

## **The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts**

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One of the important ministries of the Holy Spirit to believers today is His bestowal of spiritual gifts on Christians at the time of their conversion. While Christians may have natural abilities even before they are saved, spiritual gifts seem to be related to the special purpose of God in calling them and saving them; and, in the language of Ephesians 2:10, they are "created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Spiritual gifts are divinely given capacities to perform useful functions for God, especially in the area of spiritual service. Just as the human body has members with different capacities, so individual Christians forming the church as the body of Christ have different capacities. These help them contribute to the welfare of the church as a whole, as well as to bear an effective witness to the world. Spiritual gifts are bestowed by the sovereign choice of God and need to be exercised in the power and under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Every Christian has at least some spiritual gifts, as according to 1 Corinthians 12:7, "To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." After enumerating a partial list of such gifts, the apostle concluded in 1 Corinthians 12:11, "But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills." The analogy of the human body is then developed as an illustration of the various functions of the members of the body of Christ.

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*BSac* 143:570 (Apr 86) p. 110

Spiritual gifts obviously differ in value, and the list of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:28 is given in order of importance. In 1 Corinthians 13 the importance of using spiritual gifts in love is emphasized. Some gifts that were bestowed in the early church seem no longer to be operative today, and this introduces the important consideration of the extent of contemporary spiritual gifts.

### **Spiritual Gifts Used Today**

Practically all serious expositors of the Word of God agree that some spiritual gifts continue throughout the present age. These constitute the more important and essential capacities within the church that enable it to function and fulfill its divinely purposed role.

The gift of teaching or expounding the Scriptures is one of the more important gifts and is mentioned in Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28; and Ephesians 4:11.

Obviously the teaching of divine revelation to others is an important function of the members of the body of Christ. Though all believers have the capacity by the Spirit to comprehend divine truth in the Word of God, all do not have the same gift in communicating this truth to others. The teaching gift does not necessarily require superior knowledge, but it does require the capacity for successful communication and application of the truth to the individual. No doubt the gift of teaching natural truth is similar to that of teaching spiritual truth, but the spiritual gift is especially adaptable to teaching the Word of God. Accordingly a person might be quite gifted in teaching natural truth but would not be effective in teaching the Bible.

A common gift among Christians is that of ministering to one another (Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28). This gift varies depending on the person and the situation. Some are better able to minister in one way and some in another. The total work of God depends on the capacity of the members of the body of Christ to minister in this way.

The gift of administration is related to wise direction of the work of God in the church and is mentioned in Romans 12:8 and in 1 Corinthians 12:28. Comparatively few Christians are able administrators in the realm of spiritual things, and those lacking this gift should seek direction and guidance from those who have it.

The gift of evangelism mentioned in Ephesians 4:11 refer's to the unusual capacity to preach the gospel of salvation and to win

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*BSac 143:570 (Apr 86) p. 111*

the lost to Christ. While every Christian should be a channel of information to others and should do the work of an evangelist as Timothy was instructed to do (2 Tim 4:5), nonetheless some will be more effective in sharing the gospel than others.

The gift of being a pastor or shepherd of the flock also calls for special abilities. In Ephesians 4:11 pastors and teachers are linked, indicating that a true shepherd will also be able to teach or feed his flock, and that a true teacher should have some pastoral abilities. While these qualities may be found in various degrees in different individuals, the link between teaching and shepherding the flock is inevitable for one who wants to be effective in preaching the Word of God.

The gift of exhortation mentioned in Romans 12:8 has the thought of presenting the truth in such a way as to stir to action. Sometimes those who have a gift of exhortation are not necessarily good Bible teachers and vice versa; men with varied gifts are all essential to the work of the church.

Other gifts mentioned in the Bible include the gift of giving, having special grace to share one's earthly possessions as mentioned in Romans 12:8. The gift of showing mercy relates to the special ability to show empathy and sympathy for those in need. The gift of faith, or that of special trust in the Lord, is included in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. All these gifts abide throughout the entire church age and constitute the divinely appointed enablement for the church to fulfill its task.

### **Spiritual Gifts Which Are Temporary**

The question of whether certain spiritual gifts are temporary is one of the debated areas of truth relating to the Holy Spirit in the contemporary church. While most of the church will agree that certain spiritual gifts were discontinued after the apostolic

age, others are insisting that gifts given at the beginning of the church age continue in the same way throughout the entire period.

On the surface it is quite clear that the modern church does not function quite like the apostolic church. There is an evident decline in miracles, though God is still able to perform miracles. No longer does the testimony of the church depend on its capacity to support its oral testimony by phenomenal miraculous works. It is also clear from the history of the Bible that miracles were evident for particular purposes in some periods while almost absent in others. Three notable periods of miracles are evident

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*BSac* 143:570 (Apr 86) p. 112

in the Bible: (a) the period of Moses, (b) the period of Elijah and Elisha, and (c) the period of Christ and the apostles. In each of these periods there was a need to authenticate the message that God gave His prophets and/or apostles, but once this need was met the miracles seemed to recede.

The problems relating to the question of whether some gifts are temporary have focused principally on the gift of tongues, the gift of interpreting tongues, and the gift of miracles or healing. Relatively little controversy has been aroused concerning whether or not certain other spiritual gifts were only temporary.

### **The Gift of Apostleship**

It seems evident from the Scriptures that the gift of apostleship was limited to the first-century church. Apostles were distinguished from prophets and teachers in 1 Corinthians 12:28. During the apostolic period they had unusual authority and were the channels of divine revelation. Often they had the gift of prophecy as well as that of working miracles. Generally speaking, those who were in the inner circle of the apostles were eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Christ or, like Paul, had seen Christ subsequent to His resurrection. In Protestantism comparatively few claims have been advanced that any persons exist today with the same apostolic gift found in the early church.

### **The Gift of Prophecy**

The gift of prophecy, though claimed by a few, has also been recognized as having only passing validity. In the early church before the New Testament was completed, authoritative revelation was needed from God not only concerning the present, with the prophet being a forthteller but also concerning the future, with the prophet serving as a foreteller. The Scriptures themselves contain illustrations of such prophetic offices and their exercise. The gift is mentioned in Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10; and 14:1–40. A number of illustrations are found as in the case of Agabus who predicted a famine (Acts 11:27–28), and who warned Paul of coming sufferings (21:10–11). Among the prophets and teachers at Antioch, according to Acts 13:1, were Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Paul. Women could also be prophets, as illustrated by the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9). Paul clearly had the prophetic gift (16:6–10; 18:9–10; 22:17–21; 27:23–24). Among the others who were evidently prophets were Judas and Silas (15:32). All these

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*BSac* 143:570 (Apr 86) p. 113

individuals were used as authoritative channels through which God could give divine revelation, sometimes about the contemporary situation and sometimes about the future.

New Testament prophets were like prophets in the Old Testament who spoke for God, warned of judgment, and delivered a message from God, whether contemporary or predictive. The Old Testament prophet, however, was more of a national leader, reformer, and patriot, and his message usually was to Israel alone. In the New Testament the prophet principally ministered to the church and did not have national characteristics.

To be a prophet an individual had to have a message from God in the form of special revelation, had to have guidance regarding its declaration so that it would be given forth accurately, and the message itself had to have the authority of God. The prophetic office, therefore, was different from the teaching office in that the teaching office had no more authority than the Scripture on which it was based. The prophetic office, on the other hand, had its authority in the experience of divine reception and communication of truth.

In the early church the prophetic office was very important and was considered one of the principal gifts. It is discussed somewhat at length in 1 Corinthians 14, and given more prominence than other gifts in the list in 1 Corinthians 12:8–10. Because no one today has the same authority or the experience of receiving normative truth, it is highly questionable whether anyone has the gift of prophecy today. No one has come forward to add even one verse of normative truth to the Bible. While individuals can have specific guidance and be given insight into the meaning of Scripture, no one is given truth that is not already contained in the Bible itself. Accordingly it may be concluded that the gift of prophecy has ceased.

### **The Gift of Miracles**

The gift of miracles, while a prominent gift in the early church (1 Cor 12:28) and frequently found in the New Testament, does not seem to exist today in the same way it did in Bible times. Throughout the earthly ministry of Christ, hundreds of miracles were performed in attestation of His divine power and messianic office. After the ascension of Christ into heaven, miraculous works continued in the early church, on many occasions attending the preaching of the Word and constituting proof that it was indeed from God. With the completion of the New Testament the need for

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*BSac 143:570 (Apr 86) p. 114*

such miraculous evidence in support of the preached Word seems to have ceased and the authority and convicting power of the Spirit seems to have replaced these outer manifestations.

Believing that the gift of miracles is temporary does not demand that there are no miracles today. God still is able to do supernaturally anything He wills to do. It simply implies that in the purpose of God miracles no longer constitute a mainline evidence for the truth, and individuals do not (as in apostolic times) have the gift of miracles. While some who claim to have the gift of miracles today have succeeded in convincing many of their supernatural powers, the actual investigation of their operation, which in some cases may be supported by individual miracles here and there, is often found to be quite deceptive, and often the alleged hearings are

psychologically instead of supernaturally effected. The point is not that God cannot perform miracles today, but rather that it is not His purpose to give to individuals the power to perform miracles by the hundreds as was true in the apostolic period.

What is true of the gift of miracles in general seems also to be true of the gift of healing mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30. In biblical times there were special acts of divine healing, and undoubtedly there were many instances in which the apostles were able to demonstrate the divine power that was within them by restoring health to those who had various physical disabilities.

A survey of the present church, while not without its segment of those who claim divine healing, does not support the contention that it is the same gift as was given in the early church. That God has the power to heal supernaturally today is obvious, and that there may be cases of supernatural healing is not to be denied. Healing as a divine method for communication or authenticating the truth, however, is not the present divine purpose, and those who claim to have the gift of healing have again and again been proved to be spurious in their claims. While Christians should feel free to pray and to seek divine healing from God, it is also true that frequently it is God's will even for the most godly of people, that, like Paul, they should continue in their afflictions as the means to the end of demonstrating the sufficiency of God. Cases of healing are relatively rare in the modern church and are not intended to be a means of encouraging evangelism or church growth.

### **The Gift of Speaking in Tongues**

Probably the most controversial of the gifts of the Spirit is the gift of tongues. On the day of Pentecost Jews who had come to

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*BSac* 143:570 (Apr 86) p. 115

Jerusalem for the feast were amazed to hear the apostles speak in their languages, and they asked the question, "And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and Proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God" (Acts 2:8–11). This was clearly a supernatural work of God and a testimony to the authority and truth of the apostles' message concerning Jesus Christ.

Two other instances occurred in Acts—one in Acts 10–11 on the occasion of Peter speaking to the house of Cornelius, and the other in Acts 19. In Acts 11 Peter, analyzing their speaking in tongues, said, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, just as He did upon us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15). When Paul encountered certain disciples of John the Baptist at Ephesus, as he "laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying" (Acts 19:6). It would seem reasonable to conclude that in these three instances in Acts there was a supernatural manifestation of the Spirit in the form of empowering men to speak in languages that were not known to them. It should also be observed, however, that these are the only three instances mentioned in the Book of Acts, and that apart from the discussion in 1 Corinthians 12–14 there is no other reference to speaking in tongues in the New Testament. What is the explanation of this gift, and can it be exercised today?

Though some writers have distinguished between the instances in Acts, which were clearly known languages, and the experience of the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 12–14, there does not seem to be adequate basis for this distinction. The same expressions are used in both places. The term “unknown tongue” (1 Cor 14:2. KJV) is inaccurate, since the word “unknown” is not in the original. There is no evidence that those who exercised the gift of tongues spoke languages that were unknown to men, though there is reference to the theoretical possibility of speaking in the tongues of angels (1 Cor 13:1). The instance in Acts 2 was clearly in known languages. The recognition of a known language is essential to any scientific confirmation that genuine speaking in tongues has taken place. If those speaking in tongues had only babbled incoherent sounds, this would lend itself to fraudulent interpretation which could not in any way be confirmed. Therefore

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*BSac* 143:570 (Apr 86) p. 116

it is assumed that speaking in tongues in the Bible was a genuine gift, that it involved speaking in existing languages unknown to the speaker, and that actual communication took place in such experiences. So genuine speaking in tongues in the New Testament cannot be explained as simply hypnosis or psychological emotionalism; it has to be recognized as a genuine gift of the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of speaking in tongues is clearly defined in the Scriptures. It was to be a sign to attest to the gospel, a proof to the unsaved of the genuineness of the Holy Spirit’s work (1 Cor 14:22). Though words were expressed and the glory of God was revealed, there is no instance in Scripture where a doctrine was revealed through speaking in tongues, and it does not seem to have been a major vehicle for the revelation of new truth. Interestingly Jews on the day of Pentecost were converted to Christ not after they heard tongues-speaking (Acts 2:5–12) but after Peter preached the gospel (2:14–41).

In all three instances in Acts speaking in tongues served to prove that what was taking place was a genuine work of God. In Acts 2, of course, it was the gift of the Spirit and the beginning of the New Testament church. In Acts 10 it was necessary as an evidence to Peter of the genuineness of the work of salvation in the household of Cornelius and was designed to teach Peter that the gospel was universal in its invitation and application. The third instance, in Acts 19, served to identify the 12 men mentioned as actually being converted to Christianity instead of simply being followers of John the Baptist. In these three instances, speaking in tongues was a sign that the work of the Holy Spirit was genuine and that salvation through Christ was available to all whether Jew, Samaritan, or Gentile.

The only passage in the New Testament that deals theologically with the gift of tongues is found in 1 Corinthians 12–14. In the Corinthian church, plagued with so many doctrinal and spiritual problems, it is rather significant that three chapters of Paul’s epistle to them are devoted to expounding the purpose and meaning of tongues, giving more attention to this problem than to any other that existed in the Corinthian church. The chapters were written to correct and regulate speaking in tongues rather than to exhort the Corinthian believers to exercise this gift. In light of the fact that none of the other epistles or New Testament books apart from the Book of Acts deals at all with this subject, it would seem apparent that speaking in tongues, though it existed in the early

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*BSac* 143:570 (Apr 86) p. 117

church, was not a major factor in the church's evangelism, spiritual life, or demonstration of the power of God. It seems to have been prominent only in a church that was notoriously unspiritual (cf. 1 Cor 1–11 ).

The gift of tongues is introduced in 1 Corinthians 12 as one of many gifts, and, significantly, as the least of the gifts enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12:28. It is number eight in the list, and immediately afterward the apostle made it plain that spiritual gifts were not possessed by all the Corinthian church, and that only a few would actually speak in tongues. All of chapter 13 is devoted to motivation in speaking in tongues, with Paul pointing out that the only proper motivation is love. So they were not to exalt the gift and they were not to use it as a basis for spiritual pride. Speaking in tongues without love was an empty and ineffectual exercise.

In chapter 14 the discussion of the significance of the gift of tongues is developed in detail. Paul made at least five major points. First, he defined tongues as a gift that is not nearly so important as other gifts such as the gift of teaching or the gift of prophecy. The problem was that speaking in tongues in the Corinthian church could not be understood by anyone there without the gift of interpretation, and it was limited in its capacity to communicate divine revelation. So Paul wrote that it would be better for them to speak five words with understanding than 10,000 words in an unknown tongue (1 Cor 14:19). Clearly Paul exalted the gifts that actually communicate truth rather than the phenomenal gift of tongues that was more a sign gift.

Second, Paul wrote that speaking in tongues should not be exercised in the Corinthian assembly unless an interpreter was present. The principal exercise of speaking in tongues was to be in private, but even here Paul indicated that praying with understanding is better than praying in an unknown tongue (1 Cor 14:15).

Third, the importance of speaking in tongues resides in the fact that it is a sign to unbelievers—a demonstration of the supernatural power of God, not primarily intended for the edification of believers (1 Cor 14:21–22). The Corinthian church, however, was told that unless speaking in tongues was conducted with proper order, it would not achieve its purpose of convincing unbelievers of the truth and it would introduce an element of confusion (1 Cor 14:23). In the public assembly the exercise of the gift of prophecy, the communication of a revelation from God in a known language,

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*BSac* 143:570 (Apr 86) p. 118

was more important and more effectual in leading others to faith than exercising the gift of tongues (1 Cor 14:24–25).

Fourth, the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues as well as exercising the gift of prophecy should be regulated and should not be allowed to dominate the assembly. The principle is that these gifts should be exercised only if the church is edified. Ordinarily only two or three in any given meeting were to be allowed to speak in tongues, and none at all should be permitted if an interpreter was not present (1 Cor 14:27–28). A blanket prohibition was laid down against women speaking either as a prophet or in tongues in the church assembly (1 Cor 14:34–35). The general rule was that all things should be done decently and in order.

Fifth, Paul allowed speaking in tongues to be exercised and not forbidden, but its limitations should be recognized and its exercise should be in keeping with its value. From Paul's discussion of the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14, as well as from 1 Corinthians 12–13, it is evident that speaking in tongues was not intended to be a primary source of revelation or a primary experience of power in the church. It was rather collateral and auxiliary as a proof of the truth of God.

If speaking in tongues was truly exercised, however, in the early church, and if under proper regulation it was beneficial, the question still remains whether a similar experience can be had by the church today. Because it is almost impossible to prove a universal negative in an experiential matter such as this, especially in light of many who claim to have exercised the gift, a practical line of approach is to first examine the question whether the Scriptures themselves indicate that speaking in tongues was a temporary gift and then, on the basis of the total evidence, to ask what one should do in light of the claims of many that they have a gift of speaking in tongues today.

At least four arguments lead to the conclusion that speaking in tongues was temporary. First, there was no exercise of speaking in tongues before Pentecost. Christ and the apostles and John the Baptist did not exercise the gift of speaking in tongues prior to the day of Pentecost. There is no evidence that such a gift was given in the Old Testament period. So since such a gift was given at Pentecost it also could be withdrawn by God's sovereign will.

Second, tongues was especially to be a sign to Israel. Isaiah prophesied, "Indeed, He will speak to this people through stammering lips and a foreign tongue" (Isa 28:11). This is quoted in 1 Corinthians 14:21–22 as being fulfilled in the exercise of speaking

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*BSac* 143:570 (Apr 86) p. 119

in tongues. Such a sign gift would be fitting and effective at the beginning of a new age, but it would not necessarily be required throughout a long period of time.

Third, though it is debated, it seems evident that other spiritual gifts, such as the gift of apostleship, the gift of prophecy, the gift of miracles, and the gift of healing, were temporary. If these gifts, so effective in establishing the church, were used in the apostolic period but seem to have faded thereafter, it would follow that the gift of tongues might have a similar withdrawal from the church.

Fourth, the statement is made in 1 Corinthians 13:8 that tongues would cease. It can be debated whether this means that the gift of tongues would cease when the New Testament canon was completed or would cease at some future time. The point, however, is that in either case, speaking in tongues is temporary and not a manifestation continued indefinitely in the purpose of God. These evidences seem to point to the conclusion that speaking in tongues is not a gift which can be expected to be exercised throughout the entire church period.

How then can the exercise of speaking in tongues today, as claimed by many individuals, be accounted for? Some sort of a phenomenon that is identified as speaking in tongues is a manifest feature of contemporary Christianity. Three explanations are possible.

First, much of the phenomenon of so-called speaking in tongues today seems by all normal tests to be babbling without known words or language. Such can be explained by psychological means and without supernatural inducement.

Second, claims are made in some cases that speaking in tongues is in definite languages recognizable by those who are familiar with these languages. Though such claims are few and far between and hard to demonstrate, if such claims can be substantiated the question is, How can they be explained? This introduces a second possibility for explaining at least a portion of the tongues phenomena today. Satan is able to counterfeit the gift of tongues, and occasional reports have been given of those claiming to speak in tongues who actually expressed horrible blasphemies against God.

A third possibility in explaining the contemporary claim for speaking in tongues is to recognize that, in some rather remote instances, it is a genuine spiritual gift. Many evangelical Christians do not feel that there has ever been evidence in this century of

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*BSac 143:570 (Apr 86) p. 120*

the exercise of the genuine gift. But if such could be substantiated in a particular case, it still would not justify the great majority of instances of so-called speaking in tongues, which apparently are not at all what the Scriptures refer to as speaking in tongues.

Much of the difficulty in the modern Pentecostal movement is found in the fact that rarely will adherents of tongues-speaking submit their experience to scientific investigation. If a given instance of speaking in tongues were tape-recorded and played separately to several individuals who claim to have the gift of interpretation, and their translations proved to be identical, it would be a scientific demonstration of the genuineness of speaking in tongues such as was true on the day of Pentecost. Unfortunately the Pentecostal movement has not, so far as this author knows, been willing to submit their speaking in tongues to such a scientific test. Until they do, questions will continue to be raised concerning the genuineness of the exercise of the gift of tongues today.

While speaking in tongues was a genuine gift in the early church, it was subject to abuse. In the Corinthian church it was a source of pride on the part of unspiritual people who exercised the gift but who had little of spiritual power or holiness attending its exercise. Unfortunately the same tendencies sometimes are observed today in those who claim to speak in tongues but who make it a source of pride instead of effective testimony for the Lord. It is not true, as often claimed, that speaking in tongues is a proof of either the filling of the Spirit or of spiritual power. There is no basis for pride in the exercise of such a gift.

Four areas of misunderstanding are commonly associated with the gift of tongues. First, speaking in tongues is not, as is sometimes claimed today, a prominent spiritual gift. It is the least of all spiritual gifts and is the least effective in propagating Christianity.

Second, tongues is not a required sign of salvation, and by its very nature as a gift it was given to only a few Christians, not to all of them. The lack of reference outside

the books of Acts and 1 Corinthians is substantial proof that it was not an important feature of experiential Christianity in the first century.

Third, speaking in tongues is not in itself a proof of spirituality. The church that seems to have exercised it the most was the least spiritual. The history of the tongues movement seems to have given rise to emotionalism and excesses that have not been beneficial to the propagation of the gospel.

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*BSac* 143:570 (Apr 86) p. 121

Fourth, it is not true that speaking in tongues is an inseparable evidence of the baptism of the Spirit. Since it was a genuine gift in the early church, one who spoke in tongues obviously was also baptized into the body of Christ. Yet every Christian is baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13), but only a few spoke in tongues. So the attempt to make tongues a necessary sign of either spirituality or salvation is an abuse of the doctrine.

### **The Gift of Interpreting Tongues**

If the gift of tongues is suspect today, it also follows that the gift of interpreting tongues today is suspect. The nature of the gift of interpreting tongues makes it difficult to confirm. But if a bona fide case could be found of one who, without knowledge of a foreign language, could interpret such a foreign language while exercising the gift of tongues, and if this in turn could be confirmed by someone who already knew the language naturally, there would be scientific evidence for a supernatural gift. Still the question would remain as to whether this was of God or of Satan. Until proof has been established as to the nature of the interpretation, it is reasonable to question whether the gift can be exercised today.

### **The Gift of Discerning Spirits**

The gift of discerning spirits, while not related to speaking in tongues, is another gift that seems to have been temporary in the church. This was the gift of discerning whether a person supposedly speaking by the Spirit was speaking of God or of Satan. Probably Christians today who are spiritually minded can discern whether one is Spirit-directed or demon-possessed, but this ability does not seem to be bestowed on the church today as a particular gift.

## **Conclusion**

In approaching these controversial matters, Christians should avail themselves of the revelation of Scripture and attempt to find a workable base for solving these problems. The important truth is that there are spiritual gifts bestowed on the church today. The proper use of these gifts in the power of the Spirit is essential to fulfilling the work of God in and through His church. While the temporary gifts are no longer necessary to the testimony of God, the exercise of the permanent gifts is vitally important and is the best demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>1</sup>Dallas Theological Seminary. 1986; 2002. *Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 143* . Dallas Theological Seminary

The Holy Spirit, also called the Holy Ghost, has been mentioned in the Bible 93 times: 90 times in the New Testament and 3 times in the Old Testament. The Holy Ghost has played a crucial part during Christ's ministry on Earth—right from the time when Virgin Mary conceived Jesus through the grace of the Holy Spirit, to the time He breathed His last on the cross. Therefore, this gift helps us to respond wisely to the worldly challenges. We focus on nourishing our spiritual self than the material self, and draw closer to God in the process.

2. The Gift of Understanding

We live in a world where mysteries surround us, where one simple thing has many facets to it. How often do we remark, "This situation, as I understand it"