

Gifts of the Spirit

Key Verse: *“The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”*
—*I Corinthians 12:7*

Selected Scripture:
I Corinthians 12:1-11

PAUL IS HERE ADDRESS-ing the brethren in Corinth who formerly were idol worshippers. He reminds them that those of Christ’s followers who had been recipients of certain miraculous gifts had such powers conferred upon them by no other source than God’s Holy Spirit. These gifts, when employed, would serve as a witness to strengthen the faith of prospective believers that the “good news” of the Gospel proclaimed an opportunity of salvation for all mankind from sin and death. They would further testify to the fact that Christ had laid down his life as a sacrifice, and was subsequently resurrected to glory and honor, being seated at the right hand of God. The invitation to become footstep followers of our Lord, to serve his cause faithfully unto death and reign with him in God’s kingdom, was another important aspect of this testimony. Thus, Paul said that any who would refer to Jesus as “accursed” would give evidence of not being associated with the Christian ministry.—*I Cor. 12:1-3*

Our lesson continues: “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” (vss. 4-6) Then follows our Key Verse, which asserts that during apostolic times, all consecrated

believers had a “manifestation of the Spirit,” given for the purpose of helping to edify the body of Christ. Indeed, some brethren had multiple talents that could be employed in their service to God.

Paul then delineates some of the many gifts which those begotten of the Holy Spirit might possess. He mentions wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing powers, working of miracles, prophecy—that is, the ability to elucidate God’s Word. He cites the discerning of righteous versus evil spirits, the ability to speak in different languages and dialects, as well as the gift of interpreting these so that the Gospel message would be comprehended by the hearers in their local language.—vss. 8-10

All of these aforementioned gifts were provided by the Holy Spirit, though they were distributed among the believers in accordance with the will of God. The recognition of this truth should have served to prevent the recipients from feelings of pride or superiority as compared to others without that particular gift. “Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”—I Cor. 4:7

Our lesson concludes as Paul uses the human body as an illustration of both unity as well as diversity. It is one, but is composed of many members. Just as there were diversities of gifts during the period of the Early Church, consecrated believers all down through the age have been different in various respects, as members of the body of Christ. From God’s standpoint, this is essential towards the fulfillment of his eternal purpose.—chap. 12:11,12

May we ever appreciate the fact that this entire arrangement is under divine supervision. When the church is united in glory with Christ Jesus, those who will be with him are all spoken of as “called, and chosen, and faithful.”—Rev. 17:14 ■