26, 28; 21:11). With an incomplete revelation from God, this gift was particularly imperative (cf. Eph. 2:20).

5) Discerning of spirits. Three times the word "discerning" appears in the New Testament (here; Rom. 14:1; Heb. 5:14). It is a safeguard for penetration (cf. 1 John 4:1-3).

### c. Those related to emotion v. 10.

1) Tongues. Here the term "another" of a different