

## When the "Perfect" Comes

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by Robert C. Welch

The latter part of 1 Corinthians 13 has presented a problem to many Bible students because they have viewed it from a false premise. It is supposed by a vast number to be teaching that prophecies, tongues and spiritual knowledge will come at the end of time. That interpretation is shown to be incorrect by the last verse of the chapter, which says in contrast with the things which were ceasing, "But now abides faith, hope, love." These are abiding things in this age. The spiritual gifts such as prophecy and tongue speaking were to cease sometime in the course of this dispensation. The passage says they will be done away "when that which is perfect is come" (1 Cor. 13:10).

As Paul by inspiration was writing this letter to Corinthian saints much of the New Testament had not been written. Paul had not written the majority of his letters. But when that writing was completed men had what is called "the perfect law, the law of liberty" (James 1:25). This complete, perfect law of liberty which produces faith (Rom. 10:17) is "once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

The spiritual gifts were for two purposes. Prophecy is the revealing or producing the word of the Lord. Jesus said to His apostles concerning the Holy Spirit: "he shall teach you all things" (John 14:26) and "he shall guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13). Jude has declared that it is delivered to the saints and James says it is perfect or complete. Then what can a prophet reveal today? Nothing. All things are in the completed perfect word, all the truth is contained therein. When the New Testament was completed or perfected, the gift of prophecy had no further purpose, it ceased. That is what Paul said would be.

The other purpose of spiritual gifts was to confirm the word spoken or written by these inspired men. After Jesus was received up into heaven, the apostles "went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed" (Mark 16:20). These signs proved that the word they were giving was the truth from God. We have that complete, perfect truth which has been confirmed. It was "at the first spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will" (Heb. 2:3-4). Since this inspired perfect word has been confirmed, the purpose of such signs as tongue-speaking is useless and gone. They ended when that perfect will of God came; just as Paul told the Corinthian saints would happen.

All of these proclaimants to tongues speaking and prophecy today show by their very claims that they are false prophets. If they were not, they would accept the truth of this statement by the inspired apostle Paul that prophecies and tongues ceased when the will of the Lord was completed. They have not a word of truth to reveal, it has all been revealed. They are not trying to confirm the word of the Lord by their claims to tongue-speaking and faith healing. Note carefully that they are only trying to make people believe that they are something special. The perfect law of liberty needs no confirming signs today, it has been confirmed. This perfect law of liberty, when received with meekness, is able to save the soul (James 1:21). The power is in the perfect word, not in some man claiming powers today which God never promised in his word. "For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

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