

# A Biblical Analysis of the Gifts of the Spirit in Pentecostalism

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## Introduction.

I was deeply involved in the sermon I was preaching. It seemed as if the congregation was too. What happened next came without any warning. I was cut off mid sentence by what sounded like the howl of a dog that was being choked to death. I stopped and looked toward the back corner of the church, from which the strange noise was coming. My family, which was sitting in the front row, had come close to jumping off the bench. No one else in the congregation seemed too disturbed by the sound. They were used to it. But this was the first time I was introduced to the gifts of the Spirit in that small, back-hill church of Jamaica. It happened once or twice more during the service, each time interrupting my preaching.

After the service I asked the lady who had interrupted our worship with her outbursts why she had done this. She told me that she could not help herself. The Spirit had taken hold of her heart and voice and she could not hold the loud shrieks in. Incidents of this sort led me to my first earnest study of the Holiness and Pentecostal movements and their influence. This also led me to examine more carefully the particular incidents of speaking in tongues, healings, and revelations recorded in Scripture in order to come to

a biblical understanding of them.

The gifts of the Spirit (*charismata*, which is Greek for "gifts") are vital to the Pentecostal religion. The bestowing of these gifts of the Spirit on the members of the church is the one, outstanding tenet of Pentecostal thought and worship. Though Pentecostalism claims to believe in all of the various truths of the Bible, nevertheless the overwhelming emphasis in its teaching and in its worship is baptism in or with the Holy Spirit. This baptism results in many different "charismata," gifts. Anne S. White, a writer, teacher, and counselor in the charismatic movement during the 1960s and 70s, in her book *Healing Adventure* uses I Corinthians 12:4-7 to enumerate what she believes to be the nine essential "gifts of the Spirit." "... St. Paul described the nine gifts (or manifestations) as: the utterance of wisdom ... the utterance of knowledge... faith ... gifts...gifts of healing... the working of miracles... prophecy the ability to distinguish between spirits ... various kinds of tongues ... the interpretation of tongues."

Out of these nine "charismata," Pentecostals place the most emphasis on three: speaking in tongues, gifts of healing, and prophecy or on-going revelation. There is a proliferation of writings on these gifts and their attainment, and they are available everywhere. Most of these books use personal experience as the foundation for their claim that these gifts of the Spirit are yet present in the church of today. Though many Scripture passages are quoted by these authors, none of the passages are carefully exegeted to discover the validity of the "charismata" today. Rev. James Slay, a minister and teacher in the Church of God, has written a book entitled *This We Believe*, in which he attempts to prove from Scripture the presence of the gifts of the Spirit in the modern church. Some of his arguments we will be considering.

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## **I. The Gifts in Pentecostal Thought.**

### **A. Speaking in tongues.**

We mentioned that there are three gifts of the Spirit that the Pentecostal movement emphasizes above all the others: speaking in tongues, faith healing, and on-going revelation. Of these three, speaking in tongues is the most prominent.

The first recorded incident of speaking in tongues is found in the events that transpired on the day of Pentecost. In fact, it is in this event that the presence of the Spirit and speaking in tongues are linked. This is also why those who today yet maintain the gift of speaking in tongues are often referred to as Pentecostals.

We read of this event in Acts 2:1-4:

*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come; they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting, And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

It is to this third sign of the Spirit's presence in the church, viz., speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance, that the Pentecostal calls our attention. He does so because, of these three signs, this was the only one that continued after that day of Pentecost. The miracle that was performed that day is easily explained: when the Spirit entered into the hearts of the disciples of Christ, they began to speak in "other tongues," that is to say, in foreign languages. These men, who were simple Galileans and not scholars in foreign languages, suddenly by means of the Holy Spirit began to speak in many different foreign languages so that many who were present from other countries could understand what they preached on that day. Neither did this sign of the outpouring of the Spirit cease upon that day.

The Pentecostal directs our attention to what he believes are four other instances in Acts that speak of this.

The first is found in Acts 8:14-17, where we find the church of Jerusalem sending Peter and John to Samaria, where the evangelist Philip had preached.

*Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as of yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."*

Although it is not explicitly stated, it is argued, and that reasonably so, that, when Peter and John laid their hands upon the Samaritans, the Spirit came upon these Samaritans so that, as a result, they spoke in other tongues. This is why Simon the Sorcerer wanted to buy the power to bestow this gift on others.

The second instance of the pouring out of the Spirit on someone which resulted in speaking in tongues is that of the apostle Paul himself and his conversion in Acts 9:17. "And Ananias went his way and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." This verse does not necessarily establish the claim of the Pentecostals that Paul spoke in tongues at that time, but it does establish the fact that the Holy Spirit was poured out on him. Later too, in I Corinthians 14:18, Paul testifies to

his speaking in tongues.

The third instance of speaking in tongues is recorded for us in Acts 10 and 11, where we read of Peter's preaching the gospel to the household of Cornelius, a Gentile centurion. In verses 44-46 of Acts 10 we read:

*While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.*

In this instance there can be no debate. The miracle of speaking in tongues indeed took place upon the conversion of Cornelius and his household.

The fourth and final instance recorded in Acts is found in chapter 19:1-7 where twelve Ephesian men, who had heard the preaching of John the Baptist and were baptized by him, now heard the gospel of Christ by the mouth of Paul. Paul explained that John had already then preached and baptized in the name of Christ. These men were then baptized by Paul, and the Spirit fell on them, and we read that they spoke in tongues.

These are the only instances we read of in Acts. But attention is also drawn by the Pentecostal to Mark 16:15-18.

*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

Our attention is drawn to the undeniable Word of our Lord Himself: this miracle of tongues would take place with the coming of the Spirit. Tongue-speaking, therefore, was an activity that definitely took place in the early church. This is evident, too, in I Corinthians 12-14, where this whole subject is addressed by Paul. Obviously, in the churches established by Paul on his missionary journeys, speaking in tongues also took place.

Concerning these proofs of speaking in tongues, Rev. James Slay writes (p.90):

*Of such spiritual endowments were to be for only those who lived in Apostolic times, why would the Holy Spirit allow such information to be included in His word? Why should we be told, in such precise terminology, about the regulation of a gift if it were not in the plan of God for us to be given such? Why tell the children of a pauper how to spend the inheritance of one who has left them nothing?*

Again Slay writes (p. 91):

*The Holy Spirit baptism and the tongues phenomenon have an affinity that is unmistakable. This experience is not the "uprage of the subliminal" nor is it "babblings" of an ignorant population segment. We have scriptural evidence for this remarkable spiritual manifestation, and of late the cloud of witnesses, testifying to its reality, is becoming of such moment as to elicit the attention of national press.*

The argument that is adduced by the Pentecostal therefore is simple: unless proof is brought to the contrary, the Bible teaches that this gift of the Spirit is in the church today. There is no reason to believe that this gift has disappeared. The reason it cannot be traced into the church after early times is simply that the church apostatized and neglected this gift.

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## **B. The gift of healing.**

The same reasoning is applied to the gift of healing. Jesus Himself, it is reasoned, spent the majority of His earthly ministry healing people. From His example to us it is evident that He came to heal not only our souls but our bodies too. It was this gift of healing He has promised to His church after Pentecost. Again, we read of that in Mark 16:17-18 (quoted above). Several different instances of healing are recorded for us in the New Testament. Peter was given power to heal (e.g., Acts 3:1-11; 5: 15). The deacon Philip, when he preached in Samaria, healed people who were sick of the palsy (Acts 8:5-7). We read in Acts 6:8 that to the deacon Stephen was also given the power to perform miracles and wonders among the people, though we are not told just exactly what these were. The apostle Paul on many different occasions healed the sick and cast out demons (e.g., Acts 14:8-10; 19:11, 12).

Just as with the gift of speaking in tongues, so also with this gift of healing, the Pentecostal reasons that if Scripture does not explicitly state that this gift has disappeared, we certainly may not erroneously reason that it has. This gift Christ yet gives to men today. Not everyone receives this gift, however only those who are able to exercise themselves mightily in the faith.

In fact, together with this gift the charismatic has developed his whole idea of the power of prayer, an idea that has taken the church world by storm. He claims that if only one believer who has been given the special power of faith and prayer by the Holy Spirit prays fervently enough he can heal another. Or if this does not work, then believers can band together in prayer groups or in prayer chains and storm God's throne with their prayers that as a result they will be able to heal the sick! Faith healing and fervent effectual prayer go hand in hand with the charismatic.

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### **C. The gift of on-going revelation.**

Finally, there is also the gift of on-going revelation. This particular gift of the Holy Spirit is based on the prophecy of Joel which Peter quoted in his sermon on Pentecost in Acts 2:17, 18:

*And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy...*

Here, too, is a gift of the Spirit, it is emphasized by the Pentecostal, that existed in the early church. Although the instances of it are not as frequent as with the other gifts, they are there. For example, in Acts 21:8, 9 we read of the four daughters of Philip who prophesied concerning Paul's capture by the Jews. Likewise, it is pointed out that the church in Corinth (I Cor. 12-14) was deeply involved in prophesying. From these passages and a few others, we can assume that the gift of prophecy still continues in the church today. Nowhere does the Bible inform us that this gift is no longer present with the church.

Neither is this gift to be equated with the preaching, in the mind of the Pentecostal. This custom of some churches leaves no room for the spontaneous work of the Spirit. There are those in the church, however, who by spontaneous utterance of the Spirit speak words that are extra-scriptural. They can still today predict future events by means of the Spirit. The Spirit takes hold of the heart and tongue of a person who is exercising himself in the Spirit and leads him to speak things that he cannot control, just as did the prophets in the old dispensation.

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### **D. How these gifts are acquired.**

These are the charismata, the gifts of the Spirit. And it is on the acquiring of such gifts that the worship service in Pentecostal churches focuses much of its attention. Frederick Dale Brunner in his book *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, writes (pp. 132, 133):

*The Pentecostal church meeting has been described as pew-centered, and the description is apt. In contrast to generally pulpit-centered Protestantism and altar-centered Catholicism, Pentecostalism finds its center in the believing community. The Pentecostals are concerned, as one put it, that "we never reach the point where our congregations are composed of on-looking spectators rather than participating worshippers. To avoid this deflection Pentecostals attempt to offer every believer an*

*opportunity actively and personally to participate in the church's life. The paramount focus for this participation is the church meeting. Here the gifts are to find their most proper and prominent sphere of operation.*

There is a certain excitement about the Pentecostal worship service. Everyone in the church is led to feel a certain anticipation or readiness to receive one or more of these gifts.

All kinds of means are used to evoke this high level of emotion: soul-stirring music, a powerful speaker, testimonies, shouted hallelujahs and amens, even laughter. Then it begins to happen. The souls are stirred and the Spirit is said to enter the worship of the church. People break out in tongues, others mount the pulpit and claim to be interpreting the tongues, while still others bring a word that God has told them personally. Some sing a song or get up and dance. Some may fall on the floor and shake uncontrollably. At times there is even special time that is set aside when certain men are given opportunity to heal the sick.

This then is the Pentecostal experience. These are the charismata --the gifts of the Spirit.

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## **II. A Biblical Analysis of the Gifts of the Spirit.**

### **A. In general.**

It is important that we analyze the arguments of Pentecostals on the basis of God's Word. The Word of God is the objective standard according to which every teaching must be tested to see if it is true. This means that we do not merely in a superficial way read a few passages of the Bible that seem to say something they do not. It means that we examine the Word of God to see what the Spirit truly says to the church.

This booklet does not intend to analyze every aspect of the Pentecostal's teachings on the gifts of the Spirit. This would, no doubt, take a book. What constitutes proper speaking in tongues by the Pentecostal can be criticized; what is behind the so-called "supernatural" healings can be exposed; the improper use of prayer can be refuted; the abuse and misuse of the worship service can easily be critiqued. But the aim of this booklet is specifically to analyze positively the biblical position on the gifts of the Spirit.

There are two criticisms of the charismatic movement's undue stress on the acquiring of the gifts of the Spirit.

First of all, the emphasis that this movement places on the gifts of the Spirit robs God's people of the necessary knowledge of the Scriptures. This is not to say that the Pentecostal movement does not quote and use many different passages of Scripture. Their writings are full of them. Neither does this mean that there is no time at all (though it is little) spent on preaching in the worship of the Pentecostal church. But the stress which is placed in worship and life on the acquisition of the gifts of the Spirit discourages any careful study of God's Word. In the foreword to James Slay's study in doctrine the admission is made:

*The Church of God knows what it believes and preaches, and prints what it believes, but to this point the Church has not systematized it in a definitive work. That such a work has not been completed does not represent a lack of interest in the theology. Rather it probably comes from our historic dependence upon the sheer Word as our doctrinal guide.*

That is quite an admission for a Pentecostal denomination that had been in existence for over seventy-five years at the time of the writing of that book! There is no emphasis on objective knowledge in the Scriptures. The Old Testament Scriptures are virtually ignored. The New Testament is used, in the main, as a means to prepare the members of the church to receive the gifts of the Spirit or the joy of rebaptism. That this is true is manifest in the almost total lack of biblical proof for their contention that the charismata still exist today! It is also evident from the total disregard for the true work of the Spirit taught in Scripture. Truly, what the prophet Amos spoke in Amos 8:11 characterizes this movement: there is a famine of hearing the Word of God!

A second critique that can be leveled against this movement, generally speaking, is that it is man-centered rather than God-centered or even Christ-centered. The worship of the Pentecostal does not center in the preaching of the Word. Again, not that there is not occasional preaching. But there is little stress placed on hearing the voice of God through a careful exposition and explanation of His Word by one who is called and trained to do so. The worship of the Pentecostal is, rather, caught up in trying to prove to others that one has the gift of the Spirit in him. Attention is called to the man who has the ability to speak "off the cuff," so to speak, in front of people. It is drawn to that singer with the most beautiful voice or that one who is experienced in making sounds that might seem like he is speaking in an unknown tongue. This breeds disappointment and despair in the hapless souls who are trying still to find the Spirit. They begin to feel like second-rate Christians!

There are other criticisms that can also be made of the stress that the charismatic places on the acquiring of the gifts of the Spirit, but we wish at this point to analyze positively the biblical position on these gifts.

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## B. Specifically.

James Slay identifies correctly the point of disagreement between the Pentecostal and those who deny his claims. He writes (p.92):

*Of this experience (speaking in tongues - WB) was to have been for only the Apostolic period, there must have been some logical reason for its not being extended to the rest of the church. Did the apostles, who had all known the Lord, need this special endowment to shore up their faith? Had the contemporaries of Jesus need of this extraordinary sign to convince them, in spite of the fact that they too had seen and heard our Lord?*

These are rhetorical questions that Slay intends to answer with a "no." Our answer to these questions, however, is "yes"! Both the apostles and the church of Christ at that time *did* need this extraordinary sign to convince them of the work of the Holy Spirit in the church! This rests in the fact that speaking in tongues is a sign! A sign! Here is the one term that very few pay attention to in this entire discussion.

A sign is, in the very nature of the case, something that disappears when the reality comes. When we see a sign along a road advertising that a restaurant is coming at a certain exit, then that sign points us to the reality that is coming. When we pass that exit, however, there is no more sign. Why? Because when the reality comes, then there is no more need for the sign. That is the nature of a sign. It disappears when replaced by the reality.

Well, speaking in tongues and faith healing were both signs. Is that not what Jesus said about them in Mark 16, that "*signs*" shall follow them that believe?

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### 1. Tongues.

This is true, first of all, of the gift of speaking in tongues. Paul writes in I Corinthians 14:22, "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." The question is, of what was the speaking in tongues a sign? Certainly, it did not simply point to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. Then either this third sign of Pentecost would have ceased on Pentecost with the other two, or the other two would still be prevalent in the church today too. The meaning of the sign of speaking in tongues is found specifically in this: it was a sign that the Spirit was poured out *on all nations, peoples, and languages of the earth!* This sign of speaking in foreign languages was meant to prove conclusively to every one that God would now gather His church from all peoples and kindreds of the earth. Salvation in Christ through the Spirit was

no longer going to be limited to the Jews but was going to be given to people of every language, race, and nation under heaven. Of that, speaking in tongues was a sign.

The apostles who had known Christ, and others who had seen and known our Lord, *needed* this extraordinary sign to convince them that salvation was no longer of the Jews! Why did the disciples of Jesus speak in different tongues on the day of Pentecost? In order that Jews from all over the world, Jews out of the various nations of the world, might be brought to faith and repentance by the work of the Spirit.

Why did the Samaritans in Acts 8 speak in tongues after Peter and John laid their hands on them? To prove, to the skeptical Jews who had had for centuries ingrained into them that salvation was only of the Jews, that the Samaritans now also shared, with the Jewish converts, in the blessings of Christ which the Spirit pours out upon His church. The Samaritans were hated by the Jews as foreigners to the covenant. Now God proved that the Samaritan would be a part of that church and covenant. How? Who could deny the existence of the Spirit in their hearts if they spoke in tongues as on the day of Pentecost?

The same was true when Peter went to Cornelius and his household and preached to them and they were saved by means of that preaching. Who would believe that the Gentiles could be a part of the church, could be the objects of the Spirit's work in their hearts? But when the Spirit worked in them, then they too spoke in tongues the sign of the presence of the Spirit. And when the Jews in Jerusalem contended with Peter about this, Peter simply said, in Acts 11:17, "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" To this word the Jews then responded in verse 18, "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

This sign no doubt accompanied the preaching of Paul in other places too. It did evidently in Ephesus, where the twelve Ephesians who were first baptized by John the Baptist's baptism were now clearly shown that they too were incorporated by that baptism into the blood of Christ. How was the church of Ephesus, as well as Paul, assured of this? These men spoke in tongues. Obviously, this same sign was used in the church in Corinth. This is indeed evident in I Corinthians 12-14. When Paul writes to this church, however, it was to admonish them for their abuse of this once good gift. "Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not!" Tongues are a sign to prove, to those who did not believe, that the Spirit could be poured out upon the Gentiles, not to those who indeed believe that it is. Paul's point in I Corinthians 14:22 then is this: why are you, who believe that the Spirit is among you, still using a sign that is meant to prove this to those who do not believe this fact?

In chapter 12 of I Corinthians, Paul places this gift on the bottom of his list, in importance. In chapter 14 Paul places strict limitations on the use of the gift -- the women may not use it in the worship service, neither can one use it unless there is another who can interpret what is said. In chapter 13 Paul states literally (this does not come out in the English translations of the Greek) in verse 8: "whether there be tongues, they shall cease of themselves." Why? What is the logical reason for their end? They were but a sign that God would now gather His church from out of all nations of the world. Once that fact, once that reality, was established, there was no more reason for the sign. It slowly vanished. The church now knows that the Spirit works in the hearts of all believers from every nation and kindred and kingdom of this world. That is why there are no more tongues today. That is why they were needed only during the apostolic period.

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## 2. Healings.

What about healings? Jesus tells us that these were a sign too in Mark 16. Of what were they a sign? Well, they clearly did not signify the same thing as did the sign of speaking in tongues. The gift of healing was not a sign used on Pentecost to prove that the Spirit was poured out. Paul does, however, reveal to us of what they were a sign. Notice: II Corinthians 12:12, "Truly," Paul writes to the Corinthians, "the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." In Acts 4:29, 30 the apostle Peter asks God to confirm the apostles by means of the sign of healings: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak the word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus." Here was a sign that indicated to others apostolic authority and power. Paul used this to prove to those in Corinth who vocally questioned his apostleship that he was an apostle.

It was to the twelve disciples, and a little later to seventy men who followed Him, that Jesus during His earthly ministry gave authority to cast out spirits and heal people of their sicknesses. After Pentecost we no longer read of these seventy men. We read only of the apostles performing the work of healing others. There are only two other men who were not apostles, Stephen and Philip, who were given the authority to heal. We read of no one else receiving this power to heal people. This was given strictly to those men who were appointed by God to the work of establishing the New Testament church. It was given to the apostles only, and then given by them to two others who were instrumental in establishing the church. When these men died, this special authority and power to heal died with them. It did so because it was a sign! There was no more need to prove the authority of these men and their special office in the church since they were now gone. The church was established. Ministers of the gospel were

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ordained to carry on the work of the ministry. Apostolic authority was no longer needed. The sign was no longer needed.

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### *3. On-going revelation.*

What about the gift of on-going revelation? It is not difficult to prove the fallacy involved in the claim that men still have this gift today. Some months ago I received in my e-mail the writings of a man who claimed that God had spoken to him by direct revelation. He was then burdened by God, so he explained, to share this all important revelation with others. So, he sent me the first installment with the explanation that the second one would be coming shortly. I could not help but chuckle when I read some of what he wrote. Grammatically his writings were horrific! Strangely enough, he also tried to write in the old English, as if this lent an air of authority to what he wrote. Evidently, God had spoken to him in old English. Besides all of this, what he wrote was nonsense, some of it hardly understandable. I wrote him back and told him I was not interested in the second installment.

Some years ago a Pentecostal radio pastor declared to his audience that God had appeared to him. He said that God had told him that if his followers did not come up with some exorbitant amount of money (the amount escapes me) God was going to take his life. The man soon after was able to raise that money and then some! Do you see where the foolishness of on-going revelation leads us?

Revelation was not a sign of the work of the Spirit in the early church. Revelation, however, was indeed given to a man by the Spirit. The Spirit used revelation in order to establish the objective record of God's Word. Once that canon of God's Word was established, revelation ceased. There is no longer any need for it today. We have contained in the Scripture, according to its own testimony (II Tim. 3:15-17; II Pet. 1:19-21), the infallible standard of all truth. We have there all that is necessary to know for salvation. We do not need any on-going revelation of men.

We live in the last days. John tells us that in these days there are going to be false prophets claiming that what they say is the truth. John tell us in I John 4, the first few verses, that we must try these spirits! How do we do that? By judging what they say over against the objective Word of God.

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## **III. An Admonition Concerning the Gifts**

There are two warnings that we must heed when considering the error of Pentecostalism. First, it is not enough to know what is *not* the work of the Spirit. In this booklet we have only exposed the error with respect to the work of the Spirit. As believers we are also obliged to know what the proper work of the Spirit is. Take time out to study that. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ who reveals to us the work of Christ for us on the cross. It is that Spirit that works in our hearts, quietly and powerfully, the blessings of salvation that Christ has merited for us in His death and resurrection. Study these blessings!

One other warning: let our worship and our lives in this world be theocentric, God-centered. Much of the church world has caved in to Pentecostal influence. Perhaps many have not embraced the extremes of this movement, but many have given in to the reasoning behind this movement. The face of worship is changing, the idea of prayer is altered, the need for doctrine is belittled. Feeling has replaced objective truth! We must be careful that these trends not creep into those churches where we are members! May we stand on the Word of God. May God's name be glorified. May He be the beginning and the end of all our lives and of our worship. To God, who sent His Son to die for sinners, be the glory.