

**Record of Sermons delivered during the month of**  
**May 2022**

(added progressively for each Sunday)

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(see following pages)

Delivered Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2022

1 Corinthians 12:13  
**Baptism of the Spirit**

per S Olyott

**1 Corinthians 12:13**

***13 For in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.***

This (today and next week) is the conclusion of the exposition of Chapter 12 that has occupied us for the past two weeks already. Two week's ago we surveyed Chapter 12. We found it to be important that we have the whole chapter in mind at the one time. Of course the chapter is about Spiritual Gifts. We learnt: what spiritual gifts are; we saw some examples of spiritual gifts; we examined the purpose of spiritual gifts; and we saw the spirit in which spiritual gifts are to be exercised in the church. Doing this while the whole chapter was in context. [Not being distracted by certain phrases here and there that have largely been emphasised to the exclusion of everything else and bringing total confusion!] That was the first half of the treatment of the chapter. The intended second section was commenced last week but not completed.

This second section's purpose was to examine the importance of chapter 12, especially in the light of certain things, which are being said about chapter 12 at the present time: Sweeping the religious world is the movement, which has become called, the Charismatic Movement. We had an overview of their teachings; firstly that the Gifts mentioned in Chapter 12 are being restored to the Christian Church at the present time; second, most of your problems as a Christian – at least the problem of your living it at such a low level – can be solved by you having a distinct experience, separate from Conversion, called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit; and third that the 'sign' that you have had the Baptism of the Spirit, is that you will 'speak in tongues'. Or at least, exercise some 'miraculous' gift. But generally the mark is of speaking in a language they have never previously learnt.

At first flush this can sound great! When you first come across this teaching it sounds very spiritual and scriptural. So our main effort last week was to look very carefully at the first three verses of the chapter. Where we saw that the Apostle teaches, that we are not to be 'swept' into anything. To be swept into anything without seriously thinking about it is pagan, heathen and ungodly.

"Before we accept anything as a 'movement' of the Spirit of God," said the Apostle, "we have to have an intelligent approach and ask certain questions of that movement, and in particular we have to give it a doctrinal test. Asking the question, 'Does this thing have a high view of Christ or a low view of Christ?' Everything which has a high view of Christ is a 'movement' of the Spirit of God. Everything which has a low view of Christ does not proceed from the Spirit of God.

It turns out that the Charismatic Movement does not have a high view of Christ. Because it degrades the Office of Jesus Christ as a Prophet! By teaching that Jesus Christ, and His personally commissioned Apostles, did not perfectly and finally, reveal God, but that something else is necessary, today, in addition to the Ministry of Jesus and His Apostles.

2. The second thing that was intended previously in examining the importance of the Chapter to us, was to show that this chapter is a direct contradiction of the teachings of the Charismatic Movement.

That Movement teaches that when you are Baptised in the Spirit, the proof that you are, is typically, that you speak in tongues. Look at verse 13: Where Paul says that all his readers are baptised in the Spirit. Then look at verse 30: Where he teaches quite clearly not all his readers speak in tongues.<sup>30</sup> *Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?* Where, as we found last week, the Greek verb used, is rhetorical, requiring the answer “No!” Paul teaches quite clearly that not all people, who are baptised in the spirit speak in tongues.

This Chapter which the Charismatics appeal to, in fact, teaches the very opposite of what they teach.

However Pentecostals have a little ‘get out’ on this question. They say this, in fact, “When you are Baptised in the Spirit, all of you speak in tongues, but not all of you have the ability to speak in tongues in the church. All are able to speak in tongues in private, but not all in public.” This movement argues that that is what Paul refers to here.

The answer to that is this: Paul has not yet mentioned ‘Public Worship’ in this Chapter. He doesn’t do this, strictly, until chapter 14. The fact is that if you are a member of the ‘body of Christ’ you are a member of the ‘body of Christ’ whether the ‘body’ is gathered or whether the ‘body’ is separated. If you are an Apostle, you are such whether the church is ‘gathered’ or not. Similarly as a Prophet and all the spiritual gifts (as they were present at that time.) If you are a ‘tongue speaker’ you are such when the church is ‘gathered’ or when it isn’t. Therefore Paul’s question (with the automatic answer, “NO!”) cannot be interpreted in the way that Charismatics/Pentecostals, do.

Verse 13 and verse 30 together prove that Charismatic teaching is false.

Now we turn our attention specifically to the teaching of Baptism of (with or by) the Holy Spirit: There are only 7 references, in the New Testament to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Once each in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – each of which, referring to John the Baptist, who said. “I indeed baptise you in water, but He, the Messiah, will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.”<sup>1</sup>

1 Matthew 3:11, [ESV](#): “I baptise you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Then there is a reference in Acts 1, where Jesus said to his Disciples, “*you heard from me; <sup>5</sup> for John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with<sup>[2]</sup> the Holy Spirit not many days from now.*”

Then there is a reference, later on, in the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 11, where Peter is talking about the Conversion of Cornelius – and his household. In describing what took place he says, <sup>16</sup> *And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.’*

Hence six of the seven references refer to the words of John the Baptist and repeated by the Lord. That the Messiah would be a baptiser in the Spirit.

The seventh reference to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the text we have open this morning.

Only seven references in the ‘whole counsel of God’, to the Baptism of the Spirit. From these references we are able to answer three questions: When does the Baptism of the Spirit take place; what does it do for us; and must it be accompanied by ‘signs’ – especially tongues? It is necessary to take time to answer these questions. Because sooner or later some – probably well meaning enthusiast – will claim that you are not a proper Christian unless you have some extra ‘experience’ which is indicated by such a thing as ‘speaking in tongues’ and if you don’t know better you will be thrown into doubt and confusion unnecessarily. If we clear this up now we will be able to go on in confidence to Chapter 13, where Paul’s ‘more excellent way’ is described and be reminded of how the true Christian is to show and signify his faith.

1. When does the Baptism of the Spirit take place? <sup>13</sup> ***For in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.***

This letter was to a Christian church, as we saw in Chapter 1. Paul is saying. “Every single one of you, who is a Christian in the Corinthian church, has been Baptised in the Spirit. Every one of you who is a member of Christ’s ‘body’, became a member of that ‘body’, by the Baptism of the Spirit. Everyone of you who has had a spiritual experience, so that you ‘drink the one Spirit’, whether you’re a Jew, Gentile, slave or free – whoever you are, whatever your background – every single one of you who is joined to Christ. Is joined to Christ, because you have been Baptised in the Spirit.

So it is perfectly clear, when the Baptism of the Spirit takes place: at Conversion! Consider now the word, ‘concomitant’. That means there are certain things which go ‘hand in hand’, are never separated. Repentance and faith are concomitant – you never find one without the other. Conversion and regeneration are further examples. You never find God working on the heart, without the man turning to God. Further, Conversion, regeneration and Baptism by the Spirit are concomitant. God never makes you into a ‘new creature’, so that you ‘turn to God’ (repent), without you also becoming a member of Christ’s ‘body’ – drinking the one Spirit. Entering into union with Christ and union with fellow Christians. The Baptism of the Spirit occurs at Conversion. You should defy anybody to say

otherwise. Because the Word of God teaches this in plain, 'black and white', Greek!

Now some people will say that the Greek of verse 13, is different from the Greek of the other verses referencing the Baptism of the Spirit. That's true in this respect. The other six verses call the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, but this verse calls the Spirit, the 'One Spirit'. The other six verses talk about Christ as the Baptiser, but don't mention the reason for the Baptism, whereas this verse talks about being Baptised – without mentioning the baptiser – but tells us the reason for this Baptism. It makes us members of 'one body'!

But apart from those two details, there is no difference at all, between 1 Corinthians 12:13 and the other six verses. The Baptism of the Spirit is that spiritual experience, which makes us members of Christ's 'body'.

There are many further 'trees' that we can review, but we could be in danger of missing the main point – the 'forest' as it were. However, for example we could prove that regeneration is the Baptism of the Spirit from John Chapter 1, where Jesus is called the one who takes away the sin of the world – the one who Baptises with the Spirit<sup>2</sup>. (John 1:29 & 33). That is to say: to have your sins taken away and be Baptised in the Spirit mean the same thing.

Now let's refer to Acts Chapter 1. Where we can gain the same result.

Verse 5: Jesus promised, that His Apostles would *be Baptised with (or in) the Holy Spirit not many days from now*. He had told them, verse 4, that this would be a fulfilment of the promise of the Father. The promise of the Father and the Baptism of the Spirit are the same thing.

The promise was fulfilled, as shown in Chapter 2, on the day of Pentecost, where verse 33 of Chapter 2 of Acts proves that Jesus it is, who has received the promise of the Father and *He has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing*. Pentecost was the baptism of the Spirit!

But then, when Peter's preaching he says to his hearers, that if they repent and are baptised in the Name of Christ, they will receive the Holy Spirit. (verse 38). Telling them that the promise is to them, their children, and to those who are afar off. What to all of them? No! He qualifies this typical statement meaning all kinds but not literally every individual, with: everyone of them, whom the Lord calls; everyone of their children, whom the Lord calls; everybody who's afar off, whom the Lord calls. Everyone whom the Lord calls is a recipient of the promise. But what is the promise? Well if it is a different promise (from regeneration/conversion) then Peter is a great confidence trickster and so is Luke who recounted this! It must be the same promise: which has already been mentioned twice in the book of Acts so far. The promise of the Father, which is

<sup>2</sup> But we would need to have a Greek language lesson on the importance of the present participle. Where Jesus is described as the taker away of sin, the baptiser in the Spirit. The present participle only being used this twice in John 1, in a way which shows that those two participles mean the same thing.

the Baptism of the Spirit.

Peter is saying to the converts on the day of Pentecost, that we (that unique group of Christ's personally commissioned Apostles) have had the promised, but delayed, Baptism of the Spirit as the first example of this new Testament work of the Spirit, while you (out there and beyond in space and time) from now on, receive this Spirit the moment you believe.

Of course we should expect the Apostles to be different. They were born in the Old Testament administration, they came to faith with Christ who was physically present amongst them. Now he's absent, because He's ascended and so the Spirit comes to the church in the new way that the Spirit is going to be in the church from that day of Pentecost to the end of the world, when Christ comes back for us to be with Him. Then His Spirit – the Holy Spirit – will be no longer necessary, in that way.

Here we pause for today with more to say about this first question next week, but for now we assert that the Baptism of the Spirit occurs at one and the same time as Conversion!

[2224]

**Pray for God's grace, through the Spirit of Christ to live in us all, that we, may live the new life made possible by the Spirit, for all the saints present today. Amen.**

Delivered Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2022

1 Corinthians 12:13

## Baptism of the Spirit – Part 2

based on S Olyott

*1 Corinthians 12:13*

***12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.***

Today we come to the 4<sup>th</sup> week that is being spent on the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of 1 Corinthians. We began with an exposition of the whole chapter. That is, we discovered what Paul actually said: Finding that it was important to keep the whole chapter in mind, recognising its broad thrust: Generally summed up as Spiritual Gifts were given by God to benefit the whole 'body' of Christ.

Having seen then what Paul had said to the church at Corinth we then spent considerable time, identifying the implications of the Chapter for the Church in the Twenty First Century. Where for many years the Charismatic Movement has been attacking conventional Reformed Doctrine.

In connection with this threat we set out to examine two things which arise from 1 Corinthians 12: The first was derived from the first three verses and the other specifically from verse 13, together with verse 30.

For verses 1-3, the final summary was: We are to use our minds about everything. Any emotion which is not stirred by truth is to be suspect. Examine everything, putting it under the 'searchlight' of God's Holy Word. That which doesn't tally exactly with God's Holy Word is not to be received. Especially when it has not a 'high view' of Christ. Such cannot possibly be of the Spirit of Christ.

The second point coming from the Chapter and related to the modern day threat was began last week and the Sermon title was changed to reflect the paramount topic of that week and today's: Baptism of the Spirit. It amounts to a detailed critique of the teaching of the Charismatic Movement and affirms that the 12<sup>th</sup> Chapter is in direct contradiction to the teachings of that Movement. The very Chapter that they claim supports them.

Three questions to be answered by Scripture were to be put. The first being: When does the Baptism of the Spirit take Place? Whereas Pentecostals and others of the Movement claim this is a 'second experience' that occurs once a person becomes a Christian; is necessary so that one becomes a better type of Christian; and is generally demonstrated by the person speaking in tongues.

In absolute contrast God's Word unambiguously teaches that to become a Christian in the first place the Spirit has already acted. This is the spiritual baptism – the Baptism of the Spirit – occurring concomitantly with God's act of conversion.

Today we will start with the final comments in response to that first question, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> proposed questions will follow.

1. (Continued) They (the Apostles on the day of Pentecost) enter into the full blessings of new Testament Christianity as a distinct experience from their conversion because they cross between two different administrations. But from Pentecost onwards, every single person, as Peter tells us, who is called by God to faith in Christ enters into the Baptism of the Spirit. There and then! That's why when Peter, later, is explaining that Cornelius was Baptised in the Spirit, the people who are hearing the account say: "Then God has granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life." (Acts 11:18) Because to repent and believe the Gospel and to be Baptised in the Spirit are the same thing!

Marvellous. That's why as you read through the New Testament, not on any occasion, at any time, in any book, do you read God, commanding a Christian, to be Baptised in the Holy Spirit. Olyott is able to say that when Pentecostals have come to him. Telling him that he is required to be Baptised in the Holy Spirit as a separate experience. He frequently challenges them to find in the New Testament such a command. At which he would then gladly submit to it. It hasn't happened!

In fact why should a Christian be separately Baptised in the Spirit. At true Conversion they have already been Baptised in the Spirit. Paul doesn't say in 1 Corinthians 12:13, "This is what you need." He says, "This is what you have!" He doesn't say, "This is what you have to seek." He says, "This is your present condition."

That's why the Apostle can say in Ephesians 4, 'One Lord one Faith and one Baptism.' If I was Baptised, with water, when I became a Christian and then there was a necessary separate experience completely different and distinct from Conversion – called the Baptism in the Spirit. I would have to talk about two Baptisms. But I can't. There is one Baptism. Baptism in water, is the outward and visible sign of the Baptism of the Spirit. One is the Sacrament which displays the grace of the other. The inward and spiritual grace. Therefore it is 'one Baptism! If there were a distinct and separate experience from Conversion it's unthinkable that it would be called the Baptism of the Spirit. Since in the Bible, baptism is always something initiatory (marking the very beginning). Therefore if there were to be something distinct and special later on. The last word that would be appropriate to call it would be a 'baptism'.

When does the Baptism take place? (Which was our first question that has carried over from last week.) Now we emphatically answer: At Conversion! We must be very firm and definite about this because as we have said before if we submit to the notions of the Charismatic Movement, the Evangelical Church will lose its moorings. To say that the Baptism of the Spirit is distinct and separate from Conversion and to be something that needs to be sought by regenerated

Christians is untrue.

Now we continue to consider 1 Corinthians 12:13 in order to answer our second question:

2. What does the Baptism of the Spirit do for us? Because we've all had it if we are Christians! Look what it does for us 1 Corinthians 12:13. <sup>13</sup> *For in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body*— In a baptism in the Bible, you have to have three things: someone who does the baptism; a medium in which the baptism takes place; and a purpose. So in the New Testament we are Baptised for the 'remission of sins'. In other words: some representative of the Christian Church, baptises us, the purpose being to display that we have received the remission of sins. Now, Christ baptises us in the Spirit, because this is to display and is the means by which we become members of the one 'body'. That is a spiritual 'body'. Christ is the 'head' of it. All Christians are the individual 'organs' of the 'body'. But it's a spiritual 'body'. It's a spiritual organism. It's alive with spiritual life. You can't enter into a spiritual body without a spiritual experience. You can't enter into a spiritual body – into this spiritual atmosphere – without a spiritual change. You have to be initiated into the spiritual world. "The Baptism of the Spirit is what does that for you." Says the Apostle Paul, in verse 13. It being the same way for Jews, Gentiles slaves and freemen.

"Every one of you has had a spiritual experience and now lives and functions and operates in a spiritual word. Having drunk of the same Spirit. You all have been immersed in the one Spirit!"

"So, it initiates us into the realm of the Spirit. So the baptism by the Spirit," as he says there in verse 13, "is the great uniting feature of the Christian Church." Now, isn't it sad, that modern Charismatic teaching makes the Baptism of the Spirit the dividing feature in the Christian Church! The Charismatic preacher has to insist before a Christian congregation that "Some of you have had it and some of you haven't had it. This use of the Baptism of the Spirit: divides. But the Apostle Paul says the opposite! It's the uniting feature of the Spirit. It's what brings Jews and Gentiles together. Think of it. The complete opposite. Being members of the same body. It's the Baptism of the Spirit which brings slave and freemen – the other end of the social scale from each other – to be one 'body', under Christ. Members of one another. Doing each other good because spiritual gifts build each other up in the spiritual realm. It's the one spiritual experience that every Christian has had. Which gives the Christian Church its unity. That's what the Baptism of the Spirit does.

3. Must the Baptism of the Spirit be accompanied by signs? We could also ask. Must Conversion be accompanied by signs? The three thousand on the day of Pentecost, received a promise. But we don't read in the whole of Scripture that there was any outward signs among the three thousand, on the day of Pentecost. It if were of great importance to know that we would have read that the

three thousand all spoke in tongues and therefore that was the proof that they had the promise. Or perhaps they entered in the spiritual area where they could do miraculous cures. We don't read that. Scripture is completely silent! And where Scripture is silent it's for a reason.

In the new Testament we don't find any teaching in any Epistle, that signs must accompany the Baptism of the Spirit. Signs did accompany the Baptism of the Spirit – but specially on the day of Pentecost. Those were uniquely marvellous signs! They began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. They knew for certain that the new dispensation of the Spirit had really come, because of the 'cloven tongues, like as of fire', over their heads. The promise had been fulfilled! God had created a new 'body' and people in every Nation under heaven had to realise that there was a new Nation – composed of many Nations. Declared by this unique, miraculous preaching. That declaration of the wonderful works of God, where people were hearing it in their own tongue.

So in that case there were those initiatory signs, but from then onwards we don't read that the Baptism of the Spirit is accompanied by signs. Cornelius and his household speak in tongues, but we know that we will come to the reason for that in 1 Corinthians 14. Tongues have a special significance to the Jew as a sign of judgement. When Peter and other Christians saw the Spirit come upon Gentiles, they could see that God had received Gentiles. That God was making the new 'body' in a way that he wasn't doing in the past amongst the Jews. It was a marvellous and necessary sign of a one off specially significant revelation. But there is no teaching, even in that passage, that all others, when they are converted by the Spirit (that is: receive the spiritual Baptism of the Spirit) must speak in tongues or otherwise show remarkable external signs. [There is of course the internal sign of the indwelling of the Spirit which to believers can be recognised and taken as the guarantee of 'son-ship' then and in eternity.]

You will of course recognise that this group of sermons is and has been polemical – exposing common errors<sup>3</sup>. But has been necessary. It can come about, especially for new Christians – in Christ a few months or even a couple of years – that you may meet somebody who might hand you a piece of paper or perhaps in apparently idle conversation, get to the point of asking if you speak in tongues. If you say or imply that you don't (in the way that he means), he will convey to you in the most definite terms that you are either a very poor Christian or not one at all!

So you'll be challenged by this erroneous teaching and at the very least it will perplex you or confound you. Unless you are clear in your own mind that: Thank God you are already Baptised in the Spirit, if you have faith in Christ. You are already in the spiritual dimension. And we shall clearly see as we progress in 1 Corinthians that the unique speaking in tongues of which that deluded Christian speaks, ceased long, long ago

3 **Polemical:** Polemic is contentious rhetoric intended to support a specific position by forthright claims and to undermine the opposing position. The practice of such argumentation is called polemics, which are seen in arguments on controversial topics. A person who writes polemics, or speaks polemically, is called a polemicist.

with the completion of the writing and distribution and providential preservation of the New Testament Scriptures.

He is a poor self-deceived man who should receive our pity and not our envy. We should bleed within for him because he is so confused himself. So deceived! Thinking that he has something. Which he hasn't. And he's questing for the things that Scripture doesn't encourage him to seek. His is the Christian life that is limping along. Is poor and pathetic. Because he has put his priorities in all the wrong areas.

Instead of you going through life envying the Pentecostal teaching, wishing that you had it. You'll thank God that you don't have it and it may be that you will be used by the Lord to bring some folk out of a poor, perversion of Christianity and back to a glad submission to Holy Scripture.

For all of us as Christians, our great need is not the Baptism of the Spirit. Not some new 'second experience'. Not to be able to speak in non-English (or non-whatever your native language happens to be). That's not your great need. You should not be agonising, worked up or distressed at all, about the lack of some 'second experience'. What a Christian needs. The great priority of the Christian life and what a Christian should be agonising to have is described in the next Chapter, Chapter 13. Which is introduced by Paul himself at the end of the last verse of Chapter 12: <sup>31</sup> ... *And I will show you a still more excellent way.*

We will recognise in Chapter 13 that it was Jesus Christ who had all these qualities – the higher gifts – in His life and that He is able to bring them into ours.

[2310]

**Pray for God's grace, through the Spirit of Christ to live in us all, that we, may live the new life made possible by the Spirit, for all the saints present today. Amen.**

1 Corinthians 13:1-8  
**Love, the Greatest Gift**

per S Olyott

**1 Corinthians 13:3**

***<sup>3</sup> If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.***

As we continue in 1 Corinthians we move on to Chapter 13. It can be said: “In all the English language, there could be nothing which parallels the beauty and power of this Chapter.” However we don’t study it because of its majesty and simplicity in the use of the English tongue, but because of the immense importance that it has for our Christian lives.

We shall introduce this Chapter in the following way:

Sweeping the religious world – as we have noted over the past several weeks. Sweeping every area of the religious world. Is what has been called, the Charismatic Movement, and which calls itself Charismatic Renewal. This movement has three main beliefs:

1. All the gifts in Chapter 12, God is restoring to the Church – through them.
2. Your greatest need as a Christian is a **new** experience of the Holy Spirit called, the Baptism of the Spirit.
3. The proof that you have the Baptism of the Spirit, is that you will exercise one of the gifts of Chapter 12. (Almost certainly it will be the ‘gift of tongues’.)

Of course that is not what we are saying. That is the mantra of the Charismatic Movement. We are not saying that all the gifts are being restored; your greatest need is a separate Baptism of the Spirit; and the proof that you have it, is that you will speak in tongues.

Two of those teachings, we have seen over past weeks, are firmly contradicted by Chapter 12. We have seen that every true believer is already Baptised in the Holy Spirit – there are no exceptions. If you are not Baptised in the Holy Spirit you’re not a believer. If you are a believer you are already Baptised in the Holy Spirit.

In addition from the very same Chapter, we were shown that not everybody, even in those earliest times, spoke in tongues. Or exercise a miraculous gift then, in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church!

So we are left with a question. If the new experience of the Holy Spirit is not my greatest need, as a Christian, what is? [The significance of this question is that many, many Christians recognise that their Christian lives are not as good as they should be. Unfortunately various ‘movements’ over the Centuries have exploited this recognised need and applied a spurious, dangerous and non-biblical solution of their own misinter-

pretation of Scripture or completely from their own invention. So what is our common need and what is the Biblical solution?]

What then is your and my greatest need? Chapter 13 tells us! If the greatest priority of my Christian life is not to seek a new Baptism of the Spirit. What is the great priority of my Christian life? If I'm not to agonise to have a new experience of the Holy Spirit. What am I to agonise for? Chapter 13!

Chapter 13 is the death knell for what has become known as the Charismatic Movement. [As it has been for all the spurious interpretations of the past Centuries]. The Charismatic Movement 'rests' – relies – on a simple error: that there is some connection between spiritual gifts and being a spiritual person. [Some connection between exhibiting miraculous feats and being a Spirit-conceived 'born again', spiritual Christian.]

That is why they say that when you enter into the Baptism of the Spirit the proof of it is that you will exercise some spiritual gift – probably the 'gift of tongues'. They have got it into their heads that there is some connection between spiritual gifts and being a spiritual person. That is the simple error of it all. Even those – because there are some of those in the Charismatic Movement – who teach that you can be Baptised in the Spirit, without speaking in tongues. Even those admire the 'miracle worker'! Thinking that the 'miracle worker' is a truly godly person. A 'man of God'. Someone to be admired because of his spirituality.

What we have to say to that is that this teaching – that there is some connection between having spiritual gifts and being a truly spiritual person is – non-biblical. And actually Biblically childish. If you break that connection the Charismatic Movement will disappear 'over-night'. If you could break that connection within the minds of the people in that movement. It is that view, more or less, which holds the whole movement together: that there is some connection between exhibiting spiritual gifts and being a spiritual person.

Just before we open 1 Corinthians 13, consider Matthew 7: Jesus said that on the 'last day', some people will come to Him and say, "Lord, we have exercised spiritual gifts. Lord, I prophesied in your Name. Lord I cast out demons in your Name. Lord, in your Name I did many wonderful works." Jesus says, that to many such people He will say, "Depart from me I never knew you! Ye that work iniquity."<sup>4</sup> Because the fact that you exercise spiritual gifts, even in the Name of Christ, is not even a proof that you have had even the most elementary, basic, spiritual change.

The fact that you can 'speak the Word of God' as a Prophet. The fact that you can cast out evil spirits, with your word. The fact that you can work miracles and do it in

#### 4 I Never Knew You

<sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' <sup>23</sup> And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

the Name of Christ. Is not even a proof that you are a Christian at all! So, how can there be any connection between spiritual gifts and being a spiritual person.

Remember in the Old Testament, there was a Prophet named Balaam.<sup>5</sup> He spoke the very words of God. He predicted a glorious future for Israel and then he made an even more glorious promise about the 'coming of Christ'. But Balaam was a 'lost' man. In the New Testament he is given as an example of apostasy. (Revelation 2:14) He was the man who led Israel into one of its 'foulest' periods. He spoke the very words of God – but 'lost' he was!

In the New Testament, we know that the disciples went out and cast out demons, healed the sick. On coming back to Jesus they told what had happened. He answered that he had seen Satan falling from heaven. But one of the disciples involved was Judas! He cast out demons. He preached the word and the devil suffered defeats due to the ministry of Judas. But Judas wasn't a converted man. He was the 'son of perdition'!<sup>6</sup>

Also, in John's Gospel, Caiaphas, the High Priest, stands up and gives the prophecy, that Jesus will die on behalf of the people. (John 11:51) But Caiaphas, himself was a wicked, spiteful, ungodly man!

There is no connection between spiritual gifts and being a spiritual person. You can have spiritual gifts and be an unconverted person. You can have spiritual gifts, which are exercised in the Name of Christ and still be unregenerate and damned. That's exactly what Paul is going to say in the first opening verses of Chapter 13. He's going to show to you, in verse 1, that you can have no limit to your use of tongues and still be a spiritual nothing. Show to you in verse 2 that you can speak the very Words of God and have the gift of knowledge, having such faith that everything you pray for happens, but still be a spiritual nothing. Show to you in verse 3, that you can be the most generous person in the church who ever lived and even suffer martyrdom, but be spiritually nowhere!

Because there is no connection between spiritual gifts and holy spirituality. No connection! That is the whole point of this Chapter.

The fact that you have certain outward gifts does not mean that you infallibly have grace in your heart. The fact that you have certain outward gifts, does not mean that you are making spiritual progress. Why were the gifts given? Not to prove that you are a Christian or not. Certainly not to prove that you are a progressing Christian or not. Certainly not to prove that you are a higher order of Christian or not! The gifts were given to benefit the Church.

<sup>5</sup> Numbers . Chapters 22-24.

<sup>6</sup> Note the various ways Christ 'sent' disciples. Luke 9 (sending the 12); Luke 10 (sending the 72) with the reference to Satan falling at verse 18. Note verse 20: *"But don't rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven."* See also the parallel account of the sending of the 12 in Matthew 10 – where Judas is listed with the comment that he was the one who betrayed Jesus. If this was not enough condemnation, in John 17:12, where Jesus is praying for the disciples he says that none have been lost except the 'son of perdition'.

In the old Testament, Moses struck the rock, sinfully, but the water still flowed out so that the people could drink. As far as spiritual gifts are concerned, people can exercise spiritual gifts, which actually feed the people of God, while doing it sinfully and with an unregenerate heart.

The 'sign' of being a spiritual Christian is Chapter 13. The 'sign' of being a Christian who is making progress, is not that you have certain spiritual gifts. But that you have certain inward qualities which 'flow out' in your life. If the Charismatic Movement truly believed that. It would disintegrate! Because there is no Biblical connection between outward gifts and inward grace. It's only inward grace – inward grace alone – which is the proof that I am making spiritual progress.

To find out whether a man is a godly man. I don't ask, "What gifts does he have?" I do ask, "How does he measure up with 1 Corinthians 13! That is why, Paul when having talked about the gifts, before he talks about love, talks about it as a **more excellent way!**

If you want to know whether you are making any progress in the things of God, this Sunday morning. The way to measure it. Is by measuring your life against Chapter 13: What is your great need, as a Christian? Love. What is the great priority of the Christian life? Love. What should I be agonising for, working for, praying for and longing for? It is love! What is the sign of a godly man or woman? It is love. What is the more excellent way? So excellent that gifts pale into insignificance, when compared with it? It is love.

So we come to Chapter 13 to study what it teaches about love!  
This Chapter divides easily into three:

1. In verses 1-3, Paul tells us that love is **essential**.
2. In verses 4-7, he tells us that love is **effectual** – it works, in a certain way.
3. In verses 8-13, Paul tells us that love is **eternal**.

Love is essential (verses 1-3): "Alright," says Paul, verse 1, "so you speak in tongues! But no language, in heaven or on earth, is to be compared with love. Very well! There's no end to your gift of tongues. But if you don't love you're a mere noise. Some FM radio stations have the motto: The Best Sound Around. Very well! Maybe you are the 'best sound around', but without love that's all you are! A sound. You're a gong. You're a clashing of cymbals. But that's all you are – without love!"

Verse 2 is one of the most astonishing verses in the whole of the New Testament.

Imagine a man who may come to this church, who speaks the very Words of God. That's what Prophecy is. Imagine that same man who may come to this church and he understands every 'mystery' – human and divine. He understands every mystery and has all knowledge. There is nothing unknown to him. No depth which he can't plumb.

No height which he can't reach. And no verse or doctrine which he can't explain. Imagine such a man! Coming to this church today. He speaks the very Word of God and he understands everything, perfectly. All knowledge.

Imagine that that same man has such faith 'so as to move mountains'. Which means that whenever he prays. Whatever he prays for – happens. Imagine such a man in the church! Speaks the Word of God; understands everything and prays for anything he pleases infallibly. And it happens!

All of us would stand in incredible awe of such a man. We would listen, with rapt attention, when he stood up to preach. Because we would know that we were hearing God's Word. Not just an exposition of Scripture, but the very Word of God. We would go to him with all our questions. He would be able to explain to us: how God has elected a people and how we can offer freely the Gospel to all men and women<sup>7</sup>. Certainly, there would be such a tremendous queue to speak to such a man.

In a prayer meeting we would all be dumb, because we would let him get on with the praying, because whatever he prayed for would happen. We would say to ourselves, "What a man! What a spiritual giant! Has there ever been such man like that in the history of the church?" We would be writing biographies about him and writing down his every word!

Paul says: <sup>2</sup> *And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*

That man even if he does all that, but does not have love ... Paul doesn't say that he is spiritually inferior. Paul doesn't say that he is 'spiritually low in the ratings'. Paul says the he is spiritually non-existent! He is nothing. God hasn't even noticed him.

Look at verse 3: Paul now switches from the dramatic and miraculous gifts to deeds of mercy and dedication. The tense he uses is the aorist tense, which means he speaks of a 'once for all act'.<sup>8</sup> Here is a man, in the church, who has an immense fortune and in one act of great generosity he reduces himself to 'beggary' by giving away everything that he has to feed the poor. So that he himself is now poverty stricken and not only that. He has such strong convictions that he would prefer, and actually does, burn at the stake, rather than give up what he knows to be true. Should there be such a man as this, but has not love, it profits nothing! He has made no spiritual progress at all. He has not one spiritual 'farthing' reckoned to his account.

"Love is the one thing needful! Nothing is more important than love. Nothing can

7 Perhaps the greatest 'mystery' of the Christian doctrine. One which has special place in the Declaratory Statement of the PCA!

8 **ψομίσω** (psōmisō) — 1 Occurrence. I give away. Verb Aorist Subjunctive Active – 1st Person Singular (V-ASA - 1S)

make up for the lack of love. The great priority and need and aim of the Christian life,” says the Apostle Paul, “is love. Nothing! Nothing rates higher than that.”

Love is essential.

In verses 4-7, he tells us that love is effectual. Once you have listened to Paul and you've heard him say that love is essential. The next question you will want to be answered is: What is love? But surprisingly Paul doesn't tell us. He doesn't tell us what it is, but he does tell us how it behaves. A much more practical way. He doesn't tell us what love is so that we can just carry an abstract definition around in our heads. He tells us how love behaves in practice. How a loving person lives in this world. So that he is in a position to show us that if we are not like verse 4; not like verse 5; not like verse 6; and we are not like verse 7. Then we are spiritually nowhere. We are spiritual nothings.

We pause at this point, ready to take up this challenge from verse 4 onwards next week.

[2543]

**Pray for God's grace, through the Spirit of Christ to live in us all, that we, may live the new life made possible by the Spirit, for all the saints present today.  
Amen.**

1 Corinthians 13:1-13  
**Love, the Greatest Gift – Part 2**

per S Olyott

**1 Corinthians 13:8**

***<sup>8</sup> Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.***

So far on the topic, 'Love, the Greatest Gift', Paul has shown that Love is essential.

Now in verses 4-7, he tells us that love is effectual. Once you have listened to Paul and you've heard him say that love is essential. The next question you will want to be answered is: What is love? But surprisingly Paul doesn't tell us. He doesn't tell us what it is, but he does tell us how love behaves. A much more practical way. He doesn't tell us what love is so that we can just carry an abstract definition around in our heads. He tells us how love behaves in practice. How a loving person lives in this world. So that he is in a position to show us that if we are not like verse 4; not like verse 5; not like verse 6; and we are not like verse 7. Then we are spiritually nowhere. We are spiritual nothings.

Verse 4: *<sup>4</sup>Love is patient and kind; ...* The Greek word used means being patient with people – not with circumstances. Being patient with people. Not easily 'put out'.

Also kind – where that word means being kind – even to people who ill treat you. So if they 'strike' you you do good back to them. Or when they slander you, you equally do acts of kindness back to them. When they try to rob you. You look for an opportunity to serve them! Completely outward looking. Looking, all the time, for the benefit to the other person.

He goes on to tell us: *<sup>4</sup> ... love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ...* "When somebody is a loving person," says Paul, "and he sees somebody else succeeding. He's not displeased. He doesn't get 'up tight'. Submit to jealousy or envy, because somebody else is succeeding and things are going well for somebody else. It doesn't affect his heart at all – unless it is, of course, to rejoice with them! "Love," he says, at the last phrase of verse 4, "doesn't have inflated ideas of its own importance. It's completely selfless. A loving person isn't concerned about himself. It doesn't cross his mind about his own interests. That's what I'm talking about." Says Paul.

That's what is essential. That's what the Christian should be searching and agonising for. Working for and longing for.

Look at verse 5: ... *<sup>5</sup>or rude*. It begins. Does not behave itself in an 'unseemly'<sup>9</sup> fashion. In other words: everything that is inappropriate; indecent and particularly ill mannered, love avoids it! Love doesn't behave like that. It avoids 'bad manners'!

<sup>9</sup> ἀσχημονεῖ (aschēmonei) — 1 Occurrence. – to act unseemly (literally, "improperly"); (figuratively) to lack proper form and hence thought of as unseemly (indecent, unbecoming).

“It doesn’t put itself first,” he says. <sup>5</sup> ... *It does not insist on its own way*; ... It doesn’t get ‘touchy’<sup>10</sup>. One thing that love can never say is: “I’m hurt. You don’t know how very much you hurt me!” Love can’t talk like that! Because it’s so disinterested in itself that it’s own feelings cease to be a serious consideration. It doesn’t ‘take the huff’. It doesn’t get ‘touchy’. It doesn’t ostracise people. Love doesn’t behave like that.

Then, at the end of verse 5: love is not *resentful*, (which, curiously is translated by the KJV as *thinketh no evil*.) The Greek word used<sup>11</sup> means to reckon – to keep account of. That is love doesn’t keep account of injuries. It doesn’t dwell on injuries. Keep scores. Love can’t keep the score of wrongs. Love is forgiving.

Verse 6: <sup>6</sup>*it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth*. Perhaps we could consider this overheard conversation: “Did you hear about that terrible fire?” one neighbour said. “Was anybody hurt?” Asked the other. When things are reported in the media, what is emphasised – what sells – it is the injury and the hurt. Good news is rarely reported. People, it seems, dwell on injury and despair! People take a morbid interest in injuries, sins and the ‘falls’ of others. It gives then a certain perverse ‘pleasure’. Love can’t behave like that. Love can’t read the paper or receive news on TV the same as other people. It doesn’t rejoice when it hears about injury, evil or sin or depravity.

What does cause love to be glad? The Truth! It rejoices *in* the truth – KJV. (Once again the New Testament is gloriously ambiguous because the word<sup>12</sup> also means rejoices *with* the truth.) When love hears the truth, it’s glad! When love doesn’t hear the truth it’s sad. When love hears the truth it rejoices! When love hears lies, it is unspeakably grieved. That is why it’s so much nonsense to say. “That people who contend for the truth of Scripture against modern error, are unloving. Very often when someone denies the faith – also denying the deity of our Blessed Lord – somebody speaks up against them. Immediately the media – even the pseudo religious media – accuses that objector of being unloving. It’s about time the Bible was faithfully read by such reporters. Because love rejoices in the truth and can’t rejoice when truth is suppressed, watered down, compromised or denied.

Love is not ‘lovey dovey’. Love has a moral quality. It has a strength about it. It knows what right is and it knows what wrong is. It knows what truth is and what error is. It knows what light is and what dark is. Therefore it is not afraid to speak to the issue. Put it this way: Imagine a blind man walking towards a precipice. Now, who is the loving person? The person who says that everything’s OK. All paths lead to the same destination. Or the person who says, “Stop! Although you think you’re going the right way. You’re on the wrong way. If you go this wrong way, you will perish.” The blind man keeps walking on. Now how does love behave? Love pleads and love asserts and eventually is as forceful as possible, in order to stop him going over.

10 **παροξύνεται** (paroxynetai) — 1 Occurrence – to arouse anger, provoke – to exasperate. ESV: irritable. KJV: easily provoked.

11 **λογίζεται** (logizetai) — 5 Occurrences – to reckon, count, charge with.

12 **συνχαίρει** (synchairei) — 2 Occurrences – to rejoice with, congratulate – to sympathise in gladness.

That's how love behaves! Love is forceful, because it would rather distress the man, than see him perish.

That's what Paul is talking about here: Love – *rejoices with the truth* – therefore it grieves unspeakably about error and darkness.

Verse 7: *Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Bears all things* means that love never says to anybody, "Oh, I give up. I'm finished with you!" You can't talk like that. Love never says, "That's it!"

*Believes all things.* That doesn't mean that when someone comes around to knock at my door and says that he wants a couple of dollars for a meal, that I believe that he is hungry. Love isn't gullible. It doesn't mean that true, loving Christians go through life 'having the wool pulled over our eyes' all the time. That's not what Paul is getting at. What it means is that love is always ready to believe the best and longs to do so. If there is any doubt. Love chooses to give the 'benefit of the doubt'. It would rather believe the best rather than the worst. It would rather weigh up the evidence than 'jump to conclusions'. There's a justice in it.

*Hopes all things.* That means that love never takes failure as final. It accepts the fact that 'battles are lost'. But that doesn't mean the war is lost. When we are trying to help people a particular attempt fails. But love doesn't mean that that is the end of the matter. It keeps on trying to help, console and hopes for them to reach the right way. If one approach fails it will try another. An enduring, persistence, 'stick-able' quality. It hopes all things. Hoping and praying for a good outcome.

"And love," says Paul, *endures all things.* Which means that love is just downright brave. Love does what has to be done. So that what has to be done, is done. Despite any difficulties.

Once again however, we need to stress that love is not 'lovey dovey'! It's not soft and sentimental – sickly sweet.

What we have just read from Paul's hand is actually a description of Christ. Take all the qualities mentioned and take them to the Gospels and over and over again you see them explicitly demonstrated by Christ. Not only in what He says but also in what He does. Who suffered long like He? Who was kind with enemies? Who was free from envy and free from pride? Who always behaved seemly, never having any self interest? Not easily provoked! Who was it who kept no score of wrongs? Who didn't rejoice in iniquity, but did rejoice in the truth? Who was it who bore all things; believed all things; hoped for all things; and endured all things, even the shame of the Cross, because it had to be done?

If I am the most gifted Christian in the world, but I am not becoming Christ-like increasingly, then I am getting nowhere spiritually. Perhaps there is a gifted preacher; a compelling speaker – who when he speaks, everybody is absolutely forced to give all their ears and eyes; perhaps a brilliant Sunday School teacher – such that the children are super-attentive, drinking in every word; a Christian worker whose diligence is universally admired; or an efficient and effective administrator; another able to make large donations to the good works of the church; an able visitor of the sick bringing them much needed comfort; and another who is able to make people welcome in their home, making them feel at home when they are not in their own home. All this can be done and still there be no love! It happens! But true love is effectual. And where it is ... it shows!

Love is eternal.

Finally for today we come to verse 8. Which introduces the section 8-13. This will be the burden of our study from next week, when we will consider it verse by verse. However to keep the unity of the chapter we will outline what Paul is getting at starting from verse 8.

He tells us, in verse 8, that love will ‘never fall to the ground’ – the word that he uses in the original Greek.<sup>13</sup> “There is something that will never pass away! It is love. It’s pointless to put so much stress on the ‘gifts’”, he says, in verse 8, “because they will pass away. But love. Never!”

“When the perfect comes”, verses 9 & 10, the partial (the gifts are partial) will pass away. As sure as when a child comes to maturity. He puts away his immaturity! As sure as that: when the perfect comes the gifts will be put away. They will finish. There will be no need for partial revelations when we have the whole revelation.” He tells us in verse 12. “The fate of all the gifts, which you value so highly, is that all of them will ‘peter out’ or be ‘put away’.” That’s what he is telling us. “But love will never suffer that fate. Gifts – perishable. Love – imperishable! Gifts – temporal. Love – eternal! The gifts – passing. Love – permanent!”

“Therefore if you set all your attention and affection on these things. You are setting your affection on the passing, temporal and temporary. Instead you should be fixing on the imperishable, eternal, everlasting and permanent: which is love.”  
Isn’t that a good enough reason for concentrating on love?

“Now besides love”, he tells us in verse 13, “there are two other great qualities.” Faith and hope and love are often put together in the New Testament – in over half a dozen occasions. However we know, from elsewhere in the Scripture that faith will end at the Second Coming. As will hope. So although they are great, and they abide at the present time with great importance. Even those cannot be compared with love. Because: <sup>8</sup>*Love never ends*. Therefore follow after love.

13 πύπτει (piptei) — 5 Occurrences. ... to perish, i. e. to come to an end, disappear, cease: of virtues, [1 Corinthians 13:8](#)

All that leaves one question unanswered. If love is the great priority. If love is what we are to agonise for. If love is my great need. If love is the most essential and importantly effectual thing. If nothing, nothing can replace love and nothing can make up for the lack of it. Then how can I become a loving person?

Godliness comes through discipline. Not through special experiences, (repeat) Love comes to the person who exposes his mind to the Word of God and prays. It doesn't come to anybody else! It says in the Bible, that *we love Him because He first loved us.* (1 John 4:19 KJV) That implies that the more I understand of His love, the more I will love Him. If you don't love Christ then it's certain that you won't love anyone else, properly. If I expose my mind to the Word of God and read of Christ's love, inevitably my own love will increase. If I have any spiritual life in my heart at all.

The Apostle John tells us that we shall be like Him when we shall see Him as He is. (1 John 3:2) So, when we see Him as He is, we shall be like Him. In other words, when we see Christ perfectly, we will be perfectly like Christ! This then we can also take as a general principle: the clearer that you see Christ, the more Christ-like you will be. When you see Him perfectly clearly, you'll be perfectly like Him. Right now: Tell me where you can see Christ anywhere else – except in Scripture.

So back to the Bible we go to see the love of Christ, the Person of Christ, and the majesty of Christ. Back to the Scripture we go! That's why Jesus prayed: *Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.* (John 17:17) It's the Word that does the work. The Spirit takes hold of the Word and does the work in our lives. <sup>16</sup>*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,* <sup>17</sup>*that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.* (2 Timothy 3:16,17)

<sup>22</sup>*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, ... (James 1:22) Why not? Because otherwise you deceive your own selves.*

Back to the Word we go. Back to the Word. Christ-likeness and the Word are married together. One of the great features of, so called modern, evangelicalism is that has tried to bring about a divorce. It's tried to make us godly without us being students and lovers of the Word. It's tried to persuade us that we can be spiritual, without being men and women of the Book! Can't happen. Never has happened and never will happen. That's why Paul said to the Ephesian Christians: <sup>32</sup>*And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.* (Acts 20:32)

And added to the Word. Prayer. Because we read in Galatians 5: that love is the fruit of the Spirit (verse 22). We can't suddenly say to ourselves: "Right, at 11 o'clock, Sunday 22 May, 2022, from now on I'm going to be a loving Christian." It's got to be the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit producing Christ's character in my own life. The Spirit always working through the Word – the point we've just made. But Jesus also said: <sup>11</sup>*If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those **who ask him!*** (Mat-

thew 7:11) It's the Word of God and ... prayer!

Where people expose their minds to God's Word and give themselves to prayer. Where they prayerfully study the Word and study the Word prayerfully. Keeping the two things together. Then you see in history, and in people that you may know, increasingly, spontaneously and naturally – like fruit being formed on a branch – love becomingly characteristic in their lives.

Love is the great priority in the Christian life and that is the way to do it. The choice before us: to be spiritually nothing or <sup>11</sup>... *grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and for ever. Amen.* (2 Peter 3:18)

Love is: Essential; Effectual; Eternal!

[2727]

**Pray for God's grace, through the Spirit of Christ to live in us all, that we, may live the new life made possible by the Spirit, for all the saints present today. Amen.**

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

## The Gift of Prophecy, Tongues & Knowledge

per S Olyott

**1 Corinthians 13: 8**

***<sup>8</sup> Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.***

We continue to consider the Charismatic movement which is sweeping the religious world and describes itself as 'renewal'! It has three main beliefs: All spiritual gifts mentioned in Chapters 12,13 & 14 are being restored to the church; your great need as a Christian man or woman is a new experience of God, called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit; and that the 'sign' that you have the Baptism of the Spirit is that you Speak in Tongues (or exercise some other miraculous gift).

Those are the three distinctive teachings of the Charismatic Movement.

We were able to determine several weeks ago that the second of those teachings is untrue. All believers have been baptised in the Holy Spirit. This was apparent from Chapter 12 and all the other Biblical references examined, in their context, at that time.

At that time we also determined that the third of those teachings was untrue. Not all who are baptised in the Spirit speak in tongues. This also shown in Chapter 12.

Now, this morning and next week, we will see that the first of their teachings is also untrue. That is, all the spiritual gifts mentioned in Chapters 12, 13 & 14 are being restored to the Church today: is false.

Now we note, so far in our study of Chapter 13, that this Chapter is also about spiritual gifts and that love is only considered in contrast with the spiritual gifts of Prophecy, Tongues and Knowledge – and some other gifts which are implied.

Previously, in Chapter 13, we saw that the 'sign' that you are a spiritual person is not that you have certain spiritual gifts. The sign that you are a spiritual person is that you have love, which is defined in verses 4 to 7: which is having a Christ-like character. The sign that you are making spiritual progress is not that you have certain outward gifts, but that you have a certain 'inward grace' which is growing!

Last week, we only looked very briefly at verses 8-13. So now we come to look at that passage in more detail by asking 4 questions.

1. Why is Love the greatest? Noting that in verse 13, Paul says, <sup>13</sup> *So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*  
Of the important things that continue, – abide – the greatest is love.

Why is love considered greater than faith and hope? The three attributes – that

are so often grouped together in the New Testament! In over 'half a dozen' passages. They are linked together very intimately. The early Christians thought about these three, together. In many ways you can't actually separate them. So, why is love the greatest of the three? Does Paul say, in verse 13, why love is the greatest? No he doesn't. Does He say anywhere in the passage? Yes. He does!

The answer is in verse 8: <sup>8</sup> *Love never ends.*

As long as the earth remains. And as long as we are on it. There will be Faith, Hope and Love. Those three things never end, while the earth, and the Christians on it, exist. But only of love can it be said that it never ends (passes in KJV)! The word in Greek<sup>14</sup> means, 'never comes to an end' or never falls to the ground'.

Faith will end at the Second Coming of Christ. Clearly! The Apostle Paul says, <sup>7</sup>*We walk by faith and not by sight* (2 Corinthians 5:7) making it plain that the two are mutually exclusive. So that when, at last, we have sight, there will be no place for faith. Or we could consider Hebrew 11:1 <sup>1</sup>*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.* Because when those future things are seen and we have received those things that we have hoped for, there, obviously, is no further place for faith. Faith ends at the Second Coming.

Now hope also ends at the Second Coming. We remember what Paul says in Romans 8:24. <sup>24</sup>*For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?* Maybe you hoped, for many years, that a millionaire would invite you out for a meal. Ulyott reports that one day he met a millionaire on a train. To Ulyott's great astonishment he was invited to a meal. He accepted, as anyone would, and enjoyed every mouthful. But once the thing hoped for had happened. It no longer needed to be hoped for (particularly if that 'hope' was for eternity)!

The same will be the case when the Lord appears and we are taken to our eternal home. Our 'hope' will have been fulfilled, having been satisfied. Thus the need for hope like faith will be finished. You can never say of faith or hope that they never end. This can only be said of Love! Because love will continue in heaven. We shall love the Saviour perfectly, saying: "Worthy is the Lamb which was slain". Although using every adjective that heaven can supply, we will still need all eternity to express our love for the Son of God<sup>15</sup>, who loved us and gave Himself for us. Love will continue throughout heaven. Not only will we love the Saviour, but we will love each other – perfectly. Marvellous it will be. "Heaven is a world of love", said Jonathan Edwards<sup>16</sup>.

14 **πίπτει** (píptei) — 5 Occurrences, – to perish, i. e. to come to an end, disappear, cease: of virtues, 1 Corinthians 13:8

15 See verse 6 of Hymn 386: Amazing Grace.

16 **Jonathan Edwards** (October 5, 1703 – March 22, 1758) was an American revivalist preacher, philosopher, and Congregationalist theologian. Edwards is widely regarded as one of America's most important and original philosophical theologians.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathan\\_Edwards\\_\(theologian\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathan_Edwards_(theologian))

And so it will be. No end to love! Never any end to it. So when Paul says in verse 13: <sup>13</sup> ... *now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; ...* What he must mean is that now, at this present time – up until the Second Coming. Now, in this present dispensation. Now, in this present era. Now, in this present aeon ...

Abides these three. But love is the greatest, because when this aeon is over and when hope and faith are finished. Love will still continue. Throughout the eternal ages! That is why the great priority for the Christian life must be love. Of all the graces that we have – even faith and hope will go. But love never ends. It is the great priority of your Christian life. The thing that you must long for, work for, pray for and agonise for. Love never ends! So we know why love is the greatest.

2. How temporary are the gifts? Love is eternal. But the gifts are temporary. That's why they are of so little importance – when compared with love. Look now at verse 8. <sup>8</sup> ... *As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.* Now as we know, the New Testament was written in Greek, and when Paul talks about prophecies passing away and knowledge – where by 'knowledge' he means what he said in Chapter 12: not knowledge we might store in the brain, intellectual apprehension – but the Spirit's special gift of knowledge, by which people knew the Mind of God – when he writes of prophecies and knowledge he uses the future passive<sup>17</sup>.

That is, prophecies and knowledge will be done away. Something will happen which will finish them! They will be abolished. But when he talks of tongues he uses the 'future middle' (he could have also used the future passive, but he didn't). Which means tongues will 'peter out'.

Prophecies – will be done away; tongues – will peter out; and knowledge – it shall be done away. Further, if we look at verses 9 & 10 he makes it plain that prophecy and knowledge will disappear at the same time and in the same way. <sup>9</sup> ... *we know in part and we prophesy in part,* <sup>10</sup> *but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.* Can we discern what Paul is saying? Prophecy and knowledge will be done away; tongues will peter out.

“This is the way the world ends, not with a bang, but a whimper!” says E Cummings<sup>18</sup>. His theology is wrong, but if he had said, “This is the way tongues end. Not with a bang but a whimper!” He would have been right.

Prophecy and knowledge done away, tongues peter out. They come to a gradual end. Less and less and less ... and gone.

“Now”, says, somebody, “if prophecy and knowledge are going to be ‘done away’ and tongues are just going to peter out. How can you say then, “That the

17 **καταργηθήσονται** (katargēthēsontai) — 1 Occurrence. Verb – future indicative passive. to render inoperative, abolish (referring to prophecies); **παύσονται** (pausontai) — 1 Occurrence. Verb – future indicative middle. to make to cease, hinder (referring to tongues); **καταργηθήσεται** (katargēthēsetai) — 2 Occurrences. Verb – future indicative passive. to render inoperative, abolish (referring to knowledge).

18 Unable to verify this quote to E E Cummings. However T S Eliot used it in his 1925 Poem, “The Hollow Men”.

Second Coming is going to end all three?” However we haven’t said that. The reference was to faith and hope. Paul makes it plain that tongues may finally cease before prophecy and knowledge or after prophecy and knowledge or at about the same time as prophecy and knowledge. But they will cease in a different way and maybe at a different time. That alone makes it clear the Paul is not thinking about the Second Coming, with respect to these three miraculous gifts.

But if you think about it, it is quite perfectly clear that prophecy, tongues and knowledge will cease before the Second Coming. Paul is saying so here. The logic: There are three things that abide. Faith, Hope, Love. Here are three things which pass. Prophecy, tongues and knowledge. We know that the two of the things that abide, end at the Second Coming. But when Paul compares these three with those lesser ones, he talks about them passing away before the ones that abide. Faith, hope and love are described as enduring (at least to the ‘Last Day’) while Prophecy, tongues and Knowledge are characterised as passing. Obviously before the end of earthly existence. As it is clear that two of the first group end at the Second Coming. It is equally clear that all of the second group – described as ‘passing’, rather than ‘enduring’. Must end before the Second Coming. That is: Prophecy, tongues and knowledge end before the Second coming! Otherwise Paul’s comparison: ‘passing away’ versus ‘abiding’ falls to bits!

Two temporary things are described as ‘abiding’. Prophecy tongues and knowledge are described as passing. If two of the ‘abiding’ things end at the Second Coming. It’s quite clear that the ‘passing’ things must end before the Second Coming. So Paul is saying that prophecy, tongues and knowledge will come to an end – that’s one time perspective. Faith and Hope will eventually come to an end at the Second Coming – that’s at another time perspective. While love will never end: which makes it the greatest!

We learn from Paul’s teaching that prophecy, tongues and knowledge will come to an end during this present dispensation. Sometime in the history of the Church, two of them will be done away and one will peter out. The Church will leave them behind as naturally as a man – when he grows up – leaves behind his toy soldiers and a woman when she grows up leaves behind her dolls. They will be left behind, just as naturally as that. Nobody will get worked up because John’s no longer playing with his toy soldiers and June is not playing with her dolls. Similarly, nobody should get worked up because the Church has left behind its childish things. That’s the illustration Paul uses in verse 11!

“Can you imagine it.” says Paul in verse 12, “someone sees a reflection of something in a mirror.” Their mirrors were made of polished metal – without a glass coating to stop corrosion of the surface and were not very clear. “Then he turns around and sees the same thing ‘face to face’ *facie ad faciem*. Why would he having the real view, settle for a vague image? Alternatively in seeking the truth of verse 12, we see Paul uses the Rabbinic illustration: “Can you imagine going into a room where someone is sitting behind

a veil – a thin curtain. There’s a light on in the room, but not very effective where they are sitting. This could be found frequently in the East. They can see you perfectly, but you can’t see them. You can just make out their shape. Then the veil is taken away! Then you *shall know fully, even as you have been fully known*.

When the veil has been taken away would you really want it to be replaced again? When Prophecy, tongues and knowledge are gone, you certainly don’t want to go back to them.

How temporary are the gifts? Has been our second question. The answer is that they will disappear. Two of them by being done away and one of them by petering out. All sometime during Church history.

3. The third question is this: When will this disappearance of the gifts take place? All we have said so far is sometime between Paul’s writing and the Second Coming. But when?

We can’t be very specific about tongues, except to say this. The ‘future middle’ tense of the verb means that when a thing happens – it happens. So when Paul says that tongues will cease, he means that when they cease – they cease. They could never, ever be started again. Like a car that has a seized engine. Won’t go again. If you were describing that in Greek, and you knew it was going to happen, you would use the ‘future middle’. You would be saying that if the car was to break down by a seized engine it would never go again. Paul says that about tongues.

So we now know that when tongues ceased: they ceased for good! And we know when tongues ceased – in the Second Century. They did in deed, peter out, just as Paul said. They got less and less until they went altogether.<sup>19</sup> So we have to conclude that the tongues today are not the tongues of which Paul was speaking.

But how about prophecy and knowledge? Because he says that they will be ‘done away’! These were revelatory gifts. They were gifts of revelation. In verse 9 he emphasises the phrase, ‘in part’ referring to knowledge and prophecy. We could put it like this: “In part we ‘know’ and in part we ‘prophecy’”. There was nothing wrong with the prophecy of those individuals who did so in the Corinthian church. It wasn’t defective it didn’t have any flaws in it. But when these prophecies were given all that was achieved was less than the total picture. It was ‘in part’. Similarly, there was nothing wrong with the knowledge – meaning perceptions of God. And when it was spoken there was no flaw in it, but what was missing was that it was less than the total picture. It was incomplete. The prophecy and the knowing were both ‘in part’.

<sup>19</sup> Until the Montanists tried to revive them and then a little later until the Pentecostals tried to revive them in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Like all the heresies of the past several Centuries, they all happened earlier and were debunked. History repeats! <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montanism>

“Now,” says Paul, “it is a general rule that when the complete comes, verse 10, “the partial ceases.” We might well illustrate from Olyott’s personal experience:<sup>20</sup> (see footnote) Why should I we use the partial? The whole has made the partial superfluous. Redundant. That which is ‘in part’ has been done away, because that which is perfect has come.

At this point we pause until next week, when we develop the logic that we have found so far and discover what is and when the ‘perfect’ is.

[2532]

**Pray for God's grace, through the Spirit of Christ to live in us all, that we, may live the new life made possible by the Spirit, for all the saints present today. Amen.**

<sup>20</sup> “In 1964 I was given a copy of Matthew Henry’s commentary in 1 volume. I was very pleased with it. Indeed and used it for years. However, having used it for years, I eventually found that it wasn’t complete. The publishers had cut out about 2/3 of what Matthew Henry had written (in the six volume version). Everything that was there was Matthew Henry. It was pure unadulterated, Matthew Henry. But, it wasn’t all of Matthew Henry. Some time later, with great kindness, I received the complete Matthew Henry. And I have to say that since I received the ‘complete’, I haven’t used that which was ‘in part’ even once! Why should I? When I have the whole!”