

September 2020

Editor, Keith Sharp

Designer, William Stewart



- unless otherwise noted, answers to questions by Keith Sharp -

SEPTEMBER 2020 | Part 2 of 2

Due to size restrictions with our email server, we need to split this month's MOTT into two portions. This is part 2 of 2.

In This Issue...

- **The History of the Institutional Controversy (Part 6)** | *Jefferson David Tant*
- **"The Goodness And Severity Of God"** | *Jim Mickells*
- **I Forgot to Live** | *Mike Thomas*
- **Decently and In Order** | *William Stewart*
- **Finding Contentment** | *Trevor Campbell*
- **What Was the Purpose of Miracles? (Part 2)** | *Julius C. Nwankwo*

Finally, brethren

**WHATEVER
THINGS**

are true
are noble
are just
are pure
are lovely
are of good report

PHILIPPIANS
4:8

IF THERE IS ANY VIRTUE AND IF THERE IS ANYTHING PRAISEWORTHY —
meditate on these things.

You can download this month's Meditate On These Things as a PDF file by clicking [here](#). Also, an archive of past MOTT issues is available at christistheway.com.

The History of the Institutional Controversy (Part 6)

Jefferson David Tant | Hendersonville, Tennessee, USA

What Does the Future Hold?

Is there any hope for reconciliation? The history of divisions does not present an optimistic picture. Historian Ed Harrell reported after a meeting with institutional brethren in Arlington, Texas in 1973:

"Does anyone seriously believe that...the thousands of unscriptural promotions dreamed up will...suddenly, or slowly, begin to disappear? Of course not. No man could bring it off; not 20 or 50 or 200 men could bring it off. And not only could they not, they will not bring it about."

Steve Wolfgang remarked:

"Such a movement to turn the clock back would require that institutional brethren in thousands of places make a conscious decision to place fellowship with their non-institutional brethren on a higher plane than the support of human institutions—and I think everyone knows that simply isn't going to happen."

Another preacher expressed such a possibility in these words:

"It isn't just supporting an orphanage anymore. The liberal church in town here split this congregation almost eighteen years ago over the orphanage issue—but ironically doesn't support one to this day! What they have done is to accept people we have withdrawn from,

no questions asked; or accept in full fellowship people who have left here after hearing preaching they didn't like on divorce and re-marriage, the role of the Holy Spirit, examination of premillennial claims or of the Masonic Lodge—all of them 'shaken in' with the clear understanding that they will not hear any preaching on those of other controversial issues. Don't let someone tell you it's just 'sending a few dollars a month to an orphanage'—it's how we look at the Bible, the church, living the Christian life, and much more. The longer it goes on, the more incompatible we will become."

The division is seen in an exchange between two preachers at a meeting in Leakey, Texas where the two sides seeking to come to a meeting of the minds. Joe Fitch was there, and reported this exchange between two preachers:

"One preacher said, 'Give us the Scripture authorizing the things you are doing and advocating; that is all we ask.' A prominent preacher retorted, 'Give us Scripture! Give us Scripture! You can teach an old green parrot to say 'Give us Scripture.' That is all you fellows say.' I was amazed! Some churches could surely use an old green parrot to cry out, 'Give us Scripture! Give us Scripture!'...Few preachers are saying it."

Paul Williams tells of a discussion on institutionalism in South Africa. An American preacher defended the questioned practices by saying, "These practices must be scriptural, for brethren in the U.S. have practiced these things for many years." The African preacher responded: "Brother, if we were practicing the same things we had done for years, we would have cooked you white men and had you for lunch."

Even among institutional people there has been alarm, as evidenced by a 1986 "Expression of Concern" signed by hundreds of institutional preachers. This document was specifically directed toward the teaching of theistic evolution and other concerns at Abilene Christian University, but addressed several other issues.

"I. We are deeply disturbed over the liberalism that is so evident in the brotherhood today. By 'liberalism' we mean especially the following items, though not excluding other specifics that could be mentioned.

1. There is a drifting from Bible-centered, definitive, distinctive doctrine that once characterized our preaching. Presently, uncertain sounds and weak messages emanate from many pulpits among us. Brethren are becoming accustomed to diluted and polluted preaching. We are rapidly approaching the point where many of our people, including preachers and elders no longer know the difference between true Christianity and the corrupted forms of it so prevalent about us.
2. There is a concerted effort on the part of some of our brethren to restructure the organization, worship and work of the church along sectarian lines, thus tending to denominationalize the New Testament body of Christ.
3. A spirit of doctrinal compromise and fellowshipping those in blatant religious error has permeated our ranks.
4. The world has made alarming inroads into the church. Instead of the church influencing the world for righteousness, as it should, the world has adversely affected many brethren in matters of morality and conduct of life.
5. The typical emphasis of the denominational world on recreation, entertainment, and solving the social ills of society has been incorporated into the thinking and programs of many congregations, supplanting the God-given work of meeting the desperate spiritual needs of those born within and without the body of Christ.

No "anti" could have said it better. (to be continued)

"The Goodness And Severity Of God"

Jim Mickells | Lewisburg, Tennessee, USA

"Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you,

goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off” (Romans 11:22).

There are great numbers of people, it seems to me, in the religious world today who only want to hear sermons on the grace, mercy, love and the goodness of God. All certainly need to hear such lessons. Yet Paul in his epistle to the Romans reminds his readers about the Father’s severity and that He is a God of vengeance as well (Romans 12:19; quoted from Deuteronomy 32:35). In Hebrews 10:30 this same verse is used from Deuteronomy with the added warning, “It is a fearful thing to fall in the hands of the living God” (verse 31). God is not only good, but He can be severe as well.

Consider – The apostle wanted to stir the minds of his audience. This word “consider” is defined as “universally, to perceive, notice, discern, discover” (**Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament**, 173). They needed to seriously contemplate not only the goodness and graciousness of the Father but also His strictness and severity.

When you think of the goodness of God what comes to mind? That He is our Creator and that we are made in His image (Genesis 1:26)? Do you think of all the material blessings received from His bountiful hand day by day (Matthew 6:25-33)? Is consideration given to your family, friends, and love ones who play such an integral part in your life (Genesis 2:18; Psalm 127:3)? I hear many when praying to our Heavenly Father, thanking Him for the good country in which we live with all its freedoms and the relative peace which we enjoy. All these blessings are genuinely great, along with thousands of others, yet this is not what Paul had in mind. The goodness of Jehovah of which he refers is the saving of the souls of the Gentiles by grace through faith (Romans 11:11). The greatest display of the Father’s goodness is through the gift of His Son to redeem all from their sins. Consider the goodness of God!

It is not difficult for us to recall many cases of God’s severity scattered throughout the Bible. The inhabitants of the first world were destroyed by the flood because their hearts were only evil continually (Genesis 6:5-6). The lives of Nadab and Abihu taken from them because they offered profane fire when burning incense to Jehovah which He did not command (Leviticus 10:1-3). In the New Testament when Ananias and Sapphira lied about the amount of money which they laid at the apostles’ feet, both breathed their last (Acts 5:5,10). Yet the severity which the apostle wanted his Gentile readers to think on was the Jews being cut-off from their relationship with God because of their unbelief (Romans 11:20). How tragic it would be for a person to lose his soul because of a failure to continue in faith, trust, and obedience to the Lord. Consider the severity of God!

Continue – **The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament** defines this word as, “Metaphorically, to continue in any state or course, to be constant or persevere in.” This should be a warning to everyone, even though we have been saved by the grace of God through our faith in Jesus Christ, one must remain faithful and loyal in His service. He promises to save only those who are obedient to Him (Hebrews 5:8-9). John, when writing to the church at Smyrna, told those members not to fear any of the things they were about to suffer. But they were also instructed to “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10). I have known many through the years who obviously did not allow consideration of the goodness and severity of God motivate them to faithful service. They did not continue in the goodness of God!

Otherwise – What if I do not continue in God’s goodness? “You also will be cut off” (Romans 11:22). The word “otherwise” means, “Before questions implying a neg. answer and before similar hypothetical clauses, it stands in the sense of ‘for,’ by implication meaning for then, for else, for otherwise” (**The Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament**). One of the things Paul was warning the Gentiles about was manifesting a haughty spirit toward the Jews because they had been cut-off from the favor of the Lord while He had grafted them in (Romans 11:18-20). They are made aware of the fact the same things could happen to them. They could be cut-off as well (Romans 11:21). God wanted to graft the Jews back into the olive tree, and such was possible if they would not continue in unbelief (Romans 11:23). There was a lack of faith and trust on the part of these Jews. They were disobedient to their Father rejecting the only source

of their salvation, which came through faith in His Son. Otherwise, continue in His goodness or “You will also be cut off!

May we all be motivated to faithful service to the Lord as we think about the goodness of God in the giving of His only Son on the cross to redeem us from our sins. Hopefully, we will never experience the severity of God, being cut-off from His grace and favor, by continuing to love and serve Him all the days of lives. “Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God.”

I Forgot to Live

Mike Thomas | Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA

First, I was dying to finish high school and start college,
And then, I was dying to finish college and start work.
And then, I was dying to marry and have children.
And then, I was dying for my children to go to school so I could return to work.
And then, I was dying to retire.
And now, I am dying.....
And suddenly, I forgot to live!
(author unknown)

How many of us are experiencing the same reality? We get so preoccupied with every other moment in life except the one we possess. We wallow in the past and worry about the future yet fail to recognize the mountain of blessings God has surrounded us with today. Solomon was right. “All that is coming is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 11:8). Thus, “Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire” (6:9). We are at our best when we capture the blessings that remain in our life before they are taken away.

There is a statement in the Bible that has more power in it than all the self-help books combined: “But godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Timothy 6:6). We live in a world that has it backwards—great gain comes from being discontent and unholy. Happiness is found in the next accomplishment, the next paycheck, the next gadget, next vacation, next pill, next bottle, next fling, next relationship, next property, next accolade, next congregation, next community, and next unrestrained lust. What a fantastic lie the devil has sold us! He has done an amazing job at getting us to look everywhere else except right in front of us. Consequently, mankind has lost the secret formula for happiness: satisfaction and God. Take either component away and we will never find the peace that surpasses human explanation and reasoning.

Godliness with contentment is why Daniel prayed with thanksgiving when the government made it life-threatening and illegal for him to pray.

*“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and **gave thanks** before his God, as was his custom since early days” (Daniel 6:10).*

He could have just as easily cried, complained, or terrorized his community, but Daniel chose a more noble response. Instead of returning evil with evil, he lowered himself before His powerful Creator and not only petitioned His guidance, he praised Him for the blessings that remained. Even in the midst of terminal conditions, Daniel found reasons to thank God (perhaps for the journey of life itself, for God’s continued presence and fellowship, or for the hope that remained). Amazing! His world was crashing down around him, yet he still found reasons to praise God and exercise faith, as was his “custom since early days.” Fascinating.

Are we forgetting to live like this? Are we wasting our days because “the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things” (Mark 4:19) have choked out God’s word from our hearts? Do we still remember that the ultimate aim in life is to set our minds on things above and not on

things of the earth? Are we still looking at the unseen realm of eternity during our busy days?

I am the first to admit that it is extremely easy to lose sight of this, especially when a tsunami of events comes upon us. But all we have to do is apply what we have sung for years:

*"When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
when you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
count your many blessings, name them one by one,
and it will surprise you what the Lord has done"*
("Count Your Blessings," Johnson Oatman, Jr.).

Godliness with contentment is great gain. It helps the man of God remember that his work will always be there, but his family will not, so he will take time each day to appreciate them. The godly woman who is content will understand the same and cherish her husband and children. Wise husbands and wives are satisfied with one another because they know they can overcome any obstacle with faith in God. Godly children will do their part to honor and respect their parents, and live fuller, longer lives.

Faith is the foundation of life. Pausing to reflect on the temporal nature of our earthly "portion" is what brings happiness. This is what helped Paul find satisfaction in any circumstance. Whether he had much or whether he had little, Paul would be rich because he knew God was still near and some of blessings still remained. For, he wrote:

"I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things, I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:11-13).

May God grant us the wisdom to live with the same perspective during our brief stay here. We may forget a lot of things in life but let us never forget to live.

"Truly the light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to behold the sun; but if a man lives many years and rejoices in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they will be many. All that is coming is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 11:7-8).

Decently And In Order

William Stewart | Odessa, Ontario, Canada

In all things, we want our service before the Lord to be according to His will, not rooted in church tradition, popular culture, or personal preference. This is true both in our personal lives as we endeavour to have the light of Christ shine through us and in our assembling together for worship and study with brethren. Of this latter realm, the apostle Paul demanded, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40).

Throughout the book, Paul spoke of several issues the Corinthian church needed to address. In chapter 1, there were divisions among them (1:11-13). He commanded them to have unity (1:10). In chapter 5, they openly accepted immorality in their midst (5:1-2). He commanded them to remove the unrepentant sinner from their midst (5:4-7, 11). In chapter 11, they were misusing the Lord's Supper and treated it like a common meal (11:20-22, 33-34). He commanded them to observe the Lord's Supper in the manner the Lord Himself instituted (11:23-26) and also compelled them to examine themselves (11:27-32). In chapter 12, it appears some were exalting themselves above others regarding spiritual gifts (12:4-10) or their importance to the assembly (12:15-17). Paul affirms that whatever gift one has, it is the same Spirit who had supplied it according to the will of God (12:11). Again, God has set every member of the body where He pleases, and all are essential (12:18-25).

Chapter 12 is the first of 3 chapters that specifically address miraculous gifts. It introduces the gifts (12:4-

10). Chapter 13 speaks of the duration of the gifts (13:8-12), and chapter 14 addresses the use of miraculous gifts in the assembly. By using miraculous gifts (specifically tongues and prophecy), Paul teaches on the need for decency and order in the assembly. NOTE, even in the absence of miraculous gifts (the specific context), the assembly should still be held "decently and in order" (the general principle).

So, what did Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, identify as decent and in order?

Speak to be understood (14:1-25). Years ago, a university student from China met with us on a regular basis. He was asked one Sunday morning to lead the assembly in prayer. He did so, and I'm sure it was a fine prayer, but I gained no benefit from it. Though he started in English, his nerves quickly took over and he began to speak to God in another tongue - Mandarin. Though he is my brother in Christ, he was "speaking into the air" (14:9) and "a foreigner to me" (14:11) on that occasion. Those who are leading in the assembly need to do so in such a way that they are understood. May I further suggest that supercilious ecclesiastical disquisition - sorry, I mean, speaking above the people - is as much a violation of this principle as speaking in a foreign tongue.

One at a time (14:26-31). The folks in Corinth were certainly engaged and active when it came to their assemblies. Everyone had something they wanted to bring (14:26). The problem seems to be that such was being done with no focus on decorum or order. Imagine what it would be like to have one singing a psalm, another teaching on something, another speaking in a tongue, another giving a revelation, another supplying an interpretation - all at the same time! It was utter confusion! So, Paul gave instruction - divinely revealed instruction - about establishing order to their assembly. If there were tongue speakers, a limit was set on how many would speak, and they were to speak one at a time. Also, one person was appointed to give the interpretation. If there was no one present who had the gift of interpretation, NONE of the tongue speakers were to speak. They were to keep silent (14:27-28). Likewise among the prophets, a limit of 2 or 3 prophets were to speak, again one at a time (14:31) and others were to pay close attention or judge what was said (14:29; cf. Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1). However, if one was speaking and another had a revelation, the first was to keep silent (14:30).

Exercise self-control (14:32-33). I have heard folks who are of the charismatic persuasion speak about the Holy Spirit as though He just takes control when they are speaking by the Spirit - basically that they are just along for the ride. That is not what the apostle Paul said. In verse 32, he clearly stated, "...the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." That is, they are in control. They are not possessed by the Spirit; they have not simply become a puppet in the Spirit's hand. They have control to speak or to keep silent. Though he does not specify the tongue speaks in this verse, the same is true of them also; else he could not have truthfully recorded verse 33, "For God is not the author of confusion but of peace."

Women speaking (14:34-35). Over the past several decades it has been a hot topic in the denominational world (and among some of our brethren as well) whether a woman can do the work of an evangelist. Our present text will inevitably come up in such a conversation. However, Paul is not dealing with whether a woman can serve as a preacher - his statement is more rudimentary than that. He says she is not permitted to speak in the assembly! She is not to speak, just as the tongue speaker (14:28) and the prophet (14:30) are not to speak. Does this disqualify all speech? No. Ephesians 5:19 says we are to "...speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs..." The speech under consideration in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is authoritative speaking, just as the speech of the tongue speaker or prophet in the text. Specifically, in the context, it would seem to refer to her use of a spiritual gift, whether tongues or prophecy.

1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is a specific application of the principle that is stated in 1 Timothy 2:11-12. There Paul says a woman is not "...to teacher or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence." The Greek for "silence" here is not *sigao* (absolute silence as used in 1 Corinthians 14), but *hesuchia*, meaning "stillness, desistance from bustle or language - quietness, silence" (Strong's). A woman's participation in the assembly must accord with God's will. The Holy Spirit said she should not find herself in a position

where she is teaching or exercising authority over a man. This certainly means she cannot be a preacher in the local church, but further, a woman must be careful about the nature of her participation in Bible discussions, lest by the nature of her comments she inadvertently (or intentionally) seize control.

Some will explain this away by saying it was a cultural thing, and that it no longer applies. The text identifies the Law of Moses (1 Corinthians 14:34) and the order of creation (1 Timothy 2:13), not culture as the source for this teaching. Creation and the distinct roles which God gave to men and women in the family are equally applied to the assembly of God's people.

Paul closed out our text by affirming his authority. In verse 36, he challenges those who might oppose what he said, asking if the word of God came from them? In verse 37, he says those who are spiritual, who claim to be true servants of God, will acknowledge the things he wrote to be the commandments of God. In verse 38, if anyone wants to be ignorant, he invites them to be ignorant (though understand, being ignorant of God's commandments is NOT bliss). In verse 39, the Corinthians were encouraged to desire the gifts (and use them to God's glory), and then finally, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (v 40). May we serve God decently and in order!

Finding Contentment

Trevor Campbell | Pyatt, Arkansas, USA

There are many passages teaching us to be content, which tells us that contentment does not come naturally. The apostle Paul said, "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content" (Philippians 4:11). Notice Paul uses the word "learned" in the passage. As his station in life changed he had to find contentment, for he did not naturally possess it. Contentment was something Paul had to consciously put into practice. He went on to say, "I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Philippians 4:12). He learned how to handle each situation with a spirit of contentment and thankfulness. He told the church at Thessalonica, "in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

It's interesting to note that Paul had to learn to be content even when he abounded. Having plenty does not equal contentment, contentment comes from within. Finding it requires us to focus on our blessings and be thankful for what we have, whether little or much. If we dwell on the negative aspects of our lives, we prove ourselves to be ungrateful, and we're choosing a sinful path that will lead us to destruction. The man Haman is a good example of this; In the book of Esther we read of Haman, a man whom King Ahasuerus promoted; he "advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him" (Esther 3:1). Whatever joy and contentment Haman may have felt over his promotion would not last, for Mordecai the Jew did not bow or pay homage to Haman, and this caused Haman to be "filled with wrath" (Esther 3:5). From here on Haman sought not only to destroy Mordecai, but also all of the Jews in the kingdom. Haman became filled with such rage that he could not enjoy the many blessings bestowed on him, in fact he counted them as nothing;

"Then Haman told them of his great riches, the multitude of his children, everything in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and servants of the king. Moreover Haman said, 'Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king. Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting in the king's gate'" (Esther 5:11-13).

Though he was so richly blessed, Haman could not find contentment, and it sent him down a miserable road that led to his death; "So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai" (Esther 7:10). Haman was a man of wealth and power, but that did not bring him contentment. He failed to put contentment into practice. What a sad testimony, but a good warning for us- don't dwell on the negative.

We see from the example of Haman that great wealth will not bring contentment, contentment is a choice. Like the apostle Paul we must learn contentment, dwelling on the positives, and thanking God for our blessings. Paul's epistles have an attitude of gratefulness that permeate through them.

Note these few examples; "thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Corinthians 15:57), "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3), "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy" (Philippians 1:3-4). From these few examples we can see why Paul told Philippi that he did not need anything; "Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content" (Philippians 4:11). He needed nothing, because he abounded with the blessings that come to all those in Christ.

To find contentment we must actively think upon God's blessings.

What Was the Purpose of Miracles? (Part 2)

Julius C. Nwankwo | Ahiaba, Nigeria

The Purpose of These Miracles

Miracles served the purpose of revealing the truth.

"But the Helper [one who stands by the side of], the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:26). Jesus was getting ready to return to the Father, but He realized that the apostles would need some help in remembering and teaching the gospel to the ends of the earth. So, He promised them a miraculous measure of the power and influence of the Holy Spirit. He assured them that they would be taught all things by the Holy Spirit; and he would enable them to recall all that he taught them while he was with them. Without miraculous help, they would have been unable to do this. Jesus gave them the fullest assurance that they would be divinely assisted in what they should speak. ". . . do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say" (Luke 12:11-12).

In further discussing with them the help they would receive from the Holy Spirit after he had gone back to heaven, Jesus said, "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth..." (John 16:13). From these verses, we are shown that the Holy Spirit would: (1) Teach the apostles all things, (2) Bring to their remembrance all that Jesus had spoken to them, and (3) Guide them into all truth.

Paul later spoke to the Corinthian church upon this same topic, in these words: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory" (1 Corinthians 2:7). In verse 10, he continues with this thought, "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit." This is what Jesus promised to do. The gospel was revealed unto the apostles by the Holy Spirit and they preached all that Jesus commanded. They did it without error. To the Ephesian Christians, he said that the unsearchable riches of Christ "... as it has now been revealed by the Spirit... that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body..." (Ephesians 3:5-6).

The apostles, in turn, preached the word which they had received from the Lord. "For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God..." (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Note one other passage which states that the Holy Spirit revealed the truth unto the apostles,

"To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven" (1 Peter 1:12).

Miracles served to confirm and verify the truth.

When Jesus sent the apostles out on the Great Commission, it is said, "And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs" (Mark 16:20).

It should be well understood that the New Testament was not written at this time, and so miracles attended them to establish and corroborate the gospel message they preached. The miracles served to support with evidence the divine authority by which they proclaimed Christ. The Hebrew writer said that the great salvation:

"...which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness [corroborated their testimony] both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit..." (Hebrews 2:3-4).

These were supernatural proofs by which the truth was established - shown to be genuine and authentic. The inspired truth was written down, committed to record, by those providentially prepared men whom the Lord selected. Now you and I have access to the truth that was revealed and confirmed (John 20:30-31; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). ***Once the truth had been revealed and established by miraculous power, there is no further need for the exercise or use of that power.*** Jesus said all of the truth would be revealed to the apostles by the Holy Spirit. Further revelation of truth is impossible. The truth which the apostles preached was completely verified, and no man can further prove it. It can be preached, but it was proved almost two thousand years ago.

Were Miracles to Continue?

Listen to Paul as he discusses this subject with the Corinthians:

"Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect [complete] has come, then that which is in part will be done away" (1 Corinthians 13:8-10).

God's will was revealed by the Holy Spirit only a part at a time, "bit by bit." A full and complete revelation was not made known to the apostles at once. Miraculous powers such as prophecies, foreign languages, supernatural knowledge, were some of the means by which the gospel was revealed and confirmed. But when the gospel system was completely revealed, miracles had served their purpose and came to an end.

But it is objected that the "perfect" to which Paul refers does not mean the will of God, but the coming of Jesus Christ, who is the "Perfect One." But this is not the case. When Paul said, "When the perfect is come," he used the neuter gender. Jesus Christ is not neuter gender. He is masculine. In speaking of the will of God in Hebrews 10:9-10, the inspired writer employs the neuter gender. "He taketh away the first that he may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified.." The word for perfect means "brought to completion; fully accomplished, fully developed; complete, entire, as opposed to what is partial and limited" (1 Corinthians 13:10, **Analytical Greek Lexicon**). So, when God's revelation to man was completed, "fully developed, entire," there was no further need for miracles. They had served their purpose and come to an end - were "done away." We now have the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25).

"... 'When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.'" These miraculous gifts, bestowed for the purpose of revealing and confirming the will of God, were distributed to apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The reason for their bestowal was "the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:8-13). "The faith" is the entire gospel system.

Jude speaks of it as "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). These miraculous

gifts were to last until “the faith” was completed, until it became one unit. Once it was made whole, finished, fully developed, the miracles which had been responsible for its revelation and confirmation passed away. That revelation was completed in A.D. 96, when the apostle John finished his last letter. Since that day, there has been no need for miracles. We have the word of God, all of the truth into which the apostles were guided by the Holy Spirit and it is to govern us in all of our beliefs and practices.



If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

[Click here](#) to forward this email to a friend

Meditate On These Things (MOTT)
2950 Hwy 5 S
Mountain Home, Arkansas 72653
US

[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.

vertical DELIVERED BY
response
Try It Free Today!