

**On the Cessation of the Charismata:
The Protestant Polemic
on Post-Biblical Miracles**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. The Setting of the Problem

One of the most striking developments in twentieth century church history has been the growth of Pentecostalism. This movement appeared as a few small sects in the 1910s and 1920s,¹ but by the 1950s, it had grown to become the “third force” in Christianity.² Since then, this Pentecostal, or charismatic, movement has emerged as the largest branch of Protestantism, even perhaps the largest active branch

¹Some of the best known accounts of these beginnings include: N. Bloch-Hoell, *The Pentecostal Movement: Its Origin, Development, and Distinctive Character* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1964); Fr. P. Damboriena, *Tongues as of Fire: Pentecostalism in Contemporary Christianity* (Washington, DC: Corpus Books, 1969); D. W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1987); S. Durasoff, *Bright Wind of the Spirit* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972); M. Harper, *As at the Beginning: The Twentieth Century Pentecostal Revival* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965); D. Harrell, *All Things Are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1975); K. Kendrick, *A Promise Fulfilled: A History of the Modern Pentecostal Movement* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1961); W. W. Menzies, *Anointed to Serve: The Story of the Assemblies of God* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1971); John T. Nichol, *Pentecostalism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966); and V. Synan's three works: *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972); editor, *Aspects of Pentecostal/Charismatic Origins* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1975); and *In the Latter Days: The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1984); E. L. Waldvogel, “The ‘Overcoming Life’: A Study of the Reformed Evangelical Origins of Pentecostalism,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1977). The most prominent history of worldwide Pentecostalism, however, is W. Hollenweger's condensation and translation of his nine volume dissertation, *The Pentecostals* (London: SCM Press, 1972).

²A well known phrase coined by H. P. Van Dusen, in his article, “The Third Force in Christendom,” *Life* 44 (9 June 1958), p. 13. This “third force” of 20 million included: the Churches of Christ, the Church of the Nazarene, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists and the Christian and Missionary Alliance. But according to Van Dusen, the Pentecostal groups represented the largest segment, numbering 8.5 million at that time.

of Christianity, with estimates ranging to over 700 million adherents world-wide.³

This growth did not occur without opposition. Historically, Pentecostalism provoked controversy at almost every stage of its development.⁴ This has been true not merely because of its tradition-breaking forms of worship and practice, but, significantly for the purposes of this essay, because the emergence of Pentecostalism was a tangible challenge to a theological position maintained in the church for centuries: that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit had ceased. Against this, the salient characteristic of Pentecostalism is its belief in the present-day manifestation of spiritual gifts, such as miraculous healing, prophecy, and most distinctively, glossolalia. Pentecostals affirm that these spiritual gifts (charismata) are granted by the Holy Spirit and are normative in contemporary church life and ministry.⁵

³ So, D. Barrett, *The World Christian Encyclopedia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 815-48. In *CT* 30 (16 May 1986), p. 40, he later upgraded this estimate to 150 million in 1985 and again in *Charisma* 13 (February 1988), p. 19, to 287 million by 1987 and still again to 332 million in a heavily documented article, "The Twentieth-Century Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal in the Holy Spirit, with Its Goal of World Evangelization," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 12, no. 3 (July 1988), p. 119. Barrett also projected 619 million by the end of the century. "Statistics, Global," *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds., S. M. Burgess, G. B. McGee and P. H. Alexander (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), p. 813. More recently, 'Dr. Philip Jenkins wrote *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. He points out that although many say Islam is the world's fastest growing religion, it is actually Christianity -- especially among Pentecostals -- who only numbered a few thousand in 1906. Today, you're dealing with several hundred million people, and the best projections are by 2040s or 2050s, you could be dealing with a billion Pentecostals worldwide," Jenkins said. "By that stage there will be more Pentecostals than Hindus. There are already more Pentecostals than Buddhists.'" Paul Strand, "Azusa Street Revival: Bringing in the Kingdom," <<http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/usnews/060424b.aspx>>

⁴See V. Synan in *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement*, pp. 80, 186, who writes of mob attacks and arson in the 1920s and thereafter; R. Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics II* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), pp. 39-44, 56, 193-96, 204-207, 209-10; J. C. Logan, "Controversial Aspects of the Movement," in *The Charismatic Movement*, ed., M. P. Hamilton (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), pp. 33-46. K. McDonnell, *Presence, Power, Praise: Documents on the Charismatic Renewal* 3 vols. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Pr., 1980) details some of these conflicts.

⁵Commitment to these tenets is Barrett's criterion for identifying adherents to Pentecostalism. See Barrett's *World Christian Encyclopedia*. For a thorough presentation of Pentecostal theology, see Fredrick D. Brunner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), pp. 19-149; Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 291-523, and more sympathetically, the three "viewpoints" of MacDonald, Williams and Gelpi in

The cessationist⁶ polemic, which was often directed against persons or groups claiming religious authority via any exhibition of divine healings, prophecies or miracles, recurs consistently from within such conflict settings throughout the history of the Church and even within rabbinic Judaism. But it emerged in its modern form most prominently in the conflicts between Rome and the Protestant reformers, notably Calvin, then again during the Enlightenment in “the great debate on miracles,” and presently in the twentieth-century opposition to the Pentecostal-charismatic movement. In recent years the advancing front of charismatic growth has precipitated showers of polemical books and tracts,⁷ virtually all of these reiterating this cessationist premise.

Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism, ed., R. P. Spittler, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), pp. 57-104.

⁶The terms, “cessationist” and “cessationism” shall designate the position which holds that miracles or “extraordinary” charismata were terminated at or near the end of the apostolic age.

⁷The following are representative of the scores of books and articles supporting cessationism. V. Budgen, *Charismatics and the Word of God: A Biblical and Historical Perspective on the Charismatic Movement*, enlarged ed. (Durham, UK: Evangelical Press, 1989); W. J. Chantry, *Signs of the Apostles: Observations on Pentecostalism Old and New* (Rev., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976); J. Dillow, *Speaking in Tongues* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975); T. R. Edgar, *Miraculous Gifts: Are They for Today?* (Loizeaux Brothers, 1983); F. David Farnell, “Is the Gift of Prophecy for Today?” [a four-part article] *Bibliotheca Sacra*. 149 (July-September 1992), pp. 277-303; Vol. 149 (October-December 1992), pp. 387-410; Vol. 150 (January-March, 1993), pp. 62-88; Vol. 150 (April-June, 1993), pp. 171-202; R. B. Gaffin, Jr., *Perspectives on Pentecost: Studies in New Testament Teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979); N. L. Geisler, *Signs and Wonders* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale Press, 1988); R. G. Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement* (Rev., Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co, 1972); E. N. Gross, *Miracles, Demons and Spiritual Warfare: An Urgent Call for Discernment* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990); J. G. Howard, Jr. “The Doctrine of Permanent Spiritual Gifts” (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1967); D. Judisch, *An Evaluation of Claims to the Charismatic Gifts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978); J. F. MacArthur, Jr., *Charismatic Chaos* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992); K. McCaslin, *What the Bible Says about Miracles* (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co., 1988); D. MacLeod, “Has the Charismatic Age Ceased?” *Banner of Truth* 85 (1970), pp. 13-20; L. R. Reid, “‘That Which is Perfect’ in I Corinthians 13:10,” M.Div. thesis, Winona Lake, IN: Grace Theological Seminary, 1978; R. L. Reymond, *What About Continuing Revelations and Miracles in the Presbyterian Church Today? A Study of the Doctrine of the Sufficiency of Scripture* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1977); R. Ruble, “A Scriptural Evaluation of Tongues in Contemporary Theology,” (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1964); H. Sala, “An Investigation of the Baptism and Filling Work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament as Related to the Pentecostal Doctrine of Initial Evidence,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Bob Jones University, 1966); C. I. Scofield, *The Holy Bible, Scofield Reference Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1909), p.

Moreover, an impressive list of scholars,⁸ e.g., Adolph von Harnack, J.N.D. Kelly, Arnold Ehrhardt, Henry Chadwick, Hans von Campenhausen, and Jaroslav Pelikan, have similarly asserted and explained the disappearance of the “religion of the Spirit and of power”⁹ in the earliest church. These authors are essentially restating the classic Protestant position on this issue: that miraculous spiritual gifts, including prophecy, were in some sense “foundational” in that they were essential for the initiation and spread of the Christian faith, but, like scaffolding, they were no longer required after the viable structure

1224, n. 2; (Eds.), *The New Scofield Reference Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 1245, n. 2; C. R. Swindoll, *Tongues: An Answer to Charismatic Confusion* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1981); R. L. Thomas, “The Spiritual Gift of Prophecy in Rev. 22:18,” *JETS* 32:2 (June, 1989), pp. 201-216; *idem*, *Understanding Spiritual Gifts: The Christian’s Special Gifts in Light of I Corinthians 12-14* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978); *idem* (ed.), *The Master’s Seminary Journal*, 14:2 (Fall 2003), issue devoted to cessationism. S. Toussaint, “I Corinthians 13 and the Tongues Question,” *BibSac* 120 (October-December 1963), pp. 311-16; M. F. Unger, *The Baptism and Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974); J. F. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit: A Comprehensive Study of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (3rd ed., Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977), ch. XX; C. Whitcomb, *Does God Want Christians to Perform Miracles Today?* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1973); G. W. Zeller, *God’s Gift of Tongues: The Nature, Purpose and Duration of Tongues As Taught in the Bible* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1978). I am indebted to R. W. Graves, “Tongues Shall Cease: A Critical Survey of the Supposed Cessation of the Charismata,” *Paraclete* 17 (Fall 1983), pp. 26-27, for some of these references. He notes in cessationist writings the bewildering and imprecise variety of points at which the charismata are believed to have ceased, e.g., after the writing of: 1 Corinthians, the Book of Hebrews, the last New Testament book; the closing of the canon of Scripture; when the New Testament was “accepted” or, “circulated”; at the death of the last apostle; the death of the last disciple to whom the apostles conferred a charism; when the apostolic age passed; the destruction of Jerusalem; when the Church matured in “love,” or in “doctrine”; until faith was established; “when the whole knowledge of God designed for the saving health of the world had been incorporated into the living body of the world’s thought,” etc.

⁸J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), pp. 58-59. A. Ehrhardt, “Christianity before the Apostles Creed,” *HTR* 55 (1962), p. 107. H. Chadwick, *The Early Church* (Baltimore, Penguin Books, 1967), p. 53. H. von Campenhausen, *The Formation of the Christian Bible* (trans. J. A. Baker, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), p. 234 and his *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (London: A. and C. Black, 1969), p. 297, where the “unbalanced ascendancy of office” displaced charismatic expression. J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition 1: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 106.

⁹A. von Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, trans., J. Moffatt (London: Williams and Norgate, 1908), pp. 199-213. I am following James L. Ash, Jr., “The Decline of Ecstatic Prophecy in the Early Church,” *TS* 37 (June 1976), pp. 227-52.

and doctrines of the church had been established. This doctrine was stated not only in certain polemics and historical theology but also was virtually the consensus position of older Calvinistic and fundamentalist texts on systematic theology¹⁰ and on the Holy Spirit.¹¹

B. The Purpose and Method of This Study

Many polemical and theological works either express directly or presuppose the position that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit had ceased. In response, some defenders of present day charismata establish their case on historical studies which endeavor to show a

¹⁰E.g., L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), pp. 177-78; J. O. Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963), p. 181: "God generally ceased to work through 'sign' miracles when the New Testament was finished; and [it] is His will that the 'miracle of grace,' the witness of the Spirit, answered prayer, and supremely, the written Word, shall be the chief sources of knowledge of Himself for His people during this age." L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 8 vols. (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1946), v.6, pp. 219-20; C. F. H. Henry, *God Revelation and Authority*, 6 vols. (Waco, TX: Word Publishing Co., 1979), v. 4, pp. 284-89; A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1879), pp. 278-79; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1871), v. 1, pp. 635-36. Both of these Hodge's (son and father, respectively) gave only implicit approval to the idea of the cessation of miracles. To them, miracles were regarded as divine attestation that Christ and the writers of Old and New Testament documents were the true messengers of God. A.H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1907), p. 128: "Miracles are the natural accompaniments and attestations of new communications from God. The great epochs of miracles—represented by Moses, the prophets, the first and second comings of Christ—are coincident with the great epochs of revelation. Miracles serve to draw attention to new truth [as it appears in scripture], and ceases when this truth has gained currency and foothold." A similar, though softer position is sometimes maintained by Catholics. See J.B. Metz, "Miracle. I: Theological," *Sacramentum Mundi*, Ed. K. Rahner, et al. (New York: Herder, 1969), v. 4, p. 44. More recently it appears that most major theologians have shifted from this position. So, J. Rodman Williams, *The Era of the Spirit* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1971).

¹¹Most classical Protestant texts on the Holy Spirit have supported this position, e.g., A. Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1900; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979), pp. 184-88; W. H. Griffith-Thomas, *The Holy Spirit of God* (4th ed., 1913; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963), *passim*; John Owen, *On the Holy Spirit* (London: John Darby, 1674; repr., Philadelphia: The Protestant Episcopal Book Society, 1862), Part II, pp. 474, 475; G. Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1889; repr., Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), pp. 55-56, 147; H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1910; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), pp. 378, 379. A classic text on the Holy Spirit in Fundamentalist circles is John F. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Van Campen Press, 1954), Chapter XX: "Temporary Spiritual Gifts."

more or less continuous line of charismatic activity throughout the centuries.¹²

Despite the relatively large size of the charismatic/Pentecostal constituency, with a small, but growing number of exceptions,¹³ there

¹²S. M. Burgess, *The Spirit and the Church: Antiquity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984); R. N. Kydd, *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church: An Exploration into the Gifts of the Spirit in the First Three Centuries of the Christian Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984); J. C. Beker, "Prophecy and the Spirit in the Apostolic Fathers," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1955); G. Williams and E. Waldvogel, "A History of Speaking in Tongues and Related Gifts," in *The Charismatic Movement*, ed., M. P. Hamilton (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), pp. 61-113; T. A. Campbell, "Charismata in the Christian Communities of the Second Century," *WTJ* 17 (Fall 1982), p. 7-25; H. M. Evans, "Tertullian: Pentecostal of Carthage," *Paraclete* 9 (Fall 1975), pp. 17-21; A. T. Floris, "Two Fourth Century Witnesses on the Charismata," *Paraclete* 4 (Fall 1970), pp. 17-22; *idem.*, "Chrysostom and the Charismata," *Paraclete* 5 (Winter 1971), pp. 17-22; H. Hunter, "Tongues-speech: A Patristic Analysis," *JETS* 23 (June 1980), pp. 125-37; M. Kelsey, *Healing and Christianity* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), pp. 135-99; J. LaPorte, "The Holy Spirit, Source of Life and Activity according to the Early Church," In *Perspectives on Charismatic Renewal*, ed. E. D. O'Connor (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), pp. 57-99; C. M. Robeck, Jr., "Visions and Prophecy in the Writings of Cyprian," *Paraclete* 16 (Summer 1982), pp. 21-25; H. Schlingensiepen, *Die Wunder des Neuen Testament: Wege und Abwege bis zur Mitte des funften Jahrhunderts* (Gutersloh: Verlag I. Bertlesmann, 1933); H. F. Stander, "Miraculous Charisms in Eusebius' Time," *Paraclete* 21 (Fall 1982), pp. 11-14; J. Serr, "Les charisms dans la vie de l'eglise; temoinanges patristiques," *Foi et Vie* 72, no. 1 (1973), pp. 33-42 and E. A. Stephanou, "The Charismata in the Early Church Fathers," *GOTR* 21 (Summer 1976), pp. 125-46, among others.

¹³D. A. Codling, "The Argument That the Revelatory Gifts of the Holy Spirit Ceased with the Closure of the Canon of Scripture" (Th.M. thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1974). On a more popular level, is the classic older Pentecostal polemic by C. Brumback, *"What Meaneth This?" A Pentecostal Answer to a Pentecostal Question* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1947). Since this present study was undertaken, several works have appeared dealing exegetically with the issue of cessationism: Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988); M. M. B. Turner, "Spiritual Gifts Then and Now," *VE* 15 (1985), pp. 7-64; M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Sovereign Spirit: Discerning His Gifts* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1985); D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), pp. 66-76; and G. Houston, *Prophecy: A Gift for Today?* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1989). A treatment of this issue from a Roman Catholic perspective is Y. M.-J. Congar, "Excursus B: The Permanence of the 'Revelatio' and 'Inspiratio' in the Church," in his *Tradition and Traditions*, trans., M. Naseby and T. Rainborough (New York: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 119-37 and from a charismatic viewpoint, Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., "Canon, *Regulae Fidei* and Continuing Revelation in the Early Church," in *Church, Word and Spirit: Historical and Theological Essays in Honor of Geoffrey W. Bromiley*, ed. by J. E. Bradley and R. A. Muller (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), pp. 65-91; D. Williams, *Signs, Wonders and the Kingdom of God* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 1989) and J. R. Williams, "Excursus: On the

has been very little scholarly effort to trace and evaluate the cessationist position from a perspective of systematic theology including its historical and biblical aspects. This study examines a major expression of this cessationist tradition.

The doctrine that miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased around the apostolic age has evolved over the long expanse of church history, and has found expression in various religious persuasions and philosophical convictions. This study evaluates the historical levels of influence from John Calvin to Warfield and the rationale for this cessationist polemic. It focuses in particular upon B. B. Warfield's thought because it represents the historical culmination of the cessationist tradition and because he was the most prominent modern evangelical advocate for the position. His thought is singled out here because he stands at or near the end of the evolution of cessationism, works within Calvinism, the dominant religious tradition espousing this position, and is steeped in the modern philosophical presuppositions which undergird the recent expressions of cessationism.

Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (b. 1855) was a professor of didactic and polemic theology at Princeton Seminary from 1887 until his death in 1921. Warfield is perhaps best known as the last of the defenders of Calvinist orthodoxy who remained at Princeton. In a

Cessation of Miracles," in his *Renewal Theology: God, The World and Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), pp. 158-68. P. S. Minear provides a thoughtful analysis of the problem in his, *To Heal and Reveal: The Prophetic Vocation according to Luke* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), Chapter 7: "The Prophetic Vocation Today," pp. 147-66.

A pioneering theological and biblically based polemic for the continuation of "extraordinary" spiritual gifts appeared in the works of Edward Irving, *The Collected Writings of Edward Irving in Five Volumes* (London: Alexander Strahan, 1864), to whose career, but little of his argument, B. B. Warfield devotes a chapter in his book, *Counterfeit Miracles* (New York: Charles Scribners, 1918). Much of the rhetoric of the debate among Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal fundamentalists of this century may be traced to an acrimonious attack on Irving by John Darby, the theological father of dispensationalism, which was encapsulated in, and disseminated widely by Scofield's *Reference Bible*. See L. E. Dixon, "Have the 'Jewels of the Church' Been Found Again?" *EJ* 5 (Fall 1987), pp. 78-92. A decade or so later, in the 1880's and 90's, a number of healing evangelists, such as A. B. Simpson, F. F. Bosworth, A. J. Gordon, R. A. Torrey, John Alexander Dowie, and R. L. Stanton, argued for the recurrence in the Church of miraculous healings, but met resistance from most mainline Protestant periodicals. See R. J. Cunningham, "From Holiness to Healing: The Faith Cure in America 1872-1892," *CH* 43 (December 1974), pp. 506-10 and Edith Waldvogel, "Chapter 4: An Evangelical Theology of Healing," in her "The Overcoming Life: A Study in the Reformed Evangelical Origins of Pentecostalism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1977), pp. 122-48.

prodigious number of articles, book reviews and monographs,¹⁴ Warfield attempted to withstand the rising tide of Liberalism which had, he thought, denied the divine inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. An extension of this concern was the increasing emphasis upon religious experience which, to Warfield, de-emphasized the centrality of propositional revelation which comprised the text of Scripture. This new challenge to Princeton orthodoxy found various expressions in the thought of Albrecht Ritschl and A. C. McGiffert, the subjectivism of the Wesleyan “higher life” and Keswick movements, and in the charismatic revelations and miracles claimed by many religious groups. Warfield was aware of Pentecostalism as a separate movement, but mentions it only in passing,¹⁵ since during his time it had barely become organized.

To most theological leaders of millions of Evangelicals and Fundamentalists in North America, the collection of Warfield’s work in *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*¹⁶ stands as the definitive statement on the nature of biblical revelation. To the considerable degree that this issue stands as a sensitive and divisive problem among Evangelicals today, Warfield’s work remains a major benchmark for the debate.¹⁷

¹⁴Much of Warfield’s published and unpublished writings are collected in his *Opuscula Warfieldii*, located at Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary. The definitive bibliography of his works is that compiled by J. Meeter and R. Nicole, *A Bibliography of Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, 1851-1921* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1974).

¹⁵Warfield, *Perfectionism*, Part One, in *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, 10 vols., edited by Ethelbert D. Warfield (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931, reprinted, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), v.7, pp. 326-30, hereafter, *WBBW*.

¹⁶Edited by S. G. Craig with an introduction by C. Van Til (New York: Oxford University Press, 1927).

¹⁷For example, see the articles by Evangelical authors: D. P. Fuller, “Benjamin B. Warfield’s View of Faith and History,” *JETS* 11 (Spring 1968), pp. 75-83; J. H. Gerstner, “Warfield’s Case for Biblical Inerrancy,” in *God’s Inerrant Word*, ed. John W. Montgomery, Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1974); D. Jodoch, “The Impact of Cultural Change: Princeton Theology and Scriptural Authority Today,” *Dialogue* 22 (Winter 1983), pp. 21-29; H. Krabbendam, “B.B. Warfield vs. G.C. Berkhouwer on Scripture,” in *Inerrancy: The Extent of Biblical Authority*, edited by Norman Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980); R. Nicole, “The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture: J.D.G. Dunn vs. B.B. Warfield,” *The Churchman* 97, no. 3 (1983), pp. 198-215; 98, no. 1 (1984), pp. 7-27, and “The Inspiration of Scripture: B. B. Warfield and Dr. Dewey M. Beegle,” *GR* 8 (1965), pp. 93-109; M. Parsons, “Warfield and Scripture,” *The Churchman* 91 (July 1977), pp. 198-220; J. B. Rogers, “Van Til and Warfield on Scripture in the Westminster Confession,” in *Jerusalem and Athens*, edited by E. R. Geehan (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers, 1971); E. R. Sandeen, “The Princeton Theology: One Source of Biblical Literalism in

But Warfield's decisive influence was not limited to the Evangelical debate on scripture. He also produced a definitive statement for Evangelicals on another issue: the occurrence of modern-day miracles. In the Evangelical debates over the continuation of charismatic gifts, Warfield's *Counterfeit Miracles*¹⁸ remains, after seven decades, the

American Protestantism," *CH* 31 (September 1962), pp. 307-321; R. Swanton, "Warfield and Progressive Orthodoxy," *RTR* 23 (October 1964), pp. 74-87; D. Westblade, "Benjamin B. Warfield on Inspiration and Inerrancy," *SBT* 10 (1980), pp. 27-43. In Harold Lindsell's controversial *Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), Warfield is cited frequently, e.g., on pages 70, 106, 113, 150 and 185. Elsewhere he notes, "Perhaps no theologian of that age is as widely read and has had his books kept in print so long as Warfield." Lindsell, "Warfield, B[enjamin] B[reckinridge]," *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed., J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), p. 1030. In *Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977), p. 262, James Barr states: "In respect of the doctrine of scripture it was the [old Princeton] tradition, and especially the contribution of Warfield himself, that molded the set of ideas we now know as fundamentalism." D. Clair Davis also affirms Warfield's significance in "Princeton and Inerrancy: The Nineteenth Century Philosophical Background of Contemporary Concerns," in *Inerrancy and the Church*, ed., John D. Hannah (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), pp. 359-60: "To this day Warfield's *Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* serves throughout Evangelical academia as the starting point." Similarly, Mark Noll, "Benjamin B. Warfield," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* ed. Walter A. Elwell, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), p. 1156. In his important study, *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 16, David H. Kelsey describes Warfield as "the [italics his] Princeton theologian . . . far and away the ablest mind defending Calvinist orthodoxy in the United States in 1880s and 90s.

¹⁸New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918. Warfield's impact on modern Evangelical thinking on miracles is duly noted by: C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 6 vols. (Waco, TX: Word, 1979), IV, p. 287; A. Hoekema, *Holy Spirit Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), p.59; J. Woodbridge, M. Noll and N. Hatch, *The Gospel in America* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), p. 77. Also, George Mallone in *Those Controversial Gifts* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1983), p. 3, notes, "B. B. Warfield's teaching on [the] cessation of the gifts has now influenced almost an entire century of the church's life." Again, a well known fundamentalist writer, J. S. Baxter, in his somewhat ambiguous defense of modern miracles, *Divine Healing for the Body* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), p. 53, repeatedly refers to Warfield and introduces him: "Other well-known writers . . . might be quoted as supporting this theory . . ." but Warfield, in "his brilliant treatise," *Counterfeit Miracles*, "most powerfully represents them all." In an important new book, *Miracles and the Critical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983), p. 198, Colin Brown asserts that Warfield "was in many ways . . . the doyen of American evangelical polemicists. . . . Although he has been dead for over sixty years, his views still carry great weight in evangelical circles on a wide range of issues." See also, Louis Monden, *Signs and Wonders: A Study of the Miraculous Element in Religion* (New York: Desclee Co., 1966), p. 295, n.92. J. O. Buswell in his *Systematic Theology*, p. 182, affirms that "the best work in the field [of cessationism] is Benjamin B. Warfield's." According to Synan, *In the Latter Days*, p.

major starting point for this discussion as well. Accordingly, this study treats Warfield's *Counterfeit Miracles* as the final, authoritative and representative expression of cessationism for conservative American Evangelicalism.

Warfield's polemic is expressed in the traditional Protestant cessationist propositions about miraculous charismata, *e.g.*: 1) The essential role of miraculous charismata is to accredit true doctrine or its bearers. 2) While God may providentially act in unusual, even striking ways, true miracles are limited to epochs of special divine revelation, *i.e.*, those within the biblical period. 3) Miracles are judged by the doctrines they purport to accredit: if the doctrines are false, or alter orthodox doctrines, their accompanying miracles are necessarily counterfeit.

This study critically examines the central premises underlying Benjamin B. Warfield's polemic on miracles, evaluating the validity of Warfield's argument primarily on the basis of the internal consistency of his thought. The thesis of this study is that Warfield's polemic—the culmination of a historically evolving argument directed against certain threats to institutional religion—fails because of internal inconsistencies with respect to its concept of miracle, its historical method and its biblical hermeneutics. Insofar as these errors are characteristic of more contemporary forms of cessationism, they too fail.

The central failure of Warfield's cessationism is the confusion of the *sufficiency* of revelation, *i.e.*, in the unique historical manifestation of Christ and apostolic doctrine as finally revealed in scripture, with the procedural *means* of communicating, expressing and applying that revelation, *i.e.*, via the charismata, including gifts of prophecy and miracles. In other words, the charismata do not accredit the Gospel, nor do they replace the Gospel; rather, the charismata express the Gospel. Just as the physical process of preaching the Gospel does not negate its message, so neither the gift of prophecy; as a charism of hospitality expresses, but does not replace or diminish the significance of Christ's gracious sacrifice, so neither a gift of healing. Claiming that certain gifts of the Spirit (*i.e.*, the *means* of communicating and expressing) are replaced by the Gospel (the *content* of the communication), is like claiming that the "miracles" of Christian radio and television are necessarily replaced by Christian theology. But beyond this, the

77 "The last word on the subject" and "the ultimate statement of the cessation theory" came from Warfield's *Counterfeit Miracles*." J. Rodman Williams, "Excursus: On the Cessation of Miracles," *Renewal Theology*, p. 162, interacts mainly with Warfield, introducing him as "the strongest—in many ways the most influential—person to affirm the cessation of miracles" in the early part of this century.

charismata are the divinely ordained manifestations of the risen and exalted Jesus; indeed, they are the “power of God unto salvation.”

The argument proper of this work occupies its three subsequent chapters. The remainder of this chapter is a brief historical investigation of some key elements in the cessationist polemic which Warfield shares, such as the context of religious conflict precipitating the polemic, and its various justifications, which include its underlying epistemology and view of miracle. Chapter 2 then concentrates systematically upon Warfield’s polemic itself, noting the historical factors precipitating it, and critically examining his rationale for cessationism, including its epistemology and view of miracle. Chapter 2 also evaluates Warfield on the basis of the consistency of his thought and the validity of his scriptural exegesis. Chapter 3 carries this critical analysis further by testing Warfield’s rationale for his polemic against the understanding of scripture which his own hermeneutics implies. This chapter first examines the biblical portrayal of the Holy Spirit and of the Kingdom of God and finds them both to be inimical to cessationism. With this biblically grounded understanding of Spirit and kingdom as a contextual background, Chapter 3 also examines key passages of scripture relating to cessationism which Warfield and cessationist polemicists generally fail to treat. Chapter 4 offers a summary and conclusions.

C. Historical Antecedents

Warfield’s cessationism of course did not suddenly appear in its highly evolved form at the beginning of the twentieth century. Cessationism developed from a complex stew of post-biblical theologies and philosophies that had long been simmering in their polemical cauldron. Battles over the continuation of certain spiritual gifts drastically distorted the understanding of their very nature and purpose. As certain emphases within doctrines such as Christology, the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God and ecclesiology evolved far from those of the New Testament, the dependent understanding of the charismata and “miracle” has become drastically distorted as well. For example, these days the word, “miracle” to laypersons conjures apparitions of the Blessed Virgin, canonizing saints, televangelists, narrow escapes, while “charisma” describes an attractive personality or a seductive brand of cologne. When we exclaim, “Wonders never cease!” at an unexpected virtue, we are reacting to an implicit cessationism.

Cessationism did not originate within orthodox Christianity, but from within contemporary paganism,¹⁹ normative Judaism and in Christian sects during the first three centuries of the Common Era. In **Judaism**, three major elements of a cessationist position emerged.

First, from the Maccabean era onward, Judaism harbored ambivalence about prophecy and miracles: lamenting, on the one hand, the loss of prophets and God's miraculous interventions, and on the other, a readiness to accept reports of such activity when it appeared. Hence, a compromise: there was a tendency to view prophecy and miracles on a two-tier level: 1) the classical prophets and miraculous events described in the scriptures, and, 2) the various attenuated forms of prophecy and miracles, such as the *bath qol* and miracle accounts of early rabbis.²⁰

¹⁹ Since this section was written, Gene L. Green has offered an important contribution, suggesting that Peter and Paul were responding to a climate of *pagan* skepticism about the validity of prophecy and oracles: “‘As for Prophecies, They Will Come to an End’: 2 Peter, Paul and Plutarch on the ‘Obsolescence of Oracles.’” *JSNT* 82 (2001), pp. 107-22. Since early Christianity was “alive with prophetic activity” Green insists that, against pagan claims that prophecy either has ceased or “will cease” (παύσονται, cf. Plutarch, *De pythiae oraculis* 397D; *De defectu oraculorum* 431E), Paul affirms a more nuanced cessationism, that is, “only in light of a more perfect revelation, one that is eschatological (1 Cor. 13:10). A time of full knowledge is coming but until then the validity of partial revelations should be upheld. The apostle is far from embracing notions of prophetic decline but rather anticipates that day when revelation will be full and complete (13:12, ‘face to face’), a time when any form of divine inspiration will no longer be necessary . . . due to the clarity and immediacy of communication between the divine and humankind” (p. 120).

²⁰Lit. “daughter of a voice,” an echo, suggesting an inner voice or revelatory impression.

On the *bath qol* see the article in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971), IV, p. 323. On rabbinic wonder workers see G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), pp. 77-79. Interestingly, Grudem in his *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, utilizes the rabbinic distinction between the OT prophet and later manifestations of less authoritative revelations in his understanding of NT apostleship and its relation to NT prophecy: the former in both cases express the absolute word of God while the latter is only relatively so.

On the cessation of miracles and prophecy in early Judaism, see D. E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), pp. 103-07; A. I. Baumgarten, “Miracles and Halakah in Rabbinic Judaism,” *JQR* 73 (January 1983), pp. 238-53; B. M. Bokser, “Wonder-Working and the Rabbinic Tradition: The Case of Hanina ben Dosa,” *JSJ* 16 (1986), pp. 42-92; W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 3rd ed. (London: SPCK, 1970), pp. 208-16; F. E. Greenspahn, “Why Prophecy Ceased,” *JBL* 108, no. 1 (1989), pp. 37-49; W. A. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Washington, D.C.: The University Press of America, 1983), pp. 21-33; D. Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), pp. 33-37; R. A. Horsley, “‘Like One of the Prophets of Old’: Two Types of Popular Prophets at the Time of Jesus,” *CBQ* 47 (July 1985), pp. 435-63; R.

Second, the feeling nonetheless persisted that the highest level of the Spirit's activity had ended, so that by the end of the first century, CE, an unusually pious rabbi might "merit" the Holy Spirit (that is, the gifts of prophecy and miracles), but not receive because post-biblical (OT) generations are not worthy.²¹

Third, more importantly, the issue of religious authority between "charismatics" who, even in legendary accounts, may have wished to use prophecy and miracle to establish their doctrinal credibility, increasingly lost out to those who relied on the interpretive skill and consensus of the academy.²² Prophecy and miracle working were replaced by study of the Torah and its scholarly interpretations.²³ In reaction against the radical charismatic Messianic pretenders of the revolts against Rome and against the rapidly growing charismatic Christian movement, Judaism became a religion based on the one, true God, the written Torah, and its scholastic interpretation. Because of that, miracles and prophecies, perforce, had ceased.

An early form of cessationism was directed at Jesus. One of the accusations which led to his execution was that he had violated the commands of Deuteronomy 13 and 18, which forbid performing a sign or a wonder to lead the people astray after false gods. The cessationist polemic was directed not only against later charismatic Christians,²⁴ but intramurally within Judaism by competing rabbis.²⁵

Leivestad, "Das Dogma von der prophetenlosen Zeit," *NTS* 19 (April 1973), pp. 288-99; R. Meyer, "προφήτης," *TDNT*, 6, pp. 812-28; K. Schubert, "Wunderberichte und ihr Kerygma in der rabbinischen Tradition," *Kairos* 24, no. 1 (1982), pp. 31-37.

²¹E.g., *Berachoth* 20a and *Sanhedrin* 11a.

²²*bBaba Mezi'a* 59b. Opposite results obtained in other cases: *yBerachoth* 3b and *bBerachoth* 52a.

²³To the rabbis, the prophets, after all, were merely expositors of the Law: *bMegilla* 14a; *bTemurah* 16a; *Exodus rabba* 42:8 on 19:3; *Leviticus rabba* 15:2 on 13:2; *Seder Olam rabba* 21, 30; *bBaba Bathra* 12a. See the summary of this point in, R. Meyer, *TDNT*, 6, p. 818.

²⁴*Sanhedrin*, 10:1. The one who will have no part in the life to come is one who "reads the heretical books, or that utters charms over a wound and says, 'I will put none of the diseases upon thee which I put upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee.' Abba Saul says: 'Also he that pronounces the Name with its proper letters.'" In the *Mishnah* and *Talmud* from which all anti-Christian polemics were extirpated during the middle ages, this passage may have survived. The "heretical books" could well refer to Christian writings, the healings to Christian practice and the reference to the "Lord" (Yahweh) could designate Jesus Christ, particularly in the Johannine ἐγὼ εἶμι passages.

²⁵F. E. Greenspahn, "Why Prophecy Ceased," *JBL* 108/1 (Spring, 1989), pp. 37-49 and Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, pp. 80-82.

The Jewish admission that prophecy and miracles had ceased among them, however, proved an irresistible target for Christian polemics.²⁶ Apologists such as Justin (ca. 100-ca.165), Origen (ca. 185-ca. 254) and Cyril (315-386), argued that God had withdrawn the Spirit of prophecy and miracles from the Jews and transferred it to the Church as proof of her continued divine favor.²⁷ Thus the church moved toward the Jewish aberrant view of miracle: evidentialism. That is, the primary, if not exclusive, function of miracles is to accredit and vindicate a doctrinal system or its bearers.

The second source of cessationism arose within **Montanism**. Some church fathers reacted against an alleged cessationist statement by a Montanist prophetess. They cite her as claiming, “After me there

²⁶E.g., by Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, ANF, I, 240, 243 and Origen, *Against Celsus*, ANF, IV, 614 (pp 44-50 old ch 2)

²⁷*Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, 87, ANF, I, p. 243: The charismata came in fullness upon Jesus and “would find their accomplishment in him, so that there would be no more prophets in your nation after the ancient custom: and this fact you plainly perceive. For after him no prophet has arisen among you.” Further, he notes, when “[Christ] came, after whom, it was requisite that such gifts should cease from you; and having received their rest in him, should again, as had been predicted, become gifts which, from the grace of his Spirit’s power, he imparts to those who believe in him.” Earlier Justin had insisted that “the prophetic gifts remain with us [the church] to the present time. And hence you ought to understand that [the gifts] formerly among your nation have been transferred to us” (p. 240).

Origen also notes the Jews’ own concession about the disappearance of miracles and prophecy within their own community: “Since the coming of Christ, no prophets have arisen among the Jews, who have *admittedly* been abandoned by the Holy Spirit.” *Against Celsus*, 7.8, in H. Chadwick, ed., *Against Celsus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 401-02. Elsewhere Origen insists, “God’s care of the Jews was transferred to those Gentiles who believe in him. Accordingly [they] have not even any vestige of divine power among them. They no longer have any prophets or wonders, though traces of these are to be found to a considerable extent among Christians. Indeed, some works are even greater; and if our word may be trusted, we also have seen them.” *Against Celsus* 2.8, Chadwick, p. 72. So also, *Commentary on Matthew*, ANF XIV, 19, p. 508; See the discussion in N. R. DeLange, *Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in the Third Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 81-82, who cites similar points in Origen’s *First Principles* I, 3, 7; *Psalms*, Homily XXXVI, III, 10; *Leviticus*, Homily XI, 5. Cyril of Jerusalem makes a similar “dispensational” argument against the Jews in his *Catechetical Lectures*, 18:23, 26, NPF, 2nd ser., VII, p. 140.

This whole line of argument must have been ironically familiar to Jews who had often argued that at one time Gentiles had experienced the Holy Spirit, but because they misused the prophetic gift, as Balaam, or because of epochal religious developments, such as the giving of the Torah or the completion of the tabernacle, the Spirit was totally transferred from any Gentile participation to the Jews alone. Sjöberg, “πνεῦμα,” *TDNT* 6, p. 383.

will be no more prophecy, but the end (συντέλειον),”²⁸ a probable reference to Jesus’ use of the word in Mt. 28:20. Against this hint of cessationism some appealed to 1 Cor. 13:10. For example Eusebius records that Miltiades does so against Maximilla and concludes, “it is necessary that the prophetic charisma be in *all the Church until the final coming*.”²⁹

Despite the theological stand of the fathers against the cessationism of the Jews, Montanists and others, despite the abundant appeals to contemporary prophecies, visions, miracles and especially exorcisms performed to evangelize pagans, and despite the growing interest in miracles as aids to piety, a few leaders of the church nonetheless occasionally turned her opponents’ polemic against herself. Most of the expressions of these proto-cessationist explanations follow.

²⁸Epiphanius, *Against Panarion* 48. V. 4 (PG 41:855), cited in Pierre de Labriolle, *Les Sources de l’Histoire du Montanisme* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1913), p. 117: “Μετ’ ἡμῆς προφήτις οὐκέτι ἔσται ἀλλὰ συντέλειαν.”

²⁹“δεῖν γάρ εἶναι τὸ χάρισμα ἐν πασῇ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ μέχρι τῆς τέλειος παρουσίας.” *Against Alcibiades* in Eusebius, *Church History*, V,17,4 (PNF, 2nd ser., 1, p. 234. Didymus of Alexandria cites 13:8-10 in full and assigns τὸ τέλειον to the time after the resurrection and the “second coming of the Lord (τῆς δευτέρας παρουσίας τοῦ Δεσπότου).” *Concerning Triadus* III, 41, (PG 39: 984), in Labriolle, *Sources*, pp. 156-57). Earlier, Irenaeus by implication, connected the τέλειον with the eschaton: “we, *while upon the earth*, as Paul also declares, ‘know in part and prophesy in part’.” *Against Heresies* 2,28,7 (ANF, 1, p. 401, my italics). Cf. the same identification with τὸ τέλειον in *ibid.*, 4,9,2. Origen, *Against Celsus* 6,20 (ANF 4, p. 582) makes the same connection: “And therefore we hope, after the troubles and struggles which we suffer here, to reach the highest heavens . . . And as many of us as praise him [there] . . . shall be ever engaged in the contemplation of the invisible things of God, . . . seeing, as it was expressed by the true disciple of Jesus in these words, ‘then face to face’; and in these, ‘when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part will be done away.’” Methodius of Olympus, *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins* 9, 2 (ANF 6, p. 345): “For now we know ‘in part,’ and as it were ‘through a glass,’ since that which is perfect has not yet come to us, namely, the kingdom of heaven and the resurrection, when ‘that which is in part will be done away’.” So also Archelaus, who identified “the perfect” with the eschaton in *The Disputation with Manes*, 36-37 (ANF 6, p. 210). Cf. J. L. Ash, Jr, “The Decline of Ecstatic Prophecy in the Early Church.” Gary Shogren, in an exhaustive study of the use of 1 Cor. 13:8-10 in the Church Fathers, showed that the Fathers were unanimous that the “perfect” (τὸ τέλειον) in this passage referred only to the end of this age (the *Parousia*) and that in all the cases where this passage was adduced to show the continuation of prophecy it was to show that it was to continue in all the Church until the end of this present age. “How Did They Suppose ‘The Perfect’ Would Come? 1 Corinthians 13.8-12 in Patristic Exegesis. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15 (Oct 1999), pp. 99-121.

Victorian of Petau (d. ca. 304), in a commentary on the Apocalypse, writes, “The apostles through signs, wonders and mighty deeds overcame the unbelievers. After this the faith of the Church was given the comfort of the interpreted prophetic scriptures.”³⁰

Chrysostom (347-407), in his first homily on Pentecost, complains that he is constantly questioned by his congregation about the absence of tongues speaking when people are baptized.³¹ Almost all of Chrysostom’s several dozen references to miracles are associated with arguments against seeking them: 1) Miracles were once required for weak faith; today, powerful miracles would perniciously allow weak faith among observers. 2) Accordingly, when “true religion took root” in all the world, miracles ceased. 3) To suffer for Christ is much greater than to experience miracles delivering us from that suffering. 4) No one should “wait for miracles” today because the “sign greater than all signs” is deliverance from sin. 5) Besides, if we choose Christian love as the best spiritual gift, “we shall have no need of signs.”³²

³⁰*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (Vindobonae: C. Geroldi filium, 1866-1913), v.49, p. 90. This seems to be the only clear connection between the cessation of the charismata and their replacement by scripture among the church fathers. The charge that Montanist prophecy was creating new scripture is challenged by D. F. Wright, sec. 7: “Montanist Scriptures?” in his “Why Were the Montanists Condemned?” *Themelios* 2 (September 1976), pp. 19-20 and C. M. Robeck, “Canon, *Regulae Fidei*, and Continuing Revelation in the Early Church,” *Church, Word and Spirit: Historical and Theological Essays in Honor of Geoffrey W. Bromiley*. Eds., J. E. Bradley and R. A. Miller (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987). Certainly this charge is implicit in the cessationist “maturity of the church” argument, as in Chrysostom and Augustine, but its exact relation to scripture echoes the earlier rabbis.

³¹*PG*, 50, col. 549.

³²On 1) *First Corinthians*, Homily VI (on 2:5), *NPF*, 1st ser., XII, p. 31; *Romans*, Homily XIV (on 8:24), *NPF*, 1st ser., XI, p. 446. 2) *Acts*, Homily XXXI, *NPF*, 1st ser. XI, p. 196. 3) *Matthew*, Homily IV (on 1:17), *NPF*, 1st ser. X, p. 21. This appears as part of a larger point: “It is usual with God . . . to display his own power” during periods of danger and persecution against God’s people, e.g., at the Exodus, at Daniel’s time and when the church “had just come out of error” [apostolic period]. 4 and 5) *Matthew*, Homily XLVI, 4 (on Mt. 13:24-30), *NPF*, 1st ser., X, p. 291. Chrysostom here improperly interprets the “better way” of 1 Cor. 12:31 as a forced choice between love and the charismata, rather than the “way” in which all the charismata were to be employed.

R. A. Greer, has recently insisted that “Chrysostom’s opinion that miracles ceased after the apostolic age is certainly a minority view . . . the miraculous is an important dimension of the church in the fourth and fifth centuries.” *The Fear of Freedom: A Study of Miracles in the Imperial Church* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State Univ. Pr., 1989), p. 115.

Isidore of Pelusium (d. ca. 450), follows this latter line somewhat idealistically: “Perhaps miracles would take place now, too, if the lives of the teachers rivaled the bearing of the apostles.”³³

Ambrosiaster (d. 384) offered another proto-cessationist theory involving a kind of charismatic entropy beginning with the apostles, who, in Jn. 14:12 were promised they alone would perform “greater works”; then John 20:22 denotes an impartation of the Spirit conferring ecclesiastical power enabling the successive transfer of the Spirit throughout history via the imposition of hands, and finally, a third level described in Acts 2 in which the Spirit was bestowed on the laity “whence arises the preaching of the church.”³⁴

Augustine (354-430) begins his theological career with cessationist sentiments:

“We have heard that our predecessors, at a stage of faith on the way from temporal things up to eternal things, followed visible miracles. They could do nothing else. And they did so in such a way that it should not be necessary for those who came after them. When the Catholic Church had been founded and diffused throughout the whole world, on the one hand miracles were not allowed to continue till our time, lest the mind should always seek visible things, and the human race should grow cold by becoming accustomed to things which when they were novelties kindled its faith. On the other hand we must not doubt that those are to be believed who proclaimed miracles which only a few had actually seen, and yet were able to persuade whole peoples to follow them. At that time the problem was to get people to believe before anyone was fit to reason about divine and invisible things.”³⁵

Later, Augustine repudiated this position, and in chapter 22 of his *City of God* provides samples of over seventy miracles he recorded in and around his churches. He complains in 22,8 that contemporary miracles are relatively unknown not because they no longer occur, but simply because of suppressed communication and because people are conditioned (perhaps from statements like his own, above) to disbelieve them.³⁶

³³*Epistle* 4:80, *PG*, 78, col. 1141.

³⁴*PL* 35, cols. 2289-91.

³⁵ *Of True Religion* 47, cited from J.H.S. Burleigh, (ed.), *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, Library of Christian Classics, (Philadelphia: Westminster Pr., 1953), v.6, p. 248.

³⁶*NPF*, 1st ser., I, p. 485. See the excellent summary by J. Bentivegna, SJ, “The Witness of St Augustine on the Action of the Holy Spirit in the Church and the Praxis of the Charismata in his Times,” *Studia Patristica* 22 (1989), pp. 188-201.

Gregory the Great (540-604), though a prolific recorder of contemporary miracles, nevertheless wrote, ca. 590, what was to become a highly influential metaphor on the cessation of miracles.³⁷ “These things [miracles described in Mark 16:17-18] were necessary in the beginning of the Church, for in order that faith might grow, it had to be nourished by miracles; for we, too, when we plant shrubs, pour water on them till we see that they have gotten a strong hold on the ground; and when once they are firmly rooted, we stop the watering. For this reason Paul says: ‘Tongues are for a sign, not to believers, but to unbelievers.’”³⁸

These Christian cessationist tenets followed those of the rabbis: 1) Spiritual power is normatively apportioned in descending tiers: at the idealized level of the biblical canon versus the present time. The apostolic level of spiritual power could not, and likely, should not again be approached. 2) Only in a return to the (impossibly?) idealized righteousness of the NT could the church merit the charismata. 3) Miracles were once required as scaffolding for the Church, which, once established (*i.e.*, in scripture, tradition and institution), no longer required such support. A mild Deistic theme seems implicit here: the church required a divine “jump-start” of power at the beginning, but now more or less runs on its own (*cf.* Gal. 3:3!). Hence, miracles and prophecy were replaced by piety and the study of scripture. This last thesis reflected the Church’s growing apologetic, evidentialist use for miracles, which, along with appeals to the exemplary morality and self-sacrifice of early Christians, had acted as a powerful tool for evangelism. Increasingly, in this view, miracles appeared to *prove* the Gospel, not to *express* it.

Still another corollary of cessationism was the common tendency to transmute the “miraculous” charismata of earlier times into the more “ordinary” expressions of church ministry, *e.g.*, prophecy became preaching or teaching, or the various miracles of healing became metaphors for regeneration: the “blind” see the light of the Gospel, the “lame” walk the paths of righteousness, the “dead” are raised to newness of life.³⁹

³⁷See his *Dialogues*, subtitled, *De Miraculis Patrum Italicorum*, PL, 77, cols. 149-51.

³⁸*Homily on the Gospels*, 29, PL, 76, col. 1215. On the impact of this statement upon Protestant cessationism, see Noel L. Brann, “The Proto-Protestant Assault upon Church Magic: The ‘*Errores Bohemianorum*’ According to the Abbot Trithemius (1462-1516),” *Journal of Religious History* 12 (June 1982), pp. 9-22, esp. p. 16.

³⁹On the Christian tradition of spiritualizing of miracles see, *e.g.*, Origen, *Against Celsus*, 1.46; 2.48, 42, 94; similarly, Augustine, *Sermons on the Selected Lessons of*

Cessationism thusly provided the ecclesiastical hierarchy with a ready rationale against complaints of diminished charismatic activity in their churches and to an embarrassing implicit question, “how can religious authorities as bearers of pure Church tradition and praxis be justified if they lack certain charismata which appear to be a normative New Testament expression of Christian experience?” Perhaps the faithful recalled the prediction of 2 Tm. 3:5, of a church “having a form of religion but denying its δύνάμις [miracle] power.” But while a few church leaders may have promoted cessationism out of personal and institutional defensiveness, many simultaneously disseminated contemporary miracle accounts to encourage piety, and even included in their liturgies requests for God’s miraculous graces as though normative.⁴⁰ The role of the devout is no longer to expect miracles, but to pursue virtues prescribed in church scriptures and doctrines.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) ordered the pattern of cessationist tenets which dominated the church until the 20th century.⁴¹ His major new contribution to cessationism was the metaphysics of miracle based on Aristotelian philosophy. A true miracle, Aquinas said, expresses itself beyond any “means” of nature, absolute and above the power of

the New Testament, 38.3 (NPF, 1st ser., IV, p. 379): “The blind body does not now open its eyes by a miracle of the Lord, but the blinded heart opens its eyes to the world of the Lord. The physical corpse does not now rise again, but the soul rises again which lies dead in a living body. The deaf ears of the body are not now opened; but how many who have the ears of their hearts closed, let them fly open at the penetrating word of God.” See also the summary on the early practice of spiritualizing miracles by J. Speigl, “Die Rolle der Wunder in vorconstantinischen Christentum,” *ZKT* 92 (1970), pp. 307-10. This metaphorical treatment of miracles led easily to Bultmann’s program of demythologization.

⁴⁰D. R. Foubister, “Healing in the Liturgy of the Post Apostolic Church,” *SBT* 9:2 (October 1979), pp. 141-55. Tertullian attempted to integrate the reception of the charismata into Christian initiation liturgies, according to K. McDonnell, “The Ecclesiology of *Koinonia* and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Roman Catholic Perspectives,” paper presented to the Society of Pentecostal Studies, CBN University, Virginia Beach, VA, Nov. 13, 1987, p. 15.

⁴¹For the influence of Aquinas on later Christian thought on miracles, see Johannes Wendland, *Miracles and Christianity*, trans., H. R. Mackintosh (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), p. 64. Critical appraisals of miracle as an empirical expression of divine sanction in Aquinas, see L. S. O’Breartuin, “The Theology of Miracles,” *EphCar* 20 (1969), pp. 3-4, L. Monden, *Signs and Wonders: A Study of the Miraculous Element in Religion* (New York: Desclee, 1966), pp. 46-47, J. A. Hardon, “The Concept of Miracle from St. Augustine to Modern Apologetics,” *TS* 15 (June 1954), p. 243, and B. J. van der Walt, “Thomas Aquinas’ Idea about Wonders: A Critical Appraisal,” in *Dio d’l’Economia della Salvezza*, ed., K. Rahner, *et al* (Naples: Edizioni Domenicane Italiane, 1974), pp. 470-80.

the created order: it must be purely “super-natural.”⁴² Therefore, starting with the “facts” of a miracle, then, an observer can reason to its divine source. But while one can never know *how* God performed the miracle, one can certainly know *that* he did. Miracles, then, include such events as instantaneous healings of visibly diseased or broken bodies, the revelation through a prophecy of something impossible for anyone to know, or the bestowal of the gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands.⁴³

According to Aquinas, the central function of miracles was to serve as a *signum sensibile, a testimonium*⁴⁴ to guarantee the divine source and truth of Christian doctrines, particularly the deity of Christ. To explain the lack of visible miracles in his day, Aquinas asserted that Christ and his disciples had worked miracles sufficient to prove the faith once and for all; this having been done, no further miraculous proof of doctrines could be required.⁴⁵ In a number of other places, however, he vitiates this position by maintaining that miracles can

⁴²“A miracle properly so called is when something is done outside the order of nature. But it is not enough for a miracle if something is done outside the order of any particular nature; for otherwise anyone would perform a miracle by throwing a stone upwards, as such a thing is outside the order of the stone’s nature. For a miracle is required that it be against the order of the whole created nature. But God alone can do this, because, whatever an angel or any other creature does by its own power is according to the order of created nature; and thus is not a miracle. Hence, God alone can work miracles.” *Summa Theologiae* I, 110, 4. Translation from *Summa Theologiae Complete English Edition in Five Volumes*. ET, Fathers of the English Dominican Province (1948; Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981), p. 542.

Louis Monden is critical of the Thomistic emphasis here. “The primary note is that God is the author of the miraculous; we, by reasoning, constitute it as a sign. The biblical conception—and the intervention which God himself intends to be significant—is practically abandoned. This debased [rationalistic] conception remained dominant in theology and in apologetics until the end of the last century”—certainly including Warfield’s conception. *Signs and Wonders: A Study of the Miraculous Element in Religion* (New York: Desclee, 1966), p. 47-48.

⁴³*Commentary on 1 Corinthians* 12:2, p. 728; *Commentary on Galatians* 3:2, p. 128; *Commentary on Hebrews* 2:1, p. 99. This latter point may have influenced Warfield’s insistence that only the Apostles could confer the Spirit by the laying on of hands. *CM*, pp. 22 and 245, n. 48.

⁴⁴*Commentary on Hebrews* 2:1, p. 99; cf. *Summa Theologiae* II. II, 178, 2 ad 3; *De Potentia* 6, 5; *Commentary on John* 9, 3; *Commentary on 1 Corinthians* 12:2, p. 728; *Commentary on Galatians* 3:2, p. 128. Cf. the comment on 1 Corinthians 12:2, p. 728: since biblical doctrines are beyond the capacity of people to grasp rationally, miracles are provided to authenticate them, in the sense that an envoy must provide a special sign to establish the royal origin of his message. Cf. *Commentary on 1 Corinthians* 14:1, p. 812, where any prophet claiming supernatural insight must substantiate his claim with miracles.

⁴⁵*Commentary on Matthew* 10:1, p. 818.

recur if they aid in confirmation of preaching and bringing mankind to salvation.⁴⁶ But even beyond this, Aquinas suggested that believers of great sanctity may exhibit miraculous gifts of the Spirit, a doctrine that strengthened the veneration of shrines and canonization of saints via miracles.⁴⁷ A widespread belief in these last two exceptions, which essentially contradicted cessationism, resulted in the excesses surrounding miracles which precipitated the Reformation.

The Protestant reformers turned the cessationist polemic against not only Roman Catholicism but also the radical reformation, undercutting the claims of both to religious authority they based on miracles and revelations. Because of his special relevance to our study we concentrate on only one of these reformers.⁴⁸

John Calvin (1509-64) only slightly modified the cessationism of Aquinas in that it now became a tool to attack the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, particularly in its claims to apostolic succession with the corresponding authority to write new doctrine. Calvin popularized the restriction of miracles to the accreditation of the apostles and specifically to *their* writings, though he was less rigid about cessationism than many of his followers in that he held to the tradition that in unevangelized areas, apostles and prophetic gifts could recur to confirm the Gospel.⁴⁹

At least four significant aspects of Calvin's polemic stand out, the first three of which shed light on its underlying strategy and the last of which is an observation on the epistemological basis for Calvin's thesis that the extraordinary (miraculous) gifts of the Spirit did in fact cease with the apostolic age. This rationale was delineated by the following propositions.

1) God's purpose for miracles was to accredit the Word, *i.e.*, the scripture, its doctrines and its first proclaimers.⁵⁰ This proposition had

⁴⁶*Summa Theologiae* II, II, 2, 9 ad 3; 5, 2; 171, 1; 178, 1; 2; III, 7, 7; 27, 5 ad 3; 29, 1 ad 2; 31, 1 ad 2; 43, 1 ad 2.

⁴⁷*Summa Theologiae* II, II, 178, 1 and 2; III, 43, 1. Cf. his *Commentary on John* 9:3, 1348; on 4:7, p. 648 and on 2:3, p. 420.

⁴⁸For Luther's comments on miracles see Ewald M. Plass (compiler), *What Luther Says: An Anthology* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1959), II, pp. 953-57. He essentially follows the church tradition he received, with the exception of his anti-Romanist miracle polemics.

⁴⁹[Miraculous or revelatory spiritual gifts as a category] either does not exist today or is less commonly seen." *Institutes* IV, 3, 4 (1057). Apostles, prophets or evangelists, he says, are not ordinary offices in the church today, but the Lord "now and again revives as the need of the times demands" (1056).

⁵⁰"Scripture [has] warned us concerning the legitimate purpose and use of

the effect of restricting the power of accreditation by miracles to the major Protestant basis of religious authority: Scripture. This limitation to Scripture and the original apostles of accrediting miracles was presented to undercut the religious authority of contemporary miracles thought to accredit the evolving doctrines and the contemporary leadership, derived from “apostolic succession,” of the Roman Church, as well as the “Spirit-inspired” (and hence, religiously authoritative) teachings of the radical reformation.

2) Counterfeit miracles are discerned by their association with false doctrines, hence, when miracles were claimed by the Catholics or the radical reformation as accrediting their unscriptural doctrines, these miracles claimed by these competing groups were self-evidently false.⁵¹

3) While “visible,” “miraculous,” “extraordinary” or “temporary” spiritual gifts ceased with the apostles, there is a possibility they may recur if conditions requiring their manifestation warrant. However, these types of spiritual gifts are more likely transmuted into the “permanent” gifts and offices of contemporary Christian ministry or employed as metaphors for faith in the Gospel.⁵²

miracles. For Mark teaches that those signs which attended the apostles’ preaching were set forth to confirm it [Mark 16:20]. In like manner, Luke relates that our ‘Lord . . . bore witness to the work of his grace,’ when these signs and wonders were done by the apostles’ hands [Acts 14:2]. Very much like this is that word of the apostle: that the salvation proclaimed by the gospel has been confirmed in the fact that ‘the Lord has attested it by signs and wonders and various mighty works [Heb. 2:4; cf. Rom. 15:18-19] . . . These are the seals of the Gospel.” *Institutes* I. Preface, 3 (16); I. 8. 4 and 5. The same ideas are expressed in *Tracts and Treatises*, “Article XI: Of the Miracles of the Saints,” pp. 92-93 and *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 2 vols., trans. J. W. Fraser, eds., D. W. and T. F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), II, p. 3 (on 14:3).

⁵¹E.g., *Institutes*, Prefatory Address, 3 (16). “In demanding miracles of us they act dishonestly. For we are not forging some new gospel, but are retaining that very gospel whose truth all the miracles that Jesus Christ and his disciples ever wrought serve to confirm. But, compared with us, they have strange power: even to this day they can confirm their faith by continual miracles. Instead they allege miracles which can disturb a mind otherwise at rest—they are so foolish and ridiculous, so vain and false!”

⁵²*Institutes* IV, 3, 4 (1057). Calvin has a two-level view of Christian healing of the sick: the apostolic level of “manifest powers” vs. the affirmation that “the Lord is no less present with his people in every age; and he heals their weaknesses as often as necessary no less than of old.” IV, 19, 19 (1467). He sees the gift of tongues as the ability to preach the gospel in foreign languages or allegorically in the use of Biblical Greek or Hebrew in interpreting scripture. *The Acts of the Apostles*, I, p. 318 (on 10:46); cf. *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, p. 297 (on 14:22). The gift of discernment involves fairly rational testing of false teaching against the scripture. *Institutes* IV, 9,

4) What proof, other than his *a priori* association of miraculous charismata with accreditation of Scripture, does Calvin offer for their cessation? Surprisingly little: he appeals only superficially to Scripture and to the testimony of historical “experience.”⁵³ But mostly, Calvin assumes the traditions enshrined in Aquinas, rather than attempts systematically to prove his contention.

The Enlightenment Era (ca. 1650-1790) provided the setting for the next major steps in the development of Warfield’s cessationist miracle polemic. Calvin had established a theological rationale for the polemic based on a few, but important, scriptural proof-texts, but primarily on an evolved and internally inconsistent role of miracles. But during the Enlightenment, the basis of religious authority underwent a profound shift: from the Protestant basis of biblical authority to the human authority of perception and reason. The Enlightenment era⁵⁴ is generally regarded as the watershed in thought about miracles.⁵⁵ But less well known is that during this time in England a “great debate” had raged over the role of miracles in accrediting the truth of religion.⁵⁶ In line with a growing quest for certainty in human knowledge and

12 (1176).

⁵³For scriptural “warnings” about the use of miracles, *Institutes* Prefatory Address 3 (17, 18); I, 14, 17 (176); I, 18, 2 (232); II, 4, 5 (313); IV, 8, 6 (1153); IV, 9, 4 (1168). On experience as a test for miracles, e.g., *Institutes* IV, 19, 19 (1467); IV, 19, 29 (1477).

⁵⁴The so-called Age of the Enlightenment is generally dated between 1648 (the end of the Thirty Years War) and the French Revolution, or, in intellectual history from Francis Bacon’s *Novum Organum* (1620) to Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). James C. Livingstone, *Modern Christian Thought from the Enlightenment to Vatican II* (New York: Macmillan Pub. Co., 1971), pp. 1-2.

⁵⁵Wendland, *Miracles and Christianity*, p. 210; J. S. Lawton, *Miracles and Revelation* (New York: The Association Press, 1961), pp. 11-14; C. Brown, p. 23; and P. H. Richards, “The Nature of Miracle,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Richmond, VA: Union Theological Seminary, 1958), pp. 127-78.

⁵⁶D. P. Walker, in brief but valuable study, suggests that cessationism remained “such a prominent and tenaciously held doctrine [during the early Enlightenment] partly because of the controversies arising out of Puritan attempts in the 1590s to cast out devils and the savage suppression of these attempts by Anglican prelates” and because of the increased use of contemporary miracle stories by Catholics in their anti-Protestant polemics. “The Cessation of Miracles,” *Hermeticism and the Renaissance: Intellectual History and the Occult in Early Modern Europe*. Eds., I. Mekeel and L. G. Debus (Washington, DC: Folger Books, 1988), p. 111. Also, Walker’s book, *Unclean Spirits: Possession and Exorcism in France and England in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Scholar Press, 1981), pp. 66-70, 72-73, and K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), pp. 80, 124, 256, 479 and 485.

increased confidence in human reason during this period, certain prominent scientists who were also evangelical apologists⁵⁷ advanced the novel thesis that miracles provided a more or less reasonable and empirical proof for Christian doctrine. Against this new apologetic thrust came the response of the Deists,⁵⁸ who, in their defense of “natural” (as opposed to revealed) religion, were concerned, in some cases, not only to deny divine revelation but also the miracles from which it received its accreditation. Here the cessationist polemic was pushed past its ultimate limit, when the Deists challenged not only the possibility of post-biblical miracles but even the possibility of their ever having occurred at all.

Several important developments in the cessationist miracle polemic emerged during the Enlightenment period. First, the increased interest in natural science with the presupposition that God providentially ordered nature subject to fixed laws led to a renewed emphasis on miracles as attesting evidence for Christian religious authority. Apologists now had, they felt, an *empirical* basis for apologetics. Proof

⁵⁷These men were not, as is usually supposed, a conservative, obscurantist, rear-guard defending miracles against the enlightened minds of the time, *e.g.*, David Hume, but represented the most prominent scientific pioneers, *e.g.*, Bishop John Wilkins, founder of the Royal Society for the Advancement of Science, Sir Robert Boyle, “the father of chemistry and the son of the Earl of Cork,” Sir Isaac Newton, and Archbishop Tillotson. R. M. Burns, *The Great Debate on Miracles: From Joseph Glanville to David Hume* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press), pp. 9-18. Conventional wisdom is that David Hume was a trailblazing thinker in the great debate, since he became the *bête noire* for countless orthodox apologists down to the present. But Burns has pointed out that David Hume’s now famous work, “On Miracles,” at the time of its publication in 1749, “was very much a tail-end contribution to a flagging debate” (Burns, pp. 9-10). His points had already been repeatedly made, discussed, refuted and even transcended by many other writers. In particular it was greatly overshadowed by a much more substantial book by Conyers Middleton, discussed below. While Warfield’s historical method ironically follows Hume on the question of post-biblical miracles, it is Middleton’s very similar position that Warfield claims as his own. It is for this reason that Hume’s work is properly relegated to this footnote.

⁵⁸The expression, “deist” is difficult to define, as those writers usually so described were a very diverse group who held a variety of positions on theoretical issues. Deism is associated with: Lord Herbert, Shaftesbury, Blount, Wollaston, Woolston, Toland, Tindal, Bolingbroke, Morgan, Chubb and Annet. 1) Their central tenet was the all-sufficiency of natural religion. Revealed religion was discriminatory in that it rendered mankind’s salvation subject to a historical and geographical accident. 2) They accused the orthodox notion of revelation as being self-contradictory, *e.g.*, recognition of Jesus as divine implies a pre-existing set of criteria for determining him so. Revelation was merely a “republication” of innate ideas. 3) Deists also tended to push Calvin’s repugnance for “enthusiasm” to an extreme, applying it to any claim to revelation. See Burns, *The Great Debate on Miracles*, pp. 13-14.

of Christianity via miracles was available to any human mind in the same way that all knowledge is accessible, not by revelation, but by “common sense.” But this new scientific world view also led to the conviction of a closed cosmology resting on the three pillars of causality, continuity and objectifiability. Whereas for these apologists, miracles, as divine irruptions into his natural order, provided an empirically observable event demonstrating God’s presence, later skeptics either subsumed these events under natural (versus divine) causality or attributed them to enthusiastic imaginations. The strategy of the skeptics was an old one: if miracles were adduced to accredit doctrines and religious authority, the miracles themselves must be discredited. Hence, the cessationist polemic *redivivus*. Some Enlightenment polemicists went further: they were not merely confining accrediting miracles to the classical era of Christian origins, but in the clear case of David Hume, were attempting to build an impenetrable wall between the natural and supernatural. Thus the polemic became not cessationist, but abolitionist.

Second, these Deistic and other Enlightenment polemicists who so vociferously rejected the credulity of religious dogmatism actually managed to create a dogmatism of their own. Extreme skepticism and rationalism shaped the anti-miracle polemic which arrogantly admitted of no facts beyond one’s own experience and preconceptions about nature. The term “law,” as in “law of nature” became equivocal: confusing the term as somehow being both descriptive and prescriptive. What was a “law” of nature, then, moved illogically from a term *describing* one’s consistent but limited understanding of natural phenomena to a dogma *prescribing* what must always happen to everyone under all circumstances. Hence, if this skeptic does not experience miracles, then no one can experience miracles.

Finally, the area of history as a locus of revelation was particularly suspect,⁵⁹ first, because of the widespread Protestant suspicion of “enthusiasm” and its claims to unverifiable revelations, second, because of Protestant suspicion of Romanist rule and traditions which had evolved from the dubious testimony of the Church fathers, as over against the idealized period of the New Testament, and third, because of the Deistic desire for a “natural” religion, rationally and equitably accessible to all men on the basis of common sense independent of revelation. Following Calvin, the Deistic polemic maintained that *if*

⁵⁹It is interesting that one of the tasks of modern apologetics is to affirm, against the old Liberal-Deistic notion, that revelation can indeed be found in history. This seems to be a project of such men as Rahner, Moltmann, Pannenberg and others.

miracles had in fact *ever* occurred, all the miracles required for establishing true Christianity had already been performed by Christ and the apostles, no further were needed. A model of history developed during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment consisting of an ideal “classical” period, *e.g.*, the golden ages of Greece, Rome or the New Testament era, the “dark ages” of Roman Catholicism, ignorance and degradation, and the optimistic restoration in the present time of only limited elements of the classical period, but in some ways, *e.g.*, scientifically, transcending it.⁶⁰

Conyers Middleton in his *A Free Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers*⁶¹ continued Calvin’s attack on Roman Catholics by applying Enlightenment historical critical methodology to the miracle accounts of the Church fathers, accounts which had been adduced as support for Catholic post-apostolic dogmas. As Calvin’s theological cessationism profoundly influenced him, Warfield claimed Middleton’s skeptical historical methodology as his own.⁶²

Conyers Middleton’s work greatly outshone that of David Hume, whose now famous essay on miracles contained nothing new in what had by then become a dying issue. He concluded his *Inquiry* with a response to his critics⁶³ and summarized the major theses of his work for himself. The points made here are mirror-image counter theses parodying those made by Dr. Chapman, an apologist for the early fathers, in a defense of miracles performed by Simeon Stylites.

1. That they [miracles] were all of such a nature, and performed in such a manner, as would necessarily inject a suspicion of fraud and delusion.

⁶⁰Many in Puritan America were more optimistic about the restoration of the Biblical age. America could become fully realized as the eschatological “new Israel” with the attendant outpouring of the Holy Spirit if the covenant with God were faithfully observed. Joy Gilsdorf, *The Puritan Apocalypse: New England Eschatology in the Seventeenth Century* (Yale University Ph.D. dissertation, 1964, reprinted by New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989), pp. 102, 110. The “Latter rain” movement among Pentecostals followed a similar model of history based on a misconception of Joel 2:23, *viz.*, that the abundant operations of spiritual gifts once confined to the ideal apostolic age, were, after the long, dry, dark ages, being restored. The Palestinian rainy season is continuous. Joel’s reference to the former and latter rains only means that the season was blessedly long and therefore productive.

⁶¹The full title is, *A Free Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian church from the earliest ages through several successive centuries. By which it is shown that we have no sufficient reason to believe, upon the authority of the primitive fathers, that any such powers were continued to the church after the days of the Apostles* (London: R. Manby and H. S. Cox, 1748).

⁶²*CM*, pp. 6 and 28-31.

⁶³*FI*, pp. 149-77.

2. That the cures and beneficial effects of them were either false, or imaginary, or accidental.

3. That they tend to confirm the idlest of all errors and superstitions.

4. That the integrity of the witnesses is either highly questionable, or their credulity at least so gross, as to render them unworthy of any credit.

5. That they were not only vain and unnecessary, but generally speaking, so trifling also, as to excite nothing but contempt.

And lastly, that the belief and defence of them are the only means in the world that can possibly support, or that does in fact give any sort of countenance, to the modern impostures in the Romish Church.⁶⁴

Middleton's cessationist polemic ostensibly had a practical end: to combat the errors of the Romanists. Most contemporary observers, including John Wesley, however, were convinced there was another motive: "to overthrow the whole Christian system."⁶⁵ Middleton, he complained, "aims every blow, though he seems to look the other way, at the fanatics who wrote the New Testament."⁶⁶

Warfield's philosophical and historiographical approach to miracles was derived from the Enlightenment era and from and Conyers Middleton respectively. The following chapter examines how Warfield applied these views to his cessationist polemic.

⁶⁴*FI*, pp. 135-37, citing John Chapman, *Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity* (London: S. Birt, 1742), pp. 175-76.

⁶⁵J. Wesley, *Journal of John Wesley*, ed. Nehemiah Charnock (London: Epworth Press, 1938), v.3, p. 390 (entry for January 28, 1749).

⁶⁶In his *Journal* dated August 12, 1771, *ibid.*, 5, p. 426. Middleton responds in section V of *FI* to Wesley's criticisms which appeared in an extended letter written from January 4 to 24, 1749. *The Letters of Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, ed. John Telford (London: Epworth Press, 1931), v. 2, pp. 312-88. For a fascinating account of this conflict between Wesley and Middleton, see T. A. Campbell, "John Wesley and Conyers Middleton on Divine Intervention in History." *CH* 55 (March 1986), pp. 39-49.

CHAPTER 2

BENJAMIN WARFIELD'S POLEMIC ON POST-BIBLICAL MIRACLES

The point at which key elements of cessationist doctrine culminate and integrate into their most influential recent expression appears in Benjamin B. Warfield's, *Counterfeit Miracles* (*CM*). The thesis of this chapter is that Warfield's polemic fails because of internal contradictions in his concept of miracle and because of weaknesses in his historical method and his biblical hermeneutics. After examining the historical traditions which shaped, and contemporary conditions which precipitated the argument of *CM*, this chapter examines the three essential elements of Warfield's polemic for internal consistency against his own stated presuppositions and interpretive methods.

A. Theological and Philosophical Traditions in Warfield's Polemic

Calvinist theology and the Enlightenment epistemology of Scottish Common Sense philosophy (SCSP) have strongly influenced Warfield's cessationist polemic. Accordingly, we examine their specific impact on Warfield's thought in the following two sections.

1. Calvinism In his own mind, Benjamin Warfield was emphatically a Calvinist. In 1904 he summarized what had long been held at Princeton: "Calvinism is just religion in its purity. We have only, therefore, to conceive of religion in its purity, and that is Calvinism."¹ Moreover, Warfield insists that for one to remain truly an evangelical Christian, one must follow Calvin's theology.² Even though Calvin and Warfield had faced different theological issues, he nonetheless saw his work as flowing completely within the stream of Calvin's thought. Where he deviates from it, as in several exegetical points relating to his cessationist polemic, he occasionally does so with apology to, and appreciation for Calvin generally.

¹Warfield, "What Is Calvinism?" *SSWW*, I, p. 389.

²B. B. Warfield, "Calvinism," *SHERK* II, pp. 359-64. The article is reprinted in

When it came to his cessationist polemic specifically, Warfield shared Calvin's struggle to fix the basis of religious authority firmly upon the scriptures, as against, say, the Roman Catholics, who maintained their claims to theological legitimacy, at least in part, on the authority of post-apostolic tradition, or, against the "enthusiasts" who attempted to found their religious authority upon subjective religious experience. Warfield continued Calvin's polemics against the Romanists using essentially the same arguments and expressions as those in the sixteenth century. But as he saw it, the challenge of the enthusiasts had evolved into an even more menacing threat to Calvinist orthodoxy. The old enthusiastic error of the Anabaptists and Pietists had now become, on the one hand, the sophisticated theology of Schleiermacher, which had come to dominate Protestant theology,³ and on the

Calvin and Calvinism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931), pp. 353-69. Warfield defines Calvinism as the teachings of John Calvin, the Doctrinal System of the Reformed Churches, or more broadly, the entire body of theological, philosophical, ethical and political conceptions which have become dominant in Protestant nations. "Calvinism," he writes, "is the only system in which the whole order of the world is brought into rational unity with the doctrine of grace." Elsewhere, he is more emphatic about the identity of Christian orthodoxy and Calvinism: "There is no true religion in the world . . . which is not Calvinistic—Calvinistic in its essence, Calvinistic in its implications. . . . In proportion as we are religious, in that proportion, then, are we Calvinistic; and when religion comes fully to its rights in our thinking, and feeling, and doing then shall we be truly Calvinistic It is not merely the hope of true religion in the world: it *is* true religion in the world—as far as true religion is in the world at all" [*italics his*]. "What is Calvinism?" *The Presbyterian* 74 (2 March 1904), p. 7, reprinted in *SSWWI*, p. 392.

³For example, Warfield attacked the pronouncements on the subjective principle of authority in the Church by A. C. McGiffert in his inaugural address as professor of church history at Union Theological Seminary in New York. The address was contained in his *Primitive and Catholic Christianity* (New York: J.C. Rankin, 1893). On the relation of the early church to scriptural authority, he writes, "The spirit of primitive Christianity is the spirit of religious individualism, based upon the felt presence of the Holy Ghost" (p. 19). The early Christians looked to the apostolic writings as a *source* for knowledge of divine truth, but not necessarily the "sole *standard* of truth" or "exclusive normative authority. The only authority which was recognized was the Holy Spirit, and he was supposed to speak to Christians of the second century as truly as he had ever spoken through the Apostles" (pp. 32-33).

In McGiffert's provocative concluding comment we may find some impetus for Warfield's extensive historical polemic in *CM* against alleged post-biblical miracles recounted in the first few centuries: "If we today draw a line between the apostolic and post-apostolic ages, and emphasize the supernatural character of the former as distinguished from the latter, we do it solely on dogmatic, not historical grounds" (p. 22). Warfield's reaction appeared in his article, "The Latest Phase of Historical Rationalism," *PQ* 9 (1895), pp. 36-67, 185-210, reprinted in volume IX of his collected works, *Studies in Theology* (New York: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1932), pp. 585-645.

other hand, the subjective perfectionism⁴ of the Methodist movement which dominated American religious practice. Moreover, the Calvinistic basis of religious authority, the scripture, had come under an even more direct attack from a third direction: that of modern, rationalistic biblical criticism. Warfield had labored mightily to counteract the growing impact of these threats to the Princetonian Calvinism of his time.⁵

But our focus in this study must be directed at still another area of polemical concern shared by Calvin and Warfield, *viz.*, the implicit attack on the sufficiency of scriptural authority made by those claiming miracles and extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit. We have already seen that in general, Calvin quite narrowly perceived claims to such powers as *prima facie* attempts to promote extra-biblical, and hence, false doctrines. Such claims, of course, represented a direct challenge to Protestant religious authority in that it was specifically based upon a closed canon of scripture. Warfield is at one with Calvin, then, both theologically and sociologically, in the perceived need to destroy any pretensions to spiritual leadership implied in these claims by exposing their supporting post-biblical miracles as counterfeit. We shall see once again, with Warfield as with Calvin, that the sociological dimension of group conflict provides impetus for his re-application of the cessationist polemic. But for all his insistence that he was a fully orthodox follower of Calvin, Warfield is nonetheless criticized⁶ for con-

⁴Perfectionism, of course, was not related directly to the centrality of scripture, but was concerned rather with questions of soteriology, *i.e.*, the sufficiency of God's grace alone for salvation as opposed to "works righteousness"—the human striving for religious self-sufficiency. Warfield devoted to this topic a substantial percentage of his polemical writings, most of which are now contained in two volumes among his collected works, *Studies in Perfectionism*, vols. I and II (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931).

⁵*E.g.*, in the articles collected in his *Revelation and Inspiration*, vol. I, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield* (1927; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), hereafter *WBBW*.

⁶*E.g.*, by William D. Livingstone, "The Princeton Apologetic as Exemplified by the Work of Benjamin B. Warfield and J. Gresham Machen: A Study in American Theology, 1880-1930" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1948), pp. 342-43 and C. N. Krause, "The Principle of Authority in the Theology of B. B. Warfield, William Adams Brown and Gerald Birney Smith" (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke Univ., 1961), pp. 113-34, 222-239 (for exposition) and 272-76 (for critique). Especially see Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Is Reason Enough?" *RJ* 31 (April 1981), pp. 20-24, Alvin Plantinga, "On Reformed Epistemology," *RJ* 32 (January 1982), pp. 13-17, John J. Makarian, "The Calvinistic Concept of the Biblical Revelation in the Theology of B. B. Warfield"

taminating his Calvinism with an Enlightenment-era rationalism based on a philosophy which was dominant in American religious thought during the previous century, namely, Scottish common sense realism.⁷

2. Scottish Common Sense Philosophy

The apologetical use of miracles as accreditation for doctrine, as we have shown, was revived by orthodox English Empiricists who saw in this approach a way of avoiding either dogmatism and/or fideism by appealing to what was observable in nature for the vindication of Christian faith. This new apologetic was developed as a response to the new intellectual climate that had evolved in the West.

From Descartes throughout the Enlightenment period, thinkers who faced the intellectual dilemma of competing dogmatic claims made by clerics, searched for a reliable and commonly accepted ground for knowledge. This search led increasingly to a preoccupation with the nature, capacities and limits of the human mind, and further led to the inclination to view the relation of man to both nature and God in terms of a knowing subject and a known object. This “turn toward the subject” in philosophy carried with it the conviction that the ultimate vindication for truth could be established, not in revelation from above, but in the mind of the human knower, the known object, or in some relation of the two. Against a background of religious intolerance and dogmatism, John Locke, for example, had insisted that the human capacity for knowledge was limited to fairly reliable probabilities based on sensory input and experiment. He held that through the correct use of this intellectual capacity, which was common to all, reasonable men could see the truth and settle differences. English philosophers, be they Cambridge Platonists or

(Ph.D. dissertation, Drew Univ., 1963), pp. 107-08 and 226-33, as well as an important study by John C. Vander Stelt, *Philosophy and Scripture: A Study in Old Princeton and Westminster Theology* (Marlton, NJ: Mack Publishing House, 1978), pp. 166-84 and 304-13. Ahlstrom, in “The Scottish Philosophy,” *CH* 24 (September 1955), p. 269, is sternly critical of the impact of SCSP on Reformed theology which replaced the profound insights of Calvin’s theocentricity with the premise that “self consciousness [is] the oracle of religious truth”; that the “benign and optimistic anthropology . . . veiled the very insights into human nature which were the chief strength of Calvin’s theology.” Under the influence of SCSP “a kind of rationalistic *rigor mortis* set in.” We are indebted to Vander Stelt’s study for much of what follows in the next section.

⁷Vander Stelt, pp. 15-16, summarizes the various designations given this movement, including, *inter alia*: “Natural Realism,” “Scottish Realism,” “Common Sense Realism,” “Scottish Empiricism,” “Common Sense Philosophy.” For consistency we have chosen to use the latter term.

Lockean Aristotelians, who may have parted company over the innateness of ideas and the empirical nature of knowledge, could agree on viewing revelation rationalistically as a way of securing a common ground for religious peace.

Until the beginning of the eighteenth century, Scotland had been isolated from this intellectual ferment. But with the inception of the United Kingdom in 1707, English rationalism pushed northward, generating conflicts between Presbyterians who either did, or did not accommodate themselves to these foreign ideas. The major Scottish universities reacted quickly to these rationalistic notions about religion, revelation and innate human capacities. This response was Scottish common sense philosophy (SCSP), which propelled them to the center stage of European thought. The chief proponent of SCSP was Thomas Reid (1710-1796) who in 1764 assumed the chair of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University. Both Reid and his predecessor, Adam Smith, were friends of David Hume, whose epistemological skepticism precipitated the defensive reaction of SCSP. Earlier, while teaching at Aberdeen, Reid had once written to Hume, "a little philosophical society here is much indebted to you for its entertainment. . . . You are brought here oftener than any other man to the bar, accused and defended with great zeal, but without bitterness."⁸ Reid was likely one of the accusers: his *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (1785) was a direct attack on the views of Hume. It was feared that, as Vander Stelt puts it, "By reducing matter to sensation, mind to ideas, causality to mere subjective habit, Hume had, in Reid's opinion, robbed philosophy of its source, knowledge of its foundation, belief of its basis, miracles of their trustworthiness, and history of its credibility."⁹ Reid saw his task was to rebuild for theology a solid foundation of epistemological certainty, on which the structure of Christian apologetics could securely rest. The physical, external world could not be reduced to an epistemological fiction, which found its reality either in a spiritual world of ideas, as Berkeley had said, or to a quagmire of doubt about the possibility of any reliable knowledge, as Hume. What bothered Reid about idealism and skepticism was the damage they did to traditional apologetics, particularly the argument for the existence of God based on evidences of His design in nature.

⁸S. A. Grave, *The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 1, note 2.

⁹Vander Stelt, p. 23.

Reid maintained that God had placed within the intellectual constitution of all normal men certain “instinctive presuppositions” of self-evident principles or propositions, which serve as a kind of template, or, in a more modern metaphor, as a central processing unit in a computer, to organize, classify and give meaning to incoming sense data. Man is not passive, however, as a receiver of incoming images, but is an active, judging perceiver who immediately and intuitively knows external things in themselves.¹⁰ This rational “common sense”¹¹, or, naive consciousness, both characterizes and validates knowledge. Since knowledge based upon common sense is intuitive, it requires no further proof. Hence, one can not only know *that* something exists, but also can know with certainty *what* it is that exists.¹² Perception, Reid says, involves the elements of: the *act* of perceiving, the *object* perceived, and the *conviction* that the object really exists in the external world. This view implies a permanence in subject and object, knower and known, and further implies that truth cannot be established by mere ideas or representations in the mind, but on the ground of common sense. Truth, then, was static and open to investigation equally to people irrespective of time or place. Empirically observable facts were as pieces of a mosaic which could be arranged, through the innate human powers of judgment, into coherent and logical wholes. This facility led to the expectation that if the evidence for Christianity were properly assembled, the conclusion as to its truth was inescapable.

Reid claimed that the facts of science were not materially different from those of religion in that the faculties of common sense mediated them both. He described the facts and experience of science and faith not as a “fiction of human imagination,” but as a “touchstone” and the very “voice of God.”¹³

Ahlstrom, Vander Stelt, Marsden and Noll, among others,¹⁴ have documented the extensive impact of SCSP on American thought and

¹⁰Vander Stelt, p. 27. Also, Grave, pp. 110-50 for an extended treatment of Reid’s meaning of the term, “common sense,” particularly in relation to reason.

¹¹Vander Stelt, p. 23, notes that “‘common sense’ is not used here to indicate a power of general knowledge based on ordinary development and opportunities, but to mean a faculty of reason, a source of principles, a light of nature, a capacity for certain original and intuitive judgments which may be used as foundations for deductive reasoning.”

¹²Vander Stelt, p. 24.

¹³Vander Stelt, p. 29, following here O. M. Jones, “Empiricism and Intuitionism in Reid’s Common Sense Philosophy” (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia Univ., n.d.), p. 97.

¹⁴S. Ahlstrom, “The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense,” pp. 257-58; Vander

culture during the latter part of the eighteenth century and the middle of the nineteenth. Vander Stelt, for example, notes that

by leaving its imprint upon philosophy and theology as well as upon sociology, psychology, aesthetics, literature, education, economics, and political theory, [SCSP] permeated almost every faculty of the academy, institution of society, and activity in culture. Because of its remarkable versatility, it functioned as “the handmaiden of both Unitarianism and orthodoxy.”¹⁵

He goes on to point out that although many early American seminaries may have disagreed theologically, they nonetheless concurred on the “relevance of the *practical* rationalism of SCSP.”¹⁶ The philosophy was uniquely suited to the anti-elitist democratic American vision of its national mission. All men could be expected to share the consensus view of the “*manifest* destiny” expressed in the American political, social and religious agenda because of its clearly “self-evident” nature.

SCSP became particularly entrenched in American Presbyterianism as a function of its strong Scottish roots. The Rev. John Witherspoon who came from Scotland to Princeton College as its first president in 1768 introduced the dominant SCSP tradition which was faithfully and thoroughly passed down in its theological instruction, first in Princeton College, then in the Seminary until the death of Warfield in 1921.¹⁷ Warfield was a disciple of James McCosh, the last

Stelt, pp. 57-64; G. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1980), pp. 14-17; M. Noll, *The Princeton Theology, 1812-1921* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), pp. 30-33; and H. F. May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1976), pp. 337-50.

¹⁵Vander Stelt, pp. 61-62.

¹⁶Noll, pp. 34-35, points out that at this time SCSP was widespread in virtually all American theological circles. “Early in the century Congregationalist conservatives like Timothy Dwight were . . . diligent . . . in putting the Scottish philosophy to work for the faith. Over the next generation, Congregational moderates like N. W. Taylor or more consistent Calvinists like Edwards A. Park, Unitarians like Andrews Norton, revivalists like Charles Finney, not to speak of the mass of the Presbyterians, whether Old School or New, shared the same philosophical perspective.”

¹⁷See Noll, *Princeton Theology*, pp. 31-33, who traces the transmission of SCSP at Princeton through the academic careers of Witherspoon, William Graham (1773), Archibald Alexander (1815-40), Charles Hodge (1841-78), A.A. Hodge (1879-1886) and Warfield (1887-1920).

prominent defender of SCSP, who became President of Princeton College in 1868, the year Warfield entered as an undergraduate.¹⁸

Princetonians had put SCSP to work justifying their traditional distinctions between faith and reason as well as the supernatural and the natural. Henry F. May notes they did so at some cost.

Nowhere were Common Sense principles taught with more enthusiasm than in Presbyterian seminaries, where they were used to reconcile natural religion and revelation in a manner reminiscent of the early eighteenth century, and to play down the moral paradoxes which have always troubled Christians.¹⁹

The Common Sense philosophy of the Princetonians, then, provided a moral platform on which any observer could stand so as to decide rationally about religious matters, a standpoint which was particularly in evidence in either the empirical, apologetic appeal to, or the polemic denial of miracles.²⁰ Warfield also followed this pattern of SCSP when he constructed his polemic on miracles, just as he did in his general approach to apologetics and his specific defenses of the authority of scripture. Warfield's epistemology is not anywhere systematically developed, but may be discovered in scattered statements throughout his many writings. The focus here will be, as much as possible, on his work on apologetics and miracles.

In 1908 Warfield wrote an article on apologetics for *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*²¹ in which he described theology as a science in the same empirical, inductive sense that characterized the so-called "hard sciences," e.g., chemistry, biology, and astronomy. As part of its foundation, he reiterated some central premises of SCSP:

¹⁸For Warfield's dependence on SCSP see: John H. Gerstner, "Warfield's Case for Biblical Inerrancy," in *God's Inerrant Word*, ed., John Warwick Montgomery (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1974), pp. 102-22; Marsden, pp. 114-16; Vander Stelt, pp. 166-84; and John Wiers, "Scottish Common Sense Realism in the Theology of B. B. Warfield," (unpublished paper, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1977).

¹⁹May, p. 348. Ahlstrom in his article, "The Scottish Philosophy," p. 269, makes a similar observation, i.e., that SCSP was essentially an anthropocentric rationalism which "rendered the central Christian paradoxes into stark logical contradictions that either had to be disguised or explained away. Reformed theology was thus emptied of its most dynamic element."

²⁰In this vein see for example, articles by other Princetonian theologians: Charles Hodge in Chapter XII: "Miracles," in his *Systematic Theology* (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1871-72), I, pp. 617-36; W.G.T. Shedd, "Hume, Huxley, and Miracles," *PR* 1 (1880), pp. 22-45, and Caspar W. Hodge, "What Is a Miracle?" *PTT* 14 (1916), pp. 202-64, esp. pp. 243-48.

²¹I, pp. 232-38, reprinted in *Studies in Theology*, vol. IX of *WBBW*, pp. 3-21.

If theology be a science at all, there is involved in that fact, as in the case of all other sciences, at least these three things: the reality of its subject matter, the capacity of the human mind to receive into itself and rationally to reflect this subject-matter, the existence of media of communication between the subject-matter and the percipient and understanding mind.²²

Accordingly, Warfield was extremely optimistic as to the adequacy of the human mind to reason its way to theological truth. As light to a photographic plate, so the rational appeal of the Christian message would almost inevitably imprint itself on the consciousness of a man of common sense.

It is the distinction of Christianity that it has come into the world clothed with the mission to *reason* its way to its dominion. Other religions may appeal to the sword, or seek some other way to propagate themselves. Christianity makes its appeal to right reason, and stands out among all religions, therefore, as distinctively "the Apologetical religion." It is solely by reasoning that it has come thus far on its way to its kingship. And it is solely by reasoning that it will put all its enemies under its feet.²³

Warfield shared the view of his Princeton colleagues that theology was very like any other natural science, that by following the Baconian model of observing, arranging and organizing the facts of scripture and theology, one could derive all of the essential Christian truths.²⁴

But the cacophony of conflicting theological and philosophical opinions flooding nineteenth century America presented a challenge to Warfield's view of the perceptual homogeneity innate to mankind. A simple glance at the "facts" showed that by Warfield's time the

²²WBBW, p. 11.

²³Cited from Warfield's introductory remarks to Francis R. Beattie's *Apologetics: Or, the Rational Vindication of Christianity* (Richmond, VA: (Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1903), cited in *SSWW* II, p. 98.

²⁴So, e.g., Charles Hodge, whose *Systematic Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner and Co., 1871), obviated, for Warfield, the need to write his own. Patton, in his "Memorial Address" for Warfield in the *PTR* 19 (1921), p. 387. Hodge writes in vol. I, p. 18, "If natural science be concerned with the facts and laws of nature, theology is concerned with the facts and the principles of the Bible. If the object of the one be to arrange and systematize the facts of the external world, and to ascertain the laws by which they are determined; the object of the other is to systematize the facts of the Bible, and ascertain the principles or general truths which those facts involve."

American intellectual consensus, if there ever were any, had unraveled. How was it possible for so many opposing theological viewpoints, ranging from Roman Catholicism to Congregationalism, to revivalistic evangelicalism to Unitarianism to the “pure religion” of Calvinism, if the truth could so simply and accurately be ascertained by the man of “common sense”? Moreover, how could a man, such as Charles Darwin, raised in the evangelical faith, a man of sober mind and scientific temperament, lose his Christian faith while scientifically studying nature? This obviously required explanation. While Warfield remains firm in his optimism about man coming to faith through reason and evidence, he must explain why this may occasionally appear not to be the case.

It seems to be forgotten that though faith be a moral act and the gift of God, it is yet formally conviction passing into confidence; and that all forms of conviction must rest on evidence as their ground, and it is not faith but reason which investigates the nature and validity of this ground We believe in Christ because it is rational to believe in Him Of course mere reasoning cannot make a Christian; but that is not because faith is not the result of evidence, but because a dead soul cannot respond to evidence. The action of the Holy Spirit in giving faith is not apart from evidence, but along with evidence.²⁵

Wherever rationalism and mysticism have penetrated, says Warfield, we lose the theoretical basis of religion founded on the knowledge of fact. With the rationalism of Ritschl religion is historically relativized; it becomes not a “knowledge of fact, but a perception of utility.”²⁶ With mysticism the convictions of the Christian “are not the product of reason addressed to the intellect, but the immediate creation of the Holy Spirit in the heart.”²⁷ This latter error was characteristic of the modern “enthusiasts,” the Methodists, and more specifically, the Keswick “Higher Life” movement, against which Warfield had directed a good deal of polemical attention.²⁸ So by allowing one’s natural faculties to be diverted, either to false rationalism on the one hand, or to the formless feelings attributed to the Holy Spirit on the other, one could wander from the true source of knowledge. Though Warfield implies in the passage above that religious knowledge flows from a joint work of the mind and the Spirit,

²⁵Warfield, “Apologetics,” *WBBW*, IX, p. 15.

²⁶Also Warfield, “The Latest Phase of Historical Rationalism,” *The Presbyterian Quarterly* 9 (1895), pp. 36-67 and pp. 185-210, reprinted in *WBBW*, IX, pp. 585-645.

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 14 and 15.

²⁸These writings are now collected in volumes VII and VIII of *WBBW*, *Perfectionism*, vols. I and II.

his emphasis consistently favors the former. And what of Darwin, who became for Warfield the archetypal erring scientist of his time? Continually exposed as he had been to the evidence of God's divine plan in nature, why had Darwin's faith failed? Warfield's answer was that because it had become so narrowly focused on a single scientific enterprise, Darwin's mind "atrophied" in other areas, thereby rendering it an untrustworthy judge of evidence and incapable of following "the guidance of his inextinguishable [religious] conviction."²⁹ But Warfield still faces a difficulty: if one accurately observes the tremendous diversity in theological viewpoints, the "common sense" model of human mental capacity dies the death of a thousand qualifications and millions of exceptions. Either "common sense" is "common" to all, or the term does not carry much meaning. If most people are "dead souls" who "cannot respond to evidence," what of Warfield's epistemological premise? Accordingly, once the "common" of the common sense is surrendered, the epistemological ground of Warfield's apologetics has been washed away.

According to Warfield, nowhere is the suspension of common sense more likely than in dealing with miracles. Hence, one of his major tasks is to come to grips with the confusion surrounding reports of their occurrence and the interpretations of their meaning. Moreover, while Calvinism was for Warfield the ideal theological expression for American Christian belief, he nonetheless found himself beset by a proliferating Babel of competing religious ideas which claimed miraculous sanction for their beliefs. On seeing this situation, Warfield now sharpened his ready-made cessationist polemic from Calvin, honed his SCSP epistemology, and was ready to do battle against those who both misperceived and misapplied true miracles to support their deviant causes.

B. Benjamin Warfield's Cessationist Polemic

Warfield's cessationist polemic was founded on his understanding of Calvinism, which in turn was shaped by SCSP. We now see which factors precipitated his cessationism, and his methods, both historical and biblical by which it was inadequately supported.

²⁹Warfield, "Darwin's Arguments Against Christianity and Against Religion," *SSWW* II, p. 141. See also, "Charles Darwin's Religious Life: A Sketch in Spiritual Autobiography," *Studies in Theology, WBBW*, IX, pp. 541-84.

1. Theological Challenges Precipitating Warfield's Cessationism

It is into *Counterfeit Miracles* that several streams of Warfield's life-long polemic concerns converge. In his dealing with the issue of the continuation of the miraculous in its various historical (pseudo-) expressions, Warfield apparently sensed he was in reality confronting a challenge to the uniqueness of Scriptural and apostolic authority in the church. This challenge appeared in the form of certain groups who laid claim to the possession of miraculous power,³⁰ specifically, the Roman Catholics, the Irvingites (indirectly, the Methodists), contemporary faith healers, and Christian Scientists. A chapter is devoted to each group and their respective alleged miraculous activities.

As we shall shortly see, the very act of a group's claiming miraculous powers was, for Warfield, *prima facie* evidence for its heterodoxy. It is against this common claim to miracles that Warfield is able to direct a general polemic attack collectively on these religious persuasions.

Counterfeit Miracles was written after an upsurge of faith healing activity in American Protestantism which had penetrated broadly across denominational lines in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. As a result, a major controversy over the continuation of healing miracles in the Church broke out in a number of ecclesiastical periodicals, the majority of them hostile to the movement.³¹ But modern awareness of this early emphasis on healing has been largely obscured as, after the turn of the century, Fundamentalists scrambled to distance themselves from nascent Pentecostalism, among whom the objectionable practice of speaking in tongues had increasingly tainted the already suspect practice of faith healing as well.³² This late

³⁰ *CM*, p. 6.

³¹ Raymond J. Cunningham, "From Holiness to Healing: The Faith Cure in America 1872- 1892," *CH* 43 (December 1974), pp. 503-06. Cunningham notes that "the principle periodical controversy of the decade on this subject" was a debate between two prominent Presbyterian clergymen which appeared in the *Presbyterian Review* in 1883-84. Warfield became a co-editor of that periodical in 1890 when it modified its name to *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*.

³² See Cunningham, "Faith Cure," Donald Dayton, "The Rise of the Evangelical Healing Movement in Nineteenth Century America," *Pneuma*, 4 (Spring 1982), pp. 1-18 and Waldvogel, "The 'Overcoming Life,'" esp. chap. 4, "An Evangelical Theology of Healing." Warfield notes in *CM*, p. 159, that already by 1887 "there were more than thirty 'Faith Homes' established in America, for the treatment of disease by prayer alone; and in England and on the European Continent there were many more." He cites a large number of healing conferences and conventions of "adherents in every church."

nineteenth century interest in healing developed as an outgrowth of the widespread “deeper life,” “holiness,” or “Christian perfection” movement³³—a phenomenon against which Warfield had devoted two volumes in his capacity as polemicist.³⁴

As further impetus for the writing of *Counterfeit Miracles*, new immigration patterns were shifting the blend of the American religious traditions toward Roman Catholicism³⁵ at a time when it was particularly defensive about its apologetic claims for the miraculous.³⁶ Beyond this, religious authority was increasingly difficult to ascertain for Christian Americans living in an intellectual atmosphere of subjectivism, where human understanding of truth was ever evolving—expanding and being modified. Unlike his predecessor, Charles Hodge, for whom Biblical criticism was a somewhat distant (European) concern, Warfield faced a situation where almost all major American theological seminaries had (to him) capitulated to higher criticism of Scripture, with its resulting loss of theological authority; whole religious denominations no longer preached the Gospel as traditionally understood. Those who opposed such modernism found themselves

³³A movement derived from the “Age of Methodism”, as some, e.g., Philip Schaff, described American religious life in the 19th century. More recently argued by C. C. Goen, “‘The Methodist Age’ in American Church History,” *RL* 34 (1964-65), pp. 562-72 and Winthrop Hudson, “The Methodist Age in America,” *MHist* 12 (April 1974), pp. 3-15.

³⁴For further background, see T. L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mind-Nineteenth Century America* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), chapters 7-9; J. L. Peters, *Christian Perfectionism and American Methodism*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956).

³⁵“Between 1830 and 1900, the combined factors of natural increase, immigration and conversion raised the Catholic population to 12 million. A large percentage of the growth figure represented immigrants: some 2.7 million, largely from Ireland, Germany and France, between 1830 and 1880; and another 1.25 million during the 1880s when eastern and Southern Europeans came in increasing numbers.” “The Catholic Church in the U.S.,” *1987 Catholic Almanac* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Pub. Div., 1987), p. 388. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Catholic immigration was at its peak, a trend that may have alarmed Warfield and may have contributed to the urgency and relevance of his lengthy treatment of Medieval and Roman Catholic miracles in *CM*.

On the openness to the miraculous among Catholics of this period see, Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from the Colonial Times to the Present* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1985), pp. 233-35.

³⁶See J. A. Hardon, S. J., “The Concept of Miracle from St. Augustine to Modern Apologetics,” *TS* 15 (1954), p. 249.

increasingly shunted aside from what came to be regarded as mainstream American Christianity.³⁷ This development was crucial to Warfield, since, in his view, sound spiritual life hung on sound theology. The general theological climate of liberalism was particularly odious to Warfield in its treatment of miracles. Liberal theologians typically attempted to explain the presence of miracles in the Bible by either providing naturalistic interpretations (Jesus was walking on a sand bar, not the water; the loaves and fishes were “multiplied” as the five thousand shared their provisions after being shamed by a small boy’s gift of food to the multitude, *etc.*), and/or by seeking analogies with contemporary psychological or faith healings. For liberals, the sharp distinction between “natural” and “supernatural” had blurred, and with it the effectiveness of any Christian apologetic, such as William Paley’s classic, based on proof from miracles. This new view of miracle, of course, carried ominous implications for the cessationist polemic. The implications were spelled out for cessationists by an influential American liberal theologian, Horace Bushnell, who, in his book, *Nature and the Supernatural as together Constituting the One System of God*,³⁸ wrote a chapter defending the thesis that “Miracles and Spiritual Gifts are Not Discontinued.” This conclusion may have represented to liberalism, at least in Warfield’s mind, the logical extension of their worldview. It was a position that had to be countered if Princetonian apologetics were to survive, particularly the defense of the authority of Scriptural doctrine by proof from miracles. Warfield does not devote a special chapter to liberalism in *CM*, but interacts with its ideas frequently throughout it. His article, “A Question of Miracles,”³⁹ however, is more systematic and directed against those more rationalistic and extreme than Bushnell.

Still another challenge to Warfield’s position on the cessation of miracles was that of Christian Science, a religion based on *Science and Health, With a Key to the Scriptures*, by Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, which, she claimed, was divinely dictated. The position that these new scriptures supplemented, and in some sense, assumed priority over Christian Scriptures, represented, of course, a significant challenge to

³⁷G. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 113-116.

³⁸Second edition (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1883). Warfield mentions Bushnell in *CM*, p. 247, note 59. See the important discussion on Bushnell’s impact on the question of cessationism in Robert B. Mullin, “Horace Bushnell and the Question of Miracles,” *CH* 58 (December 1989), pp. 460-73.

³⁹Warfield, “A Question of Miracles,” printed in four installments (March-June, 1903) in *The Bible Student*, and reprinted in *SSWW*, II, pp. 167-204.

Warfield and his view of religious authority. This is particularly true when the religious claims of Christian Science were supported by its apparent emphasis upon miracles of healing.⁴⁰

In view of the rapidly expanding influence of Catholicism, Perfectionism, faith healing, liberalism and cults of pantheism, could the spiritual dissolution of true American Christianity (*i.e.*, Princetonian Calvinism) be far behind?

Finally, *Counterfeit Miracles* was written shortly after the death of Warfield's invalid wife, who had contracted a severe nervous disorder as a result of being caught in a lightning storm during their honeymoon in Europe many years previously. Outside of his classroom duties, Warfield remained through the years almost constantly beside his wife, reading her numerous popular novels in which he frequently jotted reviews.⁴¹ We may only speculate on how this tragic long term illness affected Warfield's perspective on miracles and divine healing.

The dissonant new voices and conditions which challenged Warfield's religious and philosophical worldview required a fully developed and justified polemic. In the following three sections we examine Warfield's understanding of miracle, which undergirds the two major arguments for his polemic, *i.e.*, those from history and from scripture.

⁴⁰Actually, as James Daane points out, "It is a mistake to think of Christian Science as a faith-healing religion. It does not claim to *heal* sickness, for it claims sickness is an illusion." *NIDCC*, pp. 221-22.

⁴¹Apparently this was an activity to which he had become attached, according to John E. Meeter in an interview on 8 November, 1983. Meeter's bibliography lists not only 800 entries for articles and books Warfield published, but also almost 800 book reviews as well. J. E. Meeter and R. Nicole, *A Bibliography of Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield*, I (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1974). Biographical information on Warfield is scanty: the Memorial address cited in *PTR* 19 (1921), pp. 329-330 and 369-391, the brief biographical note in *Biblical and Theological Studies* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1956), in the introduction to his collected works by E. D. Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, I (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, rpt., of 1927 ed., 1981), pp. v-ix, and in W. A. Hoffecker, *Piety and the Princeton Theologians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), pp. 93-160 [*passim*], and survey of Warfield's theological positions generally, in Hoffecker's "Benjamin B. Warfield," in *Reformed Theology in America*, ed. David F. Wells (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), pp. 60-86. According to W. A. Hoffecker, "Benjamin B. Warfield," p. 84, n. 40, N. B. Stonehouse said that Warfield rarely left his invalid wife's side for more than two hours, and because of her condition did not leave the town of Princeton between 1905 and 1915. Hoffecker is citing Stonehouse's biography, *J. Gresham Machen* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), p. 220.

2. Warfield's Concept of Miracle

The validity of Benjamin Warfield's cessationism stands or falls completely with the integrity of his Enlightenment era concept of miracle on which it rests. For cessationism to demand the restriction of miracles to approximately the apostolic age, it is crucial first to establish some agreement on how one knows a miracle has appeared or even if Warfield's concept of miracle is an intelligible notion at all. The validity of cessationism depends upon a clearly discernible and internally consistent model of miracle which can be applied transparently and uniformly to all candidate cases as they appear throughout history, both in the biblical accounts and afterward. Any failure in Warfield's miracle model, or in its consistent application to both categories of cases, necessitates a corresponding failure of his cessationist polemic.

Warfield's cessationism further depends upon the normative, *i.e.*, biblical, affirmation of an exclusively evidentialist purpose for miracles (his designation of certain gifts of the Holy Spirit). Accordingly, the function of biblical miracles determine their duration: if their sole purpose is to accredit the initial presentation of New Testament doctrine, then they must perforce cease when the doctrine is established. This present section also examines the validity of this centrally important cessationist claim.

Wherever he treats the subject of miracles, we find that Warfield is fighting on two fronts: against those who deny or redefine the traditional understanding of miracle, and against those claiming present-day miracles to attest to the legitimacy of their religious authority. Since our focus is upon Warfield's cessationist polemic, we treat the first category only insofar as it both provides us with Warfield's concept of the miraculous and his criteria for distinguishing true and false miracles. We examine in order: Warfield's definition and description of miracles as they relate to nature and providential events; Warfield's epistemological conflict within his concept of miracle; and, finally, the function of miracles in his polemic.

a. Warfield's Definition and Description of Miracle To ascertain the nature of Warfield's polemic we need first to seek out his understanding of miracle. In his article, "A Question of Miracles"⁴² he takes to task those who, for him, vitiate the purely transcendent, divine character of the biblical miracles. Warfield insists at the outset on the need for a "clearly defined conception" of miracle, and criteria for

⁴²Reprinted in *SSWW* II, pp. 167-204, hereafter, "QM."

determining the validity of claims to miracles. "A miracle," he writes, "is specifically an effect in the external world produced by the immediate efficiency of God."⁴³ Its two "*differentiae*" are, first, that a miracle is not merely subjective, but that it is "objectively real" and not a function only within the mind, and, second, that its cause "is a new super-natural force, intruded into the complex of nature, and not a natural force under whatever wise and powerful manipulation." We deal with the first, subjective aspect of miracle in the next section which treats Warfield's epistemology of miracle. Here we focus more on his ontology of miracle.

Warfield's understanding of miracle in relation to nature is fairly traditional, but he is aware of the cost of tampering too freely with the accepted concept of an orderly nature. Warfield denies that a miracle should be spoken of as "a violation, suspension, or transgression of the laws of nature."⁴⁴ He seeks to outmaneuver Hume by asserting rather that a miracle is a

product of a force *outside* [italics mine] of nature, and specifically above nature, intruding into the complex of natural forces and producing, therefore, in that complex, effects which could not be produced by the natural forces themselves. These effects reveal themselves, therefore, as "new"—but not as neo-natural but rather as extra-natural and specifically as super-natural.

Warfield wants to avoid, on the one hand, the naturalistic dilution of miracle into a natural event, but desires, on the other, to avoid the trap of rendering miracles more objectionable to the critic of the traditional, evidentialist view because of their alien, un-natural, "lawless" character.⁴⁵ The apologist using miracles in this way had long faced the

⁴³"QM," p. 170. This definition is close to that of his mentor, Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner and Co., 1871), p. 618: "an event, in the external world, brought about by the immediate efficiency, or simple volition of God."

⁴⁴"QM," p. 168.

⁴⁵Warfield cites one of his opponents, William Mackintosh, who summarizes the critics' position on the immutability of the natural order. "Modern thought holds, in the form of a scientific conviction, . . . that the universe is governed by immutable laws inherent in the very nature and constitution of things—by laws which are never reversed, never suspended, and never supplemented in the interest of any special object whatever." To suggest the necessary link between a perceived "violation" of the laws of nature and divine activity is to ignore a more generally accepted explanation. "The inference is irresistible . . . to assume that every fact or event, however strange, and apparently exceptional or abnormal, admits of being subsumed under some general law

dilemma of requiring both a consistent and inviolable order co-existing with miraculous events interrupting that order, the combination of which somehow demonstrating their divine origin. Hence, Warfield moves his description of miracle as close as possible to the orderly process of nature, while insisting that the miraculous effect is completely above its powers. For example, the wine produced by the miracle of Cana was real wine, interactive with, and effective under the conditions of the relevant natural forces, becoming immediately subject to these forces once it was created. But he stresses that the wine was created miraculously—unambiguously above and beyond the power of nature.

Warfield follows Aquinas and the later traditional Christian concept when he insists that a miracle is not an event which is in any way, however unusual, produced by nature. This is so even if the forces of nature, whether physical, occult or angelic, are “under the manipulation of the infinite intellect of God.” The forces of nature, he continues, “under whatever guidance, can produce nothing but natural effects,” in which case such events must be classed as “special providences.” “Providential” works of God involve the use of “means,” or “second causes” within nature which God uses to produce effects above their “natural working.” Miracles cannot be viewed as “extraordinary events performed through the medium of natural forces, but as the immediate products of the energy of God.”⁴⁶ Hence an event may be supernatural even to the extent that it is “startling” or “remarkable,”⁴⁷ but it is not necessarily miraculous.

On this basis, then, Warfield makes an important distinction in his polemics against faith healing groups: a person may be physically healed in answer to prayer so that “the supernaturalness of the act may be so apparent as to demonstrate God’s activity in it to all right-thinking minds conversant with the facts.”⁴⁸ But he chastises those who claim these healings as “miracles” because they are guilty of “obscuring the lines which divide miracles, specifically so called, from the general supernatural.”⁴⁹ Warfield felt this clarification to the “simple reader” was necessary since there were those who attempted to “reduce the idea of miracles to the level of these Faith Healings [*sic*],

or laws, either already ascertained or yet ascertainable” *The Natural History of the Christian Religion* (New York: Macmillan and Co.), p. 23.

⁴⁶“QM,” p. 198.

⁴⁷CM., pp. 185, 191. By “miraculous” in this case Warfield intends “to say without means—any means—and apart from means, and above means.”

⁴⁸CM, p. 192.

⁴⁹CM, p. 163.

assimilating the miracles of our Lord . . . to them and denying that miracles in the strict sense have ever been wrought, even by our Lord."⁵⁰ Warfield is also reacting here to the liberal theology of divine immanence, the framework within which Modernists attempted to justify Christ's miracles on the basis of historical and contemporary analogies.⁵¹ On one level, to preserve his apologetical tradition of proving the existence of God from the occurrence of empirically-observable miracles, it was crucial that Warfield maintain a strict natural/supernatural dichotomy. Nothing of "natural means" could be allowed to contaminate a purely divine act. Beyond this, his cessationist polemic demanded a sharp distinction between the "miraculous" events of the Bible and the "providential" divine acts, if any, of later history. Any "analogies," then, between biblical and modern miracles, as the faith healers and the liberal apologists were proposing, were anathema.

Warfield emphasizes the *toto ceolo* [sic]⁵² difference between the true miracles of the Bible and events purported to be such from a later time. In his description of biblical miracles Warfield echoes the early Enlightenment quests for religious certainty, absolute truth and the idealization of a past, golden age. The miracles of Christ, for example, "were but the trailing clouds of glory which He brought from heaven, which is His home."⁵³ "Their number," Warfield asserts, "is usually greatly underestimated."⁵⁴ The miracles surrounding Christ's ministry described in the Gospels are "recorded only as specimens" of a much larger number. The miracles he lists are those of healing, exorcisms, nature-miracles, and raisings of the dead.⁵⁵ Warfield's view of the

⁵⁰CM, pp. 161-62.

⁵¹CM, p. 163. Warfield here cites works by Prebendary Reynolds who refers to a case of hypnotism producing unusual physical effects and concludes, "This shows how easy it was for our Lord, with His divine knowledge and power, to work every kind of healing." Warfield disagrees: "Our Lord's miracles of healing were certainly not faith cures, as it has become fashionable among the 'Modernists' to represent." CM, p. 302, note 12.

⁵²CM, p. 57.

⁵³CM, p. 3.

⁵⁴Warfield, "Jesus Christ," *New SHERK* VI, p. 159. "The number of miracles which He wrought may easily be underrated." CM, p. 3.

⁵⁵Elsewhere, Warfield states that "supernatural dreams" in which "direct divine revelations are communicated" and those "symbolical dreams which receive divine interpretations" share the characteristics of a miracle, as we see below, in that they are "clustered at two or three critical points in the development of Israel" or in the "supernatural epochs." "Dream," *DCG*, I, p. 495, reprinted in *SSWW* II, pp. 154-55. He

idealized and absolute character of Jesus' miraculous ministry is illustrated when he goes far beyond the scriptural evidence: "For a time disease and death must have been almost banished from the land. The country was thoroughly aroused . . . filled with wonder [and] universal excitement."⁵⁶

The miraculous power resident in Jesus was transmitted to the Apostles, who, "as a crowning sign of their divine commission" passed it on to others in the form of charismata. These Warfield describes as "extraordinary capacities produced in the early Christian communities by a direct gift of the Holy Spirit."⁵⁷ These spiritual gifts are divided along the classical Protestant lines of "ordinary" and "extraordinary," *i.e.*, those which were "distinctively gracious" and those which were "distinctly miraculous."⁵⁸ Warfield reflects his Reformation attitude toward miracles when he insists that the "non-miraculous" charismata are "given preference" in Scripture, and as such are called "the greater gifts." To seek after these, rather than the miraculous gifts is, according to Warfield, "represented as the 'more excellent way'" (1 Corinthians

makes the same point in his article, "Miracle," in *A Dictionary of the Bible*, ed., John D. Davis (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1898), pp. 481-82.

In "QM," p. 202, Warfield makes a special plea to view exorcism as strictly a clash of spiritual powers, an activity "which can scarcely be subsumed under the operation of natural forces." He compares exorcism to the resurrection of Jesus from whom "both the divine Spirit and the human soul . . . departed into 'the other world,'" and returned Him to life—activity "over which 'natural forces' could have no control" (p. 201). Warfield's view of the miraculous nature of New Testament exorcism here lies in sharp contrast to his reaction to nearly identical reports occurring in later church history.

⁵⁶In *CM*, p. 3, Warfield offers what he says is a "pardonable exaggeration" when he writes of Jesus, "In effect He banished disease and death from Palestine for the three years of His ministry." The hem of His garment "Could medicine whole countries of their pain/ One touch of that pale hand could life restore."

⁵⁷*CM*, p. 3.

⁵⁸Gerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1930; repr., 1972), pp. 300-02, a conservative scholar who was a contemporary of Warfield at Princeton Seminary, represents the virtual consensus of mainstream Protestant theology of his time when he down plays this "ordinary/extraordinary" dichotomy as applied to spiritual gifts: "The central significance in all manifestations of the Spirit, both those that we are accustomed to call ordinary or those called extraordinary, consisted for Paul in the tremendous irresistible power with which the Spirit makes his impact and produces his results in every sphere of operation. This was something inherent in the nature of the Spirit. All the phenomena revealing his presence and working bore witness to this. The fundamental note in his activity was that of divine, unique forth-putting of energy." He urges that the Church ought to connect the "quiet virtues and graces with the constant powerful urge and influence of the Spirit" and not to "empoverish" [*sic*] Christian eschatological hope by ruling out "the mighty rushing of the Pentecostal wind."

12:31).⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the manifestation of these miraculous gifts were diffused throughout the Apostolic Church on a scale that was “quite generally underestimated.” And he affirms this widespread operation of the miraculous charismata as a “beautiful picture” of early Christian worship.⁶⁰ He summarizes this ideal portrayal of the Church of this period:

[It is] characteristic of the Apostolic churches that such miraculous gifts should be displayed in them. The exception would be, not a church with, but a church without such gifts. Everywhere, the Apostolic Church was marked out as itself a gift from God, by showing forth the possession of the Spirit in appropriate works of the Spirit—miracles of healing and miracles of power, miracles of knowledge, whether in the form of prophecy or of the discerning of spirits, miracles of speech, whether the gifts of tongues or of their interpretation. The Apostolic Church was characteristically a miracle-working church.⁶¹

By his emphasis on the highly miraculous condition of the Apostolic Church, Warfield appears to be establishing two points: first, he points out the clearly discernible contrast between the miraculous activities of the Apostolic communities and those claimed for the post-Apostolic era. Second, Warfield is staking out the boundaries of miracle against “theologians of the ‘liberal’ school” who “deny the miraculous character of the charisms,” attributing the phenomena to “known psychological laws” generated from times of excitement or “great mental exaltation.”⁶²

Warfield, then, emphasizes that miracles are unconnected with any process of nature; that they are directly and immediately caused by God; and are to be distinguished from “providential” works of God in which some natural means is used to produce an unusual effect. But can one know, empirically and rationally, if a given event is a miracle?

⁵⁹His predecessor at Princeton, Charles Hodge and the consensus of commentators on this passage, would not agree. The gift of prophecy, a “miraculous” gift of revelation and divine guidance for the community, is highly prized by Paul. Hodge, *An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Sons, 1891), p. 294, writes, “The Sense is, ‘Seek the better gifts, and moreover, I show you a better way to do it,’” namely, in the “way” of love rather than in a competitive spirit in which the possession of spiritual gifts accredits one’s spiritual status in the community.

⁶⁰*CM*, p. 3-4.

⁶¹*CM*, p. 5.

⁶²*CM*, p. 234, note 6.

b. The Epistemological Contradiction within Warfield's Concept of Miracle

Warfield's approach to how a miracle is perceived is crucial for determining the validity of his concept of miracle, and with it his cessationism. But he attempts to combine two incompatible *a priori*s into one notion of miracle: naturalism and faith. On the one hand, Warfield's common sense philosophy provided him with the confidence that one could, by sifting the facts, determine if an event was miraculous or merely providential, supernatural or natural. He understands the discernment of miracles in terms of their objectivity and evidence, and from the perspective of naturalistic *a priori*s. On the other hand, Warfield finally must admit that a prior faith commitment determines one's judgment on miracles.

A true miracle, Warfield asserts, cannot be dismissed as subjective and personal: it must actually occur "in the external world . . . objectively real and not merely [as] a mental phenomenon."⁶³ He rejects the attempt to transpose "marvels from the physical to the mental world" as, for example, in the case of the miracle of wine at Cana. Here the wine was not miraculous because of the altered subjective reactions of taste and sight to what was really water, but lay in the fact that water had actually changed to wine. This is a rather simple distinction between the objective and subjective nature of miracle and Warfield mentioned it only in passing. But from here the issue of subjectivity becomes more complex. Warfield suggests that miracles may not be judged merely by their "stupendous" quality, such as a resurrection from the dead versus a modest answer to prayer. More is needed to determine a miracle than a "spiritual tape line," *i.e.*, the subjective impact of an event. Further, if miracles are determined by the perception of God's "manifest presence and activity," then one's subjective religious experience of a miracle is simply an affirmation that God sustains and directs nature and history. In such a case, "everything that occurs is a miracle."⁶⁴

Against these subjective positions, Warfield insists that the identification of a miracle must include a clear, empirically verifiable intrusion of the supernatural into the natural order of events. In "A Question of Miracles," he then develops his definition/description of miracle as discussed in the previous section. But in this he begs the question.

⁶³"QM," p. 170.

⁶⁴"QM," p. 167.

Warfield's SCSP is clearly opposed to a subjective description of miracle and even more so as he interacts with those who, while sharing the conventional definition of miracles as empirical and supernatural events, deny their occurrence. Warfield is mystified at his opponents, *e.g.*, Hume and Huxley, who claim that a miracle, on *a priori* grounds is unprovable. "Why such an event should be incapable of proof . . . is not immediately obvious. If it occurs, it ought to be capable of being shown to have occurred."⁶⁵ He continues, "The question of miracles, then, is just a question of evidence." But is it "just a question of evidence"? As in the case of Darwin's fall from faith, Warfield fails to explain how all men can be endowed with "common sense" to accept the truth as the evidence dictates and still account for those who reject the evidence for miracles that lies so clearly and objectively before them. All he offers is the critics' presupposition, with no hint of the epistemological grounds by which they arrived there. He observes,

When the evidence for a miracle presents itself before their minds it scarcely finds a hospitable reception; and when that evidence is exceptionally abundant and cogent, they are compelled to face the question, What kind and amount of evidence would convince them of the real occurrence of such an event, and they thus discover their real position to be that a miraculous event is as such incapable of proof.

In other words, despite the critics' appeals to the lack of provable miracles in history, a miracle is to them "by definition" impossible from the very outset. To them, an extraordinary event can only fall into one of two categories: a false report, or an event which can be explained, at least ultimately, within a naturalistic worldview. Warfield excoriates those who claim to examine carefully nature and history, declaring, on *a posteriori* grounds, that biblical miracles do not happen when in fact these doubters have already begun their investigation guided by the *a priori* that miracles are impossible. Nevertheless, when attacking the occurrence of *post*-biblical miracles, Warfield is not above an appeal to an identical naturalistic *a priori*. For example, though his rigorous demands for veracity seem excessive, Warfield appears to accept the possibility of true miracles. In *CM* he insists that the "effects for which miracles are required" would consist of such phenomena as the restoration of an amputated hand, the sudden healing

⁶⁵"QM," p. 175.

of a broken bone, or replacement of lost teeth.⁶⁶ However, some pages earlier, his naturalistic *a priori* shows through when he insists that “bare inexplicability” or “inscrutability” would prove insufficient grounds for the assertion of a miracle. Even such amazing events as those he described could not qualify as miracles. Warfield, like the skeptics he criticizes, simply subsumes these events, if not under the category, “nature,” then certainly under “not proven to be a miracle.”

Of course, what we have just seen illustrates the contradiction between, on the one hand, Warfield’s skeptical *a priori* that post-biblical miracles do not occur, and on the other, his assertion that he is reasonable and open to their possibility, and they may be determined only on *a posteriori* grounds to be true miracles when judged as an objective event in the real world, accessible as such to any observer. This type of contradiction is made even more explicit when he points out, not only the presuppositions of those who doubt miracles, but those who affirm them. In a stunning break from his SCSP epistemology and from the whole empirical basis of his extreme evidentiary miracle apologetic, Warfield makes the following concession:

The atheist, the materialist, the pantheist are within their rights in denying the *possibility* of miracle. But none other is. As soon as we adopt the postulate of a personal God and a creation, so soon miracles cease to be “impossible” in any exact sense of the word. We may hold them to be improbable, to the verge of the unprovable: but their possibility is inherent in the very nature of God as personal and the author of the universal frame

.....
The bald assertion that miracles are “impossible” is, for the theist, obviously mere unreasonable dogmatism.⁶⁷

So Warfield’s concept of miracle rests on two mutually incompatible foundations: on the one hand, that a miracle is an event which can be shown as such to any observer, naturalist or theist, simply by viewing the evidence, and on the other, that naturalists and theists necessarily determine the nature of an event from their respective *a prioris*.

These two incompatible viewpoints appeared as a single, unexamined premise underlying the classic Evangelical apologetic on miracles. The miracle apologetic stood on common ground with the Enlightenment-era skeptic in that they both could view nature as a closed system characterized by a chain of cause and effect relationships. They also shared a confidence in human ability to determine by observation

⁶⁶CM, p. 191.

⁶⁷“QM,” p. 175-76.

an accurate assessment of reality. A startlingly unusual event within a certain religious context, however, would, to a theistic apologist indicate the irruption of the "super-natural," an essentially distinct (divine) cause, into the chain of causality. The naturalist would feel no such constraint and would simply expand his view of the phenomena of nature to include such an unusual event. The apologist could charge a betrayal on the part of the naturalist since he refused to perceive the empirically-verifiable evidence of a miracle breaking the natural chain of causality, an irruption which indicated the hand of God. The naturalist could counter that this interpretation did not play by the mutually accepted rule of natural law, which was, in essence, a program of exclusively natural cause and effect relationships: if one begins with this premise, one ought not arbitrarily change the laws of nature in mid game.

In the final analysis, the miracle apologetic is a simple question-begging exercise: a slight-of-hand maneuver which attempts to reconcile the irreconcilable: theism and naturalism.⁶⁸ It purports to stand with the skeptic on a neutral, objective and rationalistic platform, and, from within a naturalistic worldview, to judge whether or not an event is of divine origin. The two positions are not so much contrary from an epistemological standpoint, as they are, at base, opposing commitments of faith.

Warfield has correctly pointed out that the skeptics reject the miraculous on *a priori* grounds. He stated, also, that the theist who accepts the possibility of miracles must begin with some presuppositions as well. In particular, Warfield, despite his over-all appeal to a presuppositionless apprehension of the facts as the ground for the knowledge of miracles, has some *a prioris* of his own. When he claims that "the question of miracles . . . is just a question of evidence," the "evidence" to which he appeals is testimony. In order to establish the reliability of this appeal, he claims that the probability of "testimony being true rests in part on the known or presumable trust-

⁶⁸Though referring primarily to scriptural inerrancy, the following remarks by Vander Stelt, *Philosophy and Scripture*, pp. 182-83, applies to Warfield's view of miracle as well. "As to the structure of the natural world, Warfield found the basic assumptions of a philosophy of reality and truth that was greatly indebted to SCSP acceptable and helpful in curtailing any threats upon certainty and security. By placing all of this within the larger context of the supernatural, Warfield tried to reinsure the former with the latter...a curious fusion of two basically conflicting worlds of thought."

worthiness of the witnesses available in the case, anterior to their testimony to the particular fact now under consideration.”⁶⁹ But one such testimony to which Warfield appeals to establish the historicity of miracles is the Gospel of John. Now this is a perfectly acceptable appeal to one sharing an Evangelical faith-position, but much more than what Warfield offered in support of the historical trustworthiness of John was required if he were to satisfy his own requirements for true historical testimony. For example, as Brown points out,⁷⁰ Warfield offers no corroborating contemporary testimony to John’s account of the raising of Lazarus or the healing of the man born blind. Nor can he appeal to the corroborating testimony of similar events occurring in his own experience due to his cessationist theology. So Warfield’s selection of St. John as reliable historical testimony was based on his *a priori* assumptions about the infallibility of Scripture and the evidential function of miracles.

Warfield appeals again to the *a priori* of scriptural authority when he offers the following *non sequitur* argument.

The entrance of sin into the world is . . . the sufficient occasion of the entrance also of miracle. Extraordinary exigencies (we speak as a man) are the sufficient explanation of extraordinary expedients. If, then, we conceive the extraordinary events of the Scriptural record as part and parcel of the redemptive work of God—and this is how they are uniformly represented in the Scriptural record itself—surely the presumption which is held to lie against them is transmitted into a presumption in their favor, as appropriate elements in a great remedial scheme, by means of which the broken scheme of nature is mended and restored.⁷¹

Again, the proof for miracles is circular: one must stand completely within the Christian tradition, with all its affirmations of divine activity in the physical world, to accept the premises of the argument. Warfield applies a similar type of logic when he extrapolates the likelihood of miracles’ occurring from some central supernatural events of the Christian creeds: creation, the incarnation and the resurrection.

The admission of the truly miraculous character of these three will not only itself suffice to fill the category of “miracle,” taken in its strictest sense, with an undeniable content, and so to vindicate the main proposition that miracles have happened; but will tend to drag into that category others in their train.⁷²

⁶⁹“QM,” p. 180.

⁷⁰Colin Brown, *Miracles and the Critical Mind*, p. 201.

⁷¹“QM,” p. 193.

⁷²“QM,” p. 200. Somewhat later, p. 202, he expands on this principle of miracle-by- association: he wants to “call attention . . . to the natural tendency that

Just how these events would “drag into that category others in their train” is unclear. In any case, he is begging the question. Miracles, in the evidentialist sense he hoped to employ them, were to indicate the existence of God; but here he is using the existence and power of God to indicate the occurrence of miracles. Ostensibly, the logic is that he is moving from the greater to the lesser: if God could perform the great wonders of creation, the incarnation and the resurrection, how much more easily could he perform lesser miracles in the same general category, *e.g.*, the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, the cure of demoniacs, and miracles of healing? But even granting the great redemptive wonders, there is no necessity that God had actually supplemented these works with further, lesser miracles. More to our point, Warfield again is beginning with the same theological *a priori*: the existence and activity of God as well as the historical reliability of scripture to attest to miracles. This scriptural starting point underlies Warfield's summary of *a priori* criteria for testing genuine miracles, as we see in his article, “Miracle,” in the *Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*.⁷³

1) They [true miracles] exhibit the character of God and teach truths concerning God. 2) They are in harmony with the established truths of religion (Deut. 13:1-3). If a wonder is worked which contradicts the doctrines of the Bible, it is a lying wonder (2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 16:14). 3) There is an adequate occasion for them. God does not work them except for great cause and for a religious purpose. They belong to the history of redemption, and there is no genuine miracle without an adequate occasion for it in God's redemptive revelation of himself. 4) They are established, not by the number of witnesses, but by the character and qualification of the witnesses.

The fourth point here, of course, is a reference to the reliability of the biblical witnesses as against those found in later Church history. We investigate below the specific scriptural arguments Warfield used to support cessationism, but it is necessary here only to point out that his *a priori* of scriptural infallibility was foundational to his view of miracles. Elsewhere, a fifth point, related to the first three, above, is his

exists to work out from them [major miracles] as a center to the inclusion in the same category of others more or less like them. Just because some are certainly miracles of this order, a presumption is raised that others may be of this order; and this presumption may not unnaturally grow upon us until we are inclined to assign to the same group many which in themselves would never have suggested this classification.”

⁷³Ed., J. D. Davis (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1898), p. 299.

insistence that miracles must be disassociated from “occurrences in which immoralities are implicated” or “implications of . . . irreligion or of superstition.”⁷⁴ Such events may be thoroughly marvelous and “inexplicable,” but “*we know from the outset* [italics mine] that God did not work them.” “It is a *primary principle*,” Warfield writes, “that no event can really be miraculous which has implications inconsistent with religious truth.”⁷⁵

Moreover, in keeping with his view that the miracles of scripture were absolute, instantaneous and complete, he points to the numerous failures and to the sometimes partial cures among faith healers and healing shrines,⁷⁶ and remarks, “It must remain astonishing . . . that miracles should frequently be incomplete. We should *a priori* expect miraculous cures to be regularly radical.”⁷⁷

Warfield mentions still another of his criteria for judging reports of miracles: naturalism. That is, that there are no forces, *e.g.*, divine or spiritual, which impact upon the physical, material world. This appears inconsistent in light of his attacks on the critics of biblical miracles for employing just such an objection to miracles. But when he treats accounts of post-biblical miracles, Warfield repeatedly describes them as occurring, however inscrutably, only within the natural order. For example, in response to the account of Pierre de Rudder, whose badly broken legs reportedly were instantly healed at the shrine of Lourdes, Warfield repeats not only his usual disbelief of such a report, but adds the observation:

We are only beginning to learn the marvellous [*sic*] behavior of which living tissue is capable, and it may well be that, after a while, it may seem very natural that Pierre de Rudder’s case happened just as it is said to have happened . . . Nature was made by God, not man, and there may be forces working in nature not only which have not yet been dreamed of in our philosophy, but

⁷⁴CM, p. 121.

⁷⁵CM, p. 122.

⁷⁶CM, pp. 106-109; 196.

⁷⁷CM, p. 109. It is this demand for absolute certainty that characterizes so much modern Evangelical and Fundamentalist thought on spiritual gifts. For example, the inerrant scripture is frequently contrasted with the reported aberrations surrounding claims for the contemporary gift of prophecy, with the latter faring, in many cases, quite badly by contrast. Recently Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, pp. 17-114, attempted to reconcile this conflict by positing a two-level degree of inspiration and authority for revelation: the first group, the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles, *i.e.*, those authorized to write scripture, as contrasted with the second group: New Testament prophets, whose utterances were not regarded as infallible and so lay under the judgment of apostolic tradition and under the discernment of others in the church congregation.

which are beyond human comprehension altogether. . . . We do not busy ourselves, therefore, with conjecturing how Pierre de Rudder's cure may have happened We are content to know that in no case was it a miracle.⁷⁸

Physical healings may happen among such groups as Catholics, faith healers and Christian Scientists, but Warfield typically attributes such healings to the power of hysteria, suggestion or "mind cure." In these cases, the power of the sufferer's faith lies in the abilities of the mind to influence the body, rather than God's response to that faith. Similarly, he attributes what some believe to be divine revelation or utterances to the effects of "deep religious excitement," in turn, a consequence of "brutal persecution" and "widespread oppression."⁷⁹

When Warfield confronts the question of whether or not biblical miracles have occurred, he bases his judgment, not on an unbiased, rational examination of the facts, but upon the prior assumptions about the reliability of biblical testimony and its theological corollaries. When he deals with post-biblical miracles, however, he adopts the naturalistic *a priori* of his rationalist critics. In this Warfield is ironically and profoundly unbiblical in his outlook. "The man without the Spirit," St. Paul wrote, "does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned,"⁸⁰ that is, not by human reason but by revelation of the Holy Spirit.

We spell out these *a priori*s more fully in the section on Warfield's historical method, but now we examine briefly still another of his presuppositions, indeed, the central *a priori* of Warfield's miracle polemic.

c. The Function of Miracles in Warfield's Cessationist Polemic

Warfield was confident that if one correctly discerns the "biblical principle which governed the distribution of the miraculous gifts . . ." one finds the "key which unlocks all the historical puzzles connected with them."⁸¹ What is this principle that provides him with such confident control of historical accounts of these miraculous spiritual gifts? These spiritual gifts were given, Warfield writes, by God, transferred from the earthly ministry of Christ, to be "distinctively the authentica-

⁷⁸CM, pp. 119-20.

⁷⁹CM, pp. 127, 129.

⁸⁰1 Cor. 2:14, *New International Version*.

⁸¹CM, p. 25.

tion of the Apostles. They were part of the credentials of the Apostles as the authoritative agents of God in founding the church.”⁸² The ability to bestow the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands as recorded in Scripture is given “to teach us the course of the gifts of power, in the Apostles, apart from whom they were not conferred: as also their function, to authenticate the Apostles as the authoritative founders of the church.”⁸³ Warfield approvingly cites bishop Kaye who insists that the miracle working power of the New Testament Church

was not extended beyond the disciples upon whom the Apostles conferred it by the imposition of their hands. As the number of these disciples gradually diminished, the instances of the exercise of miraculous powers became continually less frequent, and ceased entirely at the death of the last individual on whom the hands of the Apostles had been laid.⁸⁴

Under this schema it would be possible, then, to hear of a few miracles still being performed into the second century, though the number of apostolically trained men endowed with the Spirit “cannot have been very large.”⁸⁵ Warfield lists Polycarp, the disciple of John, Ignatius, Papias, Clement, Hermas and possibly Leucius as examples. Hence the miracle reports written by such men as Justin and Irenaeus could be attributed to the activity of these last disciples of the Apostles.

Warfield adds to this rather mechanical view of spiritual entropy a “deeper principle” to which the above connection of the charismata to the Apostles and their disciples serves only as an illustration. This principle is the “inseparable connection of miracles with revelation, as its mark and credential.” But even within scripture miracles do not appear randomly, but rather “appear only when God is speaking to His people through an accredited messenger declaring His gracious purpose.”⁸⁶ Elsewhere, Warfield lists the four periods of revelation which is accompanied by miraculous confirmation.

1. The redemption of God’s people from Egypt and their establishment in Canaan under Moses and Joshua. 2. The life-and-death struggle of the true religion with heathenism under Elijah and Elisha. 3. The Exile, when Jehovah afforded proof of his power and supremacy over the gods of the heathen, although his people were in captivity (Daniel and his companions). 4. The introduction of Christianity, when miracles attested the person of Christ and his doctrine. Outside

⁸²CM, pp. 3 and 6.

⁸³CM, p. 23.

⁸⁴CM, pp. 22-23, 245, note 51. *The Ecclesiastical History of the Second and Third Centuries, Illustrated from the Writings of Tertullian* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1825; 2nd ed., 1826; 3rd ed., 1845), pp. 98-103.

⁸⁵CM, p. 25.

⁸⁶CM, p. 26.

these periods miracles are rare indeed (Gen. 5:24) The working of miracles in the apostolic age, although not confined to the apostles (Acts vi.8; viii. 5-7), were the signs of an apostle (2 Cor. xii.12; Heb. ii.4; cp. Acts ii.43; Gal. iii.5).⁸⁷

From the time of creation to the Exodus, Warfield tells us, miracles were “almost totally unknown.” Similarly, “supernatural” dreams, *i.e.*, those communicating direct, divine revelation and those which received divine interpretations, are rare in scripture and when they occur are “oddly clustered at two or three critical points in the development of Israel,”⁸⁸ *i.e.*, the birth of Israel as a nation, the period of Daniel and the birth of Christ. The exceptions to these may be classed essentially as “providential” dreams or reduced to a single case: 1 Kings 3:5. If the corresponding “supernaturalistic epochs” of dreams and other miracles demonstrate a less-than-perfect match, Warfield concedes that supernatural manifestations of all types may simply “be connected with [the] . . . particular periods God’s people were brought into particularly close relations with the outside world.”⁸⁹ Warfield next takes up the question of why God would not continue to accredit his revelation “atomistically . . . to each individual, throughout the whole course of history, in the penetralium of his own consciousness.”⁹⁰ Indeed, the “Romish theory” held that miracles continued throughout history, accrediting the truth of Catholic doctrine to the present day. This theory, Warfield writes, is at least more “consistent and reasonable”⁹¹ than the “prevailing opinion” of his time which held that miracles continued after the Apostolic age for a few, usually three or four, centuries. Warfield cites Middleton’s *Free Inquiry* for reasons maintaining this prevailing opinion.

The first is that miracles were required to strengthen the Church until the civil power of the Roman Empire converted to Christianity and was in a position to protect it. The Church, “being now delivered from all danger, and secure of success, moved under the protection of

⁸⁷Warfield, “Miracle,” *DavDictBib*, p. 482.

⁸⁸Warfield, “Dream,” *DCG*, I, p. 495, reprinted in *SSWW*, II, pp. 154-55.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, p. 155. This “cluster theory” of miracles, at least in the Old Testament seems flatly contradicted by Jer. 32:20, “You performed miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt and have continued them to this day, both in Israel and among all mankind and have gained the renown that is *still yours*.” See Isa. 59:21 for the same sense of continuing prophecy.

⁹⁰*CM*, p. 26.

⁹¹*CM*, p. 35.

the greatest power on earth.”⁹² Middleton’s sardonic tone here is perhaps directed at those clerics who felt nothing amiss in referring to the civil government of Rome rather than God as “the greatest power on earth” protecting the Church.

A second reason for the continuation of the charismata for the first few centuries was offered by John Tillotson following an ancient Church tradition which compared the infant Church to a young plant requiring water until established, after which “the [miraculous] power ceased, and God left it to be maintained by ordinary ways.”⁹³

Some defined these “ordinary ways” more precisely, echoing Calvin’s⁹⁴ transmutation of the extraordinary spiritual gifts into the permanent, on-going gifts of the spirit, *e.g.*, “to gifts of tongues succeeded orderly human teaching; to gifts of healing succeeded healing by educated human skill.”⁹⁵ A third general reason maintained that the charismata were granted not as protection for the Church, but as “signs of divine favor” upon it⁹⁶ until, as John Wesley had suggested, the Roman empire had become nominally Christian and “a general corruption both of faith and morals infected the church—which by that revolution, as St. Jerome says, lost as much of its virtue as it had gained of wealth and power.”⁹⁷ Implicit of course, in Wesley’s argument is a challenge to the religious authority and legitimacy of a Church without miracles.

Warfield is dissatisfied with these justifications of what he calls the Anglican theory, not only on historical grounds, as he goes on to show throughout most of his book, *CM*, but on the ground of inconsistency. If the principle of the above position is that miracles appeared

⁹²Middleton, *Miscellaneous Works* (London: R. Manby, 1755), I, pp. xli, cited in *CM*, p. 7.

⁹³*Ibid.* This plant metaphor may be derived from Chrysostom and Gregory the Great. See pp. 15-16, above.

⁹⁴Calvin, *Institutes* IV,3,8, (1061). See pp. 22-23, above.

⁹⁵Bishop M. Creighton, *Persecution and Tolerance* (London: Longmans and Green, 1895), pp. 55-56, cited in *CM*, p. 9. Also, the popular work by Godet who makes a similar argument (*Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans., A. Cusin (1886; repr., Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977), p. 250: “Prophecy may be transformed into animated preaching; speaking in tongues may appear in the form of religious poetry and music; knowledge continue to accomplish its task by the catechetical and theological teaching of Christian truth.”

⁹⁶Warfield, *CM*, p. 8, points out that William Whiston, an Arian, held this position. The charismata accompanied the “pure religion” of the early Church until, to him, the heresy of Athanasianism triumphed in A.D. 381 when God could no longer continue his miraculous sanction.

⁹⁷*CM*, p. 8. John Wesley, *Works of Rev. John Wesley*, (New York: Carlton and Porter, 1856), V, p. 706.

temporarily to plant and sustain the Church in unevangelized areas, why then would miracles be limited to the Roman empire in the first three or four centuries? Why not also the Chinese empire in the twentieth? For that matter, he continues, the Church presently bears no essentially different relation to China than it does to the whole unevangelized, unbelieving world. Still further, could not one take the "long view" of Church history and see the first two millennia of its existence as a "negligible quantity," which places us even now in the era of "primitive Christianity," a time still requiring the accreditation of miraculous charismata.

Warfield rejects the "Anglican theory"⁹⁸ not only for its inconsistency, but more importantly, as we have noted, because of the "inseparable connection" between the miraculous charismata and special revelation, *i.e.*, scripture. To provide an alternative to the Anglican theory, he must show why the charismata cannot continue validly to accredit true, biblical doctrine after the time of the initial revelation. He offers two explanations.

First, echoing Calvin,⁹⁹ Warfield implies that since the only function of miracles is to accredit revelation, and since no new revelation is forthcoming after the apostolic age, miracles perforce, must cease. As a consequence,

God the Holy Spirit has made it His subsequent work, not to introduce new and unneeded revelations into the world, but to diffuse this one complete revelation through the world and to bring mankind into saving knowledge of it.¹⁰⁰

The Holy Spirit's work, then, is divided into two sharply distinct eras: that of revelation and that of proclamation. Warfield admits that when Christ returned to heaven this "special revelation" did not cease.

⁹⁸Also called the "scaffold theory," the miraculous charismata serving as scaffolding for the Church while it is being built. After the structure is complete the external and temporary scaffolding is no longer needed. This image implies that the Church reached maturity or viability in some institutional or doctrinal sense, and further implies that for the Church to regress back to use of the charismata would be a sign of immature faith. So A.H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1907), pp. 117-36 and W. H. Griffith-Thomas, *The Holy Spirit of God*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1913, repr. in 4th ed., 1963), pp. 44-45.

⁹⁹*CM*, p. 26-27, also John Calvin, *Institutes*, Prefatory Address, 3 (16).

¹⁰⁰Warfield is quoting Hermann Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, 2nd ed. (Kampen: J. H. Bos, 1906), I, pp. 363-64, in *CM*, p. 27.

Instead, the Holy Spirit was poured out in the “extraordinary working of the powers and gifts.” Only when “the revelation of God in Christ had taken place, *and had become in Scripture and Church* [italics mine] a constituent part of the cosmos, then another era had begun.”

The ministry of Christ in his exaltation, then, begins with the brief bestowal of spiritual gifts, resulting in the publication of scripture. At this point, Warfield claims, “New constituent elements of special revelation can no longer be added. His work has been done.” Since then, God chose not to reveal himself “atomistically” to each and every soul throughout history “to meet his separate needs,” but rather revelation was granted to mankind as “an organically complete” package. Just how the Holy Spirit could “diffuse” this revelation through the world and “bring” mankind into a “saving knowledge” of it is unclear if it were not to be revealed “atomistically” to each individual in some personal, or perhaps, subjective sense.¹⁰¹ Warfield’s view, on the one hand protects the finality and authority of normative Christian faith, but on the other, effectively freeze-dries almost all the biblically-described activity of the Spirit and incarnates Him into the texts of scripture.

Warfield also uses cessationism as a shield to protect his Christology: the final and “complete revelation of God [as] given in Christ.”

Because Christ is all in all, and all revelation and redemption alike are summed up in Him, it would be inconceivable that either revelation or its accompanying signs should continue after the completion of that great revelation with its accrediting works, by which Christ has been established in His rightful place as the culmination and climax and all inclusive summary of the saving revelation of God, the sole and sufficient redeemer of His people.¹⁰²

Here, Warfield confuses “completion” with “sufficiency” with respect to the revelation of Christ.¹⁰³ Just as it is absurd to say that because the revelation of Christ is “complete” one cannot speak about it, so it is nonsense to say that God cannot later reveal aspects, emphases or applications of this “complete” revelation. “Additional” revelation need not add “constituent elements of special revelation” to the “faith once and for all delivered to the saints,” any more than the

¹⁰¹See the discussion at the end of Chapter 3 on the “atomistic” revelation of Christ to individuals as a biblical and normative phenomenon.

¹⁰²CM, p. 28.

¹⁰³Note in the preceding passage, Warfield moves from talk of “new” revelation to “unneeded.” The equivocation begins with his use of the term “new,” which can mean in this context “repeated” or “qualitatively different or additional.” “New” in the first sense need not threaten the content of revealed doctrine any more than preaching about it.

“illumination” of scripture adds verses to the Bible.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, miracles, Warfield’s corollary to revelation, need not cease if their function is to continue operating within the framework of their functions in the Kingdom of God and within the completed and finally established gospel. Hence it is clear that Warfield confuses *process* (revelation) with *content* (the normative statement of the Church’s faith).

Warfield sees the mission of Christ, like the function of the Spirit, drastically changing, a view which also contradicts the biblical teaching on Christ’s ministry during his exaltation. For that matter, Warfield’s understanding of the mission of Christ on earth is profoundly unbiblical. Chapter four briefly touches on Warfield’s faulty pneumatology and Christology, particularly as they relate to the biblical doctrine of the Kingdom of God. These views and Warfield’s cessationism are mutually conditioned, and as such require investigation.

A second reason follows from the first and is based on the notion that the final revelation has its locus in scripture and is, by an unspecified process, “incorporated into the living body of the world’s thought,” or, has become a “constituent part of the cosmos.” Warfield cites a similarly nebulous metaphor of Abraham Kuyper, who says that in scripture God “has spread a common board for all, and invites all to come and partake of the richness of the great feast.”¹⁰⁵ These rather vague expressions seem only to mask the point that Christian revelation for Warfield is now simply equated with scripture, and for one to partake of this revelation, apparently, one simply reads the complete, objective, propositional revelation which comprises the text of the Bible. Indeed this seems to be the point Kuyper and Warfield are making in the following passage:

¹⁰⁴See “Appendix C: The Sufficiency of Scripture” in Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, pp. 299-312. Obviously, the sufficiency of scripture applies to general theological principles and cannot give guidance for every specific detail of every life, *e.g.*, personal, career or many ministry decisions requiring divine revelatory insight. Most of the prophecies in Acts responded to such unique situations, *e.g.*, guidance for ministry (11:12; 13:2; 16:6-9), warnings of famine (11:28) or personal danger (20:23; 21:4, 10) which did not add new doctrinal content to the Bible (*cf.* 1 Cor. 14:24-25).

¹⁰⁵A. Kuyper, *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology*, trans. J. H. DeVries (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1898), pp. 368 and 355-58, cited in *CM*, pp. 26-27.

[God] has given to the world one organically complete revelation, adapted to all, sufficient for all, provided for all, and *from this one completed revelation He requires each to draw his whole spiritual sustenance*. Therefore it is that miraculous working, which is but the sign of God's revealing power, cannot be expected to continue, and in point of fact does not continue, after the revelation of which it is the accompaniment has been completed [*italics mine*].¹⁰⁶

For Kuyper and Warfield, miracles have only extrinsic value; they are not in themselves revelation, but merely point to it, deriving their significance only from the fact that they draw attention to the truly important message: that of scriptural revelation.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, one's "whole spiritual sustenance" has its source in the revelation of scripture. There is nothing mentioned here of Calvin's *testimonium*¹⁰⁸ of the Spirit bearing witness to the message of the scripture and to the subjective knowledge of salvation in the believer's heart. There is no possibility of any continuing charismata such as divine power or revelation operating in the Church for the express purpose of edifying the local congregation. Warfield's view of the miraculous charismata is that function determines duration, and for him, their function is strictly limited to the accreditation of revelation recorded in scripture and confined to the time during which it was revealed.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, p. 368, cited in *CM*, p. 26-27.

¹⁰⁷R. C. Trench, an influential Evangelical writer of the last century summarizes this extrinsicist position in his *Synonyms of the New Testament* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1865), p. 327: "The prime object and end of the miracle is to lead us to something out of and beyond itself: that, so to speak, it is a kind of finger-post of God . . . ; valuable, not so much for what it is, as for that which it indicates of the grace and power of the doer, or of the connection with a higher world in which he stands."

¹⁰⁸See, B. Ramm, *The Witness of the Spirit: An Essay on the Contemporary Relevance of the Internal Witness of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), pp. 11-27. See his comments on Warfield on this subject (pp. 22, 100, 119).

¹⁰⁹For a brief, but useful sketch of scholarly consensus on the biblical view of miracles which challenges Warfield at key points, see D. Senior, "The Miracles of Jesus" in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds., R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmeyer, and R. E. Murphy (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1990), pp. 1369-73, especially section (I), "Biblical Notion of Miracle," pp. 1369-70. Senior notes that more recent theology is becoming "discontent" with the traditional view of miracle. He argues that defining miracles as "beyond the *ordinary* laws of nature" (Augustine), or beyond "*all* laws of nature" (Aquinas) "divorces miracles from the climate of faith." Moreover, he continues, 1) viewing nature as a closed system of laws is alien to the Scripture, as is, 2) the notion that a miracle is primarily "something to be wondered at" or marvelous. Above all, NT miracles are "not only, or even primarily external confirmations of [the Christian] message; rather the miracle was the vehicle of the message. They are 'revelation stories' . . . Side by side, word and miraculous deed gave expression to the advent of God's redemptive power" being expressions of Christ's war against the kingdom of Satan—the "primary means of establishing God's reign (kingdom). In Acts

This present study *emphatically accepts* Warfield's premise that the biblically described function of the charismata determines their duration.¹¹⁰ But contrary to Warfield, the following chapter argues that the functions of the charismata are not evidential, but salutary and edificatory.

Moreover, many clear commands of scripture explicitly urge the widespread and continued use of the very charismata Warfield insists have ceased. Warfield's evidentialist view of miracle is not only internally inconsistent, but inconsistent with the biblical view of miracle as well. If, as Warfield so strongly affirms, Scripture is the basis of theological truth, then it is crucial to determine what Scripture says explicitly and specifically about the function or purpose of the so-called "extraordinary" charismata, using three examples: miracles, prophecy and tongues.

Miracles and the charismata are an essential element in the very nature of the Kingdom of God that Jesus presented, of the gospel proclaimed and demonstrated by the disciples, apostles and the Church. An examination of scripture reveals that miracles do not prove the gospel, but are an essential element of it. Miracles represent, in actuality, the displacement of the rule of Satan by the Kingdom of God, whether in the realm of the physical, emotional, moral or spiritual; the gospel articulates those events. Hence, to remove the presence of God's charismatic power from the Christian gospel is to destroy its very essence as biblically described. Perhaps it is this fear that prompted the writer of 2 Tim. 3:5 to predict an eschatological struggle against those "having a form of religion, but denying its power (δύναμις)." The nature of the gospel is "miraculous" in the way in which it is presented, and also in the way in which it continues its purpose in the Church community.

The New Testament describes the function of prophecy in a variety of cases. The earliest prophets of the New Testament,

the miracles "represent the continuing power of the reign of God inaugurated by Jesus."

¹¹⁰This argument has been independently developed also by D. A. Codling in his Westminster Th.M. thesis, "The Argument that the Revelatory Gifts of the Holy Spirit Ceased with the Closure of the Canon of Scripture," pp. 81-150; Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, pp. 156-64, implicitly; and Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, p. 156: Warfield's "argument stands up *only* if such miraculous gifts are theologically tied *exclusively* to a role of attestation; and this is demonstrably not so" [italics his].

Zacharias, Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna, John the Baptist and Mary, are all seen as proclaiming or identifying the Messiah, but sometimes in the form of a psalm of worship (Lk. 1:67-79; 1:42-45; 2:25-26; 2:36; 1:76; 1:46-56, respectively). Peter receives a vision concerning the barriers between Jews and gentiles (Acts 10:11-17) and Paul his apostolic call (Acts 9:3-8). These are not signs “accrediting” the gospel, but the means by which aspects of the gospel are revealed and presented. But the function of prophetic revelation seems to lose its accrediting function altogether when Joseph is warned for the safety of his family in a revelatory dream (Mt. 2:12,13, 19,22), or repeatedly those spreading the gospel are encouraged, warned and directed by the Spirit through various revelations (Acts 5:3; 8:26,29; 9:10; 10:3,19; 11:27-30; 16:6-10; 18:9-10; 21:4,10-12; *cf.* 27:23). The Book of Acts describes prophecy explicitly as having “exhorted” and “strengthened” the community (Acts 9:31; 15:32), just as Paul describes its function in 1 Cor. 14:3; *cf.* 1 Thess. 5:11-22; 1 Pet. 4:10. “The one who prophesies, speaks to people for their upbuilding (οἰκοδομήν), encouragement (παράκλησαν) and consolation (παραμυθίαν).” The one who prophesies “edifies the church” (14:4). From prophecy an outsider or unbeliever will be “convicted” (ἐλέγχεται), “called to account” (ἀνακρίνεται), and “the secrets of his heart will be revealed” (14:25). Conversion and worship will result from this prophetic revelation. This explicit function of prophecy is not tied to an apostle, nor necessarily to scripture, but to specific, often unknown human needs. As long as the gospel is to be preached and applied, *i.e.*, “to the end of the age” (Mt. 28:20), these functions of worship, prophetic guidance, encouragement, exhortation, edification and conviction will continue to have relevance, and, if function determines duration, sufficient relevance to continue to the *Parousia* of Christ.

The function of the gift of tongues parallels that of prophecy, insofar as it not only indicates the presence of the Spirit (Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 11:15; 19:6, *cf.* 8:17-18), but also “edifies” (1 Cor. 14:4, *cf.* Jude 20) the speaker, who utters “mysteries” to God that no one (14:2), including the speaker (14:14) understands. Also, tongues speaking is associated with praise and worship.¹¹¹ F. F. Bruce rightly argues that the tongues proclaiming the “mighty works of God” the foreigners heard at Pentecost were not the preaching of the gospel—it was required that Peter do that later (v. 14-40)—but probably psalms of praise to God

¹¹¹F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, NICNT, p. 52.

in response to the coming of the Spirit. By using the gift of tongues, Paul says that he can both pray and sing in the Spirit (1 Cor. 14:15), a practice that may have appeared elsewhere among the Christian communities (Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16, *cf.* Jude 20), according to Dunn and L. W. Hurtado.¹¹² The repeated purposes for both these sample charismata are edification and praise, and represent functions to which every believer in the Church is called to perform.

The summary statements about the function of charismata bypass entirely the notion of Warfield's evidentialist accreditation of apostles or doctrine. Instead they are given for "strengthening" and "edification" (Acts 15:32; Rom. 1:11; 1 Cor. 14:26), for "the common good" (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:7); to know God's purposes (Eph. 1:18-22); so as to be "pure and blameless" (1 Cor. 1:8; 1:10, *cf.* Col. 1:10), "than in everything God may be glorified (1 Pt. 4:11). Eph. 4:12 sums up the purpose of the gifts of the Spirit: "for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ." It is explicit that these gifts are employed not simply by or for apostles, but ideally by everyone in the Christian community.

Despite the testimony of scripture on the function of charismata, Warfield's cessationist polemic requires a narrowly-focused, rationalistic, evidentialist notion of miracle as the only possible base from which to launch his major offensive against post-apostolic miracles: his extensive historical investigation and its underlying historical method.

3. Warfield's Historical Method

In lieu of a developed theological or exegetical defense of cessationism, Warfield devotes the overwhelming percentage of space in his major polemical work, *Counterfeit Miracles*, to an analysis of specific historical accounts of alleged post-apostolic miraculous events. This present section unpacks Warfield's historical method, demonstrating, that like his concept of miracle, his historical method is flawed. The criteria he applies to sustain the validity and historicity of biblical miracles against their critics are not applied consistently to miracles occurring after the Apostolic age. Similarly, the historical methods for

¹¹²*Jesus and the Spirit*, pp. 185-88; 208, 237 and 238; "What Are 'Spiritual Songs'?" *Paraclete* 5 (Winter 1971), pp. 8-15.

which he condemns the biblical critics, he himself applies to discredit post-biblical miracles.

Against the Anglican thesis, *i.e.*, the “prevailing opinion” that miracles existed for the establishment of the early Church (until about the time of Constantine) after which they faded away,¹¹³ Warfield insists that this view “contradicts the whole drift of the evidence of the facts, and the entire weight of probability as well.”¹¹⁴ Instead of maintaining, as does the popular opinion, that the charismata gradually diminished after the Apostolic period until they finally dwindled away around the end of the third century, Warfield holds that “if evidence is worth anything at all” the pattern of charismatic operation in the Church is quite the opposite:

There is little or no evidence at all for miracle-working during the first fifty years of the post-Apostolic church; it grows more abundant during the next century (the third); and it becomes abundant and precise only in the fourth century, to increase still further in the fifth and beyond. Thus . . . there was a steadily growing increase of miracle-working from the beginning on.¹¹⁵

Miracles occurring in history after the Apostolic Age differ from biblical miracles, according to Warfield, in two ways: most obviously, in the nature of the doctrines in connection with which they claim to have been wrought, and, in character.¹¹⁶ On this second point Warfield approvingly quotes an opponent, John Henry Cardinal Newman who suggests several differences:¹¹⁷ first, biblical miracles confirm divine revelation; ecclesiastical miracles have “no discoverable or direct object”; second, biblical miracles occur for the “instruction of the multitudes”; ecclesiastical wonders for those who are already Christians” or for “purposes already effected . . . by the miracles of Scripture”; third, biblical miracles tend to be “grave, simple, majestic” as opposed to their later counterparts which enter into the “wildness and inequality” of a romantic character. Fourth, the miracles of the Bible are “undeniably beyond nature”; whereas those of ecclesiastical tradition are “often scarcely more than extraordinary accidents or coincidences, or events which seem to

¹¹³ *CM*, pp. 6-9.

¹¹⁴ *CM*, p. 9.

¹¹⁵ *CM*, p. 10.

¹¹⁶ *CM*, pp. 53-54.

¹¹⁷ J. H. Newman, “The Miracles of Ecclesiastical History Compared with Those of Scripture as regards Their Nature, Credibility and Evidence,” in his, *Two Essays on Biblical and Ecclesiastical Miracles* (London: Basil M. Pickering, 1873), p. 99, cited in *CM*, pp. 53-54, 253, n. 44.

betray exaggerations or errors in the statement.” However, it was Newman’s task to show that there were important exceptions to these generalizations, and Warfield’s to show that there were not.

But the purpose of this section is to examine the criteria Warfield employs for determining whether or not the numerous accounts of miracles in history are valid. Warfield’s historical hermeneutic appears to center around two foci: the credibility of witnesses and historical probability. These are the classic arguments from the “great debate” on miracles in early eighteenth century England,¹¹⁸ particularly from Conyers Middleton, who so powerfully shaped Warfield’s thought on miracles. By the nature of the case, Warfield was forced to investigate a great amount of historical material, which constituted the overwhelming percentage of his book.

a. The Credibility of Witnesses

Warfield’s examination of the witnesses to alleged miracles throughout Church history is thoroughly skeptical. He follows Middleton’s attempts to discredit them by a critical analysis of: the worldview of the witnesses, and, as an extension of this, the use of literary forms for conveying theological messages; the vacillating attitude of some prominent witnesses toward miracles; and, the mental states of those witnessing or experiencing alleged miracles.

The worldview of those who claim to witness miracles, according to Warfield, is, in each case, suspect, because of the way they apprehended the real world. The early post-apostolic church, he argued, increasingly adopted the intellectual framework of a pagan environment. Warfield notes, “It is possible that we very commonly underestimate the marvellousness [*sic*] of the world with which the heathen imagination surrounded itself, crippled as it was by its ignorance of natural law, and inflamed by the most incredible superstition.”¹¹⁹ Citing Theodore Trede, Warfield continues, “The credulity of even educated people reached an unheard-of measure, as well as the number of those, who, as deceived or deceivers, no longer knew how to distinguish between truth and falsehood.”¹²⁰ Even “Augustine the truthful” in “a case of marvellous [*sic*] happenings . . .

¹¹⁸See Burns, *The Great Debate on Miracles*, pp. 70-96.

¹¹⁹*CM*, pp. 75.

¹²⁰*CM*, pp. 75, 249, n. 7.

shows himself quite unreliable . . . a child of his times.”¹²¹ Warfield then goes on to demonstrate Augustine’s credulity. Augustine allegedly cites as from first-hand witnesses, an apparently old and widely-recounted pagan story of a man resuscitated from the dead, using the same name and circumstances.¹²²

Beyond this, Warfield asserts that the identical story was affirmed by Gregory the Great as having happened to an acquaintance of his.¹²³ This credulity of the miraculous is typical of all subsequent Roman Catholics.

The worldview of the Catholic is one all his own, and is very expressly a miraculous one. He reckons with the miraculous in every act; miracle suggests itself to him as a natural explanation of every event; and nothing seems too strange to him to be true. . . . [He has a] disposition for miracle-seeking, which [is] altogether unaffected by the modern scientific axiom of the conformity of the course of nature to law.¹²⁴

Indeed, the very center of Roman Catholic worship, to Warfield, is the altar, which he asserts, is a relic chest, a symbol of claims which are utterly at odds with the certainty and authority of the “modern scientific axiom” of natural law.

World views are reflected in literary forms. Warfield suggests that in adapting its mode to communication to the surrounding culture, the Church came very early to make use of pagan aretalogy (wonder-tales) and popular romances, which were usually replete with miracles. Pagan stories (as above) were taken over wholesale by Christian advocates,¹²⁵ and with them their very “conception-world.”¹²⁶ With the emergence of monasticism, a new literary form followed: “a monkish belletristic,” as A. Harnack called it.¹²⁷ In literature, if not in theology, Warfield feels, “the saints were the successors to the gods.”¹²⁸

Warfield further challenges the credibility of post-apostolic Church witnesses by pointing out the apparent vacillating attitude of some key Church fathers on whether or not miracles did in fact occur.

¹²¹CM, pp. 76-77.

¹²²Augustine, however, catalogued some seventy miracles, describing a number of them in meticulous, eye-witness detail in chapter 22 of his *City of God*.

¹²³CM, p. 78.

¹²⁴CM, pp. 100-01

¹²⁵CM, pp. 19, 20, 62, and 83.

¹²⁶CM, p. 63, citing H. Guenter, *Die christliche Legende des Abendlandes* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1910), p. 8.

¹²⁷CM, p. 63, citing Harnack’s *Die Moenchthum, seine Ideale und seine Geschichte*, 3rd ed. (Geissen: J. Ricker, 1886), p. 27.

¹²⁸CM, p. 93.

Augustine “bitterly complains” that so little was made of the innumerable Christian miracles when they occurred in his time.¹²⁹ The implication here could be that Augustine was only imagining miracles his contemporaries would, or could not confirm. Warfield’s view of miracles as compelling proof to as rational and spiritually enlightened observer as Augustine is here on shaky ground. Warfield further offers quotations from Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Gregory the Great “who record long lists of miracles contemporary with themselves, yet betray a consciousness that miracles had nevertheless . . . ceased with the apostolic age.”¹³⁰

The emotional and mental states of witnesses affect their credibility, and Warfield throughout his study notes how reports of miracles may be generated by “blinding excitement,” “brutal persecution,”¹³¹ or by being “inflamed by enthusiasm”¹³² (a pejorative Enlightenment term of Warfield’s, being applied most frequently to Methodists and Irvingites), by suggestion or hysteria.¹³³ The cases of the stigmata indicate “pathology” or “morbid neuroses,”¹³⁴ rather than cases of miraculous participation in the sufferings of Jesus. The fascination with relics and their miraculous powers, according to Warfield, is an expression, at base, of [*sic*] “fetichism.”¹³⁵ In contrast to the above witnesses, the writers in the earliest post-apostolic age “inculcate the elements of Christian living in a spirit so simple and sober as to be worthy of their place as the immediate followers of the Apostles.”¹³⁶ It is no accident that saints of this caliber make “no clear and certain allusions” to miracles or charismatic operations contemporaneously with themselves.¹³⁷

b. Historical Probability From the very cases immediately above, we catch a glimpse of Warfield’s historical methodology at work. Though the literature from the early second century is scanty “there is

¹²⁹CM, pp. 44-45.

¹³⁰CM, p. 46. A page later Warfield cites Chrysostom: ““Of miraculous powers, not even a vestige is left”; and yet he records instances from his day!”

¹³¹CM, pp. 13 and 129.

¹³²CM, pp. 48, 128-129 and 137.

¹³³CM, pp. 111, 199-207, esp., 213; and 153.

¹³⁴CM, p. 87.

¹³⁵CM, pp. 99-101.

¹³⁶CM, p. 10

¹³⁷CM, p. 10.

little or no evidence at all” for asserting the presence of miracles during the first fifty post-Apostolic years.¹³⁸ Any mention of miracles in authors during this time is handled in one or more of four ways: If Warfield encounters a general statement that Christians were endowed with certain charismata or miraculous powers, he responds that such unspecific statements afford “no opportunity of applying those tests by which the credibility of miracles must be tried.”¹³⁹ If the references become somewhat more specific and compelling, as in the case of Irenaeus’ account of one being raised from the dead,¹⁴⁰ Warfield relegates it to the Apostolic age. If such a case appears to be regarded seriously by contemporaries, he dismisses it as “not esteemed [by them as] a very great thing.”¹⁴¹ Finally, the frequent references to prophecy during this period seem to be dismissed with hardly a comment.¹⁴² This is despite the fact that Warfield regards the gift of prophecy as falling

¹³⁸Numerous recent studies on this point have demonstrated the presence of such charismata. See, e.g., J. Reiling, *Hermas and Christian Prophecy: A Study of the Eleventh Mandate* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973); R. Kydd, *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984); J. E. Davison, “Spiritual Gifts in the Roman Church: 1 Clement, Hermas and Justin Martyr,” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1981) and J. C. Beker, “Prophecy and the Spirit in the Apostolic Fathers,” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1955). See p. 8, n. 12, above, and section I of the bibliography for further studies.

¹³⁹Citing Bishop John Kaye, *Justin Martyr*, by the Bishop of Lincoln, 3rd ed., 1853, p. 121, in *CM*, p. 11.

¹⁴⁰“And so far are they from raising the dead as the Lord raised them, and the Apostles did by means of prayer, and as when frequently in the brotherhood, the whole church in the locality, having made petition with much fasting and prayer, the spirit of the dead one has returned, and the man has been given back to the prayers of the saints.” *Adv. Haer.*, II: 31:2. Warfield makes much of the aorist tenses in the latter two verbs, above. This he says, indicates that these events took place in the Apostolic age. What more appropriate tense Irenaeus could have used to describe such an event is left unexplained.

¹⁴¹*CM*, p. 16. The implication being, as above, with Augustine, that this contemporary insouciance toward such a report casts doubt on its likelihood. Note that substantial research on near death experiences show this phenomenon to be extremely widespread, but until recently, generally unrecognized and disbelieved.

¹⁴²*CM*, pp. 11-12. For more recent examinations of prophetic activity during the first three Christian centuries, see the works by Davidson, Kydd and Reiling, above, and D. Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), esp. pp. 186-213; C. M. Roebbeck, Jr., “The Role and Function of Prophetic Gifts for the Church at Carthage, AD 202-258,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1985) also his “Irenaeus and ‘Prophetic Gifts,’” *Essays on Apostolic Themes*, ed., P. Elbert (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985), pp. 104-14; G. H. Williams and E. Waldvogel, “A History of Speaking in Tongues and Related Gifts,” *The Charismatic Movement*, ed., M. P. Hamilton (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1975), pp. 61-113, among others.

within the category of miraculous or extraordinary charismata.¹⁴³ References to exorcism seem to be either classed as wonder tales, or essentially demythologized.¹⁴⁴ This last point is worthy of more detailed attention. Warfield has affirmed at one point that the “cure of demoniacs” as with the resurrection of Jesus “. . . can scarcely be subsumed under the operation of natural forces.”¹⁴⁵ Yet Warfield is totally committed to Adolph von Harnack’s utterly rationalistic understanding of exorcism when he denies the “miraculous” quality of such events in the early Church.¹⁴⁶ In this latter case, demonic powers have become essentially objectifications of superstitious minds! Perhaps more than any other apologetic device, early Christian preachers pointed to the power of Christian exorcism over pagan demonic deities as its most tangible proof for the credibility of the Gospel.¹⁴⁷ By “demythologizing” demonic power in the post-apostolic Church, Warfield has attempted to avoid investigating some of the most specific and clearly described cases of what he earlier described as the supernatural power of God in action. Some of these cases,

¹⁴³CM, p. 5.

¹⁴⁴CM, p. 20: “Something new entered Christianity in these wonder-tales; something unknown to the Christianity of the Apostles, unknown to the Apostolic churches, and unknown to their sober successors; and it entered Christianity from without, not through the door, but climbing up some other way. It brought an abundance of miracle-working with it; and unfortunately, it brought it to stay.”

Again, CM, pp. 238-38, citing Harnack, *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, vols. (London: Williams and Norgate, E.t., 1904), I, p. 161, “The whole world and the circumambient atmosphere were filled with devils; not merely idolatry, but every phase and form of life was ruled by them . . . Christianity won, and expelled the demons not only from the tortured individuals whose imagination was held captive by them, but from the life of the people, and from the world.”

¹⁴⁵“QM,” p. 202.

¹⁴⁶Harnack’s rationalistic attitude toward miracles in the church at any period resonates closely with Warfield’s position on post-biblical miracles: “1) In Jesus’ day, a time when there was no sound insight into what is possible and what is not, people felt surrounded by miracles. 2) Miracles were ascribed to famous persons almost immediately after their death. 3) We know that what happens within our world is governed by natural laws. There are, then, no such things as “miracles,” if by that is meant interruptions of the order of nature. 4) There are many things that we do not understand, but they should be viewed as marvelous and presently inexplicable, not miraculous.” *What Is Christianity?* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 33.

¹⁴⁷G. W. H. Lampe, “Miracles and Early Christian Apologetic,” *Miracles: Cambridge Studies in their History and Philosophy*, ed., C. F. D. Moule (London: A.R. Mowbray, 1965), pp. 215-218.

according to Warfield's own criteria of historical credibility, clearly demand, but do not receive, his careful examination.¹⁴⁸ Warfield's rejection of this category of "miracle" is necessary for his cessationist polemic, but represents a fatal contradiction in his historical method. Even some of the most vociferous advocates of cessationism today accept the probability of contemporary exorcisms.¹⁴⁹

Another example of Warfield's historical method comes in his investigation of contemporary faith-healing miracles. In setting out to survey the genuineness of modern faith cures recounted in A. J. Gordon's work, *The Ministry of Healing, or, Miracles of Cure in All Ages*, Warfield lays out his procedure:

The testimony of theologians is . . . a matter of opinion . . . and of the healed themselves is only a record of facts . . . which constitute in their totality the whole evidence before us. What now are these facts? What is their nature? And what are we to think of them? The first thing which strikes the observer . . . is that they stand sadly in need of careful sifting. What we are looking for is such facts as necessitate or at least suggest the assumption, in order to account for them, of the "immediate action of God, as distinguished from His mediate action through natural laws."¹⁵⁰

Warfield then begins his "sifting" process in four, somewhat vaguely defined and cross-ranked, stages: A healing, to qualify as being a miracle, "should be immediate, as in cause so in time—without delay as without means—on the exercise of simple faith." This would eliminate the so-called "Faith Houses" which seem limited in the range of their cures and in the time required to effect what cures as do occur. A true miracle must exclude all cures which can be paralleled by obviously non-miraculous cures. For example, if a certain type of remarkable cure took place in the context of a non-, or anti-Christian

¹⁴⁸E.g., Tertullian, *Apology* 22-23 (ANF III, p. 36); Cyprian, *Epistle* 75, 15 (ANF V, p. 276, 402); *Whereas Idols Are Not God* 7 (ANF V, p. 467); Origen, *Against Celsus* 1,6 (Chadwick, p. 10), among others. Warfield concedes with Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, I, p. 162, that "from Justin downwards, Christian literature is crowded with allusions to exorcisms, and every large church, at any rate, had exorcists" "But this," Warfield comments, *CM*, p. 239, n. 21, "is no proof that miracles were wrought, except this great miracle, that [the Church won] its struggle against deeply-rooted and absolutely pervasive superstition."

¹⁴⁹E.g., M. Unger, *Demons in the World Today* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1971). For a more academic approach, see the recent works by G. Twelftree, *Christ Triumphant: Exorcism Then and Now* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985), and *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007).

¹⁵⁰*CM*, p. 185, citing A. J. Gordon, *The Ministry of Healing, or, Miracles of Cure in All Ages* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1882), p. 192.

religion, and the same type of cure occurred in an orthodox Christian setting, then both cures must be disallowed as being miraculous.¹⁵¹ Again, for Warfield, a heterodox, or, for that matter, any post-apostolic miracle is a contradiction in terms.

Also excluded from the miraculous are "all cures which seem to us, indeed, to have come in answer to prayer, but of which there is no evidence that they have come . . . without all [any possible] means."¹⁵² A cure may come in a dramatic, sudden, fashion; but solid proof must be offered that no "natural" means could have entered the case. Finally, since few persons are competent to diagnose correctly the exact nature of a disease, a precise, accurate diagnosis must be guaranteed before a miraculous cure is claimed.¹⁵³

Further on, when examining the cures of Lourdes, Warfield noted that some of the healings were not complete. "We should *a priori* expect, miraculous cures to be regularly radical." "Why, after all," he continues, "should miracles show limitations?"¹⁵⁴ God would be expected to do a thorough job. This raises an important point in the assessment of all reported charismatic occurrences, and a demand that Warfield, at a number of points, seems to make of his cases, *viz.*, an element of absoluteness, or perfection, something "unambiguously" true, almost docetic in its transcendence of the mundane.¹⁵⁵ But Warfield ignores the New Testament's own apparent ambiguities in its records of charismatic activity. For example, Paul is told by a prophet "through the Holy Spirit" not to go to Jerusalem, reported without apology or embarrassment at this anomaly, when it had been made clear that this journey was indeed a divine mission (Acts 21:4, *cf.* 20:22).¹⁵⁶ Warfield also ignores other New Testament miracle accounts

¹⁵¹CM, p. 185. This rather bizarre requirement may be in response to Hume's critique that miracles are self-canceling: if rival groups with conflicting doctrines exhibit the same type of miracle, neither is authenticated. See N. Geisler, *Miracles and Modern Thought*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1982), pp. 138-39.

¹⁵²CM, p. 187.

¹⁵³CM, p. 188.

¹⁵⁴CM, p. 110.

¹⁵⁵As in his opening paragraphs describing the near total scope of Jesus' healing activities (with a touch of his "pale hand"), and charismatic operations in the Apostolic church.

¹⁵⁶Grudem has suggested that prophecy in the New Testament often represents "speaking merely human words to report something God brings to mind." These "human words" are frequently full of imperfections and do not bear the ultimate divine authority of say, Old Testament prophets or New Testament apostles. *The Gift of*

which fail his guidelines, for example, the case the incomplete healing of Paul's eyes (Acts 23:3-4, where he was unable to identify the high priest; Gal. 4:15; 6:11), his illness (6:14), his failure to heal Trophimus (2 Tim. 4:20), and even Jesus' incomplete, though corrected, healing (Mk. 8:24, *cf.* Mk. 6:5).

Moreover, the clear teaching of the New Testament affirms that in appearances of such "miraculous charismata" as prophecy and divine knowledge, the experiences are described explicitly as "limited": occurring only "in part," or as "in a glass darkly" (1 Cor. 13:7-12). Miracles are regularly rejected or misperceived by onlookers in the New Testament.¹⁵⁷ John records an exceptionally ambiguous miracle that precipitated at least three interpretations (12:28-29). But to Warfield, a miracle is necessarily out of the world of the ordinary, and radically transcendent, and as such, no historical event could attain that quality, particularly if perceived by one with a skeptical mindset. It is, of course, reasonable to require accurate records and careful observation in determining the unusual nature of an event, but one senses that only postpones the problem, and no amount of "sifting" will force one out of a determined, non-theistic interpretive frame of reference.

It is ironic that Benjamin Warfield, who to so many was a rock of orthodox stability in a time of dramatic theological change, has used many of the same critical techniques on historical miracles that his liberal opponents had used on Scripture. In dealing with miracle accounts through the centuries, Warfield appears to be employing at least rudimentary kinds of literary form criticism; he cites approvingly Adolph von Harnack's rationalization of exorcisms in the early Church; and dismisses every claim to miracles as human misperception, be it superstition, mental imbalance or mendacity. The very essence of Warfield's argument against post-biblical miracles seems formed from a template of Harnack's rationalistic liberalism, but also from Hume's *Enquiry*: all have their *a priori*, *i.e.*, that miracles cannot

Prophecy in the New Testament and Today, pp. 89-106.

¹⁵⁷For example, Jesus is accused of performing the miracles of Beelzebul (Mk. 3:22-23 || Mt. 12:24; Lk. 11:15) or a demon (Jn. 8:48; 7:20; 10:20). Early Jewish religious authorities may have made these charges on proscriptions against miracle workers who draw people after other gods (Deut. 13:1-11 and 18:15-22), hence, their desire to "test" Jesus by demanding miracles, thereby further condemning him. Moreover, the signs of Jesus provoke both belief (*e.g.*, Jn. 2:11, 23; 4:50, 53; 5:9; 6:14, 21; 9:11, 17, 33, 38; 11:27, 45; 12:11) and unbelief (*e.g.*, Jn. 5:18; 6:66; 9:16, 24, 29, 40f; 11:53). In the ministries of the apostles, the miracles provoke similar divided responses (*e.g.*, Acts 4:13-22; 5:17-20, 33-40; 16:19-27) or were misinterpreted (*e.g.*, Acts 14:11; 28:6).

happen (for Warfield after the Apostolic age, for Hume, at all); a highly critical evaluation of witnesses to miracles; and, a pre-ordained analysis of the (im-)probability of miracle occurrences on a case-by-case basis. While Warfield's attack on the historical reliability of post-apostolic miracles represented the overwhelming percentage of *CM*, he insisted that his polemic rested on *two* legs, *i.e.*, one, a historical case against post-apostolic miracles, and the other, a biblical justification for cessationism.¹⁵⁸ It is to an analysis of Warfield's biblical arguments for cessationism that we now turn.

4. Warfield's Biblical Argument

When the limited number of texts Warfield employs in his biblical arguments for cessationism are critically analyzed according to his own presuppositions of the authority and inerrancy of the Bible, and tested against his own scriptural hermeneutics, they fail to sustain his cessationist thesis. Moreover, he fails to treat almost all of the important biblical material relating to his polemic.

Warfield asserts that his polemic stood on two legs: first, that cessationism was supported by the clear teaching of Scripture, and second, that it was supported by the facts of history. It appears odd, in view of Warfield's strong commitment to a biblically based theology,¹⁵⁹ that hardly more than a half dozen pages of over three hundred

¹⁵⁸Warfield is "sure" of his cessationist position "on the ground both of principle and of fact; that is to say both under the guidance of the New Testament teaching as to their [*i.e.*, the miraculous charismata's] origin and nature, and on the credit of the testimony of later ages as to their cessation." *CM*, p. 6.

¹⁵⁹Warfield had emphasized in "The Idea of Systematic Theology," *Studies in Theology, WBBW*, IX, p. 63, that natural theology, including historical investigation, would lead to a "meager and doubtful theology were these data not confirmed, reinforced and supplemented by the surer and fuller revelations of Scripture; and that the Holy Scriptures are the source of theology in not only a degree, but also in a sense in which nothing else is." Warfield's biblical hermeneutic is somewhat illuminated in this passage dealing with the inspiration of Scripture. "We follow the inductive method. When we approach the Scriptures to ascertain their doctrine of inspiration, we proceed by collecting the whole body of relevant facts. Every claim they make to inspiration is a relevant fact; every statement they make concerning inspiration is a relevant fact; every allusion they make to the subject is a relevant fact; every fact indicative of the attitude they hold toward Scripture is a relevant fact. . . . Direct exegesis, after all has its rights: we may seek aid from every quarter in our efforts to perform its processes with precision and obtain its results with purity; but we cannot allow its results to be 'modified' by extraneous considerations [*e.g.*, preconceived theology]." *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, vol. I, *Revelation and Inspiration*,

are devoted to this scriptural grounding, and of this, almost nothing in specific exegesis of texts. The remainder of this chapter, after outlining his biblical hermeneutic, tests Warfield's biblical arguments against his own explicit principles of biblical interpretation. The following chapter then reviews important biblical theological arguments and specific passages regarding cessationism which Warfield failed to treat.

a. Warfield's Biblical Hermeneutics

As he does with his historical and theological method generally, Warfield shapes his specifically biblical hermeneutics according to the Common Sense traditions he received from, *inter alia*, his mentor, Charles Hodge.¹⁶⁰ Warfield held that the Bible should first be approached, without any *a priori*s, "as any other book," to discern any peculiarities which "should modify the applications of the usual, simple rules of interpretation."¹⁶¹ Scripture possesses a single such feature, *viz.*, the fact of its divine inspiration. This fact, Warfield continues, both does, and does not affect the rules of New Testament interpretation. On the one hand, the Bible's inspiration forces the reader to a greater diligence "to seek the exact and minute meaning of each passage and word and express only it." Further, despite variations in their style, focus and peculiarities, the fact of the infallible inspiration of the human writers by the Holy Spirit, "brings the whole book under the authorship of a single Mind; the words of Peter or the words of Paul are alike the words of God."¹⁶² Hence, one must interpret the works of this single Author "in harmony with Himself."¹⁶³

(1927; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), pp. 205-06.

¹⁶⁰C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner and Co., 1971), I, p. 10. See J. Vander Stelt, *Philosophy and Scripture*, pp. 166-84 and M. A. Noll, "Common Sense Traditions and American Evangelical Thought," *AQ* 37 (Summer, 1985), pp. 216-38, and especially pp. 229-32 where Noll examines the impact of the common sense philosophy on Evangelical hermeneutics.

¹⁶¹Warfield, "The True Method of Procedure in the Interpretation of the New Testament," p. 6, contained in a folio, *MSS Material on the New Testament*, located at the Alumni Alcove of Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary. This article was delivered as an address to the incoming students of Western Seminary at the beginning of the school year, 1880-81, and was printed in the *PB* of September 22, 1880. Since, by Warfield's own account, the printed version was inadequate, the manuscript of the address is used here.

¹⁶²*Ibid.*, p. 10. The entire New Testament bears "the stamp of a single mind." Warfield, *Biblical Doctrines* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1929), p. 176, reprinted from the article, "The Person of Christ," *ISBE*, ed., Orr, 1915, pp. 2338-48. This is not to say that "when the Christian asserts his faith in the divine origin of his Bible, he does not mean to deny that it was composed and written by men or that it was given by men to the world. He believes that the marks of its human origin are

On the other hand, since the New Testament has come to us in the language of men, it is equally subject to the “rules for the interpretation of human writings.”¹⁶⁴ So on this view, the fact of inspiration does not appreciably affect ordinary interpretive processes. Interpretation lays out for the investigator the facts the author has written. However,

to understand [underlining his] the meaning when arrived at, requires other graces: humility, docility . . . and above all . . . spiritual discernment before we can feel the full sense of the Word, which can be inspired into the heart only by the same Spirit which inspired the words themselves.¹⁶⁵

But in the paragraph following, Warfield prescinds from the subjective aspect of interpretation, which though he describes it as “the *sine qua non* rather than the *qua*” of interpretation, he concentrates instead on the “objective method” [underlining his], which is “indispensable to the accurate attainment of the mind of the Spirit.” Warfield then offers an arrangement of five rules, to be applied sequentially, for interpreting the New Testament. These “self evident” rules, listed below, were “more or less consciously used by every competent exegete from the publication of the New Testament until now.”¹⁶⁶

ineradicably stamped on every page of the whole volume. He means to state only that it is not *merely* human in its origin.” *Revelation and Inspiration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 429. Elsewhere, Warfield affirms the human/ divine tension in the formation of Scriptures, which “are conceived by the writers of the New Testament as through and through God’s book, in every part expressive of His mind, given through men after a fashion which does no violence to their nature as men, and constitutes the book also men’s book as well as God’s, in every part expressive of the mind of its human authors.” *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers, 1948), pp. 151-52. For a sympathetic review of Warfield’s view of the divine/human tension in the formation of Scripture, see A. N. S. Lane, “B. B. Warfield on the Humanity of Scripture,” *VE* 16 (1986), pp. 77-94.

¹⁶³*Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 19. Earlier (p. 17) Warfield noted, “Divine as it is, Scripture has come to us in a human form [of speech], and it is with that form that we [have] primarily to do.” The task of exegesis is to determine the intent of the human author of any New Testament passage by a five point method, which “demands that the sense of a passage where once reached through legitimate means be adhered to as the true sense no matter what divinity it implies” (p. 18).

¹⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 35.

The application of these five rules, Warfield claimed, represented such a “safeguard of so careful and scientific an examination [that] we may be able to say with confidence: ‘this is the mind of the Spirit.’”¹⁶⁷ Warfield recognizes, however, that some passages of scripture may not yield the full profundity of their meaning to this method, particularly if applied in a “coldly” intellectually manner. He does concede that the guiding presence of the Holy Spirit is crucial to any meaningful exegesis, much as one may successfully interpret the *Iliad* only if he has “poetry in his soul.” Nevertheless, Warfield’s awareness of the role of the Spirit in illuminating the Scriptures does not fare well against his conception that his principles of interpretation are somehow an inherent characteristic of the human consciousness. For example, Warfield’s common sense philosophy emerges clearly when he insists that his method does not appear as a new discovery, but that his hermeneutic appears throughout history almost as a universal mental archetype, or “common sense” of mankind.

It is as old as the Bible itself, and has been unconsciously used by everyone who has tried in a simple-hearted way to understand its words. A man does not need to know logic to reason correctly. When the argument is in him, it will come out; nor has it been necessary for everyone who has interpreted correctly to know he was interpreting after a scientific fashion. All the same, logic and hermeneutics are true sciences; and a knowledge of them will enable many a man to reason and interpret correctly who never could have done so without them.¹⁶⁸

The first “self evident” rule of interpreting Scripture is to base one’s exegesis upon an accurate text.¹⁶⁹ Warfield, the text critic,¹⁷⁰ complains that this rule is frequently neglected in the process of interpretation. Even as exegetes know and admit the problem, in practice they “seldom act upon it!”¹⁷¹

The second rule: “Obtain the exact sense of every word.”¹⁷² When stating this rather obvious rule, Warfield says he is “dealing with self evident propositions,” but failure to distinguish, say, between the

¹⁶⁷*Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁶⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 19-22. Warfield apparently found himself limited by the convocation schedule before giving this address to the incoming seminary students because a great deal of interesting material supporting and illustrating each of his rules was crossed out.

¹⁷⁰B. B. Warfield, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 7th ed., 1887, 2nd American ed., 1907).

¹⁷¹Warfield, “The True Method and Procedure in the Interpretation of the New Testament,” p. 20.

¹⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 20.

meaning of a Greek word as it appeared in the Classical period, and as it later appeared in Hellenistic usage, has caused "great classical scholars" to flounder sadly in the New Testament.¹⁷³ But words in themselves require logical linkages to others to form intelligible language.

Rule three, then, is: "Construe the words according to the strictest rules of grammar."¹⁷⁴ Warfield criticizes the "old school" of interpreters "who framed a grammar to their own liking for each passage treated." He illustrates such improper interpretive techniques with several cases relating to the virgin birth and the authority of scripture, which, he felt, liberal critics of the Bible had ignored. He cites the famous conservative commentator, Lange, who said that the "publication of Winer's grammar killed [the liberal and rationalistic] Strauss' *Life of Jesus* in Germany." Warfield wonders whether the similar application of correct biblical grammar would not do the same in America.¹⁷⁵ It is clear that to Warfield, hermeneutics is the handmaiden of polemics.

Rule four is to "interpret with reference to the historical setting of a passage." Spelled out, this involves not only that the interpreter must approach his task with an understanding of the historical, archaeological and topographical background of a passage, but must also "be able to enter into the feelings of the contemporary readers."¹⁷⁶ In this last case, Warfield's emphasis here is upon a knowledge of allusions to the first century literary and intellectual experience; he does not mention that an understanding of their religious experiences might also be useful.

Finally, rule five demands that one "interpret contextually," keeping in mind both the immediate context, which, in turn "must be put in harmony" with the "broad context" which is "the object, argument and general contents of the entire book."¹⁷⁷ Warfield "cannot too strongly" insist that "the sense of a verse can[not] be arrived at when torn from its context." Indeed, "it is very often that the apparent sense is utterly

¹⁷³*Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁷⁴*Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁷⁵*Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁷⁷*Ibid.*, p. 30.

and diametrically altered by the context.”¹⁷⁸ But Warfield is confident that, in one sense, the whole of scripture is a uniform context.

One may extrapolate from this last rule to another: that one must interpret Scripture *by* Scripture, that is, “interpreting by the analogy of faith.”¹⁷⁹ This principle follows from the proposition that all scripture has the stamp of a single infallible Author and is therefore a unity. Because scripture, Warfield continues, “has but one sense”

this puts the chief instrument of interpretation in the hands of every Bible reader, by declaring that Scripture is its own interpreter, and that more obscure Scriptures are to be explained by plainer Scriptures.

Human learning may be of some use in the hermeneutical process, but in the last analysis, “parallel passages alone will give . . . infallible guidance.” Specifically, this suggests that if the meaning of a word or phrase in the Bible, *e.g.*, “Spirit,” or “Spirit of God,” is unclear or ambiguous, one must clarify the obscure reference by consulting all the other relevant Biblical contexts where these words appear.

Warfield’s Scottish Common Sense Philosophy, then, has influenced his hermeneutics of scripture. But our interest in his principles of interpretation for this chapter focuses more specifically on how these principles would, if applied consistently and without cessationist preconceptions, explicate certain patterns of biblical passages relating to the cessation of miracles at the end of the apostolic period.

One could argue that Warfield’s emphasis on common sense methodology, a hermeneutic, which claims, by certain fairly mechanical steps to discern “the mind of the Spirit,”¹⁸⁰ betrays a kind of ration-

¹⁷⁸*Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁷⁹Warfield, “The Westminster Doctrine of Holy Scripture,” in *PRR* 4 (1893); reprinted in *WBBW*, VI, pp. 251-52. He summarizes his section on the Westminster Confession’s hermeneutic: “The rule here set forth is that which is known as “interpreting by the analogy of faith,” and its foundation is the assumption of the common authorship of Scripture by God, who is truth itself. If we once allow the Confessional doctrine of the divine authorship of Scripture, it becomes only reasonable that we should not permit ourselves to interpret this divine author into inconsistency with Himself, without compelling reason. This is the Confession’s standpoint; and from this standpoint the rule to interpret Scripture by Scripture is more than reasonable—it is necessary.”

¹⁸⁰We are reminded here of T. F. Torrance’s critique of Warfield’s *Revelation and Inspiration of the Bible* in the *SJT* 7 (May 1954), p. 107. “The basic error that lurks in the scholastic idea of verbal inspiration is that it amounts to an incarnation of the Holy Spirit. . . . Dr. Warfield’s theory of inspiration neglects the Christological basis of the doctrine of scripture, and fails, therefore, to take the measure both of the

alism—a kind of worldview—which is reluctant to taste, or even recognize subtle flavors of the miraculous or charismatic in the text it encounters.¹⁸¹ On the other hand, if this hermeneutic is truly “scientific” and objective, such reluctance could be transcended by careful compilation and analysis of word meanings derived from their respective contexts, even if one is not willing to enter into the religious experiences as Warfield demands, *i.e.*, into the “feelings” of the writers and their readers. These numinous elements, like any other elements in the text, can be identified and studied, if not personally owned. We will assume the latter position is viable. Aside from sharing Warfield’s certainty that his hermeneutical method can, with certainty, discern the “mind of the Spirit,” we can generally find Warfield’s canonical exegetical approach valid and useful. Our agreement with his method is irrelevant, however, since it is from within Warfield’s own hermeneutical method that we evaluate his cessationist polemic.

Since we have established in broad strokes Warfield’s biblical hermeneutic, let us now examine his biblical argument for the cessation of the charismata against the background of his own interpretive principles.

b. Specific Texts Treated in Warfield’s Biblical Argument

Warfield is expansive in his descriptions of the miraculous activities of Christ and the Apostolic church, averring that we “greatly underestimate” the breadth of our Lord’s healing ministry, as well as the ubiquitous “characteristic” occurrence of charismatic phenomena in the

mystery of revelation and the depth of sin in the human mind.”

¹⁸¹This reluctance to perceive in the Bible implications for continuing miracles may not have been solely consequence of rationalism. There seem to be theological biases against miracles derived from the broad Reformation tradition as well. For example, in his *Preface to the New Testament* of 1522, Martin Luther reveals a view of the canon of scripture which distinguishes the “true and noblest books,” *i.e.*, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, 1 Peter and the rest of Paul’s letters, as well as the first epistle and Gospel of John from others in the New Testament. His criterion for selecting “the heart and core of all the books” is that “these do not describe many works and miracles of Christ, but rather masterfully show how faith in Christ overcomes sin, death, and hell and gives life, righteousness, and blessedness.” The discerning Christian prefers the Gospel of John over the Synoptics simply because the latter are so much history and miracles. *The Works of Martin Luther* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-), v. 35, p. 361. See the discussion in P. Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, E.t., R. C. Schultz from the 1963 German edition (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 83.

early Christian communities.¹⁸² These charismata are classified as “ordinary” (“distinctively gracious”), and “extraordinary” (miraculous). The former category of gifts are “preferred” in the classical passage which treats them, 1 Corinthians 12-14, and the quest for these ordinary, post-Apostolic gifts is described by Warfield as being “the more excellent way.”¹⁸³ The most favored of the “miraculous” gifts, prophecy, Warfield describes as a rather ordinary sounding “gift of exhortation and teaching,”¹⁸⁴ but miraculous in the sense that they were divinely inspired. Further miraculous gifts he includes: healings, workings of miracles, discernings of spirits, kinds of tongues, the interpretation of tongues, miraculous knowledge, *etc.*¹⁸⁵

We have already noted that Warfield sees the operation of these gifts “belonged exclusively to the Apostolic age.” Failure to perceive this is a failure of “an accurate ascertainment of the teaching of the New Testament on the subject.”¹⁸⁶ The question now is, how does

¹⁸²CM, pp. 3-5.

¹⁸³CM, p. 4.

¹⁸⁴Note Calvin’s description of prophecy as the application of scripture to the needs of the church, p. 32, above.

¹⁸⁵CM, p. 5.

¹⁸⁶CM, p. 21. Yet C. Hodge, Warfield’s teacher at Princeton, may have set the historical, as opposed to the biblical thrust for CM when he wrote, “There is nothing in the New Testament inconsistent with the occurrence of miracles in the post-apostolic age of the church.” Hodge espouses the Reformed tradition that the “necessity” of miracles ceased when they achieved their “great end” as aids to the Apostolic testimony. “This, however, does not preclude the possibility of their occurrence on suitable occasions, in other ages.” *Systematic Theology* 3, 452. A more recent Princeton seminary professor, B. M. Metzger (with D. E. Dilworth), perhaps with an eye to Warfield, supervised the Presbyterian position paper on the biblical basis for cessationism: “We cannot . . . follow the view of some theologians that the purely supernatural gifts ceased with the death of the apostles. There seems no exegetical warrant for this assumption.” *Report of the One-Hundred and Eighty Second General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Part I: Journal* (Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., Philadelphia, PA, 1970), p. 150. A similar statement emerged from the Southern Presbyterian Church a year later. J. R. Williams, ed., “The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit with Special Reference to ‘the Baptism of the Holy Spirit,’” *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.*, cited in K. McDonnell, *Presence, Power and Praise: Documents of the Charismatic Renewal* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1980), III, pp. 287-317. Also, the editor of the conservative Presbyterian periodical, for which Warfield had written, states: “It can be rather categorically stated that the New Testament simply does not affirm that the Church should expect God to stop working miracles among his people. To take that position is to come perilously close to the approach which is anathema to Reformed hermeneutics, namely, conclusions based on what is said to be the experience of the Church rather than the clear teaching of Scripture. . . . We have no biblical warrant to restrict the gifts to the early Church, nor to outlaw any specific

Warfield make his case from the biblical data? Warfield approaches this task affirmatively and negatively.

Affirmatively, he builds a case for the authentication of the Apostles as being the messengers of God. While other Christians in the Apostolic age were recipients of the charismata, these gifts "belonged, in a true sense to the Apostles" as special signs of their office. The charismata are tied in this special sense to the Apostles in that they are conferred to others with the exception of the two "great initial instances of the descent of the Spirit" at Pentecost and at the household of Cornelius. "There is no instance on record of their conference by the laying on of hands of any one else than an Apostle."¹⁸⁷ Warfield does note Acts 9:17 where a non-Apostle, Ananias, tells Paul, "the Lord Jesus . . . has sent me that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit," but claims this "is no exception as is sometimes said; Ananias worked a miracle on Paul but did not confer miracle-working powers." To preserve his thesis, without any biblical evidence whatsoever, Warfield insists that Paul's miracle-working power was "original with him as an Apostle, and not conferred by any one."¹⁸⁸ But if we are to be consistent with Warfield's own examples, the issue here is not conference of miraculous powers, but rather the "conference" of the Holy Spirit "by the laying on of hands," the express, divinely-given mission of Ananias. This is a fatal exception. Either Warfield must say in this case that Ananias' mission from the Lord Jesus failed, or that the filling of the Holy Spirit in Paul's case was unique among all the other occasions of Acts where there were miraculous accompaniments. Added to this is the fact that nowhere else, except in this case, in the New Testament is Paul portrayed as initially receiving the Spirit.

Further, the consensus of current biblical scholarship generally affirms that "Luke shares with Judaism the view that the Spirit is essentially the Spirit of prophecy"¹⁸⁹ and of other charismata.

gift today." G. T. Aiken, "Miracles-Yes or No?" *PJ* 33, no. 16 (14 August 1974), p. 9.

¹⁸⁷*CM*, p. 22.

¹⁸⁸*CM*, p. 245, note 48.

¹⁸⁹E. Schweizer, "πνεῦμα, κ.τ.λ.," *TDNT*, 6, pp. 408-9. See also the summary of the consensus on this matter by M.M.B. Turner, "The Significance of Receiving the Spirit in Luke-Acts: A Survey of Recent Scholarship," *TrinJ* N.S. 2 (Fall 1981), pp. 131-58. See below, in Chapter 3, "The Biblical Portrayal of the Holy Spirit's Characteristic Activity Is Inimical to Cessationism," and especially the Appendix, supporting it, where this consensus is more fully documented.

Evangelical scholar F. F. Bruce notes, "Ananias' gesture of fellowship to [Saul]

Warfield also asserts that the “cardinal instance” demonstrating his proposition that only Apostles could confer spiritual gifts is the case of the Samaritans and their reception of the Spirit. In this case, after the successful evangelism of Philip in Samaria, the Apostles Peter and John were sent to the Samaritan believers that they might “receive the Holy Spirit.” Warfield cites Simon the sorcerer: “‘Give me also this power, that, on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.’” From this statement of a sorcerer, whom Luke wished to portray as representing an incorrect understanding of the Spirit’s work, Warfield decides that Luke is most “emphatically” teaching that, “the Holy Ghost was conferred by the laying on of the hands, specifically of the Apostles, and of the Apostles *alone*” (italics mine).

Warfield here is wide of the mark. The explicit reason Luke gives for Simon’s failure to “have any part or share in this ministry” is “*because*” (γάρ) Simon’s “heart is not right before God” (v. 21). If Luke wished to teach “emphatically” the doctrine Warfield imagines he did, here would have been the perfect opportunity to introduce it: Simon was simply not an apostle. Instead, Luke’s “reason” is conditional, implying that on the basis of repentance, he, too could receive, and effectively intercede for others to receive, the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 2:38, “Repent . . . and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”). Moreover, this passage is of further importance, Warfield contends, because it teaches us “the source of the gifts of power, in the Apostles, apart from whom they were not conferred: as also their function, to authenticate the Apostles as the authoritative founders of the church.”¹⁹⁰

This conclusion seems to go well beyond the facts before us. Again, several other plausible interpretations of this passage are more likely,¹⁹¹ the most usual being that the Apostolic visit from the Jeru-

was to much the same effect as the apostles’ imposition of hands on the Samaritans: to be thus accepted and to be called ‘brother’ by someone who confessed Jesus as Lord assured Saul of his welcome into the community which he had so recently been endeavoring to extirpate. Ananias had no official status such as Peter and John: He was, for the moment, the risen Lord’s messenger and mouthpiece to Saul. Peter and John themselves could discharge no nobler function.” Bruce cites T.W. Manson’s “insistence that [it] is function and not status that is of the essence of the Christian ministry.” “The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles,” *In* 27 (April 1973), p. 175. He notes also, Hans Kung, *Why Priests? A Proposal for a New Church Ministry*, trans., R. C. Collins (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday and Co., 1972), pp. 25-29.

¹⁹⁰CM, p. 23.

¹⁹¹See for example, the summary by F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts of the Apostles*. Rev. ed., *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), pp. 168-70. Also, J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and*

saalem community was a mission of reconciliation: a confirmation that Jews and the Samaritan outcasts were, at the point of their reception of the Spirit, indeed, one in Christ.¹⁹² The story is not about the conversion of the Samaritans, but the conversion of Peter and the Jewish Christians to an understanding of the scope of God's program of salvation.

In a footnote,¹⁹³ Warfield mentions two promising scriptural passages which could imply a more firm foundation for his contention. The first is 2 Cor. 12:12, "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you in all patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works." The second is Heb. 2:3b-4, "It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His own will."

In the first instance there is no indication that the signs of a "true apostle" were limited to the twelve apostles. As Warfield admits, others performed such signs and wonders who were not apostles, but concedes also, somewhat too restrictively and without biblical proof,

the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), pp. 176, 182; G. W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit: A Study in the Doctrine of Baptism and Confirmation in the New Testament and the Fathers* (London: Longmans and Green, 1951), pp. 70-73; G. T. Montague, *The Holy Spirit: The Growth of a Biblical Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), p. 294.

¹⁹²See for example, F. D. Bruner, in the most comprehensive theological critique of Pentecostalism to date, notes in *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1970), pp. 175-76: "What the Samaritans lacked, as far as we are told, was not the laying on of hands, it was the *Holy Spirit* [italics his] (vv. 15-16). In no other place in Acts, except at Acts 19:6, are the hands of the apostles recorded in connection with the gift of the Holy Spirit—neither at Pentecost, nor in the post-Pentecost accessions, nor even in Paul's conversion itself where Ananias, who was not an apostle, was, according to Luke's account, the agent (or audience) of Paul's initiation. Even in Acts 19:1-7 it was not the apostolic laying on of hands which was either missing or taught" but inclusion into the Christian community through baptism. Jervell notes that even if it may be correct to say (if Ananias' bestowal of the Spirit on Paul is excluded) that the "Spirit is given only when the Twelve are present or a member or a delegate of the Twelve is on the scene," the operative idea is not the role of apostleship in an "intermediary office" but that they represent the people of God. *The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1984), p. 115. J. A. Fitzmeyer, *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, p. 185.

¹⁹³CM, p. 245, note 50.

that miracles were performed by those upon whom apostolic hands were laid. To the contrary, one could add to the list of non-apostolic miracle-workers even some who do not follow Jesus (Mk. 9:38-41 || Lk. 9:49-50), not to mention those who are not “known” by God at all (Mt. 7:22-23)!

Moreover, the function of these “signs of a true apostle” may be better understood by focusing on the function of an apostle, *i.e.*, to bear witness to the gospel of the kingdom of Christ (Acts 15:10; 19:8; 20:25; 26:18; Rom. 15:19; 2 Cor. 12:12). The true gospel is normatively expressed in both word and deed, hence these signs did not appear for the purpose of directing the onlookers’ attention to the person of Paul, or even to his message, but rather were the characteristic “signs of the New Age”¹⁹⁴—normative activities of the Holy Spirit which are part and parcel of the proclamation/demonstration of the gospel. Hence, Paul’s argument here is directed against those “false apostles” or others whose kingdom message consists not in “power,” but in “talk” or in “persuasive words of wisdom,” (*contra* 1 Cor. 2:4; 4:19-20; 1 Thess. 1:5) thereby showing that their gospel is not normative—either in its content or presentation. Paul’s argument, to be sure, raises disturbing implications for the role of preaching in traditional Protestantism.

The second passage, Hebrews 2:4,¹⁹⁵ again, makes no necessary connection between the miraculous operations of the Spirit and the specific accreditation of the Apostles. The passage describes three more or less parallel “witnesses” to the same gospel: the Lord, His hearers, and God via the distributed charismata.¹⁹⁶ In Biblical tradition

¹⁹⁴V. P. Furnish, *Commentary on II Corinthians*, AB, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), v. 32A, p. 555.

¹⁹⁵Though see H. Strathmann, “ἐπιμαρτυρέω in TDNT 4, p. 510, who seems to vacillate on the meaning of συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος as either an independent witness or as one who simply accepts and confirms what is said or done as true. The context seems to prefer the first interpretation, though the practical difference is nil.

¹⁹⁶See P. E. Sywulka, “The Contribution of Hebrews 2:3-4 to the Problem of Apostolic Miracles,” unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1967, on this passage also, see T. R. Edgar, *Miraculous Gifts: Are They for Today?* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1983), pp. 103-4, 268-69, 276-77. Edgar’s work somewhat more ambitiously has focused on that which Warfield promised, and failed to do, namely, to provide biblical and theological grounding for the cessationist polemic. Edgar’s exegesis has been criticized for being less than transparent. So, Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, p. 105 and M. M. B. Turner, “Spiritual Gifts Then and Now,” pp. 22-23. Warfield does not make the argument that because this passage looks back into the past toward God’s miraculous presentation of “so great a salvation” (where the present participle συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος, “confirmed with,” at the end of v. 3 is

“two or three witnesses” presenting the same message guarantee its certainty (Deut. 17:7; 19:15; Mt. 18:16; 1 Cor. 14:27; 2 Cor. 13:1). The miracles in this context do not “accredit” the Kingdom of God, but are a manifestation of it: they are not proofs of the gospel; they *are* the gospel. The English expression “sign” may well suggest an image of a “sign-post,” having little intrinsic significance except as it points to something of vastly greater importance. Certainly this is Warfield’s notion of sign/miracle, but as in the case of the “signs of a true apostle” above, the very characteristic of the Christian message was that it came expressed in “word *and* deed” (prophecy and miracle) two aspects of the Kingdom of Heaven breaking both the mental and physical bondage characterizing the kingdom of this age.¹⁹⁷ The passage further suggests that the gifts of the Spirit were distributed to the Christian community at large, rather than restricted to Apostles (*cf.* 1 Cor. 12:7 and 11; Rom. 12:6 and 1 Pet. 4:10). In this context, then, these “signs,

grammatically contemporaneous with ἐβεβαιώθη, “was confirmed,” at the beginning of v. 4), the author of Hebrews is implicitly affirming these gifts ceased.

But the point of the passage is to parallel and contrast the punishment for rejection of a Law that was confirmed by *angels*, against the stronger certainty of judgment for neglecting “so great a salvation” which was confirmed by *three* witnesses: “the Lord,” “the ones hearing” Him, and by God himself via the charismata bestowed among the churches. Cessationism is an incidental concern here. The mention of miracles and spiritual gifts as past events may only indicate the author’s need to strengthen his parallel with the (lesser) angelic initial confirmation of the Law and that of the Christian Gospel. Certainly the charismatic (*i.e.*, prophetic and miraculous) confirmation of the Law was not restricted to within a generation of its appearance (Isa. 59:21 and Jer. 32:20), any more than spiritual gifts were restricted to the first generation of Christians. To say that because this passage says God bore witness to the Gospel with miracles in the past is not to say he could not continue to do so.

Moreover, the present participle (συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος) may actually indicate an action continuing into the future from the time of the aorist main verb, hence the meaning, “[the salvation] was affirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also continuing to confirm with miracles . . .” See F. Blass and A. DeBrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Translated with revisions from the ninth/tenth German edition by R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), sec. 339, p. 174 (hereafter, Blass-DeBr.). This passage warrants further study with respect to cessationism, since it can be shown to parallel, *inter alia*, such passages as 1 Cor. 1:4-8 insofar as they deal with the testimony of Christ, his hearers, and the continuing “confirmation” of each member in the Church communities via the spiritual gifts until the end of the age.

¹⁹⁷See the discussion below in Chapter 3 on the relation of the Kingdom of God to charismatic activity in the Church.

wonders, miracles and gifts of the Spirit” do not appear as proofs of apostolic authority but the normative expression/confirmation of the gospel working in acts of divine power working in and through the Christian community.

The proof texts Warfield positively offers as support for cessationism can be interpreted, in fact, as contradicting it. Now Warfield moves more negatively against his opponents’ proof texts, popularly used to attack cessationism.

Warfield shifts his biblical defense of a cessationist, evidentialist concept of miracle by attacking A. J. Gordon’s contention that scripture “unambiguously justifies the conclusion that God has continued the gift of specifically miraculous healing permanently in the church.”¹⁹⁸ The verses adduced by Gordon to establish contemporary miraculous healing were: Mt. 8:17; Mk. 16:17, 18; Jas 5:14, 15; Jn. 14:12, 13; and 1 Cor. 12 in which, he held, no hint was offered there as to the cessation of the charismata. Gordon shared, it appears, much of Warfield’s notion of miracle. And it is because he insists, in Warfield’s view, on identifying contemporary healings as miracles, even though in some cases they were adduced to accredit Evangelical doctrines, that he becomes part of Warfield’s polemical concern.¹⁹⁹ The verses listed above represent the classic proof texts of the American faith healing movement.²⁰⁰ The following representation is intended only to be indicative of the respective positions which are considerably more detailed and nuanced than presented here.

Mt. 8:17 served faith healers to show that healing was in some way guaranteed in the atonement of Christ, who bore on the cross not only sins but sickness as well.²⁰¹

Warfield echoes Luther in countering this with the evidentialist claim that a miracle was strictly an “object lesson”²⁰² for a spiritual truth. Mt. 18:17 holds out no promise of “relief from every human ill” which is to be realized suddenly or completely in this life. Then,

¹⁹⁸CM, p. 166.

¹⁹⁹Warfield, CM, pp. 160-64, is careful to establish just this point: that Gordon is indeed trying to restore modern miracles of healing.

²⁰⁰See Cunningham, “From Holiness to Healing,” p. 507. In Mt. 8:17, for example, contemporary healings, on the one hand, found a rationale from biblical soteriology, and on the other, provided a miraculous proof against liberals who denied the efficacy of Christ’s substitutionary offering for sin.

²⁰¹“When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.’”

²⁰²CM, p. 177.

possibly reflecting on the tragedy of his wife's extended illness, he declares, "We live in a complex of forces out of which we cannot escape." "Are we," he continues, "to demand that the laws of nature be suspended in our case?"²⁰³ Against the roots of perfectionism, or instantaneous "entire sanctification" of the holiness movement from which much of the faith healing movement evolved, Warfield affirms that while we are no longer under the curse of sin, as Christians, we nonetheless remain sinners. The struggle against "indwelling sin" is constant, and continues through life.²⁰⁴ In the same way, we experience a life-long struggle against sickness. Warfield's ultimate argument against this connection of healing and the atonement lay in its "confusing redemption . . . which is objective, and takes place outside of us, with its subjective effects, which take place in us . . . and that these subjective effects of redemption are wrought in us gradually and in a definite order." The extent to which these subjective effects of redemption are active in a believer's life could have been fruitfully debated. However, since this debate was framed in the absolute terms of "miracle," *i.e.*, nothing of the provisional, partial or ambiguous, there could be no compromise on healing.²⁰⁵ "Realized," or more accurately, "inaugurated eschatology" was not yet on the horizon of Warfield's practical theology.

Mk. 16:17, 18 was set forth by Gordon and others as a mandate for miraculous powers to those who believed. Warfield, the text critic,²⁰⁶ denied the validity of this assertion on the grounds that this passage was "spurious," *i.e.*, a textual addition to the original autograph of Mark's gospel. In this he is doubtless correct, though it

²⁰³ *CM*, p. 179. Earlier, p. 177, Warfield commented, "Our Lord never permitted it for a moment to be imagined that the salvation He brought was fundamentally for this life. His was emphatically an other-world religion."

²⁰⁴ *CM*, pp. 177-78.

²⁰⁵ The analogy, of course, between redemption from sin and from sickness, could be argued by pointing out that just as one of the results of the atonement in the believer's present, earthly life is sanctification—a diminution in the expression of sin—so through faith, one may expect a similar diminution in sickness. The deliverance of the body (Rom. 8:22-23) from both sin and sickness is an eschatological in nature, but proleptically experienced in this "time between the times." D. A. Carson, "Matthew," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed., Frank E. Gaebelein, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), v. 8, pp. 204-07. The New Testament clearly does expect a change in sinful behavior after regeneration. In this sense, Christianity is *not* an "other-world religion."

²⁰⁶ *CM*, pp. 167-68, 45 and 59.

does represent, likely, a very early view of the relation of charismata and faith. But even if this passage were valid, Warfield continues, “I should not like to have the genuineness of my faith made dependent upon my ability to speak with new tongues, to drink poison innocuously, and to heal the sick with a touch.”²⁰⁷ Apparently Warfield either overlooks or does not subscribe to Calvin’s distinction between “saving faith” leading to redemption, justification and sanctification, and “miraculous faith,” described in 1 Cor. 12:9, by which “miracles are performed in [Christ’s] name.”²⁰⁸ Calvin also notes that “Judas had faith like that, and even he carried out miracles by it.” Warfield’s mentor, Charles Hodge, and Hodge’s son, Archibald Alexander both make analogous distinctions,²⁰⁹ so it is odd that Warfield would frame his objection to faith for miracles in such a manner.

Jas 5:14, 15 is a command to call for the church elders to pray with faith for the sick, anointing them with oil. This seems a rather straightforward proof text for faith healers, but Warfield dissents by seeing “no indication” that a peculiar miraculous faith or healing is intended.²¹⁰ The anointing oil is not a symbol of the power of the Spirit to be exercised in the healing as Gordon had interpreted; rather, Warfield would suggest the oil had medicinal value only. This raises an important element in the nature of miracle for Warfield. If a cure can be shown to have been effected by “natural means,” *i.e.*, by any possible intervening agent of cure other than an immediate act of God, then no miracle has occurred. This principle is applied consistently to the whole range of post-Apostolic miracles Warfield surveys. Hence Warfield takes some care to establish, in the face of the strong trend within biblical scholarship to the contrary,²¹¹ the medicinal signifi-

²⁰⁷CM, p. 168.

²⁰⁸J. Calvin, *Commentary on I Corinthians*, p. 262. “Chrysostom makes a slightly different distinction, calling it the ‘faith relating to miracles’ (*signorum*), and not to Christian teaching (*dogmatorum*).”

²⁰⁹C. Hodge develops Calvin’s “saving/miraculous” faith distinction in his *Commentary on I Corinthians* (1857; repr., Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1959), pp. 246-47: “As faith here is mentioned as a gift peculiar to some Christians, it cannot mean saving faith, which is common to all. It is generally supposed to mean the faith of miracles to which our Lord refers, Mt. 17:19,20, and also the apostle in the following chapter, ‘Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains,’ 13:2.” Hodge here assumes that “the gift meant is a higher measure of the ordinary grace of faith.” A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (New York: Robert Carter and Bros., 1861), pp. 358-59.

²¹⁰CM, p. 169.

²¹¹Commentaries available to Warfield usually disagreed on this point, *e.g.*, J. A. Bengel (d. 1752): “The only design of that anointing was miraculous healing” (*Romans*

cance, *i.e.*, as “natural means,” of the anointing oil. It is more likely, however, that James derived the connection of healing and anointing with oil not from medical practice, but from the earliest strata of Christian charismatic tradition, *i.e.*, Mk. 6:13, when, after the disciples were given spiritual power (ἐξουσία) over evil spirits in the commission to demonstrate and proclaim the presence of the Kingdom of God, they “drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.” Here, clearly, is not a description of medical missionaries, but of those, who like Jesus, were empowered for spiritual battle, “healing all who were under the power of the devil” (*cf.* Acts 10:38).

From Jn. 14:12 comes an interpretation which suggests the promise to anyone who believes that they will do “greater works” (greater miracles) than Christ. Warfield dismisses this view quickly on two grounds: first, faith healers have yet to produce “greater works” than Jesus’ raisings from the dead or nature miracles, and, second, that the normative interpretation of this passage is that “spiritual works,” refer to spreading the Gospel to the world.²¹²

This interpretation reflects the usual post-reformation Calvinistic spiritualizing tendency when dealing with the miraculous.²¹³ Recent

to *Revelation*, vol. 2 of *New Testament Commentary*, trans., C. T. Lewis and M. R. Vincent (1753; repr., Grand Rapids: Kregel Press, 1981), p. 723, on Jas 5:14. J. E. Huther would agree with Warfield that anointing with oil was employed for “refreshing, strengthening and healing of the body,” but insists that the healing is a “miracle” and is precipitated “not [by] the anointing but [by] prayer.” *General Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude*, vol. 10, MNTC, p. 157. So also, J. P. Lange, *The General Epistles of James*, trans., J. I. Mombert (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1900), p. 140. Even Calvin seems to disagree with Warfield on the function of the anointing in James (*Tracts and Treatises on the Reformation of the Church*, trans., H. Beveridge, introduction and notes by T. F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), p. 91. See Warfield’s comments in *CM*, p. 303, nn. 22-23. For a more modern survey of the interpretive options of this passage, see G. S. Shogren, “Will God Heal Us—A Re-Examination of James 5:14-16a.” *EQ* 61, no. 2 (1989), pp.100-07.

²¹²*CM*, pp. 174, and 307, note 30, where Warfield cites the works of Luthardt, Godet, Westcott, and Milligan and Moulton. He refers us especially to the discussion in W. Milligan, *The Ascension and Heavenly High-Priesthood of Our Lord* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1892), pp. 250-53.

²¹³See, for example, the conservative Evangelical commentator, Leon Morris who changes the usual reference of μείζονα to “works” to a simple neuter plural, “things,” therefore not referring to miracles, “but to service of a more general kind.” “Greater works” “mean more conversions. There is no greater work possible than the conversion of a soul.” *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT, p. 646. Similarly,

scholarship is more nuanced,²¹⁴ concluding generally that the evangelist's intention was that "greater" miracles were to continue among the disciples in that they were to be performed in a more eschatologically advanced era than during the earthly mission of Christ, namely that of the exalted Lord Jesus.

Warfield, *CM*, p. 4, insists that Paul urges the Corinthians to seek the "greatest gifts," which are the "non-miraculous" charismata of "faith, hope and love," though his mentor, C. Hodge disagrees. See note 59, above.

²¹⁴See the summary and discussion of the problem of "greater works" by R. Brown, in his *The Gospel According to John*, AB, 29A, pp. 633-34. After a review of promises made by Jesus to his disciples in the Synoptics and Acts to perform marvelous works, Brown suggests that the works are "greater" insofar as they partake of an "eschatological character," implying a stage of salvation history more advanced than that of the earthly Jesus. C. K. Barrett, in his *The Gospel According to St. John*, 2nd ed., (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), p. 384, develops this point further by suggesting that these same continued works (miracles) are greater not because they themselves are greater but "because Jesus' work is now complete." The disciples are to perform their works in the new age of the Spirit under the reign of the glorified Christ. "Greater" then refers to the time significance of the era in which miracles are performed rather than to their own intrinsic nature. A similar notion may be behind Jesus' saying that all in the Kingdom of God are greater than John the Baptist. R. Schnackenburg affirms that "these 'greater works' can justifiably be applied to the missionary successes of the disciples." But the evangelist intends to characterize these successes as "the increasing flow of God's power into man's world." *The Gospel According to St. John*, 3 vols., trans. K. Smyth (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 3, p. 72. Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, New Century Bible Commentary (London: Oliphants, 1972), p. 475, takes a continuist view of miraculous activity and decides that the "greater works" represent the "full scope of divine activity in Jesus . . . extended through the world and down the ages." G. W. H. Lampe is more even emphatic and specific about the nature of these works: "The divine power is at work, in a sense, only proleptically in the pre-Resurrection ministry of Jesus. In his messianic anointing with Holy Spirit and power, and in the operation of that power in his mighty acts, the age of fulfillment is anticipated; but all this was *but a foretaste* [italics mine] of what was to follow when Jesus had been 'taken up.' The Johannine saying, 'He who believes in me, the works which I do shall he do also, and greater things than these shall he do, because I am going to the Father,' expresses very clearly Luke's conception of the relation of the works done by Jesus in his ministry to the signs and wonders performed in his name after his ascension. It is as concise a summary of a central Lukan theme as is that other Johannine comment, '[the] Spirit was not yet because Jesus was not yet glorified.'" The true beginning of the new age for Luke, according to Lampe, is "therefore at the Ascension and its counterpart at Pentecost." "Miracles in the Acts of the Apostles," *MCSPH*, pp. 169-70. W. F. Howard ties the performance of "greater works" (miracles) to the "secret of effectual prayer" and that they will appear "over a wider range than the limited field" of Jesus' earthly ministry. *Christianity According to St. John* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1946), p. 162.

C. Summary

Two major influences which shaped Warfield's cessationist polemic were a narrowed and less ambiguous form of Calvin's miracle polemic against Roman Catholicism, and an Enlightenment era polemic against ecclesiastical miracles, based upon a concept of miracle that was decidedly rationalistic, which in Warfield's case was governed by his acceptance of Scottish Common Sense Realism. Warfield's polemic did not appear as an exercise in theological abstraction; it was precipitated by specific groups challenging Princetonian orthodoxy, all of which shared the claim to a religious authority based on performance of miracles. The axe of classical cessationism lay readily at hand to chop out this common root. Warfield insisted his cessationist polemic stood upon two legs: upon a critical analysis of historical claims of miracles and upon the teaching of Scripture. But these legs, in turn, rested upon a certain understanding of the nature and purpose of miracles. Warfield's concept of miracle, however, is shown to be internally contradictory and is therefore useless as firm ground for his cessationist polemic. To him, a miracle is an event *both* rationally deduced by any observer of "common sense" *and* determined by a previous commitment of faith. He did not perceive that both could not be true, or that miracles could communicate divine revelation in and of themselves.

When Warfield himself judges the authenticity of biblical miracles, he falls prey to this internal contradiction: he claims to base his evaluation on a detached, rational examination of the facts, but instead he bases his evaluation on prior assumptions about the inerrancy of biblical testimony and related theological corollaries. Warfield's major theological assumption about miracles lay in the singularity of their purpose, namely to accredit the New Testament apostles and their doctrine. By his *a priori*, any striking or unusual event unconnected with this function, could not be considered a miracle. This present study agrees with Warfield's premise that the function of the charismata determine their duration. Scripture explicitly states the function of the charismata: not for accreditation of apostles, but for edification, exhortation, encouragement and equipping, of all believers for further service.

Warfield's historical criteria for his evaluation of post-biblical miracles are essentially the same as those for which he condemns the rational critics of New Testament miracles, *e.g.*, continuously directing

ad hominem arguments against anyone reporting miracle accounts, reductionistically viewing some miracle accounts as mere literary forms devoid of historical credibility, and above all, approaching these miracles from a consistently naturalistic *a priori*.

In contrast to his historical argument, Warfield's second (biblical) "leg" on which his polemic stands, is grotesquely disproportionate, occupying only a few pages scattered throughout his work. None of the biblical passages Warfield offers as support for his thesis necessarily demand, or can even suggest a cessationist conclusion. In view of Warfield's commitment to a biblically based theology, it is astonishing that he fails to address almost all of the important scriptures bearing on his cessationist polemic. The following chapter advances beyond biblical issues that Warfield specifically raised in connection with his polemic to some far more important ones that he omitted.

CHAPTER 3

A THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL CRITIQUE OF BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD'S CESSATIONISM

This chapter argues that Warfield's claim of basing his cessationist polemic solidly on scripture is unjustified, first, because his traditional Calvinist theology ignores the emphases in at least two biblical doctrines inimical to cessationism, and second, because his polemic contradicts the specific teaching of several passages of scripture. Part A of this chapter first briefly examines the biblical doctrines of the Holy Spirit and the Kingdom of God as they bear upon cessationism and as they further provide a theological setting for Part B: an exegesis of biblical texts which teach the continuation of the charismata during this present era of Christ's exaltation.

A. CESSATIONISM AND ITS CONFLICT WITH A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Warfield's cessationism represented an attempt to protect the idea that after the final revelation of Christ, there could be "no new gospel."¹ The resulting denial of contemporary charismata is accordingly reflected in his pneumatology and doctrine of the Kingdom of God, specifically as it relates to the mission of the exalted of Christ. For example, in *Counterfeit Miracles* he asserts,

God the Holy Spirit has made it His subsequent work, not to introduce new and unneeded revelations into the world, but to diffuse this

¹Warfield, *CM*, p. 27.

one complete revelation through the world and to bring mankind into saving knowledge of it.²

Warfield's post-canonical Holy Spirit is strictly limited to activities in the Calvinistic steps of salvation (*ordo salutis*).³ "New" revelations are "unneeded" revelations: Warfield's equivocal use of "new" here bans from the Holy Spirit any revelatory or miraculous charismata.⁴

Similarly, Warfield seems to shape his doctrine of Christ's exaltation to fit his polemic. The exaltation is a key aspect of the doctrine of the Kingdom of God insofar as it impinges upon cessationism.

When the revelation of God in Christ had taken place, and had become in Scripture and church a constituent part of the cosmos, then another era began . . . Christ has come, His work has been done, and His word is complete.⁵

The exalted Christ seems presently inactive, waiting, it appears, for the preaching of Calvinistic soteriology to accomplish its task in the world.

These representative statements of theological doctrine seem to reflect more of an urgency to protect the authority of scripture than to describe carefully its teaching. For example, how does the scripture teach that the Spirit can now "diffuse" the revelation to "bring" mankind to a "knowledge of it" if not by some sort of revelation? In what sense has the exalted Christ's "work . . . been done"? It is ironic that Warfield, who is best known as the Evangelical defender of the authority of scripture, and who repeatedly insists that he founds his theology inductively upon it,⁶ deviates so drastically from the pattern of biblical data in two doctrines, which by their very nature contradict

²Warfield, *CM*, p. 26.

³Warfield, *CM*, p. 27.

⁴For the implications of this equivocation, see Chapter 2, above.

⁵Warfield, *CM*, p. 28.

⁶See Ch. 3, n. 9, above. According to Warfield, Systematic theology "is founded on the final and complete results of exegesis as exhibited in Biblical Theology. . . . combining them in their due order *and proportion* [italics mine] as they stand in the various theologies of the Scriptures." Warfield, "The Idea of Systematic Theology," *WBBW* IX, pp. 66-67 repr. from *PRR* VII (April 1896), pp. 243-71. Though see K. R. Trembath, *Evangelical Theories of Biblical Inspiration: A Review and Proposal* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 20-27 and D. H. Kelsey, *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology*, pp. 17-30 and 141. Both see a contradiction between Warfield's theoretical and actual dependence on scripture as his basis for theology.

cessationism: pneumatology and the Kingdom of God—the latter particularly as it relates to the exaltation of Christ.

1. A Biblical Doctrine of the Holy Spirit Is Inimical to Cessationism

Warfield's "biblical" pneumatology, especially his description of the Spirit in today's world, is limited almost exclusively to post-biblical theological questions of ontology and his role in the Calvinistic concepts of regeneration and sanctification.⁷ This traditional Calvinist pneumatology and conclusions of traditional biblical exegesis were mutually conditioned, causing generations of scholars to ignore the charismatic implications in the texts before them. Accordingly, Warfield failed to appreciate an emerging consensus in biblical scholarship which pointed out the overwhelmingly charismatic function of the Holy Spirit described in scripture.⁸ Had he done so, he would have found it almost impossible to speak of the contemporary activity of the Spirit in truly biblical terms without mentioning the continuing appearance of "extra-ordinary" charismata. The burden of proof for cessationism rests on Warfield and those who would so completely change the characteristic, if not the essential and central activity of an unchanging God as Spirit.

⁷Warfield, "The Spirit of God in the Old Testament," *PRR*, VI (1895), pp. 665-87, reprinted in *WBBW*, II, pp. 101-32 and his "Introductory Note," to Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Henri De Vries (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1900; repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1979), pp. xxv-xxxix. Also, Warfield, "John Calvin the Theologian," *Calvin and Augustine*, ed., G. S. Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. House, 1956), pp. 484, 487, 486; Warfield, "John Calvin, The Man and His Work," *WBBW*, V, p. 21. In his "Introductory Note," p. xxxiii, Warfield insists that the early Church provided a limited doctrine of the Spirit: consisting of the person (deity and personality) and "His one function of inspirer of the prophets and apostles [to write scripture]." By contrast, "the whole doctrine of the work of the Spirit at *large* [*italics mine*] is a gift to the Church from the Reformation."

⁸E.g., H. Gunkel, *Die Wirkungen des heiligen Geistes nach der populären Anschauung der apostolischen Zeit und der Geister im nachapostolischen Zeitalter*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1889) and J. Gloel, *Der heilige Geist in des Heilsverkündigung des Paulus* (Halle: Max Neimeyer, 1888). The fact that Gunkel's work has been translated into English 90 years after its original publication attests to its revolutionary and continuing impact. See also Leonard Goppelt's high estimate in his *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols. trans. J. E. Alsup and edited by J. Roloff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), v. 2, p. 119. An important follow-up on Gunkel's work is R. P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reverence to Luke-Acts* JSNT Supplement Series, 54 (Sheffield, Sheffield

It is not simply Warfield's failure to grasp the characteristic biblical activity of the Spirit that is so inimical to cessationism, but that scripture repeatedly emphasizes the promise of the universal outpouring of this Spirit of prophecy and miracle on "all people." This promise is fulfilled not simply to accredited apostles and those "upon whom apostolic hands were laid," but to all future generations, conditioned only upon repentance and faith.⁹ As Appendix IV shows, the core of the new covenant, derived from Isa. 59:21—the climax of Peter's Pentecost charter manifesto—is that the Spirit, in this age, is now being transferred from Jesus to his "children" ("followers," who have repented and been baptized) forever. Paul paraphrases this new covenant promise when he insists that the "gifts (charismata) and calling of God are not withdrawn" (Rom. 11:29). The Bible sees the outpouring of the Spirit and his gifts upon the Church as the central characteristic of the age of the Messiah and his reign in the Kingdom of God.

University Press, 1991). Menzies argues that Luke sees the coming of the Spirit not essentially in the soteriological terms of the Reformation, *i.e.*, in the *ordo salutis*, but as prophetic empowerment for mission. Similar conclusions available to Warfield came from: H. Wendt, *Die Begriff Fleische und Geist* (Gotha: F. A. Perthes, 1878), pp. 139-46; J. Gloel, *Der heilige Geist in des Heilsverkündigung des Paulus* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1888); C. Briggs, "The Use of רוח in the Old Testament and of πνεῦμα in the New Testament," *JBL* 19:2 (1900), pp. 132-45; W. Shoemaker, "The Use of רוח in the Old Testament and of πνεῦμα in the New Testament," *JBL* 23:1 (1904), pp. 134-65; H. Bertram, *Das Wesen des Geistes* (NTAbh, 4.4; Münster: Aschendorff, 1913), pp. 28-76. Following Warfield's hermeneutical steps, I classified each Old and New Testament reference to the Holy Spirit ("Spirit," "Spirit of God," and so on) according to any contextual description. It came as no surprise that of the 128 appearances in the Old Testament, 76 primarily described prophetic or revelatory activities of the Spirit; 18 were charismatic leadership; 14 were divine (miraculous) power; and 18 were the sustenance of life. Only a handful of associations of the Spirit and ethics or ritual purity appeared, and those were somewhat ambiguously charismatic references. Similar proportions appeared in the more frequent references to the Spirit in the New Testament. Today the consensus of scholarship on the biblical portrayal of the Spirit in terms of charismatic, primarily prophetic, power follows Schweizer, *et al.*, "πνεῦμα, κ.τ.λ.," *TDNT* 6, pp. 332-455, *e.g.*, J. Dunn, "Spirit in the NT," *NIDNTT*, III, p. 393; D. Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings: Studies in the Semantics of Sociological Terms* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1967), pp. 108-30; D. Lull, *The Spirit in Galatia: Paul's Interpretation of πνεῦμα as Divine Power* (SBLDS 49; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1980), pp. 69-73.

⁹See the development of the Old Testament promise of the Spirit into the New Testament in R. Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984), pp. 13-82. Y. M. J. Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3 vols. (New York: Seabury Press; London: G. Chapman, 1983), I, pp. 8-9, 30-31, and 44.

2. A Biblical Doctrine of the Kingdom of God Is Inimical to Cessationism

Second, Warfield ignores the anti-cessationist implications derived inductively from a biblical portrayal of the Kingdom of God.¹⁰ Jesus' central mission in the New Testament is to inaugurate the kingdom "in power" and "in word and deed" (Lk. 4:23-27; 24:19).¹¹ His signs and wonders are not mere "signs," in the English sense of extrinsic value, "pointing" to the truth of the "gospel" or its bearer.¹² Rather, miracles

¹⁰Warfield apparently wrote nothing specifically on the biblical theology of the Kingdom of God and its essentially charismatic expression in the New Testament. His position probably is that of Charles Hodge, whose three-volume systematics Warfield used in lieu of his own. See *Systematic Theology* II, pp. 596-609. Hodge stresses that Christ as "King" in his exalted state rules over all his people "by his power in their protection and direction . . . by his Word and Spirit," but only "providentially." Hodge makes no mention of Christ's bestowal of spiritual gifts or ministries during the exaltation. The Church, not charismatic or other divine activity specifically, is the visible expression of the kingdom in this age (p. 604).

¹¹Since this section was written, a former professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, Don Williams, released his *Signs, Wonders and the Kingdom of God* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1989) which makes essentially the same points outlined here. So also B. D. Chilton, *God in Strength: Jesus' Announcement of the Kingdom*. Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt, B, 1 (Linz: SNTU, 1979); J. Kallas, *The Significance of the Synoptic Miracles* (Greenwich, CT: Seabury Press, 1961), pp. 10-12. See especially, J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus*, trans. John Bowden (New York: Scribners, 1971), pp. 96-97, sec 11, i: "The βασιλεία as the Central Theme of the Public Proclamation of Jesus."

¹²Warfield, in, "Jesus' Mission According to His Own Testimony," *PTR* 13 (October 1915), pp. 513-86, repr. *WBBW* II, pp. 255-324, esp. p. 273 says, "'Mighty works' were as characteristic a feature of Jesus' ministry as His mighty word itself." But this is qualified a page later: "Jesus' mission is to preach a Gospel, the Gospel of the Kingdom of God." The miracles only "accompany" or "seal" his mission as Messiah; they have no intrinsic value other than proofs validating his preaching and Messianic claims.

"To sum up, we may say that both Word and Miracle must be interpreted as a revelation sui generis of the Kingdom of God." Raymond Brown represents the consensus of modern biblical scholarship when he writes: "Jesus' miracles were not only or primarily external confirmations of his message; rather the miracle was the vehicle of the message. Side by side, word and miraculous deed gave expression to the entrance of God's kingly power into time. This understanding of the miracles as an intrinsic part of revelation, rather than merely an extrinsic criterion, is intimately associated with a theory of revelation where the emphasis on the God who acts is equal to (or even more stressed than) the emphasis on the God who speaks." *JBC*, p. 787. H. vander Loos, *The Miracles of Jesus* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), pp. 280-86. H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, 3rd ed. (Kampen: Bos, 1918), p. 361. R. Schnackenburg, *God's Rule and Kingdom*, p. 121: "Miracle might be called the Kingdom of God in action." P. Emile Langevin, "La Signification du Miracle dans le Message du Nouveau

manifest the essential core activity of his mission: to displace the physical and spiritual ruin of the demonic kingdom by the wholeness of the Kingdom of God.¹³

Such “miraculous” charismata as prophecies, exorcisms and healings, continue not only through Jesus’ earthly ministry, but he bestows them through his followers all during his exaltation.¹⁴ Characteristically, the “word” or preaching is not “accredited” by miracles, but rather, the preaching articulates the miracles and draws out their implications

Testament,” *ScE* 27 (May-September 1975), p. 161-86.

¹³Warfield insisted in *CM*, pp. 177-78, that Jesus’ healings were an “object lesson” of his “substitutionary work,” which made “no promise that this relief [from sickness] is to be realized. . . in this earthly life.” Disease is an expression of natural law and as such may not be “suspended in our case.” Recent scholarship shows scripture takes the opposite view, e.g., Kallas, *Significance of the Synoptic Miracles*, chaps. 5 and 6: “The Demonic-Cosmic Motif in the New Testament” and “The Miracles Explained by This Motif,” pp. 58-102 and A. Richardson, *The Miracle Stories of the Gospels*, Chap. 3: “The Miracles and the Proclamation of the Kingdom of God,” pp. 38-58; J. Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark*, SBT, First Series, 21 (London: SCM Press, 1957), pp. 34-39; B. Bron describes the mission of Jesus in terms of its “Kampfcharakter” against the slavery of anxiety, sickness and death which was encountering “the inbreaking of the time of salvation and the eschatological new creation.” *Das Wunder: Das theologische Wunderverständnis im Horizont des neuzeitlichen Natur- und Geschichtsbegriffs*, zweite Auflage (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1979), pp. 236-37. “Jesus interprets his exorcisms as the beginning of the end of Satan’s reign.” R. H. Fuller, *Interpreting the Miracles*, p. 40. W. Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), p. 17: “Exorcisms and healings are the two principal approaches used to translate the kingdom program into action. In both cases Jesus intrudes upon enemy territory, challenges and subdues the forces of evil which are in the way of the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God.” So also, H. C. Kee, “The Terminology of Mark’s Exorcism Stories,” *NTS* 14 (January 1968), pp. 232-46 and W. Foerster, “δαίμων,” *TDNT* 2, p. 19 and W. Schrage, “Heil und Heilung im Neuen Testament,” *EvTh* 43, no. 3 (1986), pp. 197-214, who argues that the New Testament vocabulary of salvation and healing should not be subjected to a false dualism: that healing is a dimension of the eschatological salvation of the reign of God.

¹⁴Acts 2:33,36; 3:6,16,21; 4:7-13. G. E. Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom*, p. 268; D. E. H. Whitely, *The Theology of St. Paul*, pp. 124-25; and G.W.H. Lampe, *God as Spirit*, p. 69. See also the important new study by L. O’Reilly, *Word and Sign in the Acts of the Apostles: A Study in Lucan Theology*. *Analecta Gregoriana*, vol. 243, B, number 82. (Rome: Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1987). Also, J. Marcus, “Entering into the Kingly Power of God,” *JBL* 107, no. 4 (December 1988), pp. 663-75, esp. p. 674.

The Gospel of John cannot be excluded from this seamless connection of the Spirit’s activity in Jesus’ earthly ministry and that of the Church. W. F. Lofthouse, “The Holy Spirit in the Acts and the Fourth Gospel,” *ExT* 52 (1940-41), pp. 334-35. A. Richardson, *Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1958), p. 64.

for the onlookers.¹⁵ Jesus' charismatic mission (summarized in Acts 2:22; 10:38) continues in the commissions to his disciples (Mt. 10; Lk. 9 and 10¹⁶ and Mt. 28:19-20, *cf.* 24:14) "until the end of the age." In the Book of Acts the Church expresses her commission (1:5-8) to present the kingdom in the power of signs and wonders and the preaching of the word. The summary statements of Paul's mission (Acts 15:12; Rom. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 2:4; 2 Cor. 12:12; 1 Th. 1:5), show the continuation of this normative pattern of presenting and living out the gospel in "word and deed."¹⁷ The next major section in this chapter

¹⁵"Without miracle the gospel is not gospel but merely word, or rather, words." J. Jervell, "The Signs of an Apostle: Paul's Miracles," in his *The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), p. 95. M. H. Miller describes preaching in Luke-Acts as the way to "mediate the word of power which effects the miracles which are constitutive of the kingdom." "The Character of Miracles in Luke-Acts," (Ph.D. dissertation, Berkeley: Graduate Theological Union, 1971), p. 193.

G. Friedrich, *TDNT* 2, p. 720, has also noted that for Paul, "εὐαγγελίζομαι" is not just speaking and preaching; it is proclamation with full authority and power. Signs and wonders accompany the evangelical message. They belong together." Jervell "Signs of an Apostle," p. 91: "Miracles assume a quite central role in Paul's preaching, almost to a greater degree than in Acts He . . . states clearly that miracles occur *wherever* [italics his] he preaches the gospel. This is in itself self-evident, because miraculous deeds were a part of his proclamation of the gospel, and for Paul, proclamation is inconceivable apart from deeds of power."

¹⁶See Wm. Kurz, *Following Jesus: A Disciple's Guide to Luke-Acts* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1984), "Chapter Four: Sharing Jesus' Power for Service," pp. 57-67. Kurz implies in the introduction, p. 5, that these early commissions in Luke 9 and 10 were intended by Luke to apply beyond the early disciples mentioned there to Luke's readers generally. So also, Williams, *Signs, Wonders and the Kingdom of God*, p. 125; C. Kraft, *Christianity with Power* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 1989), p. 136. However, C. Brown, "The Other Half of the Gospel," *CT* 33 (21 April 1989), p. 27, argues that because this specific commission was brief and limited to the Jews at that time, that commands to heal and exorcise demons can have no application to the later reader. This is clearly not the pattern in the Book of Acts, in the summary statements of Paul's mission, nor in the passages investigated in sec. B., below.

¹⁷So, C. C. Oke, "Paul's Method Not a Demonstration but an Exhibition of the Spirit," *ExT* 67 (November 1956), pp. 35-36. Oke's point was that Paul's miracle-working was not to accredit himself as an apostle, but was performed in humility as an exhibition of the Spirit's normative work among his people. Echoes of these summaries of how Paul "preached" the gospel appear also in other writers, *e.g.*, in Acts 26:17-18 and Heb. 2:4, though in this latter case, as in Gal. 3:5 and 1 Cor. 1:5-8, the "confirmation" of the gospel was God working via a distribution of spiritual gifts in members of the various congregations. F. F. Bruce, "The Spirit in the Letter to the Galatians," *Essays on Apostolic Themes* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985), pp. 37-38.

examines representative New Testament passages which show the continuity of Kingdom charismata from the apostles to their readers, and beyond them, to the end of the age.

By contrast, Warfield fails to grasp the charismatic significance of several key theological aspects of the Kingdom of God. Specifically, Warfield's picture of Jesus' earthly and exalted mission is unbiblical in that it fails to show Christ as the continuing source of the charismata among those who would receive them. Warfield's soteriology, a Calvinistic *ordo salutis* limited to the problem of sin, is also unbiblical in that it fails to grasp the holistic nature of salvation, including healing, revelation, and deliverance from demonic power. His eschatology is flawed in that he fails to see that the work of the Kingdom of God (alternately, the Spirit of God), as biblically described, that is, that the exalted Christ bestows charismata provisionally in this age as a "down payment," the "first fruits," or a "taste of the powers of the age to come."

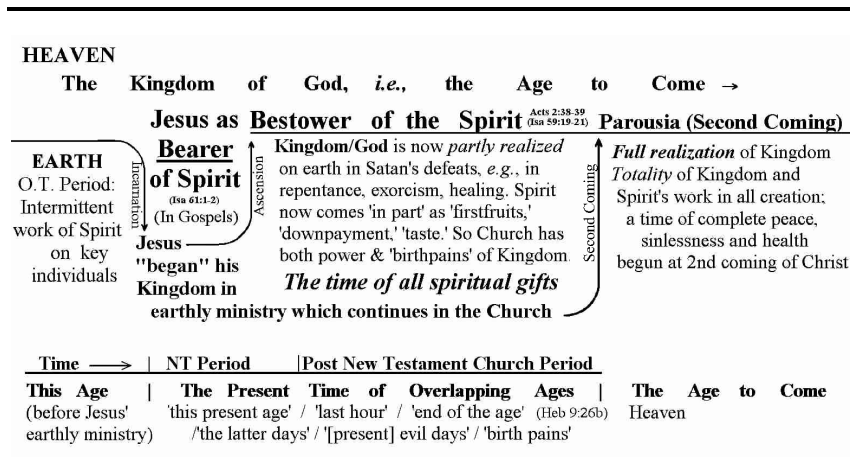
The exaltation of Jesus and the resulting outflow of the charismata through his Church must be placed in the context of salvation history. The New Testament conception of the flow of history represents a modification of the fairly simple two-part schema shared by the Old Testament and the rabbis, which divided history into two major parts: this present age (from creation to the coming of the Messiah), and the age to come (from the coming of the Messiah onward). The New Testament saw the two ages as overlapping: the coming of the Messiah, Jesus, inaugurated the time of the Kingdom and Spirit in the opening victories over the kingdom of Satan. The exaltation of Jesus and the subsequent outpouring of the Spirit continued, and expanded this conflict, through the ministry of his Church, a conflict characterized by the restoration of hearts, souls and bodies from the control of the kingdom of darkness, via the preaching of the word and through healings and miracles. The first coming of Jesus represented, in Oscar Cullmann's metaphor, "D-Day" the decisive battle (properly at the resurrection) which raged on, with its sufferings, victories and defeats, toward its ultimate victory at "V-Day" (the *Parousia*). Below is a diagram of the New Testament view of history derived from a Princeton Seminary colleague of Warfield's, Gerhardus Vos.¹⁸

The miraculous nature of the term "deed" in the above expression is confirmed in contemporary rabbinic materials according to G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), pp. 78-82.

¹⁸Pauline Eschatology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1930; repr. 1961), p. 38. G. E. Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom* (NY: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 268.

The New Testament describes a time period that overlaps the present age and the age to come, during which time the Church carries out the final commission by the power of the Spirit sent from the exalted Lord Jesus. The first two vertical lines represent the incarnation and ascension of Jesus, and the third, his *Parousia* at the end of this present age.

The New Testament expressly ties the presence of the charismata to the exalted Lordship of Jesus. This theological setting depends on an understanding of the nature of the interim period between the first and second comings of Christ, and its relation to the bestowal of the charismata, which is simply that God, through his exalted Christ in his Church, continues his earthly ministry of deliverance through the Church (Jn. 7:39; 16:7,17). The “greater works” of those who believe in him can be performed only *because* Jesus goes to his Father (Jn. 14:12, *cf.* Acts 2:33, 36b, 38-39, see especially Appendix IV, below).



If Warfield's theology had been truly based as inductively and as thoroughly on scripture as he claimed, his cessationism would have been incongruous with his biblical facts. Warfield also fails to perceive that the explicitly stated biblical conditions for the manifestation of the charismata (*e.g.*, repentance, faith and prayer) contradict his unconditional, temporary connection of the charismata with the apostles and the introduction of their doctrine.¹⁹ He also fails to account for the

¹⁹On repentance, Acts 2:38-39. Repentance, aggressive turning from this present

many explicit biblical commands to seek, desire and employ the very charismata he claims have ceased.²⁰ How can Warfield ignore these biblically explicit conditions and commands for the continuation of the charismata, if, as he insists, the Bible continues as the normative guide to the Church for her faith and praxis? Our study has outlined both a biblical pneumatology and doctrine of the Kingdom of God and their relation to cessationism to provide a theological framework for the final, more fully developed argument, namely that specific statements

world to enter the Kingdom of God and its charismatic blessings, is a strong theme in the teaching of Jesus (*e.g.*, Mt. 13:44-45).

In the synoptic gospels, almost all of the references to faith relate it to the power of God for physical needs, primarily healing. Jesus stresses the need for faith for miracles ("your faith has saved you": Mk. 5:34 || Mt. 9:22 || Lk. 8:48, *cf.* 7:50; "made you whole": 17:19; Mk. 10:52 || Lk. 18:42). The context shows similar connections in Mt. 8:10 || Lk. 7:9, *cf.* Jn. 4:46-54; Mk. 2:5 || Mt. 9:2; Lk. 5:20; Mt. 15:28, *cf.* Jn. 11:40. Even for control over the elements Jesus commands faith (Mk. 4:40 || Mt. 8:26 || Lk. 8:25); even to walk on the water (Mt. 14:31), to uproot mountains and trees by faith (Mk. 11:20-25; Mt. 17:20-21; 21:20-22; Lk. 17:6, *cf.* 1 Cor. 13:2). In fact, he says, "Everything is possible to those who have faith" (Mk. 9:23)! Conversely, where there is unbelief Jesus does no miracles (Mk. 6:5-6 || Mt. 13:58). This commitment is carried on in the apostolic church. The story of the healing of the lame man teaches explicitly that miracles do not derive from apostolic accreditation, but from the power of faith (in this case, that of the lame man) in the exalted Christ (Acts 3:12, 16; *cf.* 4:9-12; see the similar teaching in 14:9). Paul commands his readers to "prophesy according to your faith" (Rom. 12:6; *cf.* 12:3; Eph. 4:7,16), and connects the faith of a local congregation, not accreditation of doctrine, with the working of miracles (Gal. 3:5). C. H. Powell, in *The Biblical Concept of Power* (London: Epworth Press, 1963), pp. 185-86, cites a number of similar examples in Paul and concludes, "Paul has learned that *pistis* [faith] is the way to God's gifts [of power]."

Scripture offers many other examples relating prayer and the appearance of miracles in the ministry of Jesus and the apostles (*e.g.*, Acts 4:30; 4:33; 8:15; 9:40; 28:8. G. W. H. Lampe, "The Holy Spirit in the Writings of St. Luke," *Studies in the Gospels*, ed. D.E. Nineham (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952), p. 169. James makes the crucial point that the appearance of miracles is not a function of accrediting prophets, but of righteous, believing and fervent prayer (5:16-17). James points to Elijah as an example for his readers to follow, not a saint to be accredited with miracles. Why cannot this principle be applied to the New Testament figures as well?

²⁰The New Testament specifically commands its readers to "seek," "desire earnestly," "rekindle" and "employ" certain "miraculous" charismata (1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1, 4, 5, and 39; 2 Tm. 1:6; 1 Pt. 4:10) and implies that their appearance can be suppressed by simple neglect (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 14:39; 1 Th. 5:19-20; 1 Tm. 4:14; 2 Tm. 1:6). On the latter verse, J.N.D. Kelly affirms that "the idea that this grace operates automatically is excluded." *The Pastoral Epistles*, HNTC (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 159. He compares this passage with the "quenching" of the Spirit of prophecy in 1 Th. 5:19. Biblical commands, "let us use," "strive to excel [in spiritual gifts]," "desire earnestly," "do not quench," *etc.*, make little sense if the occurrence of the charismata bears no relation to the obedience of these commands.

of scripture explicitly teach that the gifts of the Spirit are to continue in the Church until the coming of Christ at the end of this present age. Much in the following passages contains echoes of the words of Jesus in the Great Commission: to duplicate his charismatic work of the kingdom until the end of the age (Mt. 24:14; 28:20). They also reflect the pattern of Peter's earliest sermon: "In the last days . . ." before the "day of the Lord" . . . "You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you, your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:17, 20, 39). The background to these verses is the promised eschatological outpouring of the Spirit of prophecy, in all its various manifestations, upon the people of God and upon their descendants forever (Joel 2:28-32;²¹ Isa. 47:3; 59:21). Within this theological pattern, then, the next section shows according to scripture that the kingdom charismata are to function normatively during the final generations of the Church.

B. KEY BIBLICAL PASSAGES ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE CHARISMATA UNTIL THE *PAROUSIA*

Despite his well-formulated rules for developing biblically based doctrine, *e.g.*, by "collecting the whole body of relevant facts," and by obtaining "the exact sense of every word" from its context, Warfield failed to grasp the significance of the pivotal doctrines of Spirit and kingdom as well as almost all of the significant scriptural passages directly bearing on cessationism. By contrast, this section applies Warfield's own hermeneutic to a number of scripture passages. Three passages, which establish the patterns for subsequent passages, receive more detailed attention: 1 Cor. 1:4-8; 13:8-12 and Eph. 4:7-13. A substantial number of similar passages reiterate the themes of these three, but will be examined only to show that such reiteration does occur: Eph. 1:13-14, 17-21; 3:14-21; 4:30; 5:15-19; 6:10-20; Phil. 1:9-10; Col. 1:9-12; 1 Th. 1:5-8; 5:11-23; 2 Th. 1:11-12; 1 Pt. 1:5; 4:7-12; 1 John 2:26-28, Jude 18-21, and Revelation 19:10 with 22:9.

²¹See the important discussion on this passage by W. C. Kaiser, *The Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), pp. 89-100. He approvingly cites W. K. Price, *The Prophet Joel and the Day of the Lord* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976), pp. 65-66, "Joel's prophecy has *initial* fulfillment at Pentecost, *continuous* fulfillment during the Church Age, and *ultimate* fulfillment at the second coming of Christ" (italics his).

1. Three Major Passages on Cessationism: 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; 13:8-13; Ephesians 4:7-13

Before dealing directly with the two passages in 1 Corinthians, it is important to point out that the argument of the Epistle of First Corinthians as a whole treats the nature of this present age before the *Parousia*: whether—or not—the “age to come” fully realized in our time, and the implications of these two positions. Much of Paul’s argument against the variety of problems in the Corinthian church lay in the members’ inadequate view of salvation history, *i.e.*, “overrealized” eschatology.²² The Corinthian believers apparently felt that the operation of the spiritual gifts evidenced their present eschatological existence, which was manifested in a factious, individualistic spirituality, based on “knowledge” and utterances (in unintelligible glossolalia) of divine mysteries. They lived “above and beyond” this present age, so that earthly or material concerns, such as factional conflict, sexual immorality, idolatrous religious associations, and concern for the poor, seemed all vaguely irrelevant to true spirituality.²³ Against

²²For background on the problems precipitating the Corinthian letter, see G. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), pp. 10-15, esp. p. 12, on the Corinthian “overrealized” eschatology, or, “spiritualized eschatology” in which those who saw themselves as πνευματικοί, *i.e.*, “people of the Spirit, whose present existence is to be understood in strictly spiritual terms. The Spirit belongs to the Eschaton, and they are already experiencing the Spirit in full measure.” With the gift of tongues they “have arrived—already they speak the language of heaven.” Fee continues, “from their point of view it would not so much be the ‘time’ of the future that has become a present reality for them, as the ‘existence’ of the future. They are now experiencing a kind of ultimate spirituality in which they live *above* the merely material existence of the present age.” See also, E. E. Ellis, “Christ and the Spirit in 1 Corinthians,” pp. 269-77; and his *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), pp. 76-78; F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, NCB (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1971), pp. 49-50; E. Kasemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, SBT 41, trans. W. J. Montague (London: SCM, 1964), p. 171.

²³So J. M. Robinson, “Kerygma and History in the New Testament,” in *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, Press, 1971), p. 34: “It would seem to be this heretical interpretation of the kerygma in terms of an already consummated eschaton for the initiated that is behind the various Corinthian excesses to which Paul addressed himself in 1 Corinthians.” For a summary of the Corinthian problem in terms of a kind of Jewish/gnostic thought, see W. Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth*, trans. by J. Steely (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1971), pp. 117-285; though against this see John C. Hurd, Jr., *The Origin of 1 Corinthians* (London: SCM Press, 1965), and a mediating position by F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), p. 21 and R. P. Martin, *New Testament Foundations* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), II, pp. 172-73, 408-09; Conzelmann, *Corinthians*, Herm. pp. 15-16.

these symptoms of a sub-Christian soteriology and eschatology, Paul presented the view of an early Christian tradition, derived directly from the words of Jesus,²⁴ to the effect that spiritual power was not bestowed for accreditation, but for a revelation of the exalted Christ.

The charismata are *Christocentric*: they are given by God through the exalted Christ Jesus, continuously to confirm the “testimony of Christ,” until the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed, in the “day of the Lord Jesus Christ.” The charismata are also *ethical* in that they are not granted to exalt the self-centered: they are God’s “grace” and “graces” (not earned); they are given for relationship—directed to Christ (“while eagerly awaiting . . . and called into fellowship” with God’s Son [*e.g.*, 1:9]); and will continue until the end for the purpose of confirming/strengthening believers to be “blameless” at the judgment of Christ.

Most relevant for our study is Paul’s point that the charismata are *eschatological*. Spiritual gifts express the contemporary presence of the future Kingdom of God. But exciting and powerful as these experiences might be, the Corinthians have not yet “arrived”; there is much more to come.²⁵ The abundance of the charismata serve usefully to promote maturity in believers all during the present age, but these gifts will be overwhelmed and replaced by the consummation of the age, the “end,” the kingdom in its fullness, that is, the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ in the “day” of his glory.²⁶ Not only do the two passages in 1 Corinthians below respond to these issues, but all of the following passages examined in this section. In Corinth, Paul must attack the

²⁴That is, in the words of the great commission (Mt. 28:19-20), where “all authority/ power is given to Christ who would be with the witnessing disciples “to the end of the age” and Acts 1:5-8, where the Spirit and power would come upon them for witness “to the ends of the earth.” This may echo Joel’s and Isaiah’s prophecies of the bestowal of the Spirit of prophecy “upon all flesh . . . to your descendants, even to those who are far off” (Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2:17-27; *cf.* Isa. 44:3; 65:23; 57:19 in Acts 2:39). As Matthew does implicitly, Acts promises the Pentecostal Spirit of power and prophecy to the full extent of both geographical and temporal limits, contradicting cessationism.

²⁵Fee, *Corinthians*, p. 12, notes, “Paul so often views their present existence in light of the future, since neither [Paul nor] they have yet arrived (1:5-8; 3:13-15,17; 4:5; 5:5; 6:13-24; 7:26-31; 11:26,32; 15:24,51-56; 16:22): they are rich, full and reigning, in contrast to the tenuous conditions of Paul’s apostolic existence.” See also D. J. Doughty, “The Presence and Future of Salvation in Corinth,” *ZNTW* 66, no. 1 (1975), pp. 61-90.

²⁶As Grundmann, “δύναμις, κ.τ.λ.,” *TDNT*, 2, p. 305, points out in connection with charismatic activity in Acts, this eschatological power “is an expression of the power which works triumphantly in history and leads it to its goal.”

underlying problem of “overrealized/overspiritualized eschatology not by denying the Corinthians’ spiritual gifts, but by clearly stating their mission within their limited eschatological framework. Charismata continue the mission of the exalted Lord in confirming and strengthening his Church only until she reaches her truly ultimate destiny. Hence, the message to the Corinthians is: spiritual gifts are temporary, *i.e.*, for the time of “eagerly awaiting” the true end (τέλος): to be blameless at the final revelation of Christ, having been called into fellowship with Him and one another. True Christian charismatic experience does not statically accredit the spiritual status of the gifted, but moves the Church toward her goal. It necessarily expresses the commission of the exalted Lord, which must continue until the end of the age.

a. 1 Corinthians 1:4-8

1 Corinthians 1:4-8 is part of Paul’s bridge-building greeting to the Corinthians, affirming them by thanking God for their development in spiritual gifts. This development is not without problems, as he points out in chapters 12-14. Hence, the passage stresses the “grace” quality and especially, the divine origin, of the spiritual gifts—an implicit reminder that these gifts, especially “knowledge” and “tongues” do not accredit their high spiritual attainment or status, much less that the readers are already fully existing in the age to come. The passage also stresses that even those who are spiritually enriched and gifted still must await the ultimate revelation of Christ at his *Parousia* at the “end.”²⁷ Indeed, the very reason that God in Christ provides spiritual gifts is continuously to strengthen and confirm them from now until the end, since they have not yet spiritually “arrived.”

So in the above context, this long sentence (vss. 4-8) reiterates the themes discussed previously about the Christian experience of the Spirit: the Father bestows the charismatic Spirit “in” or via the exalted Messiah-Jesus upon his people, in the form of inspired speech, knowledge and other charismata, by which the Church is enriched and strengthened until the *Parousia* at the end of the age. The passage appears without significant textual variants.

⁴I always thank God for you because of God’s grace given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵because in every way you have been enriched in him—in every kind of

²⁷The translations will loosely follow the *NIV* except in cases where special clarity or emphasis is required. Each passage is presented at or near the beginning of each investigation.

speech and in every kind of knowledge—⁶the same way the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, ⁷with the result that you do not lack any spiritual gift, while awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸who also will confirm you until the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How does this passage relate to Warfield's cessationism? We show first that this passage is indeed speaking of "extraordinary" charismata, and second, that the teaching of this passage is that these charismata continue to the *Parousia*. First, are we in fact talking about spiritual gifts in this passage? Certainly, in v. 4, the grace of God (τῇ χάριτι) is singular, hence, is no particular gift of the Spirit. But in v. 5 "because" (ὅτι) logically connects this grace with "every kind of²⁸ speech and every kind of knowledge," necessarily including charismatic, divinely initiated speech and knowledge.²⁹ Moreover, v. 7 affirms that the Corinthians do not lack any (μηδενί) spiritual gifts: they experience them all. But the passage does not end abruptly there. The next point answers the question, how long is this situation to continue?

Second, this passage teaches that all of the spiritual gifts (v. 7) are to continue until "the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ," *i.e.*, "the end," *i.e.*, "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." This can be shown from the structure of the argument. Paul seems to affirm the importance of the Corinthians' spiritual giftedness while weaning them away from its evidentialist interpretation, *i.e.*, that they had "arrived" in a heavenly spiritual existence via the charismata. Paul redirects his readers' focus away from their own spiritual status to the idea that these gifts are *graces from God/Christ: they were enriched* (divine passive, *i.e.*, "by God," not by their own attainment) with these gifts they had not earned. Moreover, Paul emphasizes that their *present* high level of giftedness ("all speech, all knowledge," v. 5) is "just as" or "exactly as" (καθὼς, v. 6) their *original* confirming experience with Christ,

²⁸BAG, "παῖς," p. 636 (1aβ): παῖς includes "everything belonging, in kind, to the class designated by the noun, *every kind of, all sorts of*."

²⁹Even C. Hodge, *First Corinthians*, p. 12, seems to prefer this position, which even in his time was "the one very generally adopted," though he does offer the suggestion that λόγος and γνῶσις refer to "doctrinal knowledge" and "spiritual discernment." About the charismata mentioned in v. 7: "The extraordinary gifts . . . seem to be principally intended" (p. 13). Certainly this is the modern consensus. C. K. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 2nd ed., BNTC (Edinburgh: A. and C. Black, 1971), p. 37; A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *First Corinthians*, 2nd ed., ICC, p. 5; H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, Herm., trans. J. W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 27.

probably the apostolic witness in the power of signs and wonders and the resulting outpouring of charismata at their conversion/initiation into the Spirit. That is, what they now have in such abundance, they received from others. So far, Paul has tied the Corinthians' present charismatic experience (vv. 4-5) to the past and to its true source outside themselves.

Next (v. 7), from the *past* ("for this reason" [ὥστε]), he ties the *present* ("you do not [now] lack any spiritual gift") to the *future* ("while you are awaiting [or, you who are awaiting, [ἀπεκδεχομένου] the ultimate revelation, our Lord Jesus Christ").³⁰ The Corinthians are not yet in the heavenly places, ruling the universe. They are still "awaiting" the ultimate revelation, the Lord (exalted) Jesus (earthly, physical, human sufferer) Christ (Messiah, divine ruler over the end time). The point for cessationism here is crucial. Paul is arguing, that in this present period or condition of "awaiting," the Corinthians will lack *no* spiritual gift (*all* gifts, including both the illegitimate categories of "ordinary" and "extraordinary" continue in this period). It is not randomly that Paul describes them as "awaiting" the revelation of Christ; he is making a key point: this is the time *before* the "consummation" (συντέλεια, Mt. 28:20) of the age during which Christ/the Spirit will be "with" them (Jn. 14:16-18) in power, to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:5-8). The Corinthians are living in a time of only *partially realized* eschatology. While it is the time of the Spirit and his gifts, it is also the time of *waiting* for a fuller revelation, that of Christ and the *parenetic* implications his life has for their own. This theme is continued and developed in v. 8, where the "confirmation of (from, by, or about)³¹ Christ" via the charismata is promised "until the end (ἕως τέλους)."³²

³⁰The "revelation" (ἀποκαλύψις) of Christ here, is not a personal revelation of Christ in the present age, but refers to "the manifestation of Christ when he comes from heaven at the winding up of history, the moment in hope of which the whole creation, including Christians, groans and travails (Rom. 8:22-23) . . . [The] coming of Christ in glory." Barrett, *First Corinthians*, pp. 38-39. Cf. BAG, p. 92a; Oepke, "καλύπτω, κ.τ.λ." *TDNT* 3, p. 583.

³¹Whether this is an objective genitive ("testimony *about* Christ"), as F. Blass-Debr, or a genitive of origin and relationship ("testimony *from* Christ"), the action is the same: the testimony derives from the charismata, especially those of "speech and knowledge," which in any case is sent from Christ.

³²So, BAG, "τέλος," 1, d, β, p. 819, on this passage and 2 Cor. 1:13 where also, "to the end = until the *Parousia*." So also Fee, *Corinthians*, p. 43, Barrett, *Corinthians*, p. 39. Though some others, including G. Delling, "τέλος, κ.τ.λ.," *TDNT*, 8, p. 56, take the expression to mean "fully, wholly and utterly." This latter meaning diminishes the

It is important to establish that the spiritual gifts are in fact promised to continue in v. 8, so how can one say, “via the charismata” here? First, the immediate context: Paul has just made the point that the charismata exist now, during the “awaiting” time. The present “enriching” in and through spiritual gifts is contrasted with the ultimate revelation of Christ: two ages, now and then. Verse 8 shares this pattern. Secondly, the term, “confirm” (ἐβεβαιώθη) is expressed in v. 6, “just as,” “exactly as,” (καθώς), the charismata of speech and knowledge in v. 5. To change here in v. 8 the means by which (βεβαιώω) confirms or strengthens, *i.e.*, away from charismata to some other means of confirming, would amount to equivocation. Fee³³ notes the force of καί, “Who will *also* confirm you . . .” as a reference back to the first confirmation by God (v. 6) via spiritual gifts. Thirdly, this equivocation would be destructive of Paul’s arguments, *i.e.*, that the gifts are graces from Christ (not personal achievements), and are limited to the “awaiting” period, in contrast with the ultimate revelation of Christ. Fourthly, the “Who” (ὅς) is the fourth emphasis in this short passage on Christ’s involvement in the charismata: (v. 4): the “grace” was given *in Christ Jesus*; (v. 5): the Corinthians were “enriched *in him* in all speech and all knowledge”; (v. 6): the “testimony of Christ” occurred charismatically, *i.e.*, from Christ. Paul is also stressing the Christocentric orientation of the charismata in v. 8. Fifthly, the “confirming” works toward a moral and eschatological end as do the charismata, *e.g.*, prophecy, for “strengthening, encouragement and comfort” (1 Cor. 14:3). Finally, the term βεβαιώω appears significantly in similar contexts about spiritual gifts confirming or witnessing, in the legal metaphor implicit in the word³⁴ (Mk. 16:20; *cf.* Heb. 2:3; Acts 1:8). Hebrews 2:3 uses βεβαιώω (“confirm”) in parallel with συνεπιμαρτυρέω (“bears witness with”) by which God, like Christ, “bears witness with them with signs, wonders, various miracles and gifts.” Does v. 8 promise that the charismata will continue to the eschaton? One could argue that Paul is saying that Christ will confirm/

clarity of spiritual gifts continuing to the end but does not affect the overall eschatological interpretation of the verse. See our arguments against this interpretation, below.

³³Fee, *Corinthians*, p. 43: “Paul says that in the same way that God first ‘guaranteed’ our testimony to Christ while we were with you, he will *also* ‘guarantee’ or ‘confirm’ you ‘to the end.’” See esp. n. 39.

³⁴H. Schlier, “βέβαιος,” *TDNT* 1, pp. 600-02.

strengthen the Corinthians “until personal maturity (ἕως τέλους),” which is not an eschatological time of “the end.” This interpretation, while conceivable, is doubtful. ἕως with the genitive is almost always used of time, not condition or state. If used of state or condition, the conjunction, εἰς would be more appropriate here. This interpretation also contradicts the immediate parallel context of v. 7, which points to a clear eschatological goal: “awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Moreover, the “maturity” is described as “blameless,” (ἀνεγκλήτους) which, while it is sometimes applied to persons in this present age (1 Tm.3:10 and Tit. 1:6, cf. Phil. 3:6; though see Col. 1:22 for a closer parallel), is here appositionally connected with “blameless *in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ*,” an expression which could hardly be more eschatological. The rendering could be: “until [τέλους], that is to say, blameless *in the day of . . .*” So the teaching, indeed the commitment of the author, in verse 8 is a promise: “Christ will confirm/strengthen you by means of all the charismata until the end/*Parousia*.” Given the canonical normativity for the Church, one ought not limit this promise to the Corinthian readers.

So then, Paul promises that Christ, through his spiritual gifts *will continue* the action of progressively “strengthening/confirming” believers morally, spiritually and physically “until (ἕως) the end (τέλους),” that is, until the point that the readers are “blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The gifts continue confirming Christ, progressively strengthening the believers morally and spiritually until the eschaton which is described as “the end,” that is, the point at which the readers are “blameless,” not in this age, but “in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

b. 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

1 Cor. 13:8-13 is perhaps the *locus classicus* in the discussion on the continuation of spiritual gifts.³⁵ To summarize, this passage also

³⁵Some time after this present study was undertaken, several important and recent studies appeared on this passage which challenge cessationism generally, and deal with 1 Cor. 13:8-10 in particular (indicated by page numbers). Although there is very little exegetical work relating to cessationism on other equally significant passages, some treat this passage with such thoroughness that parts of this present review may be redundant, e.g., by D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), pp. 66-72; D. A. Codling, “The Argument That the Revelatory Gifts of the Holy Spirit Ceased with the Closure of the Canon of Scripture” (Th.M. thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1974); P. Elbert, “Face to Face: Then or Now? An Exegesis of First Corinthians 13:8-13,” unpublished paper read at the seventh annual meeting Society for Pentecostal Studies, Springfield, Missouri, December, 1977; W. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in*

argues that, in contrast to Christian love, which is manifest both in the present and in heaven, spiritual gifts are temporary, *i.e.*, characteristic of the present age, ceasing only at its end, when the full revelation of God will occur. The passage appears, with no significant textual variants, as follows:

⁸Love never ends. If there are prophecies, they will be ended; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be ended. ⁹For we know in part (incompletely) and prophesy in part (incompletely); ¹⁰but when the complete has come, at that point, the incomplete will be ended. ¹¹When I was an infant, I talked as an infant, I thought as an infant, I reasoned as an infant. When I became a man, I ended infantile things. ¹²In the present time we see through a mirror indistinctly or indirectly, but then, face to face; in the present I know incompletely, but then I shall fully know to the extent I was fully known. ¹³Now faith, hope and love, all three, are present; but the greater of these is love.

After placing this passage in the over-all context of Paul's argument, this brief study attempts to validate the summary above by answering a few key questions relevant to our thesis: firstly, are in fact the charismata the focus of this passage? Secondly, to what does the ἐκ

1 Corinthians (Washington, DC: The University Press of America, 1982), pp. 210-19; *idem*, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, pp. 224-52; M. M. B. Turner, "Spiritual Gifts Then and Now," *VE* 15 (1985), pp. 7-64; Fee, *Corinthians*, pp. 641-52; and on a more popular level, M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Sovereign Spirit: Discerning His Gifts* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Pub., 1985). J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, p. 424, summarizes this position: "The classic Calvinist view of 1 Cor. 13:8-13—that glossolalia and prophecy (and knowledge) belonged only to the apostolic, or pre-canonical age, is quite foreign to Paul's thought The charismata are all temporary enough in Paul's view, to be sure, because 'the perfect', that is the *Parousia*, is imminent; but he does not envisage them ceasing or passing away before the 'face to face' knowledge of the *Parousia*." This study will show, that more emphatically and precisely than Dunn's statement, the teaching of 1 Cor. 13:8-13 is that the cessation of the charismata is *contingent upon* the second coming of Christ.

Some of those interacting with this passage attempt to defend cessationism: Th. R. Edgar, *Miraculous Gifts: Are They for Today?* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1983), pp. 333-344; Robert G. Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1973), pp. 123-24; J. R. McRae, "(to teleion) in 1 Corinthians 13:10," *RQ* 14 (1971), pp. 168-83; L. R. Reid, "'That Which Is Perfect' in 1 Corinthians 13:10," M.Div. Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, IN, 1978; W. Tamkin, "That Which Is Perfect: 1 Corinthians 13:10," B.D. thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1949; R. L. Thomas, "Tongues . . . Will Cease," *JETS* 17 (Spring 1974), pp. 81-89; S. D. Toussaint, "First Corinthians Thirteen and the Tongues Question," *BibSac* 120 (October-December 1963), pp. 311-16. These are only a few of many such references to this passage in cessationist writers. See Chapter 1, note 7, above, for a fuller list.

μέρους (“in part”) refer in verse 9? Thirdly, is there significance for cessationism in the change of verbs, καταργηθήσονται (“be ended, done away”) and παύσονται (“cease”) in verse 8? Fourthly, to what does τὸ τέλειον (“the end, complete”) refer in verse 10? Fifthly, what is the contribution of the grammar of verse 10 to the necessary conclusion that Paul predicted the continuation of the charismata until the end of the age? And finally, what is the contribution of verses 11 through 13 to the central idea of verse 10?

The **context** of this passage reflects what we have already discussed in our analysis of the previous passage, *i.e.*, the argument Paul was making about the relation of spiritual gifts to the eschatological goal of the Christian life. Spiritual experiences did not prove that the Corinthians had “arrived” in the fullness of wisdom and power characteristic of the age to come. Spiritual gifts, Paul implied, were a *means to an end*, in terms of testimony to Christ and the fulfillment of His commission to disciple all nations until the end of the age. This last event they had not yet truly experienced; it was still in the future.

In the immediate context of 13:8-13, we see Paul continuing and developing his over-all argument. Chapters 12 through 14 deal again with spiritual gifts. Again Paul stresses a Christocentric focus for the charismata (12:3, *cf.* 11:23-33) which implies service (12:5), not status. And again, Paul emphasizes the divine origin of the gifts (12:4-11): they are not human creations or possessions. Above all, Paul attacks the factionalism which had developed, at least partly, by seeing certain charismata as accrediting the status of the one gifted. He does this, as we have said, by stressing that these miracles are *charismata* (“graces”), that their source is divine, and that God’s one Spirit works through *many* people and gifts for the *common good* (12:4-31). Hence, the experience of the Spirit must be *unifying*, not divisive; it must be broad-based and diverse, not focused, as the cessationist polemic would have it, on a few individuals with “the best” gifts. Just as one body is necessarily constituted of many parts working harmoniously for the good of the whole, no one in the body of Christ can deny the importance of any member’s gift/function, be it another’s or one’s own. Conversely, no one can demand that all members possess an identical gift/function: the body cannot exist without *unity in diversity*. The gifts are given for humble service, which takes pride only in another’s honor (12:12-31). Ultimately, Paul’s view of the Corinthians is not that they are “too charismatic,” but not charismatic enough. He not only encouraged a display of a broader diversity of gifts, but urges

them to seek the “greater gifts,” particularly the “extraordinary” gift of prophecy (12:31; 14:1, 5, 39). But the way in which to manifest these gifts is in love.³⁶

Chapter 13 appears in the context of a discussion of spiritual gifts as an integral part of Paul’s argument.³⁷ The point of the first three verses is that the motive for expressing spiritual gifts is not for self-aggrandizement or accreditation, but for edification of others in love. The first verses of this chapter show that the most spectacular evidence of divine power is pointless without a loving motive. After a brief discussion of the characteristics of love in vss. 4-7, Paul makes his final argument about love and the charismata: love is eternal, the charismata are temporary. The present time is characterized by the charismata of prophecy, tongues and knowledge, as well as faith, hope and love. But love is greater because it appears both in the present *and* in eternity.³⁸ The question is, however, just how temporary are the charismata? How long do they continue?

The *teaching* of vss. 8-13 is that the charismata will continue until the “end (τὸ τέλος),” a reference to the end of the age, as described in 1 Cor. 1:4-8, above. Let us unpack the passage by responding to the questions raised above.

Firstly, are the charismata being discussed in this passage? Godet,³⁹ following the early Protestant tendency to see miracles as

³⁶The choice of the “greater gift” in 12:31 is not between the charismata or love, but, as C. Hodge notes, “The idea is not that he intends to show them a way that is better than seeking gifts, but a way *par excellence* to obtain those gifts. The other view is indeed adopted by Calvin and others, but it supposes the preceding imperative (*covete*) to be merely concessive, and is contrary to 14:1, where the command to seek the more useful gifts is repeated. The sense is, ‘Seek the better gifts, and moreover, I show you a better way to do it.’” *First Corinthians*, p. 264.

³⁷Though there is controversy about how this chapter on love appeared in this context, *i.e.*, by editorial blunder or by design. As we shall see this chapter is crucial to Paul’s message to the Corinthians. See the discussion in Jack T. Sanders, “First Corinthians 13: Its Interpretation Since the First World War.” *In* 20 (April 1966), pp. 159-87.

³⁸For support of this interpretation see Conzelmann, *First Corinthians*, p. 225: “Now . . . love and the charismata are set in antithesis to each other, and we have the eschatological argument that the latter will cease. They are accordingly, unlike love, not the appearance of the eternal in time, but the manifesting of the Spirit in a provisional way. Thus these very gifts hold us fast in the ‘not yet.’”

³⁹See above, Ch. 2, on Calvin, sec. A. 3: “The Transmutation of Spiritual Gifts.” Calvin’s hermeneutical device seems to have influenced F. Godet, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. A. Cusin (London: T. and T. Clark, 1886), p. 250; also W.F. Howard, “First and Second Corinthians,” in *ABC*, p. 1188: “Prophecy

metaphors, concedes that while “the total abolition of the gifts cannot take place before the end of the present economy, there may come about a modification in their phenomenal manifestation.” For example, prophecy transmutes into preaching, tongues into oratory or music, and revealed knowledge into “catechetical and theological teaching of Christian truth.” This view does not bear scrutiny. In the first place, such a proposal does violence to Paul’s argument in this passage: he is placing spiritual gifts into their proper eschatological context. If, before the eschaton, they are to change into purely human abilities, his argument is made pointless by such an equivocation. Further, the New Testament knows these distinctions, *e.g.*, between examples of preaching or teaching and prophetic utterance (Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 12:28-29; Eph. 4:11; Rev. 2:20; *cf.* Didache 11:10f.): preaching involves a conscious arrangement, application and presentation of the Christian tradition. Prophecy is primarily revelation and utterance. The tongues mentioned in 1 Cor. 14 are quite the opposite of oratory: they are unintelligible even to the speaker (14:14,15). As with tongues, the distinction between the nature of human and divinely revealed knowledge was made abundantly clear in the first three chapters of this epistle. Such an attempt to change meanings of terms so distinguished by the first century reader is anachronistic. Prophecy, tongues and knowledge

(or Scripture) and knowledge (or Theology), as G. G. Findlay happily suggested, serve our needs now, but of necessity leave much unexplained. These gifts belong to the present order, but will have hand their day when immediate communion brings us into the presence of Him who knows perfectly”; *cf.* Stanley Toussaint, “First Corinthians Thirteen and the Tongues Question,” p. 314, who argues that prophecy here is the “content” of prophecy and knowledge, *i.e.*, “doctrine.” Against the notion that preaching is prophecy, see R.B.Y. Scott, “Is Preaching Prophecy?” *CJT* 1 (April 1955), p. 16 and G. Friedrich, προφήτης, κ.τ.λ., *TDNT* 6, pp. 854-55. So also, Hodge, p. 271, against Toussaint: “It is not knowledge in the comprehensive sense of the term that is to cease, but knowledge as a gift; as one of the list of extraordinary endowments mentioned above.” Knowledge surely will not pass away in heaven, where we will “know even as we have been known,” but the gift of revealed knowledge (12:8) is to cease. The distinction between the charism of knowledge and its content as a way of separating the spiritual gifts from the time of their cessation at the *Parousia* has been revived by R. B. Gaffin, Jr., *Perspectives on Pentecost: New Testament teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Phillipsburg, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979), pp. 109-12, by T. R. Edgar, *Miraculous Gifts: Are They for Today*, pp. 333-344 and more fully in R. F. White, “Richard Gaffin and Wayne Grudem on 1 Cor. 13:10: A Comparison of Cessationist and Noncessationist Argumentation,” *JETS* 35/2 (June 1992), pp. 173-81. To separate the “state” of knowledge derived from the gift of knowledge in this context is hairsplitting: neither would meaningfully exist without the other, since this spiritual knowledge cannot be apprehended apart from revelation (1 Cor. 2:14). Such a separation represents an equivocation in Paul’s overall argument, which is to correct problems dealing with spiritual gifts, not the acquisition of bodies of learning.

are gifts of utterance and revelation, doubtlessly included in the category of “all kinds of speech and all kinds of knowledge” cited in 1:5, above.⁴⁰

Secondly, the term, ἐκ μέρους (“in part, incomplete”) of verse 10 echoes the same phrase in the preceding verse. It refers to the limited character of the representative gifts of knowledge and prophecy, except that in v. 10 it moves from an adverbial function to a more substantive one, acquiring an article, τὸ ἐκ μέρειον, hence, the meaning, “the partial *thing*.” The ἐκ μέρους of v. 10, then, also refers to the charismata, if not the whole body of gifts, which is most likely, then at least prophecy, tongues and revealed knowledge.⁴¹

Thirdly, the doctrine of continuing spiritual gifts has been challenged because Paul uses different verb moods in v. 8. The change from the passive verb καταργηθήσονται and καταργηθήσεται), which refer, according to this interpretation, to the passing away of (“the content of”) prophecy and knowledge (= scripture or doctrine), as opposed to the middle voice verb employed for the “supernatural” gift of tongues (παύσονται, “will cease”). The argument is that the middle voice implies the translation, “tongues will cease of themselves,” *i.e.*,

⁴⁰So, Barrett, p. 300; Fee, p. 643; Robertson and Plummer, p. 296-97: “Three prominent χαρίσματα are taken in illustration of the transitory character of the gifts: to have gone through all would have been tedious.” The attempt is specious to separate the gift of tongues from prophecy and knowledge on the grounds that vv. 9 and 12 list only the latter two and does not mention tongues. As Toussaint, “First Corinthians Thirteen and the Tongues Question,” p. 315 and Edgar, *Miraculous Gifts*, pp. 336-37. Against this, Fee, *Corinthians*, p. 644, n. 21; Conzelmann, *Corinthians*, p. 226: “In the omission of speaking in tongues we are not to find any special intention.” Also, Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, p. 67, argues that the omission is stylistic, as does Grudem, *Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, p. 211. Cf. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, p. 305.

⁴¹Barrett, pp. 305-06; Fee, p. 645; cf. Hodge, p. 271; Conzelmann, p. 226; J. Schneider notes in his article, “μέρος,” *TDNT* 4, p. 596: “The adverbial ἐκ μέρους along with the verbs γινώκειν and προφητεύειν, serves in I Cor. 13:9,12 to denote the situation of Christians in this age. There is now no perfect knowledge, no full exercise of the prophetic gift. Though controlled by the Spirit, the earthly existence of Christians stands under the sign of the partial. Only in the future aeon will what is partial (τὸ ἐκ μέρους, I Cor. 13:10) be replaced by what is perfect (τὸ τέλειον).” But Schneider goes on to show that μέρος has a broader eschatological dimension: “salvation history, insofar as it applies to Israel is also put by Paul in the category of μέρος.” Israel’s hardness, now “ἀπὸ μέρους,” refers to the present condition, which will continue until the predestined full number of Gentiles will come in, and “thusly all Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:25-26). See also Grudem’s extended comment on the meaning of μέρος here in *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, pp. 148-49, n. 59.

they are not “caused” to cease (at the *Parousia*), which may have been understood if Paul had used the active voice (παύσουσιν). Hence, grammatically, the gift of tongues may cease at any time before, and independent of the eschaton.⁴² The passive voice applied to the continuation of (“the content of”) prophecy and knowledge, implies they were “caused” to cease by the coming of Christ. In other words, enscripturated prophecy and knowledge may continue until the *Parousia*, but tongues will not.

We have already dealt with the transmutation of spiritual gifts into metaphors, but five additional problems emerge with this interpretation of παύσονται. 1) It is one thing to say that tongues ceased “of themselves,” or, simply “ceased,” and quite another to insist, on this apparent grammatical basis, that this cessation necessarily has no external causation, *i.e.*, the coming of Christ. As a matter of fact, the action of the same aorist middle of παύω necessarily involves causation in Luke 8:24, where the wind and waves “ceased” (ἐπαύσαντο), not “of themselves,” but *at Jesus’ command*. An uproar of the crowd in Ephesus “ceased” (παύσασθαι) only after the rioters were threatened and dismissed by a town official, a clear case of causation (Acts 19:40; 20:1). 2) The appeal to the middle voice of παύω to show cessation of tongues independent of the eschaton is a conclusion based on a faulty understanding of the so-called middle voice in certain semantic contexts, where, as in this case, it acts simply as an active, deponent, intransitive verb.⁴³ 3) The context is ignored: even if a reflexive (middle) usage of παύομαι were the case, the charism of tongues is

⁴²Thomas, “Tongues Will Cease,” p. 81; Toussaint, “First Corinthians Thirteen and the Tongues Question,” pp. 314-15; Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement*, pp. 128-29. D. A. Carson cites these scholars’ treatment of παύσονται in this context as an example of an “exegetical fallacy.” *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), pp. 77-79. A Th.M. thesis is devoted to the former position. D. W. Dungey, “The Relationship of παύω in I Corinthians 13:8 to the Modern Tongues Movement,” Dallas Theological Seminary, 1967.

⁴³Wm. Veitch, *Greek Verbs Irregular and Defective: Their Forms, Meaning and Quantity* (1879; repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1967), pp. 515-16. In researching this very question, Paul Elbert, “Face to Face,” pp. 26-27, in an act of academic overkill, from his collection of some 2,000 cases, examined over 400 examples of παύω/παύομαι in their various forms. He corroborated the observation of Veitch, and added a further corollary, *viz.*, that without exception, in order to express a thing simply ceasing, “when no object is involved (as in 1 Cor. 13:8), the middle form is universally preferred”; that in Koine Greek, “παύομαι is a deponent verb in the sense that the use of middle endings does not necessarily indicate the middle or [underlining his] passive idea since the middle form conveys a simple active meaning.” So also, Carson’s *Exegetical Fallacies*, pp. 78-79.

still part of the ἐκ μέρους charismata that stand in contrast to the τέλειον and are abolished by it. 4) Since tongues is listed in 12:10, 28 and 29 as a gift initiated and maintained by the Spirit of God, it is absurd to imply they cease “of themselves” apart from any action of the Spirit. 5) This interpretation ignores the obvious parallel of the verbs, καταργηθήσονται || παύσονται || καταργηθσονται applying to prophecies, tongues and knowledge, respectively.

Fourthly, the meaning of the term, τὸ τέλειον (“the end/completion”) in this passage has been the subject of some discussion.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Some understand τὸ τέλειον in this context to indicate:

1. Mature love which obviates the childish desires for the most spectacular gifts, e.g., G. G. Findlay, *St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians* in ExGT, 2, p. 900; N. Johansson, “I Corinthians 13 and I Corinthians 14,” *NTS* 10 (April 1964), pp. 389-90; E. Miguens, “1 Cor. 13:8-13 Reconsidered,” *CBQ* 37 (January 1975), pp. 87-97. Others in this category suggest a “mature church” is intended, e.g., W. A. Criswell, *The Baptism, Filling, and Gifts of the Spirit*, p. 134 and H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, pp. 378-79; others, suggest the maturity of believers, e.g., H. C. Shank, *More of Christ: Preliminary Thoughts Concerning a Reformed Antidote to the Current Charismatic Movement*, p. 23. In what sense the Church was “mature” as it moved toward its dark ages remains unclear.

2. The canon of scripture, which, when completed, will need no revelatory gifts, which necessarily add to its material, e.g., J. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1954), pp. 178-79; W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1939; repr., 1966), p. 221; W. G. Bellshaw, “The Confusion of Tongues,” *BibSac* 120 (April-June 1963), pp. 151-52; S. D. Toussaint, “First Corinthians Thirteen and the Tongues Question,” p. 314; and G. B. Weaver, “Tongues Shall Cease,” *GJ* 14 (Winter 1973), p. 22. Thomas, in his article above and in his later book, *Understanding Spiritual Gifts* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), p. 13, identifies τὸ τέλειον tentatively with both positions (canon and maturity of the Church): “Which of these would happen first the writer did not know.” Th. Edgar, *Miraculous Gifts*, pp. 333-44, opts for a personal, rather than corporate, eschatology (“the individual’s presence with the Lord”) as identifying τὸ τέλειον, hence, illogically, the passage makes no statement as to the historical cessation of the gifts. If this applies to every believer, then this is a strong argument for continuing gifts!

3. The millennium is the “perfect,” during which the charismata will be re-activated after their hiatus during the Church age, according to C. R. Smith in his Th.D. dissertation, “Biblical Conclusions Concerning Tongues,” (Winona Lake, IN: Grace Theological Seminary, 1970), reworked into his book, *Tongues in Biblical Perspective*, new rev. ed., (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1973). For a survey of other interpretations, see Graves, “Tongues Shall Cease,” pp. 22-28.

Against these positions see the arguments of Fee, *Corinthians*, pp. 644-45, M. B. Turner, “Spiritual Gifts Then and Now,” p. 37; Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, pp. 66-76; Grudem, *Prophecy in 1 Cor.*, p. 210-19; K. S. Hemphill, “The Pauline Concept of Charisma: A Situational and Developmental Approach,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge University, 1976), pp. 113-20 and F.F. Bruce, *Tradition Old and New*

The consensus of commentators rightly takes this phrase both as a contrast to the “in part” of the present age and a reference to its termination at the *Parousia*.⁴⁵ Their interpretation is justified for several reasons.

(London: Paternoster Press, 1970), pp. 14-15. Bruce shares a widespread Evangelical conviction, *i.e.*, the chance that “the concept of the completed New Testament canon was present in Paul’s mind is extremely improbable.”

⁴⁵ Among conservative Protestant commentators, F. F. Bruce, *The Letters of Paul: An Expanded Paraphrase* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), p. 107; *idem*, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (London: Oliphants, 1971), p. 128; A. Clarke, *Clarke’s Commentary* (Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, n.d.), v. 4, pp. 268-69; C. R. Erdman, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1948), pp. 122-23. Erdman, a Princeton Seminary contemporary of Warfield, has a difficult time with the implications of his own exegesis: “‘They shall be done away.’ Let it be granted here that the spiritual gifts which had been bestowed on the Corinthian church were confined to the Apostolic Age. Though Paul does not here so affirm it, this limitation probably was a fact; it is rather certain that these exact gifts no longer exist. But the contrast here was not between the Apostolic Age and the present time, but between the present age as a whole and the future age which is to be ushered in by the return of Christ.” C. Hodge, *First Corinthians*, p. 272; Godet, *First Corinthians*, p. 250; F. W. Grosheide, *Commentary on First Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), pp. 309-10; E. Harrison, *Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), p. 1252; C. F. Kling, *A Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, Lange’s Com., 5th German ed., pp. 271-72; L. Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, TNTC p. 187; Toussaint, 313; among others, commentaries by P. E. B. Allo, *Saint Paul Première Épître aux Corinthiens*, 2nd ed., (Paris: Le Coffre, 1956), pp. 347-48; C. K. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, p. 306; F. Baudraz, *Les Épîtres aux Corinthiens* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1965), p. 106; J. Hering, *La Première Épître de Saint Paul Aux Corinthiens* (Paris: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1949), p. 120; D. H. Lietzmann, *An Die Korinther, I, II* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1949), p. 66; H. A. W. Meyer, *First Corinthians*, MNTC, 5th ed., p. 305: “With the advent of the *Parousia* the other charismata too (12:8ff.) surely cease altogether.” James Moffat, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper, 1938), p. 201; Robertson and Plummer, *First Corinthians*, ICC, p. 297; H-D. Wendland, *Die Briefe an die Korinther*, NTD, 7, p. 106.

In some related works: G. Bornkamm, *Das Ende des Gesetzes* (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1961), pp. 103-05; N. Hugedé, *La Métaphor Du Miroir dans les Épîtres de Saint Paul aux Corinthiens* (Paris: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1927), p. 17; the Evangelical theologian, C. F. H. Henry, *Personal Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), pp. 484-85; K. Maly, *Mundige Gemeinde* (Stuttgart: Katholische Bibelwerk, 1967), p. 195 and G. Delling, “τέλος, κ.τ.λ.,” *TDNT* 8, pp. 75-76 and J. Schneider, “μέρος,” *TDNT* 4, p. 596.

See also the more developed arguments by Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, pp. 67-76; Fee, pp. 644-45, nn. 22 and 23; Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, pp. 210-19 and in his more recent work: *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, pp. 228-52; Hemphill, “The Pauline Concept of Charisma,” pp. 113-20, and Turner, “Spiritual Gifts Then and Now,” p. 39. Calvin, *First Corinthians*, p. 281, identifies the perfect with the “last judgment” and remarks, “it is stupid of people to

1) It is the unanimous testimony on the meaning of τὸ τέλειον in this context by the early Church fathers who were embroiled in a cessationist controversy over Montanists who, like the Corinthians, claimed spiritual perfection attested by the gift of prophecy. These fathers also reacted against an alleged cessationist statement by a Montanist prophetess, Maximilla. They cite her as claiming, “After me there will be no more prophecy, but the end (συντέλειαν),”⁴⁶ a probable reference to Jesus’ use of the word in Mt. 28:20. A number of early fathers argue against cessationism by appealing to 1 Cor. 13:10 for rebuttal to that logion or to the Montanist claims to spiritual perfection. Eusebius records that Miltiades cites 1 Cor. 13:10 against Maximilla and concludes, “It is necessary that the prophetic charisma be in all the Church until the final coming.”⁴⁷ Against the presently realized “perfect” existence claimed by the Montanists, the fathers employed 1 Cor. 13:8-12, especially v. 10, to show that the “perfection” (τὸ τέλειον) was yet future at the coming of Christ.⁴⁸ An

make the whole of this discussion apply to the intervening time.”

⁴⁶Epiphanius, *Against Panarion* 48. V. 4 (PG 41:855), cited in Pierre de Labriolle, *Les Sources de l'Histoire du Montanisme* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1913), p. 117: “Μετ’ ἐμὲ προφήτις οὐκετι ἔσται, ἀλλὰ συντέλειαν.”

⁴⁷“δεῖν γὰρ εἶναι τὸ προφητικὸν χάρισμα ἐν πασῇ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ μέχρι τῆς τέλειος παρουσίας.” *Against Alcibiades* in Eusebius, *Church History*, V,17,4 (PNF, 2nd ser., 1:234. Didymus of Alexandria cites 13:8-10 in full and assigns τὸ τέλειον to the time after the resurrection and the “second coming of the Lord (Parousia).” *Concerning Triadus* III, 41, (PG 39, p. 984), in Labriolle, *Sources*, pp. 156-57). Earlier, Irenaeus by implication, connected the τέλειον with the eschaton: “we, while upon the earth, as Paul also declares, ‘know in part and prophesy in part.’” *Against Heresies* 2,28,7 (ANF, 1, p. 401, my italics). Cf. the same identification with τὸ τέλειον in *ibid.*, 4,9,2. Origen, *Against Celsus* 6,20 (ANF 4, p. 582) makes the same connection: “And therefore we hope, after the troubles and struggles which we suffer here, to reach the highest heavens And as many of us as praise him [there] . . . shall be ever engaged in the contemplation of the invisible things of God, . . . seeing, as it was expressed by the true disciple of Jesus in these words, ‘then face to face’; and in these, ‘when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part will be done away.’” Methodius of Olympus, *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins* 9,2 (ANF 6, p. 345): “For now we know ‘in part,’ and as it were ‘through a glass,’ since that which is perfect has not yet come to us, namely, the kingdom of heaven and the resurrection, when ‘that which is in part will be done away.’” So also Archelaus, who identified “the perfect” with the eschaton in *The Disputation with Manes*, 36-37 (ANF 6, p. 210). Cf. James L. Ash, Jr., “The Decline of Ecstatic Prophecy in the Early Church,” *TS* 37 (June 1976), pp. 240-42.

⁴⁸Pseudo Athanasius in his *Dialogue of an Orthodox with a Montanist*, argues forcefully and in some detail from the whole passage against the Montanist position on spiritual perfection, and concludes by identifying the analogies in 13:11-12 (of

exhaustive study by Gary Shogren defined the use of “τὸ τέλειον” in 1 Cor. 13:10 as it appears in the early Church Fathers. He found that they were unanimous in their understanding of this phrase as referring to the end of the present age at the second coming of Christ. Where they discussed the cessation of spiritual gifts in this passage, they were unanimous that spiritual gifts were to continue until the coming of Christ at the end of this age.⁴⁹

2) The τὸ τέλειον of 13:10 is closely aligned with a similar eschatological context in 1:8 (τέλους), as discussed above. The point is made in both passages that spiritual gifts remain until the “end.”

3) The τὸ τέλειον in the protasis of v. 10 stands in contrast to the ἐκ μέρους in the apodosis.⁵⁰ The “complete” is contrasted with the “incomplete” acquisition of knowledge via prophecy and revealed knowledge in v. 9. Grudem notes that since the knowledge of the τὸ τέλειον is so great that it will render the present method of gaining knowledge useless (τὸ ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται), only the consummation could qualify for such a contrast.⁵¹

4) Paul several times uses the term, καταργέω in 1 Corinthians in ways parallel to the eschatological context here, in that the present expressions of “this age” will be “nullified” by the coming of the end: the “things that are” (1:28); the rulers, authorities and powers of this age (2:6; 15:24); the stomach and food (6:13); and death (15:26).⁵²

5) As we see below, the parallel analogies of verses 11, 12 and 13 further confirm the view that τὸ τέλειον refers to the eschaton. The eschatological meaning of τὸ τέλειον, then, is essential to the passage

childhood/manhood, seeing in a mirror and face to face, knowing partially and being fully known) with the “τέλειον” (cited in Labriolle, 93-95). Jerome *Epistle* 41, V, 35-36, (PL, 22, 474, in Labriolle, pp. 169-70), also quotes 13:10 and 12 in the same context, making the same point, as does Augustine, in *Against Faustus*, 33,17,30 (PL, 42, 506 in Labriolle, pp. 185-6), in *On Heresies*, Book 26, 5 (PL 42, 30, Labriolle, p. 189), and again in *Praedestinatus* I,26,5 (PL 53, 596, Labriolle, p. 214).

⁴⁹Gary Shogren, “How Did They Suppose ‘The Perfect’ Would Come? 1 Corinthians 13.8-12 in Patristic Exegesis,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15 (Oct 1999), pp. 99-121. See also his “Christian Prophecy and Canon in the Second Century: A Response to B B Warfield,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40 (Dec 1997), pp. 609-626. Shogren was a professor at Biblical Seminary in Hatfield, Pennsylvania, a traditionally cessationist institution.

⁵⁰BAG, “τέλειον,” p. 816; esp. G. Delling, “τέλειον,” *TDNT* 8, p. 75: “In the Pauline corpus the meaning ‘whole’ is suggested at 1 C. 13:10 by the antithesis to ἐκ μέρους.”

⁵¹Grudem, *Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, p. 213.

⁵²*Ibid.*, p. 214.

it occupies. It is to an examination of that crucial verse that we now turn.

Fifth, the grammar of inspired prediction of St. Paul in verse 10 has great significance for the cessationist polemic: ὅταν δέ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον, τὸ ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται, “but when the complete has come, at that point, the incomplete will be ended”). This contingent connection has been questioned D. A. Carson, who, while agreeing that τὸ τέλειον refers to the second coming of Christ, nonetheless suggest that the gifts of prophecy and tongues in this context could disappear at any time preceding the *Parousia*.⁵³ However, the grammar of this verse simply precludes that interpretation. ὅταν appears here with the aorist subjunctive (ἔλθῃ) in the subordinate clause, followed by the future passive, καταργηθήσεται. Grammarian J. H. Moulton notes the significance of this pattern:

One result of the aorist action has important exegetical consequences, which have been insufficiently observed. It affects relative, temporal or conditional clauses introduced by a pronoun or conjunction with ὅταν The verbs are all futuristic, and the ὅταν ties them up to particular occurrences The aorist, being future by virtue of its mood (subjunctive), punctiliar by its tense, and consequently describing complete action, gets a future-perfect sense in this class of sentence; and it will be found most important to note this before we admit a less rigid translation.⁵⁴

The implication for our translation, then, is that the partial (charismata) pass away, not simply “when,” “whenever,” or “at the point of,”

⁵³Showing the Spirit, p. 70.

⁵⁴J. H. Moulton, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 3rd ed., (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1908; repr., 1961), I, p. 186; III, p. 112. So also, A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: G. Doran Co., 1914), pp. 972-73; BAG, p. 592a, Blass-Debr, sec., 382; J. H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Evangel, 1889; repr., 1974), p. 458b; J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), p. 462.

Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, p. 70, claims that this passage teaches that “a charismatic gift or gifts could . . . have been withdrawn earlier than the *Parousia*,” e.g., the gift of apostleship (1 Cor. 12:28). But on the basis of the grammar of this verse, and on the basis of the flow of Paul’s argument throughout the epistle, it would appear that the *principle* Paul is attempting to establish is the contrast of the uniform (prescriptive) condition of this present age with its gifts, and their abrogation only at the appearance of the age to come. On the continuation of the gift of apostleship see the discussion on 1 Cor. 12 and Eph. 4, Appendix II, below.

but more precisely, “*immediately after*” the appearance of the perfect, *i.e.*, the event which virtually *causes* the ἐκ μέρους to be ended. We are not arguing that these charismata will continue beyond the *Parousia* for any significant length of time, but only that the grammar does not allow any cessation of the ἐκ μέρους, until the action of the ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον is complete. Again, the subjunctive, ἔλθῃ in these contexts assumes a future perfect tense. Perhaps an even more precise paraphrase of the verse could be: “When the perfect will have completely arrived, only at that point, and not a moment before, will the partial be ended.”⁵⁵

Finally, the point of verse 10 is illustrated by the analogies of verses 11, 12, and possibly 13; they repeatedly contrast the present age with the eschatological perfection to come.⁵⁶ In verse 11, Paul uses a personal example contrasting his imperfect level of speech and knowledge at infancy to that of adulthood. Some cessationists have insisted that this analogy applies best to the maturity of the Church or individual believer, or the “completion” of the Church by the inclusion of the Gentiles.⁵⁷ But as Carson and others have pointed out, such a leap from infancy to “maturity” (if maturity is understood either in terms of theological awareness or praxis) on the basis of the completion of the canon of Scripture, spiritual or ethical maturity of the Church, or the inclusion of the Gentiles, “is irrelevant to the context of 1 Cor. 13” and “trivializes the language of verse 12.”⁵⁸ It is also historical nonsense, certainly if Warfield’s dim view of the later post-apostolic Church is our guide. Compared to the writings of the

⁵⁵Passages with similar grammatical structure are: Mt. 9:15; 10:19; 19:28; 25:31; Mk. 2:20; 12:23,25; Lk. 5:35; 9:26; 13:28; Jn. 4:25; 7:31; 8:28; 15:26; 16:13; 21:18; Acts 23:25; 24:22; Rom. 11:27; 1 Cor. 15:28,54; 16:3,5; Col. 3:4; 2 Th. 1:9-10; Rev. 11:7; 20:7.

It is interesting that some textual witnesses on this passage show a scribal tendency to enhance the “then, and not until then” meaning of this verse by adding a τότε before ἐκ μέρους (K, L, Syr., Chrysostom, and others). Robertson and Plummer, p. 297 and Nestle, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 26th ed., *ad loc.*

⁵⁶This position is again the virtual consensus of the representative commentators cited in note 26, above.

⁵⁷E.g., J. R. McRay, “Τὸ Τέλειον in I Corinthians 13:10,” *RQ* 14 (1971), p. 183, who maintains that Paul is “using τέλειος to mean the inclusion of the Gentiles” into the Church, so that of Jew and Gentile “God had created of the two one new man,” though he also says that “the generation upon whom he laid his hands and imparted χαρίσματα experienced τὸ τέλειον.” For others who interpret τὸ τέλειον as “maturity,” and/or the completion of the canon see note 25, above.

⁵⁸Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, p. 71 and Turner, “Spiritual Gifts Then and Now,” p. 39.

New Testament, Warfield would affirm that the writings of the second century Church show a significant *loss* of sophistication in terms of the depth of understanding and articulating the Christian faith. Cessationists here would then be arguing that the Church “matured” right into the Dark Ages! This view also assumes that the “maturity” of the post-canonical Church to be greater than Paul the Apostle himself, who admits that now he sees indistinctly and knows incompletely (13:12). Moreover, was he saying that because the canon was completed, or because Gentiles entered the Church, that suddenly he would see “face to face” and know even as God knows him? Was the “maturity” of the Church manifested in the fact that “all Asia” abandoned Paul at the end of his ministry (2 Tm. 1:15; 4:16)? or that throughout the Pastoral epistles, written near the end of Paul’s life, the Apostle describes all kinds of strife, heresies and immoralities in the Church? Is it because the Church possessed a completed Bible or a body of established doctrine she is called “mature”? The Bible and orthodox doctrine were in the possession of the worst medieval popes, the driest of dead Protestant orthodoxy or liberalism, and indeed, of Satan himself!

Taken at face value, however, these cessationists, including Warfield, are saying that the “maturity” or “completion” of the Church need not have anything to do at all with the individual believer, except that he or she has moved into a new historical epoch,⁵⁹ and in some undefined sense thereby “participate” in the Church’s “maturity.”

The maturity is the *event* of the completed canon, or the inclusion of the Gentiles into the Church. To say that when the ink dried on the last apostolic writing, even a few in the Church suddenly shifted into a new era of doctrinal awareness or sense of theological completion, is

⁵⁹ The connection between the “mature Church” view of cessationism and Warfield’s is apparent in the following quotations: “Prophecy and miracle, word and deed, inspiration and regeneration go hand in hand in the completion of special revelation. But when the revelation of God in Christ had taken place, and had become in Scripture and church a constituent part of the cosmos, then another era began.” A page later Warfield continues.

“It has not been God’s way to communicate to each and every man a separate store of divine knowledge of his own, to meet his separate needs. . . . He has given to the world one organically complete revelation, adapted to all, sufficient for all, provided for all, and from this one completed revelation He requires each to draw his whole spiritual sustenance. Therefore it is that miraculous working which is but the sign of God’s revealing power, cannot be expected to continue, and in point of fact does not continue, after the revelation of which it is the accompaniment has been completed.” Warfield, *CM*, pp. 26, 27.

historical naïveté. Not only were these writings not thoroughly disseminated, there was considerable debate for decades, even centuries, as to what should be included in the canon. How, in fact, did the writing of the last book, in what was to become the canon, affect at that point, the masses within the Church?

This same view applies to the reception of the Spirit at Pentecost, where the “Church” receives the gift of prophecy promised of Joel 2 in a single historical incident, which seems to have the effect of leaving later members of the Church to participate in this type of experience of the Spirit only vicariously or by imputation.⁶⁰ Similarly, the subsequent charismatic outpourings of the Spirit in the Book of Acts are to be understood as having primarily “epochal,” and therefore, by implication, unrepeatable significance for individuals, serving mainly as signs of the key historically unique stages of the Church’s expansion.⁶¹

We have seen that some have interpreted verse 11 as referring to the immaturity of the Corinthian church which will move into adulthood at the completion of the canon of scripture, or growth in love, or the inclusion of the Gentiles. But these interpretations suffer from either an anachronistic reading of dogmatics into this passage, or from forcing onto Paul’s analogy a view of “maturity” which is alien to the context and flow of his eschatological argument. Instead, verse 11 is an

⁶⁰E.g., R. B. Gaffin, Jr., “The Holy Spirit,” *WTJ* 43 (Fall 1980), p. 74. On the basis of 1 Cor. 12:13 Gaffin says, “All believers, without exception, share in the gift of the Spirit by virtue of their union with Christ, and correlatively, their incorporation into his body, the church, which he (permanently) baptized with the Spirit at Pentecost. The gift of the Spirit is present in the church on the principle of ‘universal donation.’” This universal “gift” of the Spirit must be distinguished from His “gifts,” which are given on the “principle of differential distribution . . . by divine design . . . and not because of lack of faith or the failure to seek a particular gift.” Gaffin’s conception of the Church as an abstraction somehow distinct from the sum of its members is puzzling: even with one’s “union with Christ” in what sense is the Church “permanently baptized”? How does every believer experience the singular historical event of Pentecost by “universal donation”? By reading about it in the Bible? Gaffin’s abstraction is a way of denying to future generations of Christians the personal participation in the characteristic and normative activities of the Spirit as they occurred at Pentecost. All this is simply another way of saying, “the way the Spirit operates today is different than He operated at Pentecost: the Spirit today is limited to His role in the Calvinistic *ordo salutis* as well as to some other gifts which appear sovereignly “without regard to human faith, desire or denial.” Gaffin’s notion of contemporary believers’ participation in the Holy Spirit seems closely related to Warfield’s postulate, *CM*, p. 26, that the final revelation in scripture precludes the “mystic’s dream”: “new and unneeded revelations into the world,” i.e., spiritual gifts. Cf. I. Howard Marshall, “The significance of Pentecost,” *SJT* 30, no. 4 (1977), pp. 347-69.

⁶¹E.g., Warfield, *CM*, p. 23. In response to this position, see Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, pp. 137-58. For a review of Carson’s response see Appendix I, below.

analogy contrasting infancy with adulthood in an *eschatological* framework, a point of view which supports, illustrates and mutually conditions the surrounding statements.

Upon what does this “maturity” of the Corinthians depend? Not upon their own spiritual growth or upon reception of a canon of Scripture, but upon the second coming of Christ. Earlier (2:6), Paul affirms that he speaks “a message of wisdom among the mature (ἐν τοῖς τέλοις).” But it is not a wisdom characteristic of those of this present age—of “those being ended/abolished (τῶν καταργουμένων).” This secret wisdom has been hidden by God, but “destined for our glory [an eschatological term] before time began” (v. 7). No human has seen, heard or even conceived of this wisdom which God has prepared (v. 9). Ignorance, then, is the condition of the present age, but yet, amazingly, the future has, in some sense, come: “but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit” (v. 10)! Paul goes on to describe the astonishing scope of this present revelation in vss. 10-15, and summarizes the tension between the normal human condition and those “mature” in the Spirit: “For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.” But is this wisdom—this “mind of Christ,” which is revealed by the Spirit, complete in this age?

No. The tension is far from resolved among, not only the Corinthians, but among the apostles as well. Regarding the Corinthians, while “God’s Spirit lives in” them (3:16), they are not “spiritual, but worldly [of this present age]—mere infants in Christ [unable to digest ‘solid food,’ *i.e.*, the revealed wisdom of the age to come] . . . still worldly” (3:1,2). Their wisdom, even revealed wisdom, and ability to judge is proscribed by the present human limitations.

Hence, in a context of the Corinthians attempting to use their revealed wisdom to judge others, Paul spells out necessary rules reflecting this limited condition: 1) The first rule recognizes that the present incompleteness will be ameliorated only by the coming of Christ: “Therefore, judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness.” 2) The second rule showing the incompleteness of revealed wisdom is its dependence upon the established body of Christian doctrine: “Do not go beyond what is written”—likely a reference to Old Testament Scripture (4:6) and perhaps, the established tradition of the early Church (4:7).⁶² 3. Present revelation is incomplete and cannot, therefore, be

⁶²Fee, *First Corinthians*, pp. 167-69 and Barrett, *First Corinthians*, pp. 106-07.

grounds for boasting, since everything the Corinthians (or any other believer) have was given them from God or from others, who obviously have more than the ones receiving (4:7, *cf.* the discussion on 1:4 and 5, above).

Even Paul and Apollos share this present human condition of limited revelation (4:6,3): “God will judge, I do not even judge myself,” *cf.* 13:12, “I know in part, I prophesy in part.” He has applied to himself (and, by implication, other apostles) a principle of deference both to the eschatological judgment of Christ, and the limitations of scripture and tradition (4:6)—all this because in the present age, revealed wisdom, the mind of Christ, is incomplete.⁶³

This excursus on the nature of maturity in verse 11 returns us to the original intent of Paul in this verse: that the comparison of infancy to adulthood is an analogy of the contrast of this present age, with its limited speech and knowledge, to the age to come. A chart of the parallels in verses 9-12 might be instructive. The four segments moving left to right are verses 9-12 which are to be read in their vertical columns, in a descent through time, in two stages, the present and the age to come. Evidence that these verses are indeed parallel, repeating the same argument, lies in the fact that there are three elements in each verse above, which consist of: the imperfect/immature perception in the present age, the transition event, and the consequence. Each sentence is characterized by a “now” and “then” aspect, contrasting the quality of perception in the two ages.

1 Cor. 13: 9-10	11	12	12
Now is our: knowledge imperfect; prophecy imperfect	I used to speak as infant think as infant reason infant	Now I see dimly, indirectly	Now I know in part
when the perfect comes the imperfect will be ended	when I became a man I gave up infantile things	then I shall see face to face	then I shall know exactly as I am [now] known [by God]

⁶³Many of the same themes emerge in Rom. 11:34-12:12, *i.e.*, the quotation from Isa. 40:13 on the superiority of divine wisdom, the “renewal of the mind” as opposed to conformity to the world, humility, to “prophesy according to the measure of faith” (*cf.* above, to use “wisdom” within limits of scripture and tradition, and serving others during the eschatological “affliction,” “in hope” (of the eschaton), not seeking judgment on others, but allowing the Lord to repay evil (v. 19).

Thus Paul is continuing his argument about the value of spiritual gifts: the charismata are valuable and desirable in this present period, but when Christ returns, their usefulness is at an end. As Barth has written, “because the sun is rising, all lights go out.”⁶⁴

Verse 12 continues the parallel most clearly. The “now” (ἄρτι) is twice contrasted with the “but then” (τότε δέ). The ideas of revelation and knowledge are clearly present in the “seeing indirectly or in a riddle” (ἐν ἀνίγμῳ) in a mirror,⁶⁵ and knowing and being known. As in vss. 9-11, these expressions of revelation and/or knowledge are seen as incomplete in contrast to the “but then,” where Paul (using himself as an example)⁶⁶ will “see face to face” and “know even as [he] was fully known.” Let us briefly examine two key elements in these contrasts.

The first illustration in v. 12 appears to be based, at least partly, on Num. 12:8, where “we,” like the prophets and unlike Moses, receive revelation δι’ ἑσοπτρου ἐν ἀνίγμῳ rather than “mouth to mouth” or “face to face,” *i.e.*, the language of theophany, that is, the immediate, actual appearance of God.⁶⁷ We are not to construe the present vision, *i.e.*, the gifts of the Spirit, as distorted or false, but

⁶⁴Karl Barth, *The Resurrection of the Dead*, trans. H. J. Stenning (New York: Arno Press, 1977), p. 81.

⁶⁵The metaphor of the mirror here involves much more than a reflection in a simple looking glass (or, polished metal). Mirror gazing (captromancy) had a connotation, without the modern negative aspects, of crystal-ball gazing, and, like the casting of lots (*cf.* Acts 1:26), was a fairly accepted form of prophecy or discerning mysteries among the Rabbis and Greeks of the time. See, R. Kittel, “ἀνίγμα (ἑσοπτρον),” *TDNT* 1, pp. 178-80. But the point of the comparison seems simply to be the contrast of the (present) indirect vision, as opposed to the “face to face” vision (of God) in the age to come. So, Hugedé, *La Métaphor du Miroir*, pp. 145-50 and the virtual consensus of commentators.

⁶⁶For the Apostle Paul to use himself as example here has important implications for cessationists who feel τὸ τέλειον is the canon of scripture or the maturity of the Church. Even apostles like Paul, upon whom canonical revelation and doctrine is based, finds himself in the same position with respect to divine revelation as his Corinthian readers: in a time of incomplete revelation, both await the same full revelation of God’s knowledge. In light of the Church’s checkered history, will such cessationists argue that the revelation in the canon, or the maturity of the Church has surpassed that of the apostles? Paul, himself, acknowledges that in this life he is not yet “mature” (Phil. 3:12).

⁶⁷See Grudem, *Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, p. 147, who notes that in the Septuagint, πρόσωπον πρὸς (or, κατὰ) πρόσωπον “is clearly used of seeing God personally, as in a theophany” Gen. 32:30; Deut. 5:4; 34:10; Jg. 6:22; Ezek. 20:35; *cf.* Ex 33:11.

merely indirect, and therefore, as in the other illustrations in this context, “incomplete” when compared to the presence of God in the age to come.⁶⁸

The second illustration in v. 12 repeats this point: “in the present I know in part [ἐκ μέρους, paralleling the use of ἐκ μέρους in vss. 9 and 10], but then, I shall know to the extent that (καθὼς)⁶⁹ I was fully known.” Again, the ἐκ μέρους appears in the same context, and is contrasted with the time when Paul will know “exactly as” or “to the extent that” God knew him on earth. The passive here (ἐπεγνώσθην) is most likely a divine passive.⁷⁰ The aorist suggests a point of view in the eschaton, set by the future tense of ἐπιγνώσομαι, hence almost a pluperfect sense: “I will know to the extent I *had been* known.” Verse 13 seems to carry on the argument of vss. 9-12, though less clearly.

Verse 13 represents another possible parallel to the foregoing. The beginning of this section, 8-13, begins with “Love never ends”—implying that other things will. As the argument develops, the charismata are shown to contrast with love: while the charismata are operative in this age, love is superior in that it is the same taste of heaven in the “now,” but love, unlike the charismata, will continue in heaven. There is little disagreement among the commentators on this point.

But is there a further parallel to those of 9-12 in verse 13? Barrett, Carson and others,⁷¹ have argued that Paul is not making the same analogy which contrasts the permanence of love with the temporary nature of faith and hope, thereby paralleling faith and hope with the charismata. But, Calvin and the majority of commentators in the older Christian tradition, according to Meyer, argue otherwise.⁷² Other Pauline texts show that faith which becomes sight is no longer faith, nor is hope which is realized (Rom. 8:24-25; 2 Cor. 5:6-10; 4:17-18). Moreover, faith is listed as a charism in 12:9, and more importantly, as miracle-working faith in the present context (13:2). Further, the overall

⁶⁸So, Grudem, *Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, pp. 145-50; Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, pp. 71-72; Fee, *Corinthians*, pp. 647-49; esp., Meyer, *First Corinthians*, pp. 306-07.

⁶⁹Fee, *First Corinthians*, p. 649, notes that Paul uses this word 25 times, in every case with the connotation, “exactly as,” or, “it makes an exact comparison.”

⁷⁰Meyer, *First Corinthians*, p. 307.

⁷¹Barrett, *First Corinthians*, pp. 308-11; Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, pp. 72-76; Bultmann, “ἐλπίς, κ.τ.λ.,” *TDNT* 2, pp. 530-33; and “πίστις, κ.τ.λ.,” *TDNT* 6, p. 221; Conzelmann, *First Corinthians*, pp. 230-31; Meyer, *First Corinthians*, pp. 308-10.

⁷²Meyer, *First Corinthians*, p. 308; Baudraz, *Corinthiens*, p. 107; Hering, *Corinthians*, p. 212-13; Calvin, *First Corinthians*, pp. 282-85; Fee, *First Corinthians*, p. 651.

argument, contrasting love with the temporary characteristics of the present Christian life, would also support the contrast of love with the “temporary” faith and hope. If, however, the use of μένει describing faith and hope is suggestive that they will “remain” past the coming of Christ, in any case, “the eschatological intention [of Paul] is by no means lost.”⁷³

Paul then spells out how this love is applied to the real life situation in Corinth. He wishes that they “all spoke with tongues,” as he did (14:5,18). But because of its superior power to edify both the church and visitors, unless the tongues are interpreted, prophecy is far more desirable in the congregational setting. Nevertheless, Paul did not throw out the charismatic baby with the bath water of conflict: “be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking with tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”⁷⁴ These themes dealing with the proper use of the charismata that Paul has established in the passages reviewed above, recur not only throughout 1 Corinthians, but also throughout the rest of his and other New Testament writings. In them we hear echoes of Paul’s thanksgiving for God’s graces given through the exalted Christ to the readers, who are enriched and edified in every form of wisdom and knowledge via the revelations they received, continuing until they are found blameless at the end of the age. In all the survey of these familiar passages, it is important to remember that the terms, “grace,”⁷⁵ “wisdom/knowledge,”

⁷³Conzelmann, *Corinthians*, p. 231.

⁷⁴1 Cor. 14:39 (NIV).

⁷⁵Conzelmann, “χάρις, κ.τ.λ.,” *TDNT* 9, pp. 372-415, notes that in the New Testament, “*Charis* shows affinity to the ordinary use of πνεῦμα. Χάρις, like πνεῦμα, is given both for the moment and lastingly” (p. 392). “Specifically Pauline is the use of the word to expound the structure of the salvation event. The linguistic starting-point is the sense of ‘making glad by gifts’” (p. 394). John Nolland follows the thesis of G. P. Wetter, *Χάρις: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des ältesten Christentums* (J.C. Hinrichs, 1913), cited by Grundmann, “δύναμις, κ.τ.λ.” *TDNT*, 2, p. 311, n. 90, and takes Conzelmann to task for taking an overly-traditionalist view of the action of grace, *i.e.*, as supernatural power (p. 376), but power focused on “overcoming sin” (p. 395). While this is certainly a major objective of God’s grace, Nolland demonstrates the more specific *activity* of χάρις, which appears in the LXX and in the New Testament as “a tangible [charismatic] power in the believer.” “Grace as Power,” *NovT* 28 (October 1986), p. 31. Nolland makes an even stronger case for the writings of Luke in “Luke’s Use of Χάρις,” *NTS* 32 (October 1986), p. 615, where he argues that “Luke’s major use of χάρις is in reference to a tangible divine power dramatically present with Jesus and the church of Acts.” Dunn makes the same point in *Jesus and the Spirit*, pp. 202-05: “For Paul grace means *power* [*italics his*], an otherly power at work in and

“body” (as a metaphor of the Church), “power,” and above all, “Spirit,” must be defined according to Warfield’s principle of “scripture interpreting scripture,” that is, “gaining the exact sense of the words” by comparing them with other, more descriptive contexts, such as, especially, the ones just reviewed. But we need not expend much effort on showing the charismatic characteristics of these terms, since Warfield has not only conceded, but warmly affirmed, that during the time these letters were written, spiritual gifts were widespread in the church. Those who took part in “ordinary church worship . . . might often have a miraculous gift to exercise, ‘a revelation, a tongue, an interpretation,’ as well as ‘a psalm or a teaching.’” Warfield also lists “miracles of” healings, of power, of knowledge, of prophecy and the discernment of spirits.”⁷⁶ Despite this concession, the following investigation must continue to point out the charismatic elements in the passages where there may be doubt over actual reference to them in the text. Once this is established the study then concentrates upon the issue of their continuation.

c. Ephesians 4:7-13

Ephesians 4:7-13 still again, reiterates the themes above in 1 Corinthians⁷⁷ to affirm that the gifts of the exalted Christ, which are required for the upbuilding of the Church, continue until certain ideal eschatological goals are achieved by everyone in the Christian community.⁷⁸ Briefly, this survey examines the context of the passage and certain key elements within the passage itself, specifically, focusing on the nature of the gifts and their time of termination.

through the believer’s life, the *experience* of God’s Spirit . . . Paul’s most earnest and constant wish for his converts is that they may experience grace, may know ever afresh the gracious power of God existentially moving in and upon their lives.” Certainly, as we view the uses of *χάρις* in the context of church ministries and spiritual gifts, this usage also seems most reasonable in Paul. Warfield, *CM*, pp. 3-4, wished to distinguish between the “ordinary” and “extraordinary” gifts of the Spirit, “that is, [those] which were distinctively *gracious*, and those which were distinctively *miraculous* [italics mine].” Again on p. 23, Warfield insists that the whole Samaritan episode in Acts 8 “was of great importance in the primitive church, to enable men to distinguish between the gifts of grace and the gifts of power. Without it there would have been danger that only those would be accredited as Christians who possessed extraordinary gifts.”

⁷⁶Warfield, *CM*, pp. 4-5.

⁷⁷Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, p. 347, notes the “obvious parallels between Eph. 4:3 and 1 Cor. 12:13, between Eph. 4:7 and Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 12:11 (‘to each’), and between Eph. 4:12-16, Rom. 12:4-7, and 1 Cor. 12:14-27. It is eminently arguable that these parallels are not merely formal, but reflect the actual parallel between the

⁷To each one of us was given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. ⁸Because it says, “Having ascended on high, he led captivity captive; he gave gifts to mankind.” ⁹(How can it mean, ‘he ascended’ unless he also ‘descended’ into the lower, earthly part? ¹⁰The ‘One descending’ is one and the same as the ‘One ascending’ far above all the heavens, in order that he might fill everything). ¹¹He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastor-teachers ¹²for the training of the saints, for the work of service, for the building of the body of Christ, ¹³until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, toward a complete adult, toward the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

The **context** of 4:7-13 is an appeal for love and “the unity of the Spirit” within the congregation. Paul echoes his unity theme from 1 Cor. 12:4-6, 13 in Eph. 4:3 and 5 (“one body and one Spirit,” and “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all”). Another theme is unity in diversity in the use of spiritual gifts distributed by the sovereign Lord. Paul employs virtually the same words: (“To each was/is given . . .”), and certainly the same general concepts. As in 1 Cor. and Rom. 12, he employs the “body” metaphor to describe the operation of spiritual gifts (4:4, 12, 16). And finally, the goal of the spiritual gifts is not accreditation, but upbuilding of those in Christ, (“according to the empowering distributed to each single part, [Christ] makes for the growth of the body upbuilding itself in love”).

The **nature** of the gifts requires review. First, as in all the previously discussed passages, the parenetic emphasis concerning the gifts points out their grace-quality and their source in the exalted Christ (v.

situations envisaged in Eph. 4 and that of Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12 (see also Eph. 4:25; 5:30); in which case the ‘gifts’ of 4:11 are less likely to be offices, and we would probably be better advised to understand them more as regular ministries, like the prophets and teachers of 1 Cor. 12:28 and the ‘overseers and deacons’ of Phil. 1:1.”

⁷⁸Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, p. 437: “In 4:11 it is assumed that the church at all times needs the witness of ‘apostles’ and ‘prophets.’ . . . Ephesians 4 does not contain the faintest hint that the charismatic character of all church ministries was restricted to a certain period in church history and was later to die out.” He notes Calvin’s position on the transmutation of the functions of apostles, prophets and evangelists into the preaching of the gospel by pastors and teachers, and concludes, “thus he sought to refute the Roman Catholic doctrine regarding the transition of apostolic authority to the bishops and the pope.” In apparent response, Barth affirms, “The author of this epistle did not anticipate that the inspired and enthusiastic ministry was to be absorbed by, and ‘disappear’ into, offices and officers.” See Appendix II: “Does the Spiritual Gift of Apostleship Also Continue?” below, p 199.

7). The controversial⁷⁹ quotation from Ps. 68:18 referring to Christ also suggests to every Christian reader a paradigm of earthly ministry, and perhaps battle and suffering, before entering into an exalted state of ultimate rule.⁸⁰ Second, the extent of the giftedness bestowed on believers is qualified by “the measure of the gift of Christ (κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ).” Two interpretations may share simultaneous legitimacy: 1) κατὰ τὸ μέτρον means “within the limits of the distribution pattern with which Christ measures out” the gifts, implying that the recipients should neither belittle anyone’s gifts, including their own, nor over-exalt certain gifts, but should preserve the productive diversity of charismata which together upbuild the whole body, or, 2) κατὰ τὸ μέτρον means “equal to,” or “to the extent of” the quality and/or abundance of Christ’s giftedness. 1) Interpreting κατὰ τὸ μέτρον in v. 7 in the first sense may reflect a similar reference in 4:16 (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7,27). But even in 4:16 the ideal of each part (gift) operating ἐν μέτρῳ seems to refer, not only to “operating within the limitations of,” but also to the “extent” or “full potential” of each part of the body which contributes toward mutual upbuilding. This is certainly a strong theme in Rom. 12:3-8,⁸¹ 1 Cor.

⁷⁹See Barth’s survey, *Ephesians 4-6*, pp. 472-77.

⁸⁰Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, sec. 55 “Sharing in Christ’s Sufferings,” pp. 326-38: “To experience the exalted Christ therefore is to experience not merely new life but new life which is life through death, life out of death, and which always retains that character. As soon as the exalted Christ is separated from the crucified Jesus, charismatic experience loses its distinctive Christian yardstick . . . and character.”

⁸¹Rom. 12:3 uses μέτρον in this context: “[You believers are not to] think of yourself more highly than you ought, but soberly to evaluate yourself in accordance with the measure of faith God has distributed to each (ἐκάστον ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἐμέρισεν μέτρον πίστεως).” Superficially, one’s status in the community appears to depend on the level of faith imparted: that if they are allotted great faith, they will be great in the church and vice versa, as C. E. B. Cranfield suggests in his, “‘Μέτρον πίστεως’ in Romans 12:3,” *NTS* 8 (1961-62), pp. 345-51. Against this notion, one could argue that competition and status seeking represent a striving to compensate for powerlessness, i.e., fear, which is a condition of faithlessness. Hence, when God distributes faith, the recipient’s position on earth is secure in God who will vindicate all slights: he or she is empowered enough to be “weak”; confident enough to be a humble servant. The implication then, is not that God distributes various amounts of faith to different people, which should result in different levels of status, but that the great measure of faith distributed by God to all should be reflected in a great measure of humility and service.

Clearly, while all this is true, and even relevant to the passage, its central meaning is lost, since the above interpretation does not explain a parallel pattern in v. 6: “if one’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith (κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως). Here the meaning seems to be, as in v. 3, “Know your

12-14; and 1 Pt. 4:10, where the believers, toward the goal of upbuilding in love, are encouraged to use their gifts diligently to their full extent. We should further note that the object of the measure in 4:7 is not Christ, but the gift of Christ, implying not only that Christ was distributing the gifts, as is clear from other verses, but also that the gifts are given, ideally, at least, to the extent Christ was gifted (*cf.* Jn. 14:12).⁸² Μέτρον is also used in the sense of “extent” in v. 13, when it refers to the goal of ultimate maturity “toward the measure (εἰς μέτρον) of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

2) κατὰ τὸ μέτρον can be interpreted “to the extent or quality of” Christ’s gift, if we consider the following. Paul in Ephesians is emphasizing and encouraging the present experience of life in the Spirit-power of the age to come. In contrast to his teaching against the “over realized eschatology” of the Corinthians, *i.e.*, that the charismata are restricted in both quality and duration (*i.e.*, “in part”), Paul in

spiritual limitations: if you do not have the revelation of faith for a certain gift or job, do not attempt it in ‘the flesh.’” See, Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, pp. 211-12, who cites F. J. Leenhardt, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: Lutterworth Pr., 1961): “The expression [of prophecy] should neither fall short of, nor exceed the controlling inspiration” (p. 310). In 1 Pt. 4:10, the use of καθὼς (*to the degree that* one has received a gift”) implies support for this interpretation. Because of 12:3, most commentators now reject the older suggestion that the “analogy of faith” means “according to a standard of doctrine.” As do, W. Sandy and A.C. Hedlam, *The Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, eds., S. R. Driver, A. Plummer and C. A. Briggs (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 5th ed., 1902; repr., 1971), pp. 356-57 and Warfield, “The Westminster Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” in ch. 3, p. 178, n. 178, above.

However, among earlier prominent Protestant commentators, see first the ambiguous position of W. G. T. Shedd, *A Critical and Doctrinal Commentary upon the Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1879), pp. 363-64: “subjective faith is meant . . . communicating only what God has revealed to him,” though later he adds the more traditional caveat, insisting also on “the objective rule of faith.” A prophecy must harmonize with that body of doctrine which has come down from the beginning.” No alleged Christian tenet can be correct which conflicts with other Christian tenets. C. Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, new ed. (New York: A.C. Armstrong and Son, 1873), p. 615, is more traditional. After exploring more subjective interpretations of faith in this passage, decides that the “analogy of the faith” is conformity to “instructions of men whose inspiration was beyond doubt,” *i.e.*, the apostles and their scriptures (621). He recognizes, however, that this understanding “is denied by many of the strict philological interpreters.” Robert Haldane, an even earlier influential Protestant commentator, *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans*, 5th ed. (New York: Robert Carter, 1847), p. 547, opts for the canon of scripture as the analogy of faith.

⁸²This seems to be the point of Acts 1:8-9 when Luke alludes to the account of the Spirit’s transfer from Elijah to Elisha in 2 Kgs. 2:1-18.

Ephesians emphasizes the exalted position of the believer (e.g., 2:6, “seated us with [God] in heavenly realms”) and uses much more expansive and enthusiastic language about the apparently limitless nature of the grace gifts in this age (e.g., 1:7-8, 18-19, 22; 2:7; 3:16, 19-20). So when Paul describes the grace given to “each of us,” “according to the gift of Christ,” he perhaps has the tradition in mind that Jesus received the Spirit “without measure or restriction”⁸³ and that to this “extent” the abundance of spiritual gifts is supplied here to the believers. It may well have been, however, that this Ephesian emphasis on being “seated in heavenly realms” and the somewhat more blurred distinction between the extent of God’s Spirit in the present and future, represented an early emphasis in Paul’s gospel. It may have been this presentation, filled with spiritual excitement and sense of the “presence of the future,” that caused the Corinthians to err into their “over realized” eschatology.⁸⁴ Consequently, unlike in Eph. 3:7, Paul was forced to clarify to the Corinthians the extent and limitation of the charismata in this present age, even though in the age to come, the Spirit in some sense may be bestowed “without measure,” or, perhaps to the ultimate “measure of Christ’s gift.” Whatever the precise meaning of κατὰ τὸ μέτρον, referring to either “distribution” or “abundance” of spiritual gifts or a blend, the actual listing of the gifts in this passage remain the same.

Third, the specific gifts from the exalted Christ that are mentioned in verse 11, consist of “apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers.” The gift of apostles, of course, appeared also in the lists of charismata in 1 Cor. 12:28 and 29. Both lists contain a problem which is central to the issue of cessationism, namely, the appearance of “apostles.”⁸⁵

It may be significant that each of these “gifts” in Eph. 4:11 are people: the idea of “office” here seems alien, at least in the more modern ecclesiastical sense. In keeping with the metaphor of Ps. 68, they could be considered slaves with certain abilities who were captured from the slavery of this world and given to his Church by the exalted Lord. This is not only the case of Paul, who sees himself as a “slave” in service to the Church (2 Cor. 4:5) and to God (Rom. 1:1;

⁸³K. Deissner, “μέτρον, κ.τ.λ.,” *TDNT* 4, p. 634.

⁸⁴So, J. C. Hurd, *Origin of 1 Corinthians*, p. 285, where he lists the characteristics of the Corinthian community indicating their belief they were “living proleptically in the Kingdom.”

⁸⁵See the Appendix II: “Does the Spiritual Gift of Apostleship also Continue?” below, p. 199.

Gal. 1:10; Eph. 6:6, *etc.*), but indeed, all members of the Church have been “redeemed” (Gal. 4:5; Tit. 2:14), or “purchased” (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; 1 Pt. 2:1) from a condition of slavery. So perhaps in the above sense, they are given as gifts to each other. Certainly this parallels the metaphor in 1 Cor. 12 of bodily-members/charismatic-functions given as gifts to the Church.

The implication of the Ephesian metaphor for cessationism hangs on the use of “he gave” (ἔδωκεν, aorist)⁸⁶ in v. 11. Was this a singular, punctiliar act as some would say the aorist tense implies? If so, this would argue for the uniqueness and cessation of the apostles and prophets.⁸⁷ But it would also require the cessation of the other categories of ministry, evangelists and pastor-teachers, since they all are placed in parallel construction and are characterized by the accusative plural endings. If the giving of these gifted people to the Church is an ongoing process, then similarly, there is no exegetical warrant for artificially dividing these ministries into categories of “extraordinary” and “ordinary,” suggesting that one group is no longer given by the victorious Lord but that the other continues. Exegetically, the gifts continue or cease as a single group. But is the giving of apostles, prophets and others an ongoing process?

The **time of termination** for the gifts in v. 11 is explicit from the relationship of the main verb, ἔδωκεν, and the preposition, μέχρι (“until”). The purpose for the gifts of some apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers is (πρός, “for the purpose of”) the training of the saints, specifically, εἰς (“for” or “directed toward”) the work of ministry, εἰς the upbuilding of the body of Christ. All this is to continue “until” (μέχρι) a certain goal is achieved. What is that goal?

⁸⁶The use of the aorist here may possibly reflect the writer’s unawareness of any problem relating to the continuation of these gifts. Because of his eschatological expectations, he may have failed to envision a further generation of ministries emerging in the Church before the coming of Christ. More likely, he is simply preserving the tense of the quotation from Ps. 68. In any case, the commitment of the author is that the subsequent ideal goals for these gifts represent a clear, fully eschatological end for their duration.

⁸⁷As Stagg and Carson have shown, the aorist tense cannot be limited simply to punctiliar action in the sense of “once and for all in the past,” but, depending on the context, can denote repetitive and even future continuous action. F. Stagg, “The Abused Aorist,” *JBL* 91 (June 1972), pp. 222-31 and Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, pp. 69-75. Hence, the gifts of the exalted Christ could be given continuously to the Church.

Where *πρός/εἰς/εἰς* describes the function of these gifts (training for ministry and upbuilding), *μέχρι* defines their *duration* in terms of a specific standard of spiritual development: “*until* we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a complete adult, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Several observations are in order. First, note that the standard to be reached is essentially perfection: *all* of the Church (no possibility for laggards or immature) are to attain the following: 1) “the unity of the faith.” Whether this refers to unity of doctrine⁸⁸ or of their power of faith, or to unity generally, can anyone argue that this goal was achieved fully at any time in either the New Testament or in subsequent church history? Does it occur now? Certainly not over cessationism! If not, the goal remains unreached. 2) “the full knowledge of the Son of God.” Do any spiritual gifts, religious experiences, the completed canon of Scripture, the creeds, or even the millions of words expounding them lead the Church to a “full knowledge” of Christ? Do any of these means even have the capacity to lead “all” the Church into such relationship/knowledge? 3) “a complete man (adult).” This could speak of a certain level of maturity attainable in this age (1 Cor. 2:6; 14:20; Phil. 3:15; Heb. 5:14), but more likely follows the image of 1 Cor. 13:11 (“when I became a man”),⁸⁹ and as such represents a purely eschatological state. 4) “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” To claim that all in the Church have reached the same level of maturity as Christ, is at least, grandiose.

Second, even Paul the apostle has not reached this goal. This is true for the following reasons. 1) The “we” ending on *καταντήσωμεν* includes the writer⁹⁰ who expects to be among those who remain in the present “until.” 2) The verb, *καταντήσωμεν* appears in the subjunctive mood, representing both Paul and the Church in a contrary-to-fact, or at least a contingent situation. 3) Phil. 3:11-16 Paul shows that for him, this, or a very similar goal remains unreached: “Not that I have already attained this or already have become perfected . . . I do not

⁸⁸On this passage see especially Calvin, *Sermons on Ephesians* (Banner of Truth Press, 1973), p. 381, on “the unity of the faith,” which emerges “in the age of perfection.” Earlier he argues that this condition is fulfilled only eschatologically, when “we shall see Him face to face [1 Jn. 3:3]. At the present life, “we see in part, and we know in part [1 Cor. 13:9], for as yet we walk but in faith.”

⁸⁹So, A. Oepke, “ἀνὴρ,” *TDNT* 1, p. 363. Also Calvin, *ibid*, p. 381: “St. Paul says that we shall never be at the full measure of our stature until we are rid of this body. So then, the spiritual age of Christians is attained when they are gone out of this world.”

⁹⁰Eph. 1:1 and 3:1 so identify the writer, hence, for Warfield, against a great deal of contemporary controversy about a later authorship of this epistle, the case is closed.

consider myself to have taken hold of it.” He insists that he is still striving toward the goal of knowing Christ “in the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings” and continues in this present time to pursue the “goal of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” He further urges that “those of us who are ‘mature’ (τέλειοι)” (we) should recognize this tension between a partly realized, but still future eschatological maturity, “and if you think otherwise, God will reveal that to you also.” 4) Even if one should deny the Apostle’s own insistence that he, in Eph. 4:13, had not personally reached that goal, the criterion for the cessation of the gifts mentioned remains impossibly inclusive and exhaustive: everyone (“we *all*”) in the whole of the Christian community is to equal the “stature of the fullness of Christ” at or near the end of the apostolic age. 5) Verse 14 further develops the contrast between the present infantile state of both the readers and the writer (ἵνα μηκέτι ὦμεν νήπιοι) and the fullness of Christ to come (*cf.* v. 15). It is conceivable to argue that the maturity Paul describes in v. 13 is not fully eschatological at all, since it is lived out in vss. 14-16 in contemporary expression. The ἵνα, “so that” (v. 14) connects a present world situation to be overcome (the “winds” [|| spirits || prophecies] of false doctrines), with the maturity of 13, while vss. 15 and 16 is an exhortation to practice lovingly various spiritual gifts to upbuild the Ephesian church.

But even here the goals are expressed as above: “so that (ἵνα) we may no longer be infants” (expressed in a contrary-to-fact or contingent subjunctive, ὦμεν, affirming that they are now infants—not mature). Further, the goal for the reader (and the writer), “that we might grow up into [Christ the Head] in every respect,” is expressed in another contrary-to-fact subjunctive, ἀβξήσωμεν (“we might grow”) requiring the understanding that they, and even Paul, have not yet attained that goal.

Ephesians 4:7-13, then, serves as a parallel to 1 Cor. 1:4-9 and 13:8-13 in that the operations of spiritual gifts are to continue until “the end,” “the *Parousia*,” or “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The Ephesians passage, however, describes “the end” in terms of the ultimate spiritual growth of the believer into the absolute “full measure of perfection found in Christ” (*NIV*). As 1 Cor. 13:11, Ephesians 4:13 uses the metaphor of the mature man to portray the heavenly state of believers.

The themes of the three passages investigated above recur in those below which are treated more briefly, *viz.*, that in this present time the Kingdom of God is advanced through the characteristically charismatic Spirit for strengthening, confirming and edifying via the whole range of spiritual gifts until the end of this present age at the second coming of Christ and her entrance into heavenly glory.

2. Shorter Studies on Key Passages Relating to Cessationism

Besides Eph. 4:7-11, above, several other Ephesian passages illustrate the parallel themes of each member mutually upbuilding the body in love via the operations of the Spirit toward the eschatological goal of identity with Christ. These are echoed by similar passages from several other New Testament epistles.

Ephesians 1 initiates a major theme of charismatic activity in that it has some important references to the work of revelatory charismata and works of divine power in the Church. Paul begins the epistle by affirming that God already “has blessed us with *every kind* of spiritual blessing (πάση εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ, vs. 3)⁹¹ in Christ.” To exclude the full range of charismata from this would be perilous, for in the following verses (1:8, 9, 17-20, *cf.* 1 Cor. 1:4-8), he describes these riches more fully as being specifically the “abounding grace” of “all wisdom and understanding,” “a Spirit of wisdom and revelation,” and a power that is the same as that which raised Christ from the dead, *i.e.*, the so-called “extraordinary” charismata.

a. Ephesians 1:13-14 The eschatological terminal point of the charismata emerges in the following verses (1:13-14):

¹³In [Christ], when you believed, you were marked with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is a down-payment guaranteeing (ἀρραβὼν) our inheritance until (ἐτις) the redemption of the possession—to the praise of his glory.

⁹¹Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, pp. 101-02, suggests that the term, “spiritual blessings” refers to 1) something “belonging to the heavenly world”; 2) “special (charismatic) gifts of God . . . whose meaning can be understood and explained through spiritual interpretation, by inspired men only.” And, 3) “above all, those things or events are called ‘spiritual’ that are a result and evidence of the presence of the Spirit.” Evidence of this spiritual blessing is: “Now they cry ‘Abba, Father’ . . . now manifold ‘spiritual gifts’ (charismata) are manifest among them. Obviously they offer tangible evidence of God’s blessing.”

Here Paul describes the Spirit acting as a “seal,” *i.e.*, a stamp of ownership, which warns all who see it that the believer is under God’s protection.⁹² Another metaphor, that of the ἀρραβών, also comes into play. Both figures, referring to the Spirit (seal and down-payment),⁹³ carry eschatological significance as to how long the charismatic Spirit operates among the readers. Specifically, He continues his charismatic work in the believers *until* (εἰς) they receive the full redemption of the possession, in other words, when believers receive the fullness of the Spirit at the consummation of the kingdom

b. Ephesians 1:17-21

In 1:17-21, yet again, this same pattern of spiritual gifts at work all during the time before the eschaton is repeated. As in 1 Cor. 1:4-8, he gives thanks for them, and keeps asking that

¹⁷the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of him. ¹⁸I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe, according to the working of his mighty strength, ²⁰which he exerted when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age, but also in the age to come.

This passage is full of implications for cessationism. First, the Spirit is characterized by “wisdom and revelation,” again, two of the

⁹²According to G. Fitzner, “σφραγίς, κ.τ.λ.,” *TDNT* 7, p. 949, the Holy Spirit “is now the seal with which the believer is marked, appointed and kept for the redemption. It shows that he is God’s possession *until* [italics mine] the day of redemption.” The visible expression of the seal of the Spirit, according to Barth in his *Ephesians 1-3*, is, at base the gift of prophecy (p. 142), but is wider than that: it is “an exhibition of God’s love and power” (p. 141).

⁹³See the discussion on ἀρραβών as a down payment of the Spirit above, and J. Behm, “ἀρραβών,” *TDNT* 1, p. 475: “The Spirit who God has given them is for Christians the guarantee of their full possession of salvation.” The ἀρραβών is the essence of the full payment, just as two similar concepts, “first fruits,” (ἀπαρχή) and “taste” (γεύομαι), also apply to the reality of the powers of the Spirit which exist in the present age and the age to come (2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:14; Rom. 8:23; Heb. 6:4,5) during the “time between the times.”

charismata, and by extension, further characterized as “incomparably great power” (v. 19). Second, Paul is praying that they may know [in the biblical sense of “experience,” rather than detached knowledge, *inter alia*], “his incomparably great power (δύναμις) for us who believe⁹⁴ [present participle, πιστεύοντος, or, believers in general].” This power is described as “like” [κατά with the accusative]⁹⁵ the power of the resurrection of Christ. Paul strenuously emphasizes the “excelling greatness” (ὑπερβάλλον) of this power, which is like, he insists, the “operation (lit. ‘energizing’) of the might of his strength” (κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ).” A description of “miraculous” power—like that of the ultimate miracle, the resurrection—normatively at work in the Christian church, could hardly be more explicit.⁹⁶ Third, as in so many other passages in the New Testament, Paul ties the distribution of the charismata, in this case, miracle power, to the exaltation of Christ, not to Paul’s apostleship, as Warfield would insist. The fourth, and most significant point for our study is that this power is to be experienced “not only in the present age, but also in the one to come.” One might object that this last quotation only applies to the exaltation of Christ and not to the power in the Church.

But Paul’s prayer is that God “may give” (δῶη, aorist subjunctive) gifts of wisdom and knowledge, both, as we have seen, known to be contemporary, in this present age. Connected with this main verb, “may give,” is the perfect participle, (πεφωτισμένους, indicating action completed before the action of the main verb), *i.e.*, “hearts having been enlightened” in order that the readers may “know the *hope* to which they were called.” Could “hope” be a characteristic of the age to come if the object of the hope is realized? Moreover, the final words of this long sentence, comprised of vss. 15-23, further qualify the activity of the exalted Christ toward his Church during the “present age”: “God has placed all things under his feet (including the demonic

⁹⁴That this power (δύναμις) is for this present age is apparent in 3:16 and 20, *cf.* 1 Cor. 12:10 and 29, and Acts 1:8.

⁹⁵*BAG*, p. 408: “κατά with the accusative serves in general to indicate the nature, kind, peculiarity or characteristics of a thing.”

⁹⁶Dunn points out in *Jesus and the Spirit*, p. 209, that “the ἐνέργειν word group is normally used for the operations of the divine (or demonic).” Paul chooses this verb deliberately in 1 Cor. 12:3-10 and in Eph. 1:19 (see his note 53) “to underline his conviction that *all* charismata are effected by divine power.” The gifts of the Spirit are only so “in so far as they are the action (ἐνεργήματα) of God’s Spirit in and through the individual.”

powers)⁹⁷ and placed him as head over all things which are “for, *i.e.*, “given to” the Church, his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”⁹⁸ This last phrase certainly seems broad enough to include the distribution of the charismata. Further, the placement of δόξα and its cognates indicate a strong eschatological overtone to the contexts.⁹⁹

So the point here is to establish that the operations of the charismata are fixed at very least “in the present age” with the strong suggestion that the power of God, which the Church now experiences, will also, like love in 1 Cor. 13:13 and the exaltation of Christ,

⁹⁷This placing of the demonic rulers under Christ’s feet, and the Church’s participation in his power, recalls the commissions to the disciples: “I have seen Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions, and to overcome all the power of the enemy” (Luke 10:19). In Mt. 28:18, Jesus affirms, as does Paul, above, that God gave Jesus “all authority in heaven and in earth,” which in Jesus’ continual presence with the disciples, would be theirs “until the end (συντέλεια) of the age.” In Rom. 15:20 Paul refers to the same eschatological hope of the Christian: “the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.” On the significance of the Messianic conquest of evil spirits see especially R. Leivestad, *Christ the Conqueror: Ideas of Conflict and Victory in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1954), pp. 40-49; 92-114; C. K. Barrett, *Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition*, pp. 46-68, and L. Sabourin, *The Divine Miracles Discussed and Defended* (Rome: The Catholic Book Agency, 1977), pp. 81-102.

⁹⁸M. Barth, *Ephesians 1-3*, pp. 200-10, after reviewing an astonishing number of interpreters, concludes that the concept of fullness represents “the revelation of God’s glory to the world in Jesus Christ; the power exerted by God in Christ *and in the Church* [italics mine] for the subjection of the powers and the salvation of all mankind . . . in brief, the presence of the living God and his Messiah among his chosen people for the benefit of all creation . . . and that the saints will attain or will be filled with, all of God’s and the Messiah’s fullness” (p. 209). Certainly, as we see in the note above, this fullness includes charismatic operations of the Spirit. As Barth said earlier with respect to the “filling” of the body by the Head (Christ): “‘Filling’ means both the presence felt by the exertion of power *and* the exertion of power by immediate presence” (p. 190).

⁹⁹The manifestation of God’s δόξα exhibit a similar present-future tension to that of love, power, and the charismata, *i.e.*, that they appear to some degree in the present age, but are fulfilled in the age to come. On this (and esp. 1:16, below) see, Rudolf Kittel, “δόξα, κ.τ.λ.,” *TDNT* 2, pp. 250-51: “For the believer the πνεῦμα is the ἀπαρχή and the ἀρραβὼν of the new thing which brings with it δόξα. Hence, proleptically, prayer may be made that ‘according to the riches of His glory God may grant you His Spirit . . . (Eph. 3:16). In both cases [*i.e.*, in 3:16 and 1 Pt. 4:14] there is to be διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος [through the Spirit] a full working of eschatological δόξα in the present life of the believer.”

continue in the “age to come.”¹⁰⁰ The themes of the above passages in Ephesians are further developed in Ephesians chapter 3.

c. Ephesians 3:14-21.

¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father ¹⁶I pray that by means of his glorious riches he may, by power (δυνάμει), grant that you become mighty through his Spirit in the inner person, ¹⁷that Christ reside in your hearts through faith, having been rooted and established in love ¹⁸in order that you might be empowered to grasp the dimensions [of Christ’s love], ¹⁹and to know that Christ’s love is greater than knowledge—all this that you may be filled with the fullness of God. ²⁰Now to the One ultimately powerful to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, ²¹to the extent of the power working in us, to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

This passage offers strong intimations of Paul’s repeated schema of the charismata continuing until the end. We must notice the parallels with 1 Cor. 1:4-8 and 13:8-143. Here again, Paul prays that God the Father would grant the Spirit to the readers to reveal to them knowledge of Christ and to be “filled with the fullness of God,” which is an ideal state partially realized in the present, and fully realized in the eschaton.¹⁰¹ The “fullness of God,” among other things, may reflect the condition of being “filled with the Spirit” which is clearly a repeated phenomenon producing charismatic activity (Eph. 5:19, *cf.* Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9, 52).

The doxology (vss. 20-21) repeats the above theme. Paul begins by praising God and further describing Him in terms of His provision of δυνάμις (“power”) available to his people if any believer (“we”) ask (as in asking for fillings of the Spirit, as Paul has done).¹⁰² God is glorified by the miracle power presently working in the Church. The range of things for which believers are commanded to “ask,” certainly include the charismatic Spirit. God being “glorified” by miracles is a common theme in the Synoptic and Johannine Gospels.¹⁰³ If the

¹⁰⁰The Matthean picture of the return of Christ certainly includes the idea of power continuing in the fully realized kingdom since Christ comes “with power and great glory” (μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξα πολλῆς, Mt. 24:30).

¹⁰¹See again, G. Kittel, “δόξα,” *TDNT* 2, pp. 250-51.

¹⁰²*Cf.* the echo of Jesus in Lk. 11:10-13, “If you [fathers], then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

¹⁰³*E.g.*, Mt. 9:8; 15:31; Mk. 2:12; Lk. 5:26; 7:16; 18:43; Jn. 11:4; 12:28; Acts

essential nature of the Spirit is charismatic, then mere mention of the Spirit in this context of His operation in the Church would indicate that the charismata are involved here. But this is confirmed and made explicit by the repeated references to “knowledge” and “power” as the descriptors of the Spirit’s or God’s working in this passage.

But the crucial point here is that an eschatological context governs the operation of the charismata. The doxology addresses God, “The Powerful Enabler” (τῷ δυνάμεινω, cf. Mk. 14:62), whose unlimited and unimaginable activity works “according to the δύναμις energizing us (the Church).” This appears to refer to the most ideal and complete range of the charismata.

What is the connection of the first part of the doxology (v. 20) to the second (v. 21)? The first describes God as the incomprehensible “Enabler displayed in the Church, which seems to parallel and identify the “glory in the Church,” in the second.¹⁰⁴ The parallel implies that the powerful activity of God in the Church is also the “glory” of God and Christ. If this is true, then the charismatic power uninterruptedly continues toward a twice-mentioned eschatological end: “throughout all generations” and “for ever and ever.” These last two phrases echo the promise of the perpetually granted Spirit of prophecy in Isa. 59:21 (cf. 47:3).¹⁰⁵ Paul continues to recycle his themes once again in the next passage.

11:18. “The vision of his glory is promised in the entire ministry of Jesus, and in so far as particular miracles are part of this, they are to be regarded as evidence of the fellowship between Jesus and the Father. . . . The Johannine conception of the δόξα of Jesus corresponds to the present possession by Jesus of the powers of the age to come.” W. F. Howard, *Christianity According to St. John*, p. 163. “The divine presence and power were apprehensible by those who had the faculty of faith. It is in this sense that in and through the σημεῖα He manifested His glory.” C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1954), p. 207, cf. 211. On the eschatological significance of δόξα, see the discussion above.

¹⁰⁴On the similarities of “power” and “glory” in the New Testament see S. Aalen, “Glory,” *NIDNTT*, v.2, p. 48; Alan Richardson, *Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 62-67; G. Molin, “Glory,” *EBT*, p. 297.

¹⁰⁵“And this will be my covenant with them,” says the Lord. ‘My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, of from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of their descendants from this time on and forever,’ says the Lord.” See Appendix IV, below.

d. Ephesians 4:30

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Ephesians 4:30 also suggests an eschatological end point for the operation of prophecy in the Church. Superficially, it would appear that God the Spirit is “grieved” by certain sinful verbal behavior, which is true. But the expression, “grieve the Holy Spirit” is likely a reference to rejection of prophetic guidance or inspired words from God as in Isa. 63:10 (*cf.* 1 Th. 5:19-20). The previous verse (4:29) also suggests that prophecy is the subject here when it limits speech to the purpose of “upbuilding” (οἰκοδομήν), that it might give “grace” (χάριν). This instruction seems to describe the work of the Spirit as prophecy, which, as a “seal” (a protecting identification mark), will upbuild and protect continuously “until/toward/unto (εἰς) the day of redemption,” a decidedly eschatological context. This theme continues in the following passage.

e. Ephesians 5:15-19

¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹ Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

Ephesians 5:15-19 is an exhortation to apply spiritual gifts to the present “evil days,” probably an allusion to the time of the Messianic suffering leading up to the *Parousia*. Twice previously in the immediate context, Paul contrasts the present with the future. The present is a time to imitate God (5:1) by abandoning immorality. The future is a time of the “inheritance in the Kingdom of God” and the time of God’s wrath (v. 5,6). Again in vss. 8-14 the works done in this present “darkness” will be exposed in the light of Christ after the resurrection. The pattern is repeated in vss. 15-19 with the exhortation to use wisely every opportunity during the present evil days. Specifically this is spelled out in a series of contrasts: “Be careful how you live, not as unwise but as wise.” Wisdom throughout Ephesians usually derives from revelation (1:9, 17; 3:10, *cf.* 1 Cor. 2:6,13; 3:19; 12:8; Col. 1:28).

The same observation applies to the following parallel contrast: “Do not be foolish (spiritually unaware, imperceptive), but understand what the will of the Lord is.” And again to the next parallel the point becomes even clearer: “Do not get drunk with wine, which leads to debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.” The analogy of being filled with wine and with the Spirit is an old one in biblical literature (*e.g.*, Jer. 3:9; Amos 2:12), derived perhaps from the similarity of responses of intense emotion, speech or even song (Isa. 24:9; 28:7; Zech. 10:7). At Pentecost those who were filled with the Spirit and speaking in tongues were accused of being “filled with new wine” (Acts 2:13, 15). Similarly, according to the custom of the Nazirites, the prophet John the Baptist was forbidden to imbibe wine or other fermented drink; instead he was to be “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Lk. 1:15). The charge that Jesus, unlike John, was a drunkard (Mt. 11:19-20 || Lk. 7:33-34) may have been an attempt to discredit his status as a prophet and/or the source of his inspiration.¹⁰⁶

In any case, the immediate consequence of being “filled with the Spirit” is the responsibility to “speak to one another” and “make music in your heart to the Lord” through the medium of music, via Old Testament psalms, hymns and “spiritual songs (ὠδαὶς πνευματικαῖς).” The term, “spiritual songs” probably has some connection with Paul’s charism of “singing” with his (and God’s) Spirit (1 Cor. 14:13-17)—a practice he parallels with the gift of “speaking” in tongues.¹⁰⁷ Is Eph. 5:18-19 a passage about the usage of the charismata during this present age? It appears that the term, “spiritual songs,” and other charismatic content of this passage has significance for the continuation of the charismata in the present era.

A passage parallel to Eph. 5:18-19 is Col. 3:16, which carries a clearer charismatic overtone, particularly, a sense of divine givenness:¹⁰⁸ “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing each other via psalms, hymns and spiritual songs in grace, singing in your hearts to God; and everything you do in

¹⁰⁶Luke 7:33-34. I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p. 302; A. Plummer, *St. Luke*, rev. ed. ICC (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1898), p. 208.

¹⁰⁷Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, p. 208: “Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 speak of ‘spiritual songs,’ that is, of songs prompted by the Spirit and manifesting his inspiration.” See esp. pp. 187, 238-39 and L. W. Hurtado, “What Were Spiritual Songs?” *Paraclete* 5 (Winter 1971), pp. 8-17.

¹⁰⁸Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, p. 238.

word or deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus.” As in other passages, *e.g.*, 1 Cor. 1:4-8 and the Ephesian passages examined above, which speak of the charismatic community in action, certain key words recur in Col. 3:16-17, *e.g.*, “word of Christ,” “dwell in you,” “richly,” “in all wisdom” (*cf.* 1 Cor. 1:5; Eph. 1:9, 17; 3:10; Col. 1:9, 28; 2:3), “word and deed” (*cf.* Rom. 15:19)—all of which in their contexts refer to charismatic worship and ministry. It would seem that Col. 3:16 demonstrates the charismatic nature of Eph. 5:18-19, and as such, strengthens the case for these activities to continue during these present evil days and as a “seal” “until the day of redemption.”

Thus the three Ephesian passages (4:14-16, 30 and 5:15-19) reiterate Paul’s pattern of encouraging the development of edifying spiritual gifts in his congregations in the days before the *Parousia*. However, there remains one further passage in Ephesians meriting investigation.

f. Ephesians 6:10-20

¹⁰ Finally, be empowered (ἐνδυναμοῦσθε) in the Lord and in the might of his strength. ¹¹ Put on (ἐνδύσασθε) the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground and after you have done everything, to stand. . . . ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Paul explicitly commands the use of the charismatic power of the Spirit in contexts associated with two familiar eschatological themes.¹⁰⁹ The first theme is the empowering with the eschatological

¹⁰⁹On this passage and the role of power in the eschatological Christian community generally, see Grundmann, “δύναμις, κ.τ.λ.” *TDNT* 2, pp. 313-14: “The community is rescued from the power of Satan and finds itself in a new mode of existence. In this existence, however, it is beset by perils and conflicts, and it waits for the final deliverance and the destruction of its enemies. The power of Christ granted to the community is thus by nature a power to protect and preserve,” and by which “all hostile forces can be overcome.” Grundmann identifies the eschatological outworking of charismatic power in the Eph. 6 passage with 1 Pt. 1:5, “Through faith you are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed

Spirit. In vss. 10 and 11 the command to be “empowered” (ἐνδυναμοῦσθε) is associated with the being “clothed” (ἐνδύσασθε) with the full armor of God. This association of words is likely based on the command of Jesus in Luke 24:49 (“I send the promise of my Father upon you . . . [to be] clothed (ἐνδύσασθε) with power (δύναμιν).” The second aspect of Paul’s command, *i.e.*, to combat the demonic powers, is also a major theme in Jesus’ own ministry, both earthly and exalted, and is, therefore, an integral feature of the disciples’ commission as well.¹¹⁰ Paul had promised his Roman readers that, in the eschatological battle with the demonic powers, “the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” (Rom. 15:20). This promise is an outgrowth of the *proto-evangelium* tradition in Gen. 3:15, developed in Lk. 10:18-19, *cf.* Mk. 16:17-18, in which Jesus affirmed to his disciples that they had been given “authority (ἐξουσίαν) to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power (δύναμιν) of the enemy.”¹¹¹ A further parallel of Eph. 6:12 to the great commission is the reminder that Jesus was “all authority in heaven and on the earth” (Mt. 28:18), just as Paul commissions his readers to confront the

in the last time.” Again, the activity of the “miraculous” δύναμις (as Grundmann describes it on p. 315) in the church is, according to Peter, to continue until the full revelation of her salvation “in the last time.”

¹¹⁰See sec. A, above. So, Sabourin, *Divine Miracles*, p. 76.

¹¹¹The notion of “treading” on the demonic serpent echoes the *protoevangelium* of Gen. 3:15 perhaps brought to the earliest disciples’ mind by the “wounding” of Jesus’ heel at his crucifixion. Too much has been made of the demonic ruling forces behind political powers, rather than the more personal demonic spirits as described in the Gospels and Acts, *e.g.*, by G. B. Caird, *Principalities and Powers: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1956), pp. 1-30; T. Ling, *The Significance of Satan*, pp. 56-61. C. H. C. MacGregor is typical of this position in his “Principalities and Powers,” *NTS* 1 (1954), p. 19. “Paul has in view demonic intelligences of a much higher order than the ‘devils’ who possessed the poor disordered souls that meet us in the Gospel pages.” G. Twelftree and J. Dunn, “Demon Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament,” pp. 221-22, have urged that we not “attempt to drive a wedge between Jesus’ exorcistic ministry and the wider ministry of healing both of Jesus himself and of the first Christians. The manifestations of Satan’s authority, of the grip and ill-effects of evil, were not confined to demon-possession, and Paul (and the other New Testament writers) were very conscious of the malignant power of evil that darkened men’s minds, enslaved their passions, and corrupted their bodies.” I would further suggest, in view of Paul’s action in Acts 16:11-20, his promise in Rom. 15:19, his mention of “discernment of Spirits” 1 Cor. 12:9-10 and the summary of Jesus’ ministry in Acts 10:38, that, with respect to the character of the demonic, a clear continuity exists from the theology of the synoptic gospels to Paul.

“world-rulers” (κοσμοκράτορας) and the spiritual forces of evil “in the heavenlies (ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις).”

One specific way these demonic forces are to be combated is through the “sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” To say that the sword of the Spirit/word of God in this context is simply scripture would be anachronistic.¹¹² Rather, the reference is to the prophetic inspiration of Christ which slays the demonic forces arrayed against God (Rev. 1:16; 19:13, 15, 21), even resistance in the human heart (Heb. 4:12, cf. 1 Cor. 14:24-25). But the reference does not seem to be to inspired preaching or proclamation, but rather, the “sword” is to be “taken” “by means of (διὰ) all prayer and petition, praying all the time in the Spirit” (v.18). Apparently it is in prayer and intercession that the “wrestling” against the demonic powers takes place. It is only later the readers are asked to pray also for Paul that when he opened his mouth, “words might be given him” (by God/Christ/Spirit, note the divine passive voice) so that he could “fearlessly make known” and “fearlessly declare” the gospel. This seems a clear paraphrase of Jesus’ words to his disciples in Luke 21:12-19, where they are warned against fear (vss. 9, 11 and 14) and of persecution; they are warned against preparing their own defenses but promised that Christ would give “words (lit. ‘a mouth’) and wisdom” that no one could refute. Both Matthew’s and Mark’s versions are more explicitly charismatic: “At that time you will be given what to say, for it will be the Spirit of your Father speaking through you” (Mt. 10:19b-20); “say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit” (Mk. 13:11).

It is striking that especially in Mark and Luke, these instructions come in an apocalyptic context, and are introduced in Mark by the remark that “the gospel must first be preached to all nations.” In view of the gospel parallels with Eph. 6:10-20, it would seem that Paul’s preaching may have had a strong eschatological overtone. Certainly this is the contention of Johannes Munck in his groundbreaking work, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*,¹¹³ in which he argues that Paul’s mission to the gentiles (“to all nations”) was an attempt to fulfill the commission of Christ (“to all nations/to every creature”) and precipitate the eschaton.

¹¹²So, Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, p. 227; Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, pp. 799-800: “It is clear that the mere quotation of Bible texts does not in itself exhaust the use of the ‘word of God.’”

¹¹³(Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1959), pp. 333-34. So also, A. J. Hultgren, *Paul’s Gospel and Mission* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), pp. 143-45.

The point, then, is that in Paul's mind, the use of the Spirit's gifts and power in an eschatological struggle against the demonic forces, both in prayer and in fearless proclamation represented the Church's task of the end time, of the last days. It was a commission that was to continue until the mission was completed at "the end of this age" (Mt. 28:20).

More briefly, we continue to demonstrate in further passages the themes already established in 1 Corinthians and Ephesians: Paul's prayer for God or the exalted Christ to bestow on his communities confirmations of the gospel and knowledge of God's will, via the powerful graces (*charismata*) of all wisdom, knowledge, discernment, and miracle power (δύναμις), to be continually built up in love and righteousness until the end of this present age at the *Parousia* or "day of Christ."

g. Philippians 1:9-10 Philippians 1:9-10 briefly reiterates the themes discussed above. In the immediate context, Paul, as he did with his congregations in Corinth and in Ephesus, is praying for the Philippians, partly because they "share in God's grace (χάρις)" with Paul. This powerful grace is described in its immediate context as "defending and confirming (βεβαιώσῃ, vs. 7) the gospel." We have seen that the "grace" to "confirm" the gospel involves the operation of the revelatory, if not miraculous, *charismata* (1 Cor. 1:6,8; cf. Mk. 16:20; Heb. 2:3). The passage itself emphasizes this point.

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and all perception, ¹⁰ toward the goal that (ἐῖς) you may be able to discern what is best, in order that you (ἵνα) may be pure and blameless until (ἐῖς) the day of Christ.

Here the sharing of Paul's grace appears in a familiar pattern: to "abound in love" increasingly, "in knowledge," "all perception" and in discernment. Based on previous patterns, above, this knowledge, perception and discernment include *charismata* of revelation, where once again, Paul is confident that the Holy Spirit, from the exalted Christ (vs.11) will preserve his community in the truth as the members mutually minister and upbuild via their spiritual gifts. But how long does this process continue? These *charismata* operate in the Church so that she might remain continually "pure and blameless *until* (ἐῖς) the day of Christ." This revelatory charismatic activity, again, works

among the members of the Church toward a clearly and fully eschatological goal, which is realized only at the *Parousia*.

h. Colossians 1:9-12

Col. 1:9-12 shares language and themes with 1 Corinthians and Philippians, but especially with Ephesians 1:15-23.

⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about [your faith in Christ, v. 4, and love in the Spirit, v. 8], we have not stopped praying for you and asking God that you be filled (πληρωθῆτε) with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding (ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ). ¹⁰ And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power (ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει δυνατούμενοι) according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

Once again, Paul is praying that the congregation “be filled”—an expression associated with the Holy Spirit and His gifts—with “knowledge” (“full knowledge,” ἐπίγνωσις), “in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” This last phrase emphasizes the divine, charismatic nature of this perception: “all wisdom” certainly includes, if it is not limited to, the “gift of wisdom” (1 Cor. 12:8), while the “understanding” is explicitly qualified by “spiritual” (πνευματικῇ). Grammatically, both the “all (πάσῃ)” and the “spiritual” are “connected with both the substantives,” “wisdom” and “understanding.” “Spiritual wisdom and understanding” does not here mean “being humanly clever about religious matters,” but denotes “wisdom and understanding produced by the Holy Spirit.”¹¹⁴ The Colossians, like the Ephesians, are promised to be empowered “in all power (ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει)” to the extent of “the might of [God’s] glory” (v. 11). This inclusive and expansive description of God’s power, a word frequently used in the New Testament of miracle, certainly includes God’s power for healing and other “mighty works.”

¹¹⁴T. K. Abbott, *Ephesians and Colossians*, ICC, pp. 202-3: “πνευματικῇ, given by the Spirit. Compare I Cor. xii. 8, ὃ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος διδόνται λόγος σοφίας. The word is emphatic in this position, marking the contrast with the false teaching, which had λόγος σοφίας, a pretence of wisdom (ii.23) which really proceeded from ὁ νοῦς σαρκός (ii.18).”

Further, this process is ongoing toward an eschatological end. Paul's prayer is for the Colossians "to walk worthily of the Lord, pleasing Him in every way (εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκίαν), in every good work"¹¹⁵ continually "bearing fruit" and "growing in the full knowledge of God." All this is to continue despite the eschatological woes requiring "great endurance and patience."¹¹⁶ The movement of his passage is toward the eschatological sharing "in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light" (v. 12). The following verse (13) also has a strong eschatological overtone, associated with the word, "kingdom." Here, as throughout the synoptic gospels and elsewhere, the final conflict between the "power of darkness" and the kingdom of the Son is portrayed. God has "delivered (ἐρρύσατο)" and "transferred (μετέστησεν) us" into "redemption" as part of that struggle. Having been thusly redeemed,¹¹⁷ the continuing role of the Church is that "we (including Paul and the community) proclaim him, counseling and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone

¹¹⁵"Every good work" here must include charismatic ministries. See John's use of *ἔργον* in Jn. 10:25; 14:11,12.

¹¹⁶As in Col. 1:11, above. H. Schlier, "Θλιβω," *TDNT* 3, pp. 143-48; D. E. H. Whiteley, *The Theology of St. Paul* (Fortress Press, 1972), p. 126. The use of "patience," (ὑπομονή) here, recalls the characteristic presentation and living out of the Gospel in 2 Cor. 12:12. The peculiar association—one might say, paradox—of suffering and power (*i.e.*, the charismata) in the Christian life is a strong one, representing, perhaps, the central temptation of the primitive Christian community (Mt. 4:1-10 || Lk. 4:1-12, *cf.* 2 Cor. 11; 12:1-13).

Suffering, like the charismata, is essential to the Christian experience because it is a characteristic of the eschatological overlap and the conflict of the two ages: the present evil age and the age to come. Christian sufferings are the eschatological "Messianic woes," the "birth pains" of the new age (Mt. 24:8; Rom. 8:22, *cf.* Str-Bill. I, p. 950), which are to continue until the full "revelation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:18-19).

Suffering, then, implies the continuation of the charismata, in that they both characterize this present age, and neither will cease until the present conflict is resolved at the coming of Christ. G. Bertram, "ὠδίν," *TDNT* 10, pp. 667-74. Also, just as the Christian is commanded to continue the charismatic mission of Christ only until the "end of the age," so also his suffering, which his mission necessarily precipitates as it confronts the "god," or demonic rulers "of this age." Christ holds out suffering in this present time "as a sure prospect for all disciples"—a condition which will be resolved at his return. So, W. Michaelis, "πάσχω," *TDNT* 5, pp. 932-35 and B. Gartner, "Suffer," *NIDNTT* 3, p. 725.

¹¹⁷The redemption here implies, with Eph. 4:7,11, that the charismatic members of the body of Christ, the Church, are given to the Church as booty, as slave/gifts looted from the "power of darkness" (*cf.* Mk. 3:27 || Mt. 12:29).

perfect (τέλειον) in Christ” (v. 28). Paul affirms that he continues to labor to this end (implying that his readers ought to imitate him (*cf.* 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Gal. 2:18-3:5; Phil. 3:17; 1 Th. 1:6; 2 Th. 3:7, 9; *cf.* Heb. 13:7), and repeats the characteristic way in which he presents the gospel, in “word and deed”: “according to the operation of [Christ] working in me in power (ἐν δυνάμει).” It is apparently this characteristic kind of Messianic, eschatological, kingdom-of-God empowerment in which the Colossians were to continue their various ministries (1:11). This point is amplified in a further passage.

i. 1 Thessalonians 1:5-8

⁵ Our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction . . . ⁶ you became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. ⁷ And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸ The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere.

Certainly in 1 Th. 1:5-8, Paul, who shares Moses’ wish that all Israel would receive the Spirit of prophecy, commends the Thessalonians for becoming “imitators of us and of the Lord.” What did the new believers imitate? Paul has just recounted how “our gospel came to you not in words only, but also in power (ἐν δυνάμει) and in the Holy Spirit.” As Jesus transmitted his mission and authority to his disciples, so here Paul is passing on both his mandate and the method of presenting the Gospel, which was spread (as was the norm in other churches, Acts 6:7-8; 8:4-13; 11:21; 1 Cor. 1:4-9; Gal. 3:2,5; Phil. 1:7) by the charismatic community at Thessalonica. Paul affirms that they “became a *model* to *all* believers” to those whom the Thessalonians themselves had reached with the gospel, when they “sounded out the word of the Lord” throughout the Greek peninsula (v. 8).¹¹⁸ A crucially important point emerges here. Warfield had conceded that miracles continued, but only, and somewhat mechanically, among those “upon whom apostolic hands were laid.”¹¹⁹ Here the “modeling” of the

¹¹⁸What the Thessalonians “modeled” to the new believers in Macedonia and Achaia, of course, was not only their presentation of the gospel in word and power, as they imitated Paul, but the way in which they received the gospel, *i.e.*, with joy amid severe suffering.

¹¹⁹*CM*, p. 23: “My conclusion then is, that the power of working miracles was not extended beyond the disciples upon whom the Apostles conferred it by the imposition

Thessalonians for those they encountered demands that the mission to present the gospel in word and power was not limited to the first generation of believers, who were physically touched by the apostles, but to subsequent generations as well. In any case, the imposition of hands is not hinted at in this passage. Indeed, as in most of the previous passages examined, if anything, *prayer* correlates with transmitting the Spirit or the mission to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel. This passage shows that the apostolic laying on of hands was clearly *not* a requirement for fulfilling the great commission in word and miracle. How long was this process to continue? Paul's frame of reference is again the eschaton: the report of the Thessalonians' performance included not only their good reception of the gospel and their rejection of idolatry, but that they now "wait for [God's] Son from heaven" (v. 10). As in all these other passages, either implicitly or explicitly, the present Messianic age of charismatic activity continues until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

j. 1 Thessalonians 5:11-23

1 Th. 5:11-23 continues the themes of eschatological, charismatic empowering.

¹¹ Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing ¹⁶ Be joyful always; ¹⁷ Pray continually; ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit; ²⁰ do not treat prophecies with contempt. ²¹ Test everything. Hold onto the good. ²² Avoid every kind of evil. ²³ May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

In this passage the clear, stated continuation of the charism of prophecy until the "coming (παρουσία) of our Lord Jesus Christ" is not explicit. But against the intense apocalyptic background of 1 Thessalonians (4:13-5:11), Paul's urgings not to quench the Spirit or to despise prophecy assume a definite eschatological cast. The immediate context provides three further reasons to associate the immediacy of the eschaton with the activity of prophecy. First, the contextual

of their hands." Earlier, p. 22, Warfield said, "The Holy Ghost was conferred by the laying on of the hands, specifically of the Apostles, and of the Apostles alone."

framework in which the exhortations to prophesy parallel that of 1 Cor. 12, 13 and 14: the exhortation to recognize and respect the various ministries in the church (5:11 || 1 Cor. 12); to do so lovingly (13-15 || 1 Cor. 13); and to encourage prophecy, but to regulate it (19-21 || 1 Cor. 14). The framework might even be extended to include the resurrection chapter (1 Cor. 15), where, in vss. 23-24, the whole person, including the body is to be preserved “blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Second, the last phrase is a distinct parallel of 1 Cor. 1:8 and Phil. 1:10 where in both cases the revelatory charismata are given to strengthen the community until the “end” (1 Cor. 1) so it will appear “blameless in (or, “until,” Phil. 1) the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The parallel is enhanced by observing the similarity of v. 24 with 1 Cor. 1:9, that is, that the “faithful God” will complete this sanctifying work (*cf.* the similar idea in Phil. 1:11). But Paul’s use of a particular word in reference to the Spirit may have significance for our thesis.

Third, Paul’s selection of the metaphor, “quench the Spirit,” may have importance for cessationism. Here, “quench,” as Jeremias has suggested, seems an allusion to the “dominant view of orthodox Judaism,” *i.e.*, that the sins of Israel caused the cessation of prophecy¹²⁰ at the death of the last writing prophets of the Old Testament: Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.¹²¹ Jeremias further pointed out that the New Testament presupposes such a view among its Jewish contemporaries.¹²² It was precisely the Christian claim that in the exalted Jesus the age of the Messianic outpouring of the Spirit of prophecy had arrived (Acts 2:17; 7:51-60) that was so startling and infuriating to many Jewish hearers.¹²³

¹²⁰J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus*, pp. 80-82. *Cf.* also, E. Sjöberg, “πνεῦμα, κ.τ.λ.,” *TDNT* 6, pp. 383-87 and R. Meyer, “προφήτης, κ.τ.λ.,” *TDNT* 6, pp. 813-28. *Cf.* Chap. 1, sec. C, on the cessation of prophecy in Rabbinic Judaism.

¹²¹Jeremias cites *Tosephta Sota* 13:2. *Cf.* Str-Bill. I, p. 127, sec. b. W. C. van Unnik has argued in “‘Den Geist loschet nicht aus’ (I Thessalonicher v 19),” *NovT* 4 (1968), pp. 255-69, that while one could imagine killing prophets and repressing charismatics, it is hard to conceive of stifling the Holy Spirit. Hence, he says, πνεῦμα in 1 Th. 5:19 refers properly to Spirit-inspired utterances.

¹²²As in the case where the remark of the disciples of John at Ephesus did not mean that they had never heard of the Holy Spirit, but that they had not heard He was present again. “The sharp antithesis in Mark 3:28-29 is only comprehensible in the light of the idea that the Spirit has been quenched.” Jeremias, *Theology*, p. 82.

¹²³Jeremias, *Theology*, p. 82, summarizes the possible significance of 1 Th. 5:19-20 against the background of first-century Judaism: “The idea of the quenching of the Spirit is an expression of the consciousness that the present time is alienated from God. Time without the Spirit is time under judgment. God is silent. Only in the last days will the disastrous epoch of the absence of the Spirit come to an end and the Spirit

Hence, it may well be that when Paul urges the community not to “quench the Spirit” or to “despise prophesying,” he is not simply affirming the value of prophecy. Rather, he may implicitly be saying, “Do not regress back into the contemporary Jewish belief that the Spirit of prophecy has ceased; this essentially denies your participation in the Kingdom of God or, more specifically, in the era of Messiah, Jesus, who bestows the Spirit on you, *i.e.*, in the Kingdom of God.” It is likely not accidental that this command is bracketed by references to “Christ Jesus” and the “coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” the one who, in Paul’s mind and in that of the earliest communities, is associated so primally with the inauguration of the age of the Spirit and the outpouring of His gifts. In vss. 19 and 20 then, to deny the Spirit (of prophecy) is, by implication, to deny Christ’s exaltation and charismatic work in His body, the Church (Mt. 12:28-32), as Warfield has done.¹²⁴ The motivation to quench prophecies in the Christian community of Thessalonica may well have had its source in the confusion reflected in the second letter: “Do not become shaken or disturbed because of some

return again.”

The Jewish cessationist position regarding the Spirit of prophecy and power very early became a target of Christian writers, not only those of the New Testament, but also to later Christian apologists who opposed the Jewish cessationist polemic, as in the cases of Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* 87, (ANF I, pp. 240, 243): “The prophetic gifts remain with us [right] to the present time. And hence you ought to understand that [the gifts] formerly among your nation have been transferred to us.” “This fact you plainly perceive [that] after [Christ] no prophet has arisen among you . . . It was requisite that such gifts should cease from you; [but] should again, as had been predicted, become gifts which, from the grace of the Spirit’s power, He imparts to those who believe in him, according as He deems each man worthy thereof.” Origen (c.185-c.154), *Against Celsus*, trans. and ed. by Chadwick, p. 72.; “God’s care of the Jews was transferred to those Gentiles who believe in him. Accordingly, it may be observed that after Jesus’ advent the Jews have been entirely forsaken and possess nothing of those things which from antiquity they have regarded as sacred, and have not even any vestige of divine power among them. They no longer have any prophets or wonders, though traces of these are to be found to a considerable extent among Christians. Indeed, some works are even greater; and if our word may be trusted, we also have seen them.” Cyril of Jerusalem (AD 318-386), *Catechetical Lectures*, 18:26, (NPF, 2nd ser., VII, p. 140), employs a similar dispensational argument: “The first [Old Testament] church was cast off, [but] in the second, which is the universal church, God hath set, as Paul says, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues and every kind of power.”

¹²⁴Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, p. 263. See the possible further connection with Jesus’ words on despising prophecy and other works of power in Jeremias, *The Unknown Sayings of Jesus*, trans. R. H. Fuller (London: SPCK, 1964), pp. 100-01.

prophecy [lit., πνεύματος] or message [λόγου] or letter supposed to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has already come” (2 Th. 2:2). Indeed, this second Thessalonian letter focuses on the problem and consequences of discerning true and false revelations. The revelations to those at Thessalonica have not appeared only as prophetic utterances or “words,” but as “power (δυνάμει)” and “with the Holy Spirit” (1 Th. 1:5). As an extension of the present bewildering variety of “spirits,” both divine and demonic, the miracles of the exalted Christ working through his apostles and subsequent generations of their true “imitators,” will have their opposites in the counterfeit and deceptive miracles worked by the power of the “lawless one” (2 Th. 2:9). Those who persecute the Thessalonian believers and refuse to “obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus” are to be “shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his strength on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed” (1:9-10).

k. 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

¹¹Toward which (εἰς) [glorification], we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that he may fulfill every good purpose and work of faith in power (ἔργον πίστεως ἐν δυνάμει). ¹²We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul’s prayer for his community is for their glorification in the Lord Jesus, a glorification that is spelled out in two stages. The first is eschatological and is described in three passages: 1, the previous context of the future revelation of the Lord Jesus from “heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels,” in which the Thessalonians will be glorified, 2, “toward which” (time) Paul prays that they be worthy of God’s calling (v. 11),¹²⁵ and 3, the repeated glorification of the Thessalonians in Christ and they in him (v. 12). The second stage, the present time before the *Parousia*, actually overlaps 2 and 3. Paul prays that the community may be “counted worthy” (ἀξιῶν) even now, just as the same aorist subjunctive verb form “may fulfill” (πληρώσῃ)

¹²⁵This seems to be equivalent to the fully eschatological “blameless” or “mature” state toward which the charismata worked in this present age (1 Cor. 1:8; 13:10; Eph. 4:13; 1 Th. 1:23).

applies to the present working of God among them.¹²⁶ That “present working” invites investigation.

Paul prays that God may “fulfill” two (perhaps appositional and overlapping) objectives: 1, “every purpose of goodness” (πᾶσαν εὐδόκiam ἀγαθωσύνης),” and, 2, “every¹²⁷ work of faith in power” (ἔργον πίστεως ἐν δυνάμει). The last phrase is of particular significance for our thesis.

The juxtaposition of the words, “work,” “faith,” and “power,” all strongly imply miraculous charismatic activity in the Thessalonian Christian community, as they also appear in Gal. 3:5 and 1 Cor. 12:9-10 where the three root words are similarly connected in clear references to miracles.¹²⁸ Moreover, while it is God who effects this activity, the connection with faith here also requires present human involvement in the miraculous charismatic expression. Finally, it is God’s and Christ’s “grace” (χάρις) that provides both the means and the extent of this miracle working power, a concept repeated in many similar charismatic contexts, particularly in the recorded teaching of Jesus.

But the important point is that the grammar of this passage requires miraculous activity to continue into the eschaton. This is evident from the use of the εἰς ὃ (“into/until which”), which begins v. 11, and which requires that the subsequent activity for which Paul prays (including the “work of faith in miracle-power”) to continue “into/until” the *Parousia*. It is also evident from the use of “So as/in order that” (ὅπως) at the beginning of v. 12. Here, the *purpose* of every “work of faith in power” is the eschatological mutual glorification of the saints and the name of the Lord “in” each other. But again the mutual glorification here may reflect the present/future tension of God’s eschatological glory breaking into this present age, as was so often the case in Johannine thought. The same pattern recurs in Petrine thought as well.

¹²⁶The familiar eschatological overlapping of the present and the age to come is associated particularly in the terms, δόξα/δοξάζω (“glory/glorify”). The Johannine association of δόξα with miracle is close to the usage in this passage (e.g., Jn. 2:11; 12:28), as is the word, “work.” C. H. Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 207-12.

¹²⁷The single “every” (πᾶσαν), likely modifies both phrases, viz., “purpose of goodness” and “work of faith in power.” So, E. Best, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, HNTC, pp. 269-70.

I. 1 Peter 1:5

[You] ⁵ who are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Pet. 1:5 maintains the eschatological framework for the continuing power of God. This power seems likely to be associated or identified with "the grace that was to come to you" in v. 10. Beyond the miraculous implication of δύνανμις here, one can only speculate that the kind of power and grace operative in their midst may be further described in 4:11, which apparently includes, among other gifts, that of prophecy.¹²⁹ In any case, the key point here is that this charismatic power of God is seen to be operative among the readers "until" (*NIV*, Greek, ἐς) the salvation "revealed in the last time." A similar pattern seems to emerge near the end of this epistle.

m. 1 Peter 4:7-12 1 Pet. 4:7-12 is strikingly Pauline in its tone, diction and content,¹³⁰ particularly as this passage reiterates Paul's pattern of exhortations on spiritual gifts. As in Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 1, 12 and 13, throughout Ephesians and in the other Pauline passages discussed above, the writer of 1 Peter emphasizes the motive of love against a background of the impending "end of all things" when he encourages charismatic ministry in the Christian community.

⁷ The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. ⁸ Above all, exhibit an intense love, because love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹ Provide hospitality to one

¹²⁹E. E. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, p. 24. The "λόγια θεοῦ," in 1 Pt. 4:11 are "the words spoken by the charismatic." R. Kittel, *TDNT* 4, p. 139. J. N. D. Kelly denies the λόγια are ecstatic phenomena, *e.g.*, glossolalia, but rather are "routine functions like teaching and preaching." He qualifies this apparent "ordinary/extraordinary" distinction by affirming that "these, too, though lacking the outward tokens of Spirit-possession, should be regarded (he implies) as the true sense charismatic, for what the Christian spokesman enunciates, if he is faithful, is God's word; he does not simply repeat the divine message, *but God speaks through him*" [italics mine]. The λόγια Kelly recognizes, are "used in classical Greek and the LXX for divine utterances." *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, BNTC, p. 180. Kelly seems to reverse his position in mid-paragraph, finally affirming that the "routine" teaching and preaching are commanded here to become essentially prophetic utterances. He appears to distinguish between "ecstatic" and less flamboyant forms of revelation, not between divinely or humanly inspired speech, *i.e.*, "extra-ordinary" and "ordinary" charismata.

¹³⁰Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, p. 177.

another without grumbling.¹⁰ As each one has received a spiritual gift, so serve each other as good stewards of the varied grace of God.¹¹ If anyone speaks, do so as the oracles of God; if anyone serves, do so by the strength supplied by God, in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the might into eternity.

The charismata are mentioned in general terms: “speaking” and “serving,” but they are specified as charismata in a number of ways. First, they are the “varied grace” of God, a term describing a broad range of charismata.¹³¹ As does Paul, so Peter here implies an exhortation to preserve Church unity via charismatic diversity, *i.e.*, to not despise either the so-called “miraculous” or “non-miraculous” gifts, but to retain and develop them all. Secondly, those who speak or serve, should do so “charismatically,” not through mere human ability. The ones speaking to the community should do so to the extent God speaks through them, *i.e.*, as exercising a χάρισμα (v.10). This appears at minimum to be an exhortation to exercise the gift of prophecy, paralleling the exhortations of Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 14:1, 3, 5, 13, 26, 39; and 1 Th. 5:19, 20. The readers are not to try to do by human means what God has ordained to do through them by his Spirit (*cf.* Gal. 3:3, “Having begun via the Spirit, are you now being completed via the flesh?”). Thirdly, the function of the activities also indicates their charismatic character, as we have seen in so many of the passages examined above: they are “received to serve others” (*NIV*),¹³² *i.e.*, for the mutual edification of the body of Christ.

The eschatological terminal point for the exercise of these charismata is indicated in three ways. First, Peter’s exhortations about spiritual gifts appear only as they are exhorted toward their eschatological goal (“the end of all things is near. Therefore . . . Above all . . .”). Second, the conclusion of the passage represents the eschatological goal of all Christian activity: the glory of God; and concludes with a doxology which refers to God’s ultimate and eternal power.¹³³ Third,

¹³¹“Peter has in mind (*cf.* v. 11) the charismata of primitive Christianity to which Paul especially refers, *cf.* Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11.” H. Seesemann, “ποικίλος, κ.τ.λ.,” *TDNT* 6, p. 485. The word is used to describe the “various,” or “many kinds” of miracles (δυνάμεις) in Heb. 2:4.

¹³²That is, in the spirit of a *logion* of Jesus placed in the context of ministering spiritual gifts to others: “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give” (Mt. 10:8).

¹³³See 5:8-11 for a similar paradigm: all believers are to resist the devil (a central

the context leads immediately into Christian suffering or the Messianic woes, into which all true disciples, however gifted (“on whom the Spirit of glory and of God rests,” v. 14), must enter. These sufferings, like the charismata, will end when believers “share in the glory that is to be revealed” (5:1) or, “receive the crown of glory that will never fade away” (5:4). A similar pattern emerges in the Johannine writings.

n. I John 2:26-28

1 Jn. 2:26-28 is an exhortation, in an eschatological context, to rely on the revelatory work of the Spirit, whether directly to individuals or through gifts of prophecy, in order to combat false teachers.

²⁶ I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. ²⁷ As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him. ²⁸ And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

The writer’s seemingly extreme appeal here to direct revelation to preserve orthodoxy is startling, since so much conflict and false teaching seems to have derived from “spirits” and false prophets among them (4:1).¹³⁴ There are, of course, other guidelines for identifying those who are in the truth,¹³⁵ but the community finds it

activity of the Kingdom of God) and to suffer. But the God of *all grace* (inclusive of the charismata) will eschatologically restore his faithful ones, steadfast, into “eternal glory.” The doxology, with its reference to eschatological glory and power, is repeated from 4:11.

¹³⁴W. Grundmann, “χρίω, κ.τ.λ.,” *TDNT* 9, p. 572: “A notable feature in the ecclesiastical situation in which the Johannine Epistles were written is that the author does not refer the community to an authoritative teaching office but reminds it of its reception of the χρίσμα which is itself the teacher and which makes the community independent of a teaching office [at least in the modern ecclesiastical sense]. This shows how strongly in John the understanding of the Messiah is determined by the anointing of the Spirit and how the relation between the Son and sons, which is based on reception of the Spirit, finds an echo in the connection between the anointed One [Χριστός] and the anointed [the Christians].” Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, pp. 353, 352, points out, however, that as in Paul, the Johannine literature expects the dynamic interaction of present revelation and apostolic κήρυγμα (“proclamation”): “Present inspiration is known and expected; but a right understanding of Jesus is always normative.”

¹³⁵E.g., those who: exhibit selfless love (1 Jn. 2:9-11; 3:10c-18; 4:7-12, 16, 20-21); do not break fellowship with the community (2:19; 4:6); are not antinomian

possible to thwart those who are of the antichrist “only in the power of the Spirit,” the *χρῖσμα*. The *χρῖσμα* reveals to the community “all things” (2:20, *οἶδατε πάντα*), and is closely related to other Johannine teaching from Christ about the Paraclete (*παράκλητος*, John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14), the prophetic Revealer, Teacher and Witness to the Son (5:6) who was to be with the Christian community during the exaltation of Christ.¹³⁶ So in what *time* context does the writer of 1 John see the operation of this revelatory *χρῖσμα*?

The *χρῖσμα* appears in a clear-cut eschatological context and represents an ongoing bestowal of the revelatory Spirit in continuing response to the coming Antichrist and to his prototypes who have already appeared. Their appearance in the community is evidence of “the last hour” (*ἔσχάτη ὥρα*, v. 18). John has just affirmed that this present *κόσμος* (“world/era”) “is passing away, but the one who does God’s will remains into the age to come” (*ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*). The association of the antichrist and the “last hour” is a major theme of New Testament theology, in which demonic forces are unleashed against the Kingdom of God in a final spasm of evil, deception and destruction. John’s “hour,” or even more significantly, “*last* hour,” emphasizes the decisive moment of conflict before the end,¹³⁷ which nevertheless characterizes and includes “the

(1:5-10; 2:4-6,29; 5:18); can, and do ask God for cleansing from sin willingly and immediately (1:8-9; 2:1-2,12; 3:19-22; 4:18; 5:14-15); remain within the framework of the original Christian tradition (1:1-3; 2:7,13,14,24,26-27); especially emphasize the centrality of Jesus Christ (1:1,3,7b; 2:22-24; 4:1-3,15; 5:1,5-12); and those to whom the Spirit bears witness to the truth (2:27; 3:24b; 4:13; 5:7).

¹³⁶So, W. Grundmann, “*χρῖμα, κ.τ.λ.*,” *TDNT* 9, p. 572 and D. Muller, “Anoint,” *NIDNTT* 1, p. 123. However, Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, p. 28, seems to want to limit the similar language in the Gospel of John strictly to apply to the twelve disciples who were thereby empowered to write scripture. But the parallel here of John 16:13-16 and 1 John 2:27 (also Mt. 23:9) seems to answer the hermeneutical question of how matters originally addressed to the first disciples apply to the Church at large. This strongly implies that the whole church ideally and normatively participates in, and continues the mission of the original disciples, even as they did the mission of the Lord Jesus’. Again, are not Luke’s numbers, 12, 70 (72), or 120, while historical, also archetypal of the elect, both Jew and Gentile?

¹³⁷Alan Richardson, *Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 203-10. Rudolph Schnackenburg, “Hour,” *EBT*, pp. 379-82. He summarizes the parenthetic intent of this word in Johannine literature: It “serves as an admonition to his disciples to recognize the eschatological hour which has come with him and is still to be completed and, at the same time, to take cognizance of their salvation and the task which awaits them [in] suffering and persecution . . . joy and confidence . . . peace and

whole Christian era.”¹³⁸ How it is possible to imagine an “hour” later than the “*last* hour” during which certain spiritual gifts are to cease, is difficult to grasp.¹³⁹ The whole time of the messianic woes, during which the people of God are charismatically empowered against the forces of the antichrist, continue until the final intervention of the Messiah at his coming.

The crucial connection of the prophetic anointing with the eschaton is the assertion that He “*remains in you*” μένει ἐν ὑμῖν (a plural, meaning, “the whole church”), and continues to teach the readers to “remain in Him” (Christ). How long is this situation to continue? Verse 28 exhorts the readers to “remain in Him, so that when He is manifested we may have confidence and not be ashamed in His coming (παρουσία).” This terminal-point of the “remaining” condition reminds us of virtually all of the passages examined, beginning with 1 Cor. 1:8. The flow of this passage, then, certainly suggests that the

the assurance of victory.”

¹³⁸J. G. Gibbs, “Hour,” *ISBE*, rev. ed., 1979-, 4, p. 769, referring to 1 John 2:18, “a time known by the ‘many antichrists’ that come during its duration.” D. Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: 1981), p. 855. He notes “John’s acute awareness that the ‘hour’ permeates the whole of the present era.”

¹³⁹This same argument applies to the special creation of a sub-divided sixth “dispensation” of the “Church Age” in theological dispensationalism so widespread in fundamentalism. Each dispensation represents a “period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some *specific* [italics his] revelation of the will of God.” C. I. Scofield, *The Scofield Reference Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1919), p. 5, n. 4. A popular belief among dispensationalists today is that, because “Jews seek signs, and Greeks seek wisdom” (1 Cor. 1:22), miracles appeared primarily to confirm the word to Jews, while Greeks responded more readily to reasoned preaching. The gifts of the Spirit were “transitional”: the records of them in Acts “were demonstrations of power to vindicate the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, but not intended for permanent exercise in the normal conditions of the Christian Church when Christ had been rejected by Israel” (Acts 3:19-21). Consequently, miracles rapidly diminished after Acts 9, or 15, and the “normal graces” of the Spirit predominated in the Gentile Christian Churches “as associated with the Apostle Paul.” W. H. Griffith-Thomas, *The Holy Spirit of God*, pp. 45-49. A similar position is assumed by Sir Robert Anderson, *The Silence of God*, p. 162: “As scripture plainly indicates, [miracles] continued so long as the testimony was addressed to the Jew, but ceased when, the Jew being set aside, the Gospel went out to the Gentile world.” A review of the summary statements in the New Testament of Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles, however, shows both that the content of his gospel did not change from Jew to Gentile, and that the conclusions of Griffith-Thomas and Anderson do not bear biblical scrutiny (Acts. 15:12; Rom. 15:18-19; 2 Cor. 12:12; 1 Cor. 2:4; 1 Th. 1:5; cf. Acts 19:11; 28:7-9; especially note the universal promise of the Spirit of prophecy in Acts 2:39). Interestingly, Griffith-Thomas presented this theory of a sub-divided “Church Age” dispensation as part of a series of lectures to Princeton Seminary in 1913, during Warfield’s tenure and before *CM* was written.

“anointing” on the readers, which is to combat the eschatological forces of the antichrist and his surrogates is to continue as long as this anointing is required. John does *not* appeal only to a body of teaching, to apostolic authority, or to scripture in this passage, but to the prophetic anointing remaining in the community. Certainly, elsewhere John provides several other objective checks on false teaching and revelation, but these do not preclude the witness of immediate revelation to the community, until the coming of Christ. Our final passage continues the themes developed in this present section.

o. Jude 18-21

Jude 18-21 reflects, like the previous passage, conflict between false teachers and the faithful community.

¹⁸ “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.” ¹⁹ These are the men who divide you, “natural” (ψυχικοί) men who do not have the Spirit. ²⁰ But you, beloved, build up yourselves in the most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. ²¹ Keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

The “charismatic” element appears in the exhortation that the readers, in contrast to those who “follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit” (*NIV*),¹⁴⁰ should instead be “building themselves up in the most holy faith” by “praying in the Holy Spirit.” The idea of “edification” in connection with prayer in the Holy Spirit is familiar from 1 Cor. 14:4 (“the one who prays in a tongue [|| prays in the Spirit, 14:14, 15] edifies himself”). But whether Jude is exhorting the readers to pray specifically in tongues is problematic, though if prayer is associated with the Holy Spirit in biblical texts, then that prayer necessarily has at least some charismatic dimension.¹⁴¹

The eschatological element here is familiar; it includes the struggle of the faithful community against false prophets (vss. 11,19) and demonically tinged (vss. 4,6,13) evil. This is part of the messianic

¹⁴⁰The *NIV* translation implies these men were not prophetically gifted by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴¹“A reference to charismatic prayer, including glossolalic prayer, may therefore be presumed for Jude 20.” Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, p. 246, cites E. M. B. Green, *II Peter and Jude*, TNTC, pp. 183-84.

war of the Kingdom of God. Dunn has suggested that Jude may be facing a situation here which is much like that of Corinth (1 Cor. 2:13-15),¹⁴² and we might add, of 1 John, in which divisive intruders of a proto-gnostic, antinomian bent have penetrated the community. As John, Jude understands the appearance of these scoffing, boasting and unspiritual intruders as a characteristic of “the last times” (v.18). Certainly the situation has already been foretold (v. 17, *cf.* Mk. 13:22 || Mt. 24:24, *cf.* 1 Tm. 4:1). The command to combat these men by steering into truth the doubters and those influenced by this invasion (vss. 22, 23), then, assumes the eschatological struggle against evil—a struggle which both obediently mirrors the mercy of Christ, and continues onward until the readers themselves are “brought to eternal life.”

p. Revelation 19:10 with 22:9

Those “brought to eternal life” are described in two passages in Revelation as essentially prophets. The context describes a vision of heaven featuring the “sound of a great multitude” (19:1, 3, 6), “servants” (19:2, 5), the “twenty-four elders,” and “the bride” (19:7) of the Lamb, and, apparently, “those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb” (19:9), in other words, the redeemed of God in heaven. The scene overwhelms the seer who falls at the angel’s feet, who then urges,

Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The key point for cessationism here is the angel, who is encouraging those remaining on the earth (the readers of this vision), equates not only himself with the seer, but with his “brothers” (fellow believers) on the ground that they *all* “hold the testimony of Jesus.”

The testimony of Jesus is then described simply: it is “the spirit of prophecy.” The NIV does not capitalize πνεῦμα (spirit) here to indicate the Holy Spirit, though they could do so. In any case, πνεῦμα indicates that what is held is not a written or simply oral doctrine, but a dynamic, charismatic expression of some sort. Hence, a necessary implication is that the “brothers” of the seer are those who “hold the testimony of Jesus” have the “spirit of prophecy.” On this ground, one could say that “your brothers the prophets” of 22:9 are exegetically

¹⁴²James Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, p. 246.

identical with “all who keep the words of this book.”¹⁴³ Hence, the book of Revelation seems to suggest that Christians normatively, potentially or actually, are all prophets (as Paul suggests in 1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1, 5, 39).

An important issue which Warfield raises in *Counterfeit Miracles* emerges from several of these passages: the revelation of Christ given “atomistically” to believers, a situation he describes as the “mystic’s dream.”¹⁴⁴ Warfield argues that the Holy Spirit no longer introduces “new and unneeded revelations into the world,” and in the same breath, that the present task of Spirit is to “diffuse this one complete revelation through the world and to bring mankind to a saving knowledge of it.” Chapter 2 touched on Warfield’s confusion between the *process* of revelation and the *sufficiency of Scripture*, *i.e.*, that one did not necessarily affect the other. A whole range of divine revelations and miracles can, and in fact do occur, which in no way diminish the authority of “final revelation” in Christ and scripture, *e.g.*, cases in which the gospel requires application: guidance, discernment, correction, healing, exorcism, *etc.*, none of which add a single word to the Bible or creeds. But does in fact the New Testament predict “atomistic” revelation of his purposes and will to meet each person’s “separate needs”?

Many of the passages just surveyed provide evidence that the “testimony of Christ is [repeatedly] confirmed” “until the end” to Church members through revelatory charismata, including miracles (1 Cor. 1:4-8). The list continues in the following: Eph. 1:8-10 (“making known the mystery of his will,” *cf.* v. 18); 3:18 (“empowered to grasp the dimensions . . .”); 4:13 (spiritual gifts “until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God”); Phil. 1:9-10 (knowledge and perception to “discern what is best . . . until the day of Christ,” *cf.* Col. 1:9-12); 1 Pt. 1:5 (“shielded by God’s power until . . . the last time”); and finally, 1 Jn. 2:27 (“his anointing *remains in you* . . . and teaches you about all things; . . . that anointing is real and not counterfeit”). “Extraordinary” spiritual gifts, *e.g.*, prophecy and other revelatory works are to function normatively in the Church “confirming” (Heb. 2:3-4) the apostolic testimony of Christ. This is done not by the appearance of mere “wonders” without content

¹⁴³So, B. C. Aker, *DPCM*, 458.

¹⁴⁴Warfield, *CM*, p. 26.

pointing to the true gospel, but they themselves repeat and apply that gospel in all its expressions until the end of this age, *e.g.*, reminding of the exaltation and rule of Christ over every situation; comfort, warning and edification; healing and deliverances; the presentation/proclamation of the Kingdom of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

C. Summary

Warfield's evidentialist function for miracles, the foundation for cessationism, is reductionistic and superficial in view of their dominating roles in the biblically formulated doctrines of pneumatology and the Kingdom of God. An application of Warfield's biblical hermeneutic to the scriptural data on the Holy Spirit, reveals a portrayal of His activity as characteristically, if not exclusively charismatic. To speak of the Spirit's "subsequent work" as functioning only within the Calvinistic *ordo salutis*, and not in the wider range of charismata is naive. As He operates within the traditional stages of "salvation," as Calvinism conceived it, the Spirit's work is thoroughly revelatory and lies on a continuum of revelatory activity which would include the charismata of 1 Corinthians 12. Warfield's limitation on contemporary Spirit's work is not only to confuse the object of revelation with its mode of presentation and application, but also is to alienate one's theology from its clear and authoritative biblical grounding.

Similarly, Warfield's understanding of the present work of Christ in his exaltation falls far short of the biblical teaching. The Bible teaches that Jesus' earthly mission was to inaugurate the Kingdom of God in charismatic power, and that he is to continue that mission through Christian believers, beginning with his disciples and their converts until the end of the age. The central expression of the Kingdom of God is its divine power displacing the rule and ruin of the demonic. Hence the New Testament miracles did not appear to accredit preaching, rather the preaching articulated the miracle, placing it in its Christological setting and demanding a believing and repentant response. Presently, the exalted Christ continues to pour out his charismata upon his Church to continue his kingdom mission. Christ's work is emphatically not "done," as Warfield would suggest, but remains active in his Church through his distribution of the whole variety of spiritual gifts.

Chapter 3 examined passages which exhibit a single point for our thesis: the scriptures explicitly teach that spiritual gifts equip the Church for her mission *specifically* until the end of the age. The broad range of God's graces, on a seamless continuum, from what the clas-

sical Protestant tradition would call “illumination,” to prophecy and the working of miracles, is “set in the Church” for her edification, guidance, correction, comfort and worship of God. The foregoing passages presuppose, explicitly or implicitly, that these charismata are bestowed on the Church as the central function of the lordship of the exalted Jesus, and teach directly that they necessarily continue all during this present age until he returns. Further, the charismata serve as Christ’s equipment for the intervening time of the “Messianic war,” waged not against humanity, but against the demonic powers tyrannizing it. Such eschatological warfare necessarily involves casualties; but suffering as a function of charismatic service in Christ only further indicates the duration of the battle and its victorious conclusion at the *Parousia*. Against Warfield’s position that the Holy Spirit no longer reveals divine truth “atomistically,” to each believer, several passages have shown that the charismata are normatively expected to reveal divine truth to each and every believer; that, indeed, the very structure of the Church body is established to that end. Revelation and miracles, however, are to remain within the theological and moral framework of “final” revelation in Christ as revealed once and for all in scripture.

The following chapter attempts to draw the foregoing themes into a fuller coherence and significance.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Many Evangelicals today would affirm Bishop Butler's stern rebuke to John Wesley: "Sir the pretending to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Ghost is a horrid thing, a very horrid thing."¹ What is the reason for such a revulsion to contemporary charismatic experience? Simply because, in the long evolution of Christian theology, miracles have come to signify the additional revelation of qualitatively new Christian doctrine, principally, in Scripture. To claim a revelation or a miracle represents an attempt, essentially, to add new content to the Bible.

The modern conflict over the cessation of miraculous gifts has antecedents as old as the fairly sophisticated arguments of early rabbinic Judaism. The cessationist doctrine found its classic expression in post-reformation era Calvinism: 1) The essential role of miraculous charismata was to accredit normative Christian doctrine and its bearers. 2) While God may providentially act in unusual, even striking ways, true miracles are limited to epochs of special divine revelation, *i.e.*, those within the biblical period. 3) Miracles are judged by the doctrines they purport to accredit: if the doctrines are false, or alter orthodox doctrines, their accompanying miracles are necessarily counterfeit.

Since it is widely believed that Scripture alone is the basis for Protestant doctrine, it is no wonder, then, that the traditional post-Reformation arguments against contemporary miracles (cessationism) have been widely disseminated. But the case for the continuation of the whole range of God's gifts and graces has only recently been articulated in terms beyond its usual appeals to personal experience to those based more on serious historical and biblical study. Even within the latter area, the case for continuing spiritual gifts generally rests on a very few biblical texts, usually centering on 1 Cor. 13:8-10. Theologically, the case is advanced on the simple assertion that because miracles are not limited to evidential functions in the Bible, and because prophecy is given mainly for "edification, exhortation and

¹Cited by R. A. Knox, *Enthusiasm* (Oxford: The University Press, 1950), p. 450.

encouragement” and not construed as addition to a sufficient Scripture, the basic cessationist premise (that miraculous charismata necessarily accredit new doctrine) is bypassed. If the function of the charismata determines their duration, then their edificatory, rather than simply evidential functions determine their continuation.

The doctrine of cessationism, however, deserves a more thorough examination of its foundational premises, and a broader investigation of the relevant biblical witness, than it has heretofore received. It is to this need that this project is presently addressed. Because this chapter is a distillate of the previous chapters, this summary is necessarily bereft of many scriptural references, supporting documentation and scholarly opinion. The purpose of this study is ultimately irenic, undertaken with the hope that a biblical understanding of charismatic function in its eschatological setting may defuse the conflict over cessationism.

The doctrine that revelatory and miraculous spiritual gifts passed away with the apostolic age may best be approached by examining the central premises of the most prominent and representative modern expression of cessationism, Benjamin B. Warfield’s *Counterfeit Miracles* (CM). The thesis of this dissertation is that Warfield’s polemic—the culmination of a historically evolving argument—fails because of internal inconsistencies with respect to its concept of miracle and its biblical hermeneutics. This project holds that contemporary cessationism stands upon certain post-Reformation and Enlightenment era conceptions of miracle-as-evidence, upon highly evolved, post-biblical emphases about the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God and their normative expressions in the world. The central fault of Warfield’s cessationism is that it is far more dogmatically than scripturally based. His cessationism represents a failure to grasp the biblical portrayal of the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit of prophecy, expressed characteristically in the charismata, which are bestowed until the end of this age by the exalted Christ as manifestations of the advancing Kingdom of God.

The approach of this dissertation was to review: 1) the historical evolution of Warfield’s cessationism and the concept of miracle on which it depends; 2) to examine Warfield’s cessationist polemic itself; and then, 3) to test it for internal consistency with respect to its concept of miracle, its historical method, and its biblical hermeneutics; and, 4) to scan a few representative passages of Scripture which summarize the recurring theme in the NT that Spiritual gifts are granted for the advance of God’s kingdom and the maturity of the Church until the

end of this present age. This present chapter recapitulates this pattern and concludes with a review of some biblical principles applicable to cessationism.

A. The Historical Evolution of Cessationism and Its View of Miracle

Benjamin Warfield's "Protestant polemic" against continuing miracles is "Protestant" in that it seeks to protect the core principle of religious authority on which his tradition was based: the final, normative revelation of Christ in Scripture. From before the turn of the century until Warfield responded with his work, *Counterfeit Miracles* in 1918, Protestant religious authority had come under increasing attack, in Warfield's view, from a variety of competing religious movements. Warfield perceived that these religious bodies *e.g.*, Roman Catholics, proto-pentecostals like the Irvingites, faith healers, as well as Christian Scientists and the theological liberals, were, to some degree heterodox, because they all shared an ominous flaw in faith or practice: openness to contemporary miraculous gifts.

Cessationism did not originate within orthodox Christianity, but within normative Judaism in the first three centuries of the Common Era. An early form of cessationism was directed at Jesus. One of the accusations which led to Jesus' execution was that he had violated the commands of Deuteronomy 13 and 18, which forbid performing a sign or a wonder to lead the people astray after false gods. The Mishnah and Talmud developed a sophisticated cessationist polemic, used not only against early charismatic Christians, but intramurally within Judaism by competing rabbis.²

Christian theologians at first attacked Jews with their own cessationism, but not until the fourth century did they employ the polemic against other Christians. These apologists, *e.g.*, Justin and Origen, argued that God had withdrawn the Spirit of prophecy and miracles from the Jews and transferred it to the church as proof of her continued divine favor. Thus they came to share with Jews an aberrant view of miracle: evidentialism. That is, the primary, if not exclusive, function of miracles is to accredit and vindicate the bearer of a doctrinal system.

Against some Christian sects who claimed unique access to the Spirit, or that the charismata would cease with them, the orthodox repeatedly cited 1 Corinthians 13:10 as proof for the continuation of

²See Greenspahn, "Why Prophecy Ceased." *JBL* 108/1 (Spring, 1989), pp. 37-49.

spiritual gifts in all the church until the *Parousia*. By the time of Chrysostom (d. 407), however, cessationism provided the ecclesiastical hierarchy with a ready rationale against complaints of diminished charismatic activity in mainline churches. Their cessationist arguments ran in two contradictory directions. Miracles appeared unconditionally: required as scaffolding for the church, which, once established no longer required such support; or conditionally: that if the church became more righteous, the charismata would reappear.

John Calvin turned the cessationist polemic against Roman Catholicism and the radical reformation, undercutting their claims to religious authority they based on miracles and revelations. Calvin popularized the restriction of miracles to the accreditation of the apostles and specifically to their gospel, though he was less rigid about cessationism than most of his followers. Nevertheless from Aquinas through the Enlightenment, the concept of miracle assumed an increasingly rationalistic cast, until it became a cornerstone of the Enlightenment apologetic of Locke, Newton, Glanville and Boyle, but a millstone in Hume.

Hume's skepticism about the possibility of miracles, the ultimate cessationist polemic (which exemplified Warfield's historical/critical method in his examination of post-biblical miracle claims), precipitated the response of Scottish Common Sense Philosophy (SCSP), a somewhat rationalistic apologetic made widely popular by William Paley's *Christian Evidences*. Paley argued from the divine design of nature, predictive (Messianic) prophecy and from (biblical) miracles. SCSP epistemology was short-lived in Europe but came to dominate American thought so thoroughly that for about a century, the Romantic reaction, so widespread in Europe, scarcely gained a foothold.

Nowhere had the Enlightenment era Scottish philosophy been more warmly nurtured than at Princeton seminary, where Warfield was its last major expression. Warfield seems unconscious of the impact of SCSP on his thought, but his *CM* rests solidly on its epistemology, and from it, his concept of miracle, discernible as such to anyone of "common sense."

Warfield's concept of miracle required an essentially deistic view of nature invaded by a supernatural force so utterly transcendent that, to an impartial observer acquainted with the facts, no possible natural "means" could produce such an effect. A miracle must be instantaneous, absolute and total to qualify. A startling, dramatic healing may occur today so that "the supernaturalness of the act may be apparent as to demonstrate God's activity in it to all right-thinking minds

conversant with the facts.” But to call such an event a miracle is to obscure the division between miracles and the “general supernatural.”³ Similarly, Warfield divides NT spiritual gifts into those which are “distinctively gracious” (“ordinary” gifts) and those which are “distinctly miraculous” (“extraordinary”) gifts.

On the one hand, Warfield insists that making such distinctions is “simply a question of evidence,”⁴ and on the other a matter of one’s *a priori*. It is no surprise, then, that when Warfield spends perhaps 97% of *CM* “sifting” the evidence on post biblical miracles throughout church history, he arrives at “an incomparable inventory of objections to the supernatural.”⁵ Warfield at the outset has already decided their fate when he insists that miracles may only occur as “the credentials of the Apostles” and “necessarily passed away” with them.⁶ Warfield’s cessationism involves a double standard: in *CM* he applies the same rationalistic critical methods as Hume and Harnack to post biblical miracles that he attacks in liberal critics who apply them to the biblical accounts.

Biblically, discernment of a miracle is neither “simply a question of evidence,” nor is it simply based on one’s *a priori* position. A miracle is an event perceived, in varying degrees of accuracy (*e.g.*, John 12:29), by divine revelation. “The natural man cannot accept the matters [gifts] of the Spirit” for they are “discerned by the Spirit” (1 Cor. 2:14).

Not only is Warfield’s understanding of miracle discernment unbiblical, but his understanding of their function as well. By demanding a strict evidentialist function for miracles, Warfield confuses the sufficiency of revelation, *i.e.*, in the unique historical manifestation of Christ and essential Christian doctrine, with the ongoing means of communicating, applying and actualizing that revelation, *i.e.*, via such charismata as prophecy and miracles. We see below that the charismata do not so much accredit the Gospel as they express and concretize the Gospel. Just as sound and inspired preaching applies, but does not change, the all-sufficient Scripture, so true gifts of prophecy, knowledge or wisdom reveal human needs, directing them to God’s truth within the eternally-sealed limits of the

³*CM*, p. 163.

⁴*SSWW*, p. 175.

⁵Brown, *Miracles and the Critical Mind*, p. 199.

⁶*CM*, p. 6.

biblical canon. Just as gifts of administration or hospitality tangibly express the gospel and advance the Kingdom of God, but do not alter its doctrinal content, so likewise gifts of healing and miracles.

For Warfield, the inerrant authority of Scripture was the bedrock of his theology. So it is ironic that in only a few scattered pages of *CM* does he seek scriptural support for his cessationist polemic.

B. A Biblical/Theological Response to Cessationism: The Eschatological, Charismatic Spirit Manifests the Advance of the Kingdom of God until the *Parousia*.

Warfield's polemic failed to comprehend the broad sweep of biblical theology when it addressed the crucial eschatological dimension of the charismata in pneumatology and in the presentation of the Kingdom of God. These doctrines, as they appear in classical Protestant systematic theologies, have been grotesquely misshapen by a long evolution of tangential dogmatic conflicts. Even after competent biblical studies have been published on these areas, not only Warfield, but most other systematicians have been reluctant to utilize the results. Warfield's evidentialist function for miracles, the foundation for cessationism, is reductionistic and superficial in view of the dominating role for miracles in the biblically formulated, eschatologically conditioned doctrines of pneumatology and the Kingdom of God.

1. A Biblical Doctrine of the Holy Spirit Is Inimical to Cessationism

Warfield's desire to limit the Spirit's contemporary miraculous and revelatory work is not only to confuse the finality of revelation with its mode of presentation and application, but also to change the essential character of the Holy Spirit as biblically defined and to alienate his pneumatology from its clear and authoritative biblical grounding. If we apply Warfield's own biblical hermeneutic to every scriptural context on the Holy Spirit, it reveals a profile of the Spirit's activity that is characteristically, if not exclusively, miraculously charismatic—the virtual consensus of serious biblical scholarship. Specifically, in a broad sense, the Spirit of the Bible is the Spirit of prophecy. To speak of the Spirit's "subsequent [post-apostolic] work" as functioning only within the Calvinistic *ordo salutis*, demonstrates that the Holy Spirit of post Reformation cessationism is far removed from the portrayal of the Spirit in the canonical Scriptures. Most significantly, Warfield's pneumatology fails to account for the great

Old Testament promises of the specifically prophetic Spirit *to be poured out upon all eschatological generations who believe*, beginning with those in the New Testament era (Isa. 44:3; 59:21; Joel 2:28-32; *cf.* Acts 2:4, 38).

2. A Biblical Doctrine of the Kingdom of God Is Inimical to Cessationism

Warfield failed also to address the important implications of the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. Its nature is essentially that of warfare against the kingdom of Satan and its ruinous effects (Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 10:6,7; 12:28 || Lk. 11:20; Lk. 9:2,60; 10:1-2,9,11; Acts 10:38). The NT teaches that Jesus' earthly mission was to inaugurate the Kingdom of God in charismatic power, and that he is to continue that mission through Christian believers, beginning with his disciples and their converts and continuing until the end of the age. As a rabbi's good disciples, his followers are to duplicate and continue exactly his work ("teaching them to obey *all* that I commanded you," Mt. 28:20), in this case, to demonstrate and articulate the inbreaking Kingdom. This is shown by: 1) an analysis of the commissioning accounts of Mt. 10, Mk. 6; Lk. 9 and 10; Mt. 28:19-20 [*cf.* 24:14]; Lk. 24:49 and Acts 1:4,5,8); 2) the characteristic way in which the kingdom was demonstrated/articulated in Acts; and 3) by the summary statements of Paul's ministry among the Gentiles throughout his epistles (Rom. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 2:4; 2 Cor. 12:12; 1 Th 1:5, *cf.* Acts 15:12). Thus, the "signs of a true apostle," or of any Christian, do not accredit anyone as a bearer of orthodoxy, but rather, characterize the way in which the commissions of Jesus to proclaim and demonstrate ("in word and deed") the eschatological Kingdom of God are normatively expressed by any believer. Whether in the context of an unevangelized crowd of pagans, or within the church community itself, wherever the Spirit displaces the kingdom of darkness in its various manifestations of evil, whether sin, sickness or demonic possession, the Kingdom of God has provisionally arrived. Such victories of repentance, healing or other restoration from the demonic world, represent a continuing, though partial experience of the fully realized and uncontested reign of God to come.

An essential element of the Kingdom of God is divine power—directed toward reconciliation of man to God, of righteousness, peace and joy—displacing the rule and ruin of the demonic ("The Kingdom of God does not consist in talk, but in δυνάμις (miracle power)," 1 Cor.

4:20). Of the 98 contexts of divine δυνάμις in the NT, 65 refer to what the Protestant tradition would designate as “extraordinary” or “miraculous” charismata. Thirty-three of the cases refer to the power of God without clear indication in the immediate context as to the exact way in which God’s power is working. The New Testament miracles do not appear simply to accredit preaching (or, “the word”); rather the preaching in most cases articulated the miracle, placing it in its Christological setting and demanding a believing and repentant response. Presently, the exalted Christ continues to pour out his charismata upon his church to empower his kingdom mission until the end of the age (see sec. II,D, below). It is simply unbiblical to say as Warfield does, that after an initial outpouring of spiritual gifts in the apostolic age to reveal and establish church doctrine, the exalted Christ’s “work has been done.”

3. The Specifically Eschatological Dimension of the Doctrines of Pneumatology and the Kingdom of God Is Inimical to Cessationism

Warfield’s failure to grasp the eschatological implications for cessationism is perhaps the most crucial. He nowhere notices that the Old Testament promises of the Spirit of prophecy and miracles apply to the entire time between the two comings of the Messiah; that Jesus’ “authority/power” granted in his commissions to his church is extended to all nations and is to continue until the end of the age—a frequently repeated theme in the New Testament epistles. The Spirit of revelation and power is bestowed all during this age as his own “down-payment,” “first-fruits” or “taste” of “the powers of the age to come,” until the time of the fullness of the Spirit in the consummated Kingdom of God. Against this brief sketch of the place of charismata in biblical theology, which was largely available in the scholarship of his day, Warfield never made a reply.

Finally, Warfield the exegete, beyond his failure to engage the theological issues above, failed even to acquaint himself with the brief, but significant passages of Scripture which in and of themselves taught the continuation of the charismata. It is because Warfield is first and foremost the biblicist, and because he claims to have structured his whole polemic on an investigation into history and *Scripture*, that his omission is so glaring and so disappointing.

4. New Testament Passages Reiterating the Pattern of Continuing Charismata during the Time of Christ's Present Exaltation until the End of the Age

The following paraphrase the results of the brief exegetical surveys in the previous chapter and restate the role of the charismata in the eschatological framework outlined above: the charismata continue during this age to minister toward the (as yet unrealized) goal of complete maturity of the church. Again, expressed biblically, the divine "Spirit" is presented in Scripture as associated primarily and essentially performing charismatic operations. The paraphrases below are not to be construed as exegesis, but strive only to summarize the meaning of the passages already exegetically treated above in Chapter 3.

a. 1 Corinthians 1:4-8 "I always thank God for you because of God's grace (including the whole range of charismata) because in *every way* you have been enriched in him—in every kind of speech (including prophecy) and in every kind of knowledge (including the gift of revealed knowledge). You are doing this now *exactly as* (καθώς) the testimony of Christ *was* confirmed in you (that is, charismatically, by the apostles and/or evangelists who first demonstrated/articulated the gospel to you)—with the result that you do not *now* lack *any* spiritual gift during the time you are awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. (The Lord) will *also* (not merely when the gospel first came to you, or even only now, but will) *continue to confirm/strengthen* you (in the same way as you are now experiencing the charismata in the time you are "awaiting" the end) *until the end*, so that (via the strengthening and purifying charismata which generates growth and progressive maturity) you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

b. 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 "Love never ends: it continues on into the age to come. But wherever the charismatic operations of prophecies, tongues speaking or revealed knowledge occur, they will be ended. Like childhood, they all represent an incomplete, yet necessary stage of God's eternal plan.

But when will these three (representative) gifts, *i.e.*, the charismata generally, cease? The eschatological principle is this: when the complete (end) arrives, at that precise point, the incomplete will be ended. Specifically, when Christ returns at the end of this present age,

then, and not a moment before, the charismata—gifts of prophecy, tongues and revealed knowledge here offered as examples—which are incomplete compared to the ultimate heavenly realities they only now indicate, will all come to an end, having served their temporary purpose.

Let us note three or four illustrations of this point. First, when I was a baby (representing our present existence) I babbled, thought and reasoned (*i.e.*, the present charismata of speech and knowledge) like a baby—a necessary and positive development to be sure—all of which would be related to what was to come. But at adulthood (our existence in heaven), this stage is superseded by vastly greater powers of communication, thinking and reasoning.

Second, in the present age, the charismata only serve as indirect or indistinct perceptions of God or his will, like looking into a mirror or a photograph. But in heaven, the mirror or photograph (the charismata) are unnecessary if we can see God ‘face to face.’ At that point these items, which had helped preserve the somewhat distant relationship, will have served their purpose and will be discarded, since we will have the real person before us.

Third, in this present age, I know God, but the charismata reveal Him to me only in glimpses and hints. But then, in heaven, I will know God (κἀὐτῷ) exactly as, and to the same degree God knows me now. Of what use will be those tentative and imprecise gifts of revealed knowledge under those conditions?

(Fourth), in this present age, faith, hope and love, all three function, but like the other charismata, faith (which is a charism of revelation, which, if acted upon, can produce miracles or any other aspect of God’s salvation), and hope (another gift of God which is superseded if it results in the presence and reality of its object), will both be unnecessary because of their “waiting” characteristic; in heaven, the waiting will be over. By contrast, love is greater, because, unlike faith, hope and the other charismata, love never ends.”

c. Ephesians 4:11-13 “[The ascended Christ] gave some apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers (not to accredit the gospel or its bearers, but) for the perfecting of the saints toward the work of ministry, toward the building up of the body of Christ. [But for how long?] These gifts are distributed, in principle (v. 7) “to each” *until* (μέχρι)—an ongoing process of distribution—the following state is attained, *i.e.*, that we *all arrive*: at the unity of the faith, at the *full* knowledge of the Son of God, into full, mature adulthood, that is, to

the level of stature (maturity) of the fullness of Christ.” (Note: even Paul has not “attained” to this state [Phil. 3:12]).

d. Ephesians 1:13-23 In the context of believers’ receiving “all wisdom and understanding” (1:8) and Paul’s continued prayer for the same (1:17) and to experience (“know”) “[Christ’s] incomparably great power”—like that of the resurrection, Paul describes the time frame: “In him, when you believed, you were marked with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit [or first installment—the first payment of the same to follow] guaranteeing our inheritance (described, *inter alia* as “incomparably great,” *etc.*, *like* resurrection power in 1:19), *until* (ἐἴς) the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.” This state of affairs is active in believers and is paralleled to the exaltation of Christ which occurs “not only in the present age, but also in the one to come” (1:21-23, cf 2:6).

e. Ephesians 3:14-21 Paul’s prayer is that the readers may “have power through the Spirit” that in love they “*may have power together with all the saints* [an explicit universal application] . . . to the goal that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, *according to the power that is at work within us*, to Him be glory, *in the church* and in Christ Jesus, *throughout all generations* for ever and ever. Amen.” Cf. Isa. 59:21.

f. Ephesians 4:30 With Eph. 1:13-23 above, the time period of the Spirit’s prophetic presence in the believer is restated: “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God [an allusion to ignoring prophetic warning, *e.g.*, Isa. 63:10? cf. Eph. 4:29] with whom you were sealed [an ongoing mark of ownership and protection] *until* (ἐἴς) the day of redemption.”

g. Ephesians 5:15-19 In the present evil days (characteristic of the time of the Messianic woes [Mt. 24:9-12; 1 Tim. 3] preceding the *Parousia*, don’t be drunk on wine, but continue to “be filled with the Spirit (cf Jer. 23:9; Amos 2:12; Acts 2:13,15; Lk. 1:15). Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” (*i.e.*, glossolalic singing? 1 Cor. 14:13-17)—perhaps representative of the whole range of charismatic/prophetic operations to continue during these “present evil days.”

h. Ephesians 6:10-20 “Be empowered (closely assoc. with “miracle/mighty work” in the NT) in the Lord and in his mighty power . . . struggling against demonic forces . . . with sword of Spirit—the word of God (prophecy)—and constant prayer. [Since we are in the time of the Messianic woes that Jesus predicted about standing before magistrates, *etc.*] pray that *words will be given me*” [divine passive] (Mt. 10:19b-20 || Mk. 13:11—“it is not you speaking but the Holy Spirit”).

i. Philippians 1:5-10 “Christ who has begun a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. What work? Sharing in God’s grace (and imitating Paul, 3:17; 4:9—necessarily including the charismata (*cf.* || Mt. 28:20 “teaching them *all* that I have commanded you”) in defending and confirming—a word in this context speaking of charismata, signs and wonders). And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and perception (charismata of revelation), so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless *until* (ἕως) the day of Christ.”

j. Colossians 1:9-12 “We have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through *all* Spiritual wisdom and understanding (revelatory gifts) . . . being strengthened with *all power* . . . to build spiritual maturity, looking toward (though already provisionally experiencing) the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. Indeed we have already been brought into that kingdom.”

k. 1 Thessalonians 1:5-8 In view of the rabbi-disciple model in #10, above, the normative transmission of the gospel in “word and deed” in this passage. “our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power (ἐν δυνάμει), with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction You became imitators of us and of the Lord And so (it follows) *you yourselves became models* to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.” The pattern of the gospel’s normative pattern of transmission in the miraculous power of the Spirit was carried over into a *third* generation—two away from Paul, *i.e.*, those upon whom apostolic hands would not be laid! All with the goal of building Christian maturity until the end of this age.

l. 1 Thessalonians 5:11-23 In a strong eschatological context of the *Parousia* Paul encourages believers to continue edifying each other in love: “Do not put out the Spirit’s fire [paralleled with]; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test them and heed the good ones, in view of the goal of being blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The One who calls you will be faithful to preserve you (using these charismata, *cf.* 1 Cor. 1:4-8, *etc.*).”

m. 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 “For which—in an ongoing process toward the goal [that you will be counted worthy at the coming of Christ] we constantly pray for you that our God will count you worthy and may fulfill your every good purpose *and every work of faith in power* (ἐν δυνάμει), so that the name of our Lord Jesus might be glorified in you and you in him.”

n. 1 Peter 1:5 “Through faith you are being shielded by God’s power (ἐν δυνάμει), *until* (ἕως) a salvation ready to be revealed at the last time.”

o. 1 Peter 4:7-12 “The end of all things [the goal and context of this warning] is near. . . . Each one should use whatever spiritual gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks—as the oracles of God.” Most commentators see this as a reference to NT prophecy. The parenesis is given against the approaching end, with the understanding that prophecy is to be operative up until that point.

p. 1 John 2:26-28 As an antidote to false prophets, John encourages the gift of prophecy: “Dear children, *this is the last hour* . . . But *all of you have an anointing* from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.” This passage is strikingly parallel to the promise of the Paraclete to the apostles (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13f). Here the promise is to the general readers!

q. Jude 18-21 [As Jesus prophesied] “*In the last times*. . . there will be those who follow their own human desires, and who do not have the Spirit. By contrast, you, beloved, during these same “last times,” *edify* yourselves in your most holy faith by *praying in the Spirit*.” “Praying in the Spirit” = praying in response to the direct leading of the Spirit—a revelatory process, or, as in 1 Cor. 14:4,14,15, in glossolalic prayer (“one who ‘*prays in the Spirit*’ *edifies* himself”).

r. Revelation 19:10 In the context showing the “great multitude in heaven,” *all the servants, i.e., “the Bride,”* the focus shifts to the “seer” on earth, “[An angel] said to me, ‘Do not [fall down to worship me]! I am a fellow servant with you, and with *your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus* [including all Christian believers] For *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*.” Hence, anyone who is a believer in some sense is a prophet. Similarly, Rev. 22:9, “I am a fellow servant with your and with your *brothers the prophets, that is,* (epexegetical καὶ) *all who keep the words of this book*.”

Each of these passages, then, continues the pattern of Jesus’ commissions to his disciples to demonstrate/articulate the Kingdom in the power of the Spirit—to the 12, the 70 (72), the 120—as archetypes of “all of the Lord’s people” (including the readers of these verses) whom Moses wished would all be filled with the Spirit of prophecy (Num. 11:29; *cf.*, Isa. 59:21; Joel 2:28-30; 1 Cor. 14:1,5,39).

5. The Clear Statements of Scripture Regarding the Charismata Are Inimical to Cessationism

Warfield also fails to perceive that the explicitly stated commands to fulfill the biblical conditions for the manifestation of the charismata (*e.g.*, repentance, faith and prayer) contradict his unconditional, temporary connection of the charismata with the apostles and the introduction of their doctrine. He also fails to account for the many explicit biblical commands directly to seek, desire and employ the very charismata he claims have ceased. How can Warfield ignore these biblically explicit conditions and commands for the continuation of the charismata, if, as he insists, the Bible continues as the normative guide to the church for her faith and praxis?

The New Testament repeatedly exhorts its readers that the appearance of God’s charismatic power correlates with human response, specifically, in faith and to act. But it is clear that anyone, quickened by the Spirit, is commanded, either by precept or example, to respond, for example, in faith and prayer to God’s graces.

Closely related to the argument above that the function of the charismata determines their duration, is the argument from Scripture that the appearance of the charismata depends, not on accrediting functions, but on human responses to explicit biblical commands, *e.g.*, simply to seek, request and employ the charismata, on the basis of prior repentance and obedience toward God, via faith and prayer. To deny that these commands of Scripture, woven so thoroughly throughout the fabric of the New Testament, have relevance today, is to call into question the very relevance of the scriptural canon for the church of any age. These are not commands simply to the apostles, but often by apostles to the “laity.” In any case, all these biblical commands can be construed as parenetic to the church at large. Biblical commands, “seek,” “rekindle,” “employ,” “let us use,” “strive to excel [in spiritual gifts],” “desire earnestly,” “do not quench,” *etc.*, make little sense canonically if the occurrence of the charismata bears no relation to the obedience of these commands.

Moreover, cessationism is inimical to at least five further important NT principles regarding the charismata.

1) Paul implicitly challenges the belief that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were granted only for the establishment of doctrine for the church, which then would carry on more or less under its own interpretive intellect with a greatly restricted activity of the Spirit. Paul exclaims to the Galatians who were tempted by a resurgent Judaism to exchange their calling as prophets for that of the scribes and a religion of Torah-study and works-righteousness: “Having begun in the Spirit [the context indicates a miracle-producing Spirit], will you now be completed, or reach maturity (ἐπιτελεῖσθαι) in the flesh?” Paul does not force a choice between the charismata of prophecy and miracle versus biblical precepts; he insisted upon both. Scripture itself affirms the ongoing process of spiritual perfecting (maturing) in this age as being normatively developed by the whole range of the charismata, which, within the framework of Scripture, reveal Christ even as they illuminate, apply, express and actualize his Gospel. Against cessationism, the NT insists that the church is both initiated *and* *matured* by the whole range of the Spirit’s gifts.

2. Romans 11:29 states a principle that could hardly be more clearly anti-cessationist: that from God’s side, his radical and unconditional grace offers to sustain the above process all during the present age: “God’s gifts (χαρίσματα) and his call are irrevocable—not repented of, or withdrawn.” As Appendix IV, below, shows, this

passage is based on the promise of the new covenant, which is the outpouring of the Spirit on the “children’s children forever” (Isa. 59:21). Indeed, this promise of the new covenant Spirit is the very “punch line” of Peter’s Pentecost sermon—the charter document, the manifesto, the core doctrine of the Church. In contrast to traditional theology, repentance and baptism is not the goal of Peter’s message, but rather, this is only *preparation* for the goal, which is the fulfillment of the new covenant promise of Isa. 59:21: the reception of the Spirit of prophecy for all subsequent generations, forever.

Moreover, the context of Rom. 11:29 teaches that the human failure to receive God’s call, or charismata, does not at all require that they are sovereignly withdrawn in church history, but rather that they cannot become manifested in those to who reject them. Accordingly, it may be this very unhappy state of the church that Paul foresaw: an intellectualized quasi-deism among those having “a form of religion, while denying its power (δύναμις)” (2 Tim. 3:5).

3. Still another Pauline principle is that no one member, *i.e.*, charismatic function, of the body of Christ can say to another, “I have no need of you” (1 Cor. 12:21). Cessationism says precisely that. Similarly, no one who is gifted in a specific way may demand that all the body become as he, say, a tongue! The point of 1 Cor. 12 is that for a body to be a body at all it must have *all* its functions working reciprocally for the good of the whole, each recognizing not only its own value, but also the crucial importance of the others as well. By its very nature, cessationism violates this key biblical principle.

4. The cessationist schema that miracles cluster around great revelatory events to establish the truth of that revelation does not bear scrutiny. Jeremiah lays down an explicit principle about the distribution of divine signs and wonders in 32:20, “You performed signs and wonders in Egypt *and have continued them to this day, both in Israel and among all mankind!*” Moreover, while new, enscripturated revelation abounded during and just after the Exodus, there was relatively little new doctrinal content added during the miracle-working time of Elijah and Elisha, and certainly no more new revelation in Daniel than, say, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel or the other prophets.

Moreover, the greatest new revelation of all was announced by John the Baptist, who “did no miracle” (Jn. 10:41). The contention that miracles faded as one moves toward the end of Acts thus indicating the onset of the cessation of miracles is misleading. Much of the last part of Acts relates to an imprisoned Paul, who, when released for normal ministry at the end of the book practically empties the island of Malta

of its sick (Acts 28:9)! Further, to argue that because “Jews seek signs and Greeks seek wisdom” (1 Cor. 1:22), that Christian evangelism moved from an evangelism characterized by miracles to one characterized by reasoned discourse (and remained there for the rest of church history) flies in the face of Paul’s own characterization of his highly charismatic gospel among the *Gentiles* (Acts 15:12; Rom. 15:19; 2 Cor. 12:12; 1 Thess. 1:5). More importantly, following the tradition of Jesus who refused signs to those who demanded them for evidential proof (Mk. 8:11-12; Mt. 12:38-39; Lk. 11:16, 29) Paul insists his reaction to the unbelieving demand for a sign (or wisdom) is not to willingly provide them, as this argument would have it, but to preach the “wisdom and power of God,” Christ crucified, only to those who could receive it.

5. Finally, the essence of cessationism—the limitation of miracles to new revelation and its bearers—contradicts another biblical principle, namely, the biblical desire to see the Spirit of prophecy and miracle to be as broadly spread as possible. The classic case is Num. 11:26-29 where Joshua is threatened by the loss of Moses’ “accreditation” by the prophetic Spirit. Moses replies, “Are you jealous for my sake? I wish all the Lord’s people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit on them!” The subsequent OT prophets foresaw an ideal time when the Spirit would be bestowed broadly upon all categories of humanity (Joel 2:28-29, *cf.* Acts 2:17-18, 21, 39). Similarly, Jesus refused to stop those who cast out demons in his name, though not directly associated with him (Mk. 9:38-40 || Lk. 9:49-50). No doubt this logion was recorded for the church in response to exorcists, or perhaps those exercising spiritual gifts generally, who were not only not apostles, but not even church members! At that point the “accrediting” function of miracles becomes a little thin. Paul prays for “*all the saints* [Jew and Gentile]” that they might experience gifts of revelation, knowledge and power [δύναμις] at the level of resurrection power that Jesus experienced (so also, 1 Cor. 12:6; 14:1, 5, 24, 39; Gal. 3:5, 14; Eph. 5:18; Col 1:9-14, *etc.*). Against cessationism, then, this brief sketch shows the biblical (and divine) impulse to offer the power of the Spirit to all who would respond to it, rather than limit it to a few founders of the Christian community whose status must be enhanced.

C. Implications and Conclusions

The frequent failure to respond to God’s commands to manifest the Kingdom of God in power is fully shared by most believers, “char-

ismatics” and non-charismatics alike. Both groups shape their theology and consequent practice on the basis of their own experience—or lack of it—rather than on a fresh and radical (in its original sense of “return to the root”) view of Scripture. The presence or absence of certain charismata in one’s experience proves nothing at all about one’s spiritual status or destiny (Mt. 7:21-22). Neither “charismatics” or “non-” are more or less “saved” than the other; both are at once sinful, but justified by grace alone. Nevertheless, the NT offers patterns as to how the Gospel is to be presented, received and lived out. We must not attempt to reframe our failures into virtues, that is, by allowing what the New Testament describes as “unbelief” in and for the gifts of God, to be construed as having chosen “the better way” of a “stronger faith” without them. The rabbis’ intellectualized biblical knowledge which led to their cessationism, prompted Jesus to affirm that they knew (in the biblical sense) “neither the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Mt. 22:29 || Mk. 12:24).

Much divisiveness over the gifts of the Spirit today derives from a common premise held by both sides of the debate: evidentialism. If spiritual gifts are adduced as proofs of spiritual status or attainment, rather than used as tools for humble service for others, then conflict naturally follows. The core temptation to the first and Last Adam, and by extension to all of us, was to use spiritual knowledge and power to accredit one’s independent and exalted religious status, instead of through them, rendering glory, obedience and service to God. Spiritual gifts are powerful weapons against the kingdom of darkness; but misapplied in evidentialist polemics they can wound and destroy the people of God.

The charismata, then, reflect the very nature of God, who does not share his glory with another. Similarly, God is a Spirit of power, “who changeth not.” If the church has “begun in the Spirit,” let us not attempt to change God’s methods to complete our course in the weakness of human flesh. Since it is the Father’s pleasure to “give good gifts to them who ask Him,” it must be our pleasure to receive them humbly.

Appendix I:

“Evidence” of the Spirit in Acts?

D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, pp. 137-58, represents a fairly sophisticated attempt to help some passages in Acts to conform to a traditional Evangelical experience of the Holy Spirit and to divorce them from an overly Pentecostal interpretation. Carson lays out an exposition of the various outpourings of the Spirit in Acts, showing that the experience of tongue-speaking came corporately upon certain representative groups (the first believers, Acts 2; the Samaritans, Acts 8; the Gentiles, Acts 10-11; and the disciples of John in Ephesus, Acts 19). Carson maintains that Luke uses the visible charismatic presence of the Spirit coming on each of these groups to show their incorporation into the church directly by the work of the Spirit.

Carson’s survey of contemporary “charismatic” issues, generally, is model of irenic charity, scholarship, balance and biblical insight. But his treatment of the practical application of the above passages elicits scrutiny. Carson tries to walk a non-existent middle ground between affirming on the one hand: 1) that all spiritual gifts (except apostleship in its “tightly defined sense”) continue throughout this age; that “*all* [italics his] who live under this new covenant enjoy the gift of this prophetic [in a broad sense] Spirit (p. 153); that while “some gifts, notably tongues, function in Acts in ways particularly related to the *inception* of the messianic age,” [*i.e.*, as evidence for the inclusion of groups into the church], “there is no exegetical warrant” for cessationism, “once the crucial points of redemptive history have passed.” This is true because these gifts, notably tongues, also “are tied to the *Spirit, to the new age*” (p. 155). Carson insists that “non-charismatics have often been content to delineate the function of tongues where they appear in Acts, without adequate reflection on the fact that for Luke the Spirit does not simply inaugurate the new age and then disappear; rather, he *characterizes* the new age” (p. 151).

2) On the other hand, having said all this, he wants to deny the Pentecostal doctrine that these texts in Acts can be adduced to “tell us

that a *particular* manifestation of the Spirit attests the Spirit's presence or filling of baptism in every believer this side of Pentecost" (p. 155). "Charismatics have erred in trying to read an individualizing paradigm into material not concerned to provide one" (p. 151, *cf.* 140: "Luke's emphasis in Acts 2 is not on paradigms for personal experience but on the fulfillment of prophecy"). According to Carson, one can normatively expect the Spirit's presence at conversion in a fairly traditional Protestant profile: "The Christian *knows* the Lord by the Spirit; the believer senses him, enjoys his presence, communes with him." The Spirit seems to work initially in two seamless stages: "The Spirit in a Christocentric fashion manifests himself in and to the believer; the believer in turn shows the Spirit" in a range of charismata much broader, though included, "than the few over which so much fuss has erupted today" (p. 155). Though these latter gifts are not spelled out, they doubtlessly focus on tongues. He is right, of course, but like Protestant pneumatology generally, Carson's profile of Spirit-filling is less palpably charismatic than Luke's, and probably the rest of scripture.

Carson implicitly recognizes that his contemporary model of Spirit filling is not that of the four cases above, but dismisses the disparity on the grounds that in these cases the Spirit with utterance gifts was granted as "attestation" of *new groups* entering the church, and, that where Luke records cases of Spirit-filling to *individuals* (hence our model for contemporary experience) no gift of tongues was given (*e.g.*, Acts 4:8, 31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 9:17; 11:24; 13:9, 52 [his examples, p. 150]). Several observations are in order.

1) Carson fails to distinguish between the *use* to which Luke puts these cases of Spirit-filling ("*attestation*," if this word is not too contaminated by rationalistic notions) and the *nature of the experience itself*. Just as a heartbeat sound may be *used* to prove someone is alive, *proof* is *not* the *reason-for-being* of the heartbeat. The sounds of the beating heart necessarily continue in exactly the same way irrespective of ever having "proved" life. Similarly, because utterance gifts may be used as proof of the presence of the Spirit, such proof does not change the essential and characteristic expression of the Spirit's coming. Carson's implication is that God added the utterance gifts in the Spirit-filling experiences in these cases strictly for their polemical or didactic value, and that the ideal, essential, or "normal and expected" Spirit-fillings cannot now necessarily be associated with utterance gifts. To see otherwise, is a "hermeneutically uncontrolled" exercise of applying personally what Luke intended as only historically informative.

Accordingly, if we apply Carson's theology practically, a first century Samaritan reading the Acts 8 account would be expected to respond: "I can take comfort that Samaritans as a group were once accepted into the church by receiving the Spirit characterized by utterance gifts, but since I am an individual and a few years too late, I cannot expect to receive the Spirit in the same way." Or even more remarkably, following Carson's construct on p. 150, "Because I am not 'a baptized follower of the Baptist, an enthusiastic supporter of the Baptist's witness to Jesus,' a 'believer in Jesus' death and resurrection,' and 'ignorant of Pentecost,' I therefore cannot expect normatively to receive the Spirit accompanied by utterance gifts!" Why do these cases sound so odd, forced, mechanical and implausible? Simply because they represent logical non-sequiturs—the same logical fallacy that Carson identified above: "accrediting" gifts do not cease [or, fail to continue in the same pattern] simply because they were once used for that function.

2) More than that, Carson's argument violates the very notion of "epochal" in this context and Luke's theological intention as well. These kinds of epochal events, almost by definition, are epochal because they not only initiate an era, but *serve as the proto-type for subsequent events of the same kind*. For example, Lindberg's Atlantic flight was "epochal" *precisely because* all other ocean crossings of the same kind, *i.e.*, by humans in aircraft, have followed. Hence, when Luke identifies representative groups as being incorporated into the church *by means of receiving the Spirit, all "attested" by utterance gifts*, they are "epochal" or "proto-typal" in that they *set the pattern for, and share the essential characteristics of individuals in similar groups to follow*. In other words, to the reader they would say, "If your group received the Spirit (Acts 2 probably includes *all* groups, incidentally), then you can too!" By the nature of language, a heavy burden of proof rests on those who would then demand a change of the essential characteristics of the experience for a later reader of Acts.

3) Moreover, by the very choice of a particular charismatic experience showing the incorporation of these groups into the church, Luke has necessarily appealed to an *ideal case*, a normative event, or at least a touchstone characteristic of receiving the Spirit, *i.e.*, Acts 2:4 and 11:17. The highly charismatic mode of receiving the Spirit described in the four cases above cannot be portrayed as some "special case," historically unique, to show that He has come, if, as Carson insists, by

this specific means Luke intends to show the *universality* of the Spirit's reception, with its implication for including diverse groups into the church. It follows that a central characteristic of this charismatic experience necessarily involves universal *applicability*. Indeed this is the point of Acts 2:17, as well as Paul's summaries of his mission: in each new area, he is not attempting to introduce some new epoch, but the gospel in its normative, and universally bestowed power (Acts 15:12; 26:18; Rom. 15:18-19; 2 Cor. 12:12; *cf.* Heb. 2:4).

The crucial question, though, turns on what are "essential characteristics" of the Spirit in Luke's four stories? Carson seems to argue incorrectly that because Luke used the four stories to *demonstrate the scope of the gospel*, we can derive no further normative implications from them.

4) Carson's thesis fails to comprehend the significance of Luke's device of utterance gifts to demonstrate the inclusions. Carson insists, broadly, that the coming of the Spirit with utterance gifts attests to new epochs—"introducing a new group, until as the gospel expands throughout the empire there are no new groups left" (p. 145). Certainly this is true, but he omits a crucial prior step, common to each case, from Luke's logic: *in each case Luke appeals to the presence of the utterance gifts to indicate the presence of the Spirit*. Luke does not only answer in each case, "Who is included in the church, and how do you know it?" (Answer: four groups who received the Spirit), but also, "How does one know it's the *Spirit*?" The consistent answer Luke gives is, "utterance gifts." They are the only phenomenon in Acts common to all cases *wherein the process of Spirit-filling is actually described*. This latter point answers Carson's objection that when the Spirit came upon *individuals* as opposed to the groups, above, no "tongues" were mentioned. Agreed. We do not argue here for that narrower position, *but neither does Luke describe a Protestant, generic, highly subjective filling of the Spirit. When Luke describes the process of being filled with the Spirit, charismatic utterance of some type is the norm*. This is based on the consensus understanding from his time that the presence of the Spirit was essentially the presence of prophecy and power.

How do we know Luke sees the characteristic expression of the Spirit to be utterance gifts? Rhetorical analysis of Acts 2 shows that the extended crowd response to the Pentecostal phenomena is leading to Peter's "This is that": the Spirit has come—through the exalted, vindicated Jesus. The goal of the message is that this same gift of the Spirit, following repentance, baptism and forgiveness, is available to

all—not limited to generation, as Carson would have it, or geography (2:39 with echoes of Isa. 44:3; 59:21). The Protestant reflex is to identify the Spirit here (2:39) in non-charismatic terms. But linguistically, unless it is further qualified, the description of another event by the same name, in the same context, especially as it is still occurring (2:33, "that which see and hear" in present tense), retains the same characteristics. Luke is at pains earlier to describe his *characteristic appearance* by *adding to Joel's prophecy* about the promised Spirit, "and they shall *prophesy*" (Acts 2:18). Luke goes on to include "tongues" under the rubric of prophecy. Acts 8:18 indicates at least *visible* phenomena accompanying the Spirit-filling (*cf.* 2:33), probably utterance gifts of some sort. In Acts 11:15, 16 Peter *twice* appeals to their own experience verifying the coming of the Spirit to the Gentiles. In Acts 19:6 the process of the Spirit's "coming" is described in terms of utterances: tongues and prophecy.

5) Carson's distinction between the "epochal" four cases of the Spirit's coming and those to individuals take a different turn if we widen the characteristic coming of the Spirit from "tongues" to "utterance gifts." Using Carson's examples, individual correlations of the filling of the Spirit and utterance gifts are much closer than he implies in his contemporary descriptions of Spirit filling. Acts 4:8, 30-31, associate revealed utterances, based likely on a fulfillment of Lk. 12:11-12, || Mk. 13:11; Mt. 10:20. Acts 6:3 and 5 are not descriptions of the process of Spirit fillings; the verification of Stephen's being filled with the Spirit follows immediately in his prophetic message. Acts 7:55 again, is the direct connection of the filling of the Spirit and an utterance of a prophetic vision. 9:17 reports a healing, but does not specify that Saul received the Spirit at that precise time as he does in the four "epochal" cases. At any rate, Luke may have intended Paul's "seeing," at least secondarily, as revelation. 11:24, again, does not describe the actual filling experience, and in any case the filling did not seem to require special verification. In 13:9, Paul's cursing Elymas is a clearest possible case of prophetic utterance. 13:52 is a summary statement bracketed by the highly effective spread of the "word" amidst persecution (again Lk. 12:11-12), *i.e.*, prophetic utterance. Moreover, the verb, "were filled" is imperfect, implying, like the powerful utterances of the "word," an ongoing process. Appendix IV, below, shows that the tight association between the Spirit and his "words in the mouth" represent the foundational motif of Acts, based

on its programmatic prophecy, Isaiah 59:21. Because the Spirit-speech connection is *the central fulfillment of this prophecy, Acts necessarily stresses the centrality of this Spirit-speech experience for all readers, both present (to him) and future.*

6) Carson argues that prophecy and/or tongues as an expected contemporary accompaniment of Spirit-filling is invalid because of the “distinctive abnormality” of the Ephesian disciples of John, namely, that they “believed” (were converted) but had not yet received the Spirit.

Two issues require disentangling here. It is one thing for Carson to argue against a doctrine of “subsequence” (Spirit-filling necessarily comes after conversion—a doctrine likely derived more from the Protestant *ordo salutis* doctrine and on the experience of early Pentecostals), and another to argue against the essentially charismatic characteristics of the Spirit, which he seems also to do. On the first point, it is perhaps presumptuous to believe the NT even addresses the question of “sequence” of Spirit-filling in relation to “conversion.” Luke even notes that there are those outside the Christian community, and even not converted at all who exercise spiritual gifts (Lk. 9:49-50; 11:19; 9:1 included Judas! Cf. esp. Mt. 7:21-23). The NT lacks interest in the precise order of soteriological stages as later Protestant scholastics. Rather, *the NT’s concern is purely pragmatic: it is not when the Spirit fills an individual, but that he/she is filled.* Classical Pentecostals may well pragmatically stress the “when” in order to insure “that” people experience the power of the Spirit.

7) This raises a problem with the over-schematization of the Spirit experiences in Acts, that is, its implicit evidentialism associated with these “epochal” advances in the church’s growth. Hermeneutically, one must distinguish between the rhetorical devices used by an author to make a single point (e.g., Luke’s group-inclusion schema) and the ontology and theology of the events and ones similar to those he describes. For example, because of Luke’s usage, should we then say Paul’s account of the Gospel reception and its spiritual gifts by the Thessalonians is necessarily “epochal” (1 Th. 1:5, “We know . . . that [God] has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit . . . you became imitators of us”), as would the Galatians, who received the Holy Spirit and performed miracles (Gal. 3:2, 5)? Must the charismatic expressions of Paul’s preaching be repetitively “epochal” and “unique” signifying its death as a normative expression of the gospel with the apostle (Rom. 15:19; 2 Cor. 12:12; 1 Cor. 2:4; cf. Heb. 2:3, 4)? Recall

that "signs of an apostle," 2 Cor. 12:12, only indicate not that Paul is among the exclusive band of "true" apostles, but that, because these signs are normative to Christian mission, he is not a "false" apostle. Hence, the question of cessationism is irrelevant here.

The conclusion to the above discussion points up a small but practically important distinction between Carson's expectation of the Spirit's activity and my own, namely, that while Carson believes the Spirit is "prophetic" by nature, *i.e.*, encompassing a broad range of the Spirit's gifts and graces, his practical portrayal of that Spirit filling in contemporary experience seems muted, internalized and virtually identified with what we today would call "conversion." Certainly, there is a meaningful sense in which we "receive" the Spirit at conversion. But by contrast, I believe that the overwhelming biblical evidence, particularly in Acts, is that a "filling of the Spirit" is much more visibly and demonstrably "prophetic," based on the fairly consistent models in Acts and elsewhere—both to groups and to individuals.

One must also agree with Carson that there are many "fillings" of the Spirit. Certainly one must not confuse the past tense, "filled," with the passive voice, "filled": that because someone *once* had been "filled" with the Spirit, he or she is *now* necessarily "Spirit filled." One might hold that there are various levels or intensities of the work of the Spirit in individuals, but being "filled with the Spirit" represents, in most cases, a palpable, powerful, and relatively brief experience of the Spirit, like Old Testament descriptions of prophetic experiences, for some charismatic service. True, an individual does receive the Spirit at conversion, but this is only one of many experiences of the Spirit, often below the level of awareness, both before *and* after a decision to receive Christ (Rom. 1:18, 28; 11:29).¹ The minimum "level," if you will, with respect to the Spirit and the Christian are that true children of God hear and heed the Spirit's revelation—the ideal of the "Law written on the heart" (the seat of spiritual consciousness and will, *e.g.*, Jn. 10:3, 27; Rom. 8:14; Jer. 31:33; 2 Cor. 3:3).² However, the emphasis

¹An apparent exception, however, may be the clear difference drawn in John 14:17 between those whom the Spirit is "with" and "in." This distinction is likely based, however, in large part, on the coming new age of the Spirit (*cf.* Jn. 7:39).

²This may be the thought behind the idea of "blasphemy of the Holy Spirit": that revelation can be perceived is a given, hence, attribution of that revelation to Satan represents a *deliberate* denial of that which one *knows*, via the Spirit, to be true. In this state, quite understandably, no one could receive grace and forgiveness.

of the New Testament with respect to the Holy Spirit is to be “filled,” and that repeatedly and constantly, a condition which strongly implies, not one’s ecclesiastical status, but the continual involvement in spiritual ministry in advancing the Kingdom of God in the power of signs and wonders, patterned after the ideal ministry of Jesus Christ, himself.

Appendix II:

Does the Spiritual Gift of Apostleship Also Continue?

The appearance in 1 Cor. 12:28 and Eph. 4:11 of “apostles” as a gift of the Spirit, raises the question as to the continuation of this gift, and its implications for others, until the *Parousia*. Part of explosiveness of this issue is that the gift of apostleship is so loaded with Reformation ecclesiastical preconceptions, that rational discussion over continuing apostleship is difficult. One misguided task of Reformation polemics was to shift the aura of ecclesiastical authority from the Pope (the “last apostle”) to the apostles of the New Testament. Hence, a claim for the continuation of the gift of apostleship, as for continuing miracles, was necessarily also making a claim for the prospect of *ex cathedra* additional Christian doctrine. In other words, the apostles serve as Protestant popes. We argue here that the New Testament view of apostle is less loaded with this understanding of ultimate authority than our Reformation tradition. Religious or spiritual authority in the New Testament church was much more diffuse than that. Hence, an argument for the continuation of *all* the gifts of the Spirit, including apostleship, need not provoke the traditional emotionally-laden, negative response.

Due to the complexity of the problem, the following discussion proceeds with extreme brevity and with a minimum of documentation. On this we would refer the reader, with certain qualifications, to Wayne Grudem’s response to this issue in *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, pp. 25-66 and 269-76, as well as in Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, pp. 88-91, 96-97, 156 and 164.

Carson suggests that “the only χάρισμα (“charisma”) bound up with obsolescence is apostleship in the tightly defined sense.” However, Carson may be too restrictive when he explains this statement. “The reason for the obsolescence of this χάρισμα [which] lies not in its connection with the Spirit but in its connection with the resurrected and exalted Christ, who now no more appears to human beings as the personal, resurrected Lord. Until his return, he manifests himself to us only by his Spirit; and therefore the peculiar commission and authority of the first apostles, which turned on personal contact with the resurrected Jesus, cannot be duplicated today.”

1) One could argue, though: a) that if Paul's "*contact with the resurrected Jesus*" were a visionary experience, "in the Spirit," and it seems to be, then little, if anything, in the apostolic commissions and authority transcend what could, in principle, be granted today. b) Indeed, in defending his apostleship, while Paul insists that he has "seen the Lord," he seems to undercut the significance of mere physical association with Jesus as determinative for apostleship by the principle that "we no longer know (experience/interact) with [Jesus] according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (2 Cor. 5:16)—again, an appeal to the Num. 11 principle of universalizing, rather than restricting experiences of the Spirit. c) The standard "requirement" that an apostle must be chosen from those "who have been with us all the time" from John's baptism to the ascension (Acts 1:21-22) is problem-plagued. Matthias is never heard from again. Paul certainly failed to qualify, yet he brushes this requirement aside. Judas' twelfth place is filled, but what of Paul and others who are called apostles? Hermeneutically, we face a problem some associate with Pentecostals: to what extent does Lucan historical reporting of a stage of spiritual development intend to sanction it as repeatable and normative? Specifically, did the eleven apostles have an immature understanding of the "twelve" as representing the people of God? Or did the Spirit fill the missing place and introduce the new Israel of God (the 120 and the thousands that followed) at Pentecost?¹

2) The crucial exception which has emerged in traditional teaching about apostles, however, is *the authority to write scripture* (2 Pt. 2:15-16). Despite this, even assuming conservative positions on authorship, over half of the New Testament was written by *non*-apostles, a fact which dilutes the essential relationship of apostles, as individuals rather than to their over-all witness, to the canons of doctrine and scripture.

3) The *apostolic commissions* in the New Testament (Mt. 28:19-20, cf. Mt. 10 || Lk. 9 || Mk. 6:7-13, cf. Lk. 10) are normatively directed to *all the church of all ages* to present the gospel (whether in word and deed, or in word only), as well as the more general ethical and religious injunctions to the apostles/disciples as recorded in the Gospels and Acts. This has a further effect of relativizing apostolic authority and exclusivity.

¹Note that while the apostles prayed for divine indication of who should be chosen to fill Judas's position, there is no indication, as opposed to other prayers in Acts that the Spirit responded.

4) Moreover, one basis of *apostolic authority* seems to lie in its faithfulness to the earliest Christian traditions (1 Cor. 4:6; 15:1-3; Gal. 1:8), not simply on their status as apostles. Specifically, the “signs of an apostle” (2 Cor. 12:12) are essential characteristics of the gospel as normatively promulgated; hence he is within the church. This does not show that Paul is so much a “true” apostle, as he is not a false one. By contrast, false apostles preach a kingdom that consists in talk, rather than power (δύναμις, 1 Cor. 4:20). Even revelation of the gospel is not unique to the apostles. The “revelation” of Paul’s gospel, which did not come from other apostles or from man (which seems to involve the inclusion of the Gentiles, Gal. 1:11-12; 2:2; Eph. 3:2-3), is characteristically “revealed” by Christ to the community as well, either through confirming prophecies or by direct revelation, *e.g.*, 1 Cor. 1:8; Eph. 1:7-10, 17-23. *Cf.* the similar pattern in Jn 14:25-26; 16:13-14 and 1 Jn. 2:27, where essentially the same promise is made to both the apostles and the local community.² Apostolic authority seems more to be based on the relationship of church planter (or “father”) to his congregation than on simple recognition of his status as an apostle.

5) The Pauline reference to *apostles (and prophets) as “foundational”* to the church (Eph. 2:20 and 3:5) parallels the tradition of Jesus about Peter’s revelation/confession: “You are Peter (Πέτρος), and upon this rock (πέτρα = revelation about Christ) I will build my church” (Mt. 16:18). This confession is divinely-revealed, and, like the revelation to the apostles and prophets represents the “foundation” of the church, of which Christ Jesus is the “key-stone,” or “head of the corner,” who continually, via the Spirit, holds the structure together, both from above and from below (1 Cor. 3:11).³ Strictly speaking, Christ is the exclusive foundation of the church (1 Cor. 3:3-17), which a leader or an apostle, *e.g.*, Paul, can “lay,” but emphatically is not himself that foundation. In parallel with the image of the body (1 Cor. 12), the gift of apostle is more functional than chronological. The apostles and prophets are “foundational” in that they are “prototypical” of the *whole church* which *reduplicates the original revelatory experience about Christ within the framework of the Christian gospel*. The apostles and prophets as “foundation” in the Semitic idiom represent the act (revelation) personified in the actors (the first receivers of the revelation). The apostolic gift is “first” perhaps in the sense that all further revelation about Christ is identified, reduplicated, qualified and

²See Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, pp. 346-47 and 351-52.

³The metaphor of the “foundation” (Eph. 2:20) and its implications for cessationism is discussed in the following appendix.

limited by its original receivers. Hence, this passage shows *not that apostles and prophets ceased*, but rather, that since their experience is “foundational” and archetypal, *their experience and functions therefore continue*. Most importantly: the apostles and prophets *only communicated* their revelations; *they did not create* them, *ex cathedra*, as Protestant popes. Hence their role is necessarily *exemplary and repeatable*, inviting rabbinic pedagogical imitation as does the life and ministry of Christ.

6) Most significantly, *apostleship is no guarantee of infallibility or “inerrancy”*! The apostle Peter capitulates before “men from James” (Gal. 2:12) over Judaizing teachings. It is these same men who earlier have approved Paul’s gentile mission (Gal. 2:6), though Paul seems cool toward them (“who seem to be important”); he had not consulted with them at the beginning of his own ministry (1:17, 19). It seems quite possible that these were the “super-apostles” (it would be hard to imagine apostles more “super” than the original twelve), who boasted of their status as Hebrews/Israelites/servants of Christ, but who were Judaizers in 2 Cor. 11:22-23a, *cf.* Gal. 2:12. Only against the very real prospect of error among the apostles could the warnings be given that even the words of an apostle must be weighed and held in conformity with the normative Christian tradition (2 Cor. 4:1-6; Gal. 1:8).

7) *The circle of apostles does not seem particularly exclusive*. A very early tradition (*e.g.*, 1 Cor. 15:5-8) seems to place in sequence, and thereby contrast, the resurrection appearances of Jesus to “the twelve” and then to “all the apostles,” implying others. Throughout the New Testament several people are incidentally (one cannot prove that the presence or omissions of the title is deliberate or random) called “apostles”: Barnabas (Acts 14:14; 1 Cor. 9:6), James? (1 Cor. 9:6; Gal. 1:19), the brothers of the Lord? (1 Cor. 9:6), Andronicus and Junia (a woman? Rom. 16:7), Silas (1 Th. 2:6), unnamed “apostles of churches” (2 Cor. 8:23), Judas and Silas? (Acts 15:22), Apollos? (1 Cor. 4:1,6,9). The mention of these break the number of the “twelve” who probably symbolize, via a kind of corporate solidarity, or as archetypes, the complete people of God in Christ. Certainly this seems to be the usage of the twelve (and multiples) in the Book of Revelation and the 120, “all” filled with the Spirit in the Book of Acts. Paul’s conflict with judaizing “apostles” (Gal. 1-2; 2 Cor. 11-12) reflects no sense of a closed circle of apostles, unless some of them are the original twelve (“super-apostles”! Gal. 1:17-19; 2:2,12, *i.e.*, “men from James,” before whom even Peter and Barnabas recanted; 2 Cor. 3:1). Certainly, early

Christian literature seems to reflect a tradition of many apostles besides the twelve.⁴

8) *Apostleship is on the list of spiritual gifts* (1 Cor. 12 and Eph. 4) which explicitly continue until the *Parousia* as we have outlined above. Moreover, since the gift of apostle is listed “first” in 1 Cor. 12:28 and Eph. 4:11, on what grounds can we deny its continuance if it is not one of the “higher (μεῖζονα) gifts” commanded immediately afterward in the context to be eagerly sought (1 Cor. 12:31)? Why would an offer be made to the readers which could not be fulfilled? On what grounds this gift is to be exempted from these lists?

9) *Paul’s claim to see the resurrected Jesus “last of all” is not necessarily a claim to be the last apostle.*⁵ Such a connection is simply not made explicitly in the passage. Paul is not attempting here to establish himself as the *last* in the circle of apostles, but only that he was the last (and therefore, perhaps, least) of a certain group who saw the resurrected Lord Jesus. Who was this group? Peter, the twelve, over 500 brethren, James (Jesus’ brother?), then by *all* the apostles (excluding Paul, or including many other apostles, e.g., the 70[72]?)—certainly many others, as well as perhaps two (different?) groups of apostles. Many in subsequent church history have claimed to see the resurrected Jesus, including the writer of Revelation (ch. 4). The “last” sighting of Jesus need not imply that the viewer is the “last” apostle!

What is the point of this passage? To prove Paul was the last apostle? No. At most, it is to show that he was unusually graced by God, despite its inappropriateness and suddenness, to become a witness of the resurrected Lord. The point is not that Paul is the “last apostle,”

⁴Hermas, *Similitude* 9:15,16, (*ANF* 2, p. 49) cf. *Vision* 3:5; *Similitude*. 9:25 (*ANF* 2, pp. 14, 51) knows of forty, while several others (Irenæus, *Against Heresies* 2.21:1 (*ANF* 1, p. 389); Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 4:24, (*ANF* 3, p. 387) and frequently in the Syrian literature (e.g., *ANF* 8, p. 651) mention 70 or 72 and Eusebius says, *Church History*, 1:12:4 (*NPF* 1, p. 99), “many others who were called apostles in imitation of the Twelve, as was Paul himself.” The *Didache*, 11:4-6, trans. by J. Akleise, *Ancient Christian Writers*, eds., J. Quasten and J. Plumpte (New York: Newman Press, 1948), p. 22, gives pre-eminence to the twelve, but describe itinerant missionaries also as “apostles” led by the Spirit. See the ground breaking discussion in Lightfoot, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians*, 10th ed., (1865; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1957), pp. 92-100; in W. Schmithals, *The Office of Apostle in the Early Church* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1969), pp. 239-40 and L. Goppelt, *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times* (London: A. and C. Black, 1970), pp. 178-82. More generally, see F. H. Agnew, “The Origin of the NT Apostle-Concept: A Review of Research,” *JBL* 105 (March 1986), pp. 75-96.

⁵See the extensive argument of P. R. Jones, “1 Corinthians 15:8—Paul the Last Apostle,” *TB* 36 (Winter 1985), pp. 3-34.

but that his preaching is valid despite his lowly status among the witnesses. The passage is not attempting to establish the limits of the apostolate. Rather it is attempting to confirm the truth of the Christian tradition Paul and others are proclaiming. At very least, one might then assert that the gift of apostle, in the sense of a pioneer missionary, called, commissioned and empowered by Christ, could normatively function in the world today.⁶ Whether this “limited” conception of apostle was ever anything much other than this in the New Testament is debatable.

The explosive nature of contemporary apostleship, of course, parallels the contention over modern miracles: the Reformation wished to cut the root of ultimate religious authority from the popes by denying apostolic succession. As it did with miracles, the polemics of the day failed to discern the relation of “authority” and apostleship. As from both conceptions, miracle and apostle, what flows is not the brute-force political/ecclesiastical power (which characterizes the power of this evil age), but a spiritually-discerned authority and influence, apprehended only by those with spiritual perception (1 Cor. 2:11-14). Hence, since the notion of apostle is so historically conditioned with ultimate religious authority, anyone now claiming apostleship may justifiably be regarded with skepticism. Nevertheless it is possible that no real biblical impediment exists to someone today *functioning*, or even being *gifted* as an apostle.

⁶See, e.g., K. Giles, “Apostles Before and After Paul,” *Churchman* 96 (1985), pp. 241-56; J. H. Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, 26 (Cambridge: University Press, 1975). On a more popular level: M. C. Griffiths, “Today’s Missionary, Yesterday’s Apostle,” *EMQ* 21 (April 1985), pp. 154-65; J. A. Hewett, “Apostle,” *DPCM*, p. 15; E. F. Murphy, *Spiritual Gifts and the Great Commission* (South Pasadena, CA: Mandate Press, 1975), pp. 193-221. On the fluidity of the New Testament concept, see R. Schnackenburg, “Apostles Before and During Paul’s Time,” in *Apostolic History and the Gospel*, eds. W. Gasque and R. P. Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 287-303.

Appendix III: The “Foundational Gifts” of Ephesians 2:20

Abstract

Cessationists support their view that the gift of prophecy is presently inoperative by their increasing appeal to an argument-by-analogy from Eph. 2:20, namely, that since apostles and prophets appear as the “foundation” of the temple/Church, and since the “foundation” can only represent one generation of time, then these “foundation” gifts necessarily passed away before the second generation of Christianity. Non-cessationist Evangelicals so far have either failed to address this argument or have assumed the main premise of the cessationists.

This cessationist argument-by-analogy fails because: 1) “foundation” indicates a “pattern” to be replicated, not a “generation” frozen in time; 2) the “foundation” of Eph. 2:20 represents both Christ himself and the recurring apostolic and prophetically-inspired “foundational *confession*,” as Peter’s “great confession” (Mt. 16:16-18), revealed to all Christians in every era; 3) traditional Protestantism sees a NT apostle as a 16th century pope rather than as an ongoing ministry function within the Church; 4) the cessationist metaphor, in an illogical, question-begging move, confuses the death of early apostles and prophets with the death of their gifts; 5) the metaphor is destroyed if Christ the ἀκρογωνιαίον (“cornerstone”) is, as is likely, also the “capstone” or “long-high cornerstone” holding the walls together like interlacing fingers (2:21), who is also in contact with *each stone*; 6) this cessationist metaphor violates the clear teaching of Eph. 4:11, and, 7) substitutes the “letter” of the New Testament for the Spirit-revealed experience of Christ himself as the ultimate foundation.

I. Status of the Problem

One of the few remaining NT texts to which cessationists¹ appeal for support of their position is Eph. 2:20.² The cessationist argument-

¹For the purposes of this appendix, the term, “cessationist” designates one who asserts the demise of the so-called “sign-” or “miraculous” gifts of the Holy Spirit, usually connected with the death of the apostles or completion of the NT writings. For the various descriptions and times of this termination by cessationist writers see R. W. Graves, “Tongues Shall Cease: A Critical Study of the Supposed Cessation of the Charismata,” *Paraclete* 17/4 (Fall 1983), pp. 20-28. By contrast, Pentecostal or charismatic Christians believe that all the so-called “miraculous” gifts of the Spirit have continued in the Church. Many in this latter group, however, deny the continuing gift of apostleship.

²E.g., by R. B. Gaffin, Jr., *Perspectives on Pentecost: Studies in New Testament*

by-analogy is that since apostles and prophets appear as the foundation of the temple/Church, and since each course of stones in this temple metaphorically represent successive generations of believers throughout Church history, then these “foundation” gifts necessarily passed away before the second generation of Christianity.³

From the frequency and extent this argument is made in cessationist circles,⁴ one would assume that there would be a serious reply

Teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Phillipsburg, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers, 1979), pp. 93-116; R. L. Thomas, “Prophecy Rediscovered? A Review of *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*,” *BibSac* 149/593 (Jan-Mar 1992), pp. 83-96; K. L. Gentry, *The Charismatic Gift of Prophecy: A Reformed Response to Wayne Grudem* (Memphis: Footstool, 1989); R. F. White, “Gaffin and Grudem on Eph. 2:20: In Defense of Gaffin’s Cessationist Exegesis,” *WJT* 54 (1992), pp. 303-20; and F.D. Farnell, “Is the Gift of Prophecy for Today?” *BibSac* 149/595 (July-September 1992), pp. 277-303; 149/596 (October-December 1992), pp. 387-410; 150/597 (January-March 1993), pp. 62-88; 150/598, (April-June 1993), pp. 171-202. This latter series derives from the author’s doctoral work, “The New Testament Prophetic Gift: Its Nature and Duration,” (ThD dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1990). Richard D. Kelso, “An Evaluation of the Biblical Support Presented by Wayne Grudem regarding the Nature, Role and Exercise of Non-Apostolic Prophecy in the New Testament and Today” (M. A. Thesis, Columbia Biblical Seminary and Graduate School of Missions, 1999). R. Fowler White, “Reflections on Wayne Grudem’s ETS 1992 Presentation, The New Testament Gift of Prophecy: A Response to My Friends.” *TREN*, 1993.

³This historicist interpretation of the Eph. 2:20 “cornerstone” (ἄκρογωνιᾶτον) metaphor has only the most tenuous support in Church history. For example, of about 101 references discovered by the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae CD-ROM, version D, virtually all of the references to the “cornerstone” of Ephesians 2:20, which offer sufficient context to discern its location, show that the “cornerstone” appears as the “capstone,” “keystone,” or the most prominent and highest stone in the building—usually the “final” stone to be placed, completing the structure. One may find a possible exception in the *Shepherd of Hermas* ANF, II: 49 “‘And the stones, sir,’ I said, ‘which were taken out of the pit and fitted into the building: what are they?’ ‘The first,’ he said, ‘the ten, viz., that were placed as a foundation, are the first generation, and the twenty-five the second generation, of righteous men; and the thirty-five are the prophets of God and His ministers; and the forty are the apostles and teachers of the preaching of the Son of God.’” This hardly offers a coherent basis for the cessationist metaphor from Eph. 2:20, since the last stones mentioned, apparently the *fourth* (!) generation represent apostles!

⁴Gaffin appeals to a “canon-within-a-canon” argument. “The decisive, controlling significance of Ephesians 2:20 (in its context) needs to be appreciated.... I Corinthians 14 ... has a relatively narrow focus and is confined to the particular situation at Corinth. Ephesians, on the other hand, may well be a circular letter, originally intended by Paul for a wider audience than the congregation at Ephesus. More importantly, 2:20 is part of a section that surveys the Church as a whole in a most sweeping and comprehensive fashion. Ephesians 2:20 stands back, views the whole building, and notes the place of prophecy in it (as part of the foundation); I Corinthians and the other passages on prophecy examine one of the parts from within.

from their theological dialogue partners, the Pentecostals and charismatics. However, Pentecostal or charismatic scholars have generally failed either to treat this cessationist argument to any significant degree,⁵ or if so, adequately.

This appendix offers a biblical rebuttal to the cessationist use of Ephesians 2:20 as an argument for the cessation of prophecy, and, by extension, the other so-called “miraculous” gifts of the Holy Spirit. After a statement of the issue itself, this appendix examines the only significant “anti-cessationist” response offered so far, that of Wayne Grudem, and then goes on to offer some alternative responses of its own.

Wayne Grudem’s Rebuttal to the Cessationist Use of Ephesians 2:20

Wayne Grudem is the only scholar I can discover who attacks the cessationist argument from Eph. 2:20 in any detail,⁶ so quite reasonably, Grudem’s response stands as the default Pentecostal/charismatic position among cessationists,⁷ along with their perceptions about its strengths and weaknesses.

Though he presents his position as an attempt to mediate between charismatics and cessationists, it appears that Grudem’s defense on this

Ephesians 2:20, then, with its broad scope ought to have a pivotal and governing role in seeking to understand other NT statements on prophecy with a narrower, more particular and detailed focus...” *Perspectives on Pentecost*. p. 96. “Ephesians 2:20 figures prominently in this debate.” Charles E. Powell, Dallas Theological Seminary, at the 48th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Jackson, MS, November 1996. <http://www.bible.org/docs/theology/pneuma/giftques.htm>

⁵ For example, in Jack Deere’s influential work, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993) there is a brief treatment (p. 248) with the promise of a plan to discuss Eph. 2:20 in detail “in my next book.” If *Surprised by the Voice of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) is that next book, the passage does not appear in the Scripture index, nor am I able to discover any discussion of it. Similarly, in another major work Gary S. Greig and Kevin N. Springer (eds.), *The Kingdom and the Power: Are Healing and the Spiritual Gifts Used by Jesus and the Early Church Meant for the Church Today?* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1993), one page is devoted to Eph. 2:20 in a chapter by Wayne Grudem (see below). J. Rodman Williams does not treat the cessationist view of Eph. 2:20, but rather seems to affirm it, at least with respect to the “original” 13, apostles, including Paul—as opposed to “continuing” apostles. *Renewal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), p. 173. No real critique of the “foundational” argument appears in the extended discussion in *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?* Ed., Wayne Grudem (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996).

⁶ E.g., in the adaptation of his Cambridge Ph.D. dissertation, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1982), pp. 82-105.

⁷ Note 2, above.

point shares traditional cessationist presuppositions about the nature of apostles and of the “foundation” in Ephesians 2:20. Grudem seems to agree with cessationists who argue against the continuation of the gift of prophecy in that the gift is somehow identical with the first generation (“foundation level”) of Christian prophets: that, necessarily, when these particular prophets died, the gift of prophecy died with them. The same, he would also agree, would be true of apostles.

Grudem, however, ingeniously denies the death of prophecy by claiming that only a *special category* of prophets is described in Eph. 2:20, namely, that they are “foundational,” and hence, *cease* because these particular prophets are in fact, *apostles*! He also offers an alternate possibility that perhaps these “foundational” prophets were an elite group that received and uttered apostolic-level revelation. He agrees, then, with cessationists that apostles, at least the original twelve (or thirteen, if we include Paul) stood to be unique in that they that they are seen as the authoritative bearers of foundational Christian doctrine, which they wrote into Scripture. Accordingly, Grudem sees the apostle/prophets of Eph. 2:20 as the equivalent of the canonical prophets of the Old Testament, whose pronouncements and writings also held ultimate religious authority in that they later became Scripture.⁸

On this view, and to preserve the continuation of Christian prophecy, Grudem must then define NT prophecy in two categories. 1) Agreeing with traditional cessationists, the first class of prophecy, which was to cease within the first generation, was a kind of interim canon awaiting its written form, while, 2) the second class of prophecy was represented by the “less authoritative type of prophecy indicated in 1 Corinthians.”⁹

Grudem’s novel defense precipitated a detailed response from cessationists, who wish to deny any “two-level” gift of prophecy that Grudem describes.¹⁰ Without going into their argument in detail, these

⁸ “We all (some of Grudem’s cessationist critics and himself) agree that *these* [italics his] prophets are ones who provided the foundation of the Church, and therefore these are prophets who spoke infallible words of God. . . . Whether we say this group was only the apostles, or was a small group pf prophets closely associated with the apostles who spoke Scripture-quality words, we are still left with a picture of a very small and unique group of people who provide this foundation for the Church universal.” *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), p. 1051, n. 4.

⁹ *Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, 105. Also, his *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* (Westchester, Ill.: 1989), pp. 45-63 and his *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), p. 1051.

¹⁰ E.g., by F. David Farnell, “Fallible New Testament Prophecy/ Prophets? A Critique of Wayne Grudem’s Hypothesis,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 2:2 (Fall

respondents seek to prove that *all* manifestations of the gift of prophecy in the first generation will cease together, since prophecy is divine revelation, and such revelation must necessarily be enscripturated.¹¹

Grudem therefore finds himself in an interesting dilemma: on the one hand, since he sees apostles (and this first class of NT prophets) as the New Testament counterparts of Old Testament prophets and therefore “were able to speak and write words that had absolute divine authority,”¹² that is, in the canon of Scripture, it is crucial to restrict this class of men to the “foundational” and unrepeatable. Because of the central apostolic role as Scripture writers, and because the canon of the NT is closed, the gift or “office” of apostleship must necessarily cease.¹³ On the other hand, “apostleship” is seamlessly listed along

1991), pp. 165-77. Even a significant charismatic writer resists this distinction. Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts in the New Testament Church and Today*, rev. ed (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998), p. 215.

¹¹ Michael Moriarty states this position clearly. God placed prophets in the apostolic Churches to “provide doctrinal insights” only during an “interim period” in which Churches “had only portions of the Bible.” *The New Charismatics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), p. 231. So also, Farnell, *ibid.* Gaffin appears to hold this view. He writes:

I should emphasize that, during the foundational, apostolic period of the Church, its “canon” (*i.e.*, where I find God’s word and revealed will for my life) was a fluid, evolving entity, made up of three factors: (1) a completed Old Testament; (2) an eventual New Testament and other inspired documents no longer extant (*e.g.*, the letter mentioned in 1 Cor. 5:9), as each was written and then circulated (*cf.* Col 4:16); and (3) an oral apostolic and prophetic voice (“whether by word of mouth or by letter” [2 Thess. 2:15] points to this authoritative mix of oral and written). The Church at that time lived by a “Scripture plus” principle of authority and guidance; by the nature of the case, it could not yet be committed, as a formal principle, to *sola Scriptura*.

“A Cessationist View,” in *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?* ed. Wayne A. Grudem, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), pp. 45-46 fn. 50.

What Gaffin has essentially done is redefine the canon for the NT Church. For them it contains revelation not included in the Scriptures. But now, after the completion of the NT, the canon is simply the Bible. This simply will not do. The canon is either Scripture only or all revelation. It cannot be both; one for the apostolic Church and the other for the post-apostolic Church. Gaffin’s argument seems to be a desperate expedient to preserve both the completion of the canon and cessationism.

¹² *Systematic Theology*, 1050.

¹³ It is interesting that when choosing the four dialogue partners for the book Grudem edited, *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), neither of the charismatic or Pentecostal participants affirmed the continuation of one of the spiritual gifts: apostleship! See my review in *Pneuma* Review of Wayne Grudem (ed.), *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views*. Zondervan, 1996 in *Pneuma* 21:1 (Spring 1999), pp. 155-58. Also in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42:3 (September 1999), pp. 531-32.

with the other “miraculous” spiritual gifts in 1 Cor. 12:28 and Eph. 4:11, gifts which Grudem insists must continue in the Church! In short, Grudem’s views of apostleship, prophecy, revelation and Scripture leave him vulnerable to the charge that he is fatally inconsistent in his defense of continuing spiritual gifts.

But does Scripture itself view the NT apostles and prophets as conscious repositories of unwritten or uncanonized Scripture, or is this notion of these biblical figures held by Grudem and his cessationist counterparts anachronistic and too narrow?

The Protestant Tradition and Its Bearing on the “Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets” in Evangelical Interpretation

How has the doctrine of apostles and prophets as unrepeatable offices come about? Perhaps a brief review of the historically conditioned origin of “foundational” cessationist doctrine may be illuminating. It appears that this Evangelical cessationist tradition underlying this view of Eph. 2:20 has been uncritically passed down from the polemics of the Reformers against the Papacy.

To undercut Papal claims to ultimate religious authority via apostolic succession,¹⁴ the Reformers failed to examine adequately the NT roles of apostle and prophet. Rather they assumed the premises of Rome and simply transferred the crown and the authority of the 16th century Pope to the first century apostles! The apostles, then on this view, the receivers of unique divine revelation, canonized their ultimate ecclesiastical and doctrinal authority, not in papal encyclicals, but in the New Testament. The Reformers, and particularly the scholastic theologians who followed them, further protected the “Papal” authority of the New Testament by denying any *additional divine revelation* based implicitly on the “foundational” role of prophets in Eph. 2:20.¹⁵

In this historical context, then, to Protestants, the notion of a continuing gift of apostleship, or a gift of divine prophetic revelation, is anathema. “Apostles today” represents the specter of apostolic succession and the Papacy, while the contemporary prophecy implies

¹⁴ Even today, Roman Catholic apologists appeal to Eph. 2:20 as a proof text for Papal authority. Anthony Saldarini, “Chapter 2, Interpretation: Part One: The Biblical Period,” in *Papal Infallibility: An Application of Lonergan’s Theological Method*, ed. T. J. Teikpe (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1983), p. 18.

¹⁵ See the historical developments during the Reformation on this passage in R. Schnackenberg, *Ephesians A Commentary*, E.t., Helen Heron (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), pp. 326-28.

the claim to ultimate, but constantly evolving and increasingly contaminated, *ex cathedra* doctrinal authority over the Church. For this reason, and not for biblical reasons, have the cessation of apostles and prophets become a “foundational” doctrine for traditional Protestant theology. The application of this polemic, then, could be easily and uncritically transferred to anyone advocating the continuation of spiritual gifts, particularly explosive being those of apostles and prophets.

An Alternative View of the “Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets”

If this Evangelical tradition leading to the cessationist position fails to reflect an adequate interpretation of Ephesians 2:20, then what alternative can be offered? This appendix would suggest that “the foundation” of Eph. 2:20 represents the recurring apostolic and prophetically-inspired “foundational *confession*,” as Peter’s “great confession” (Mt. 16:16-19), which is *revealed* to and *confessed* by *all* Christians at *all* times.¹⁶ Peter’s confession is universally considered to be both paradigmatic and parenetic. This position, of course, is merely a specifying of the standard identification of the “foundation” derived from Calvin, *i.e.*, foundational doctrine.¹⁷

I would suggest that the earlier Christian tradition of Peter’s confession shaped the Eph. 2:20 metaphor in that both share at least four key elements: 1) the *prophetic revelation* from the Father was stressed as the means by which Peter knew that, 2) Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (the central point of the discussion); 3) the “*foundation*” *language* of building Christ’s Church “on this rock”; 4) the *archetypal role of Peter results from his prophetic confession*: a)

¹⁶ New Testament scholars may cringe at this easy leap between the Ephesian and Matthean traditions. This elicits two responses: 1) Rabbinic exegesis, which seems to have shaped NT writers’ use of scripture and traditions, identifies large scriptural passages by odd words, phrases, or allusions (in this case, the concepts of foundation, building the church, apostle, revelation and Christ-as-foundation). This cluster of notions could easily have evoked the “Great Confession” pericope from the oral tradition with which Paul was likely familiar. 2) The early Christian communities may not have been nearly as isolated from one another as so much NT scholarship these days seems to assume. So, the thesis of Richard Bauckham, ed., *The Gospel for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

¹⁷ “Built on the foundation, —they are founded on the doctrine, of the apostles and prophets.” Calvin, *Ephesians*, *ad loc* [2:20]. It is “normative teaching.” A. T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, 42 (Dallas: Word, 1990), p. 154. Schnackenberg, *Ephesians*, 326-28.

the play on words for “rock,” connecting his prophetic confession to the “foundation” and building of the Church; b) the fact that he was given the keys to the kingdom: not only that he had access himself at that point, but also the role he had in unlocking the kingdom to the Christo-centric prophetic experiences of the Samaritans in Acts 8 and Gentiles in Acts 10.

The debate on the precise meaning of this last phrase is historic: how does “rock” mean: Peter’s leadership? Peter’s confession, which somehow “unlocked” the kingdom to all, and could “bind” and “loose” sins? That Peter’s confession was a paradigm for *all* to confess, thereby unlocking the kingdom and being built into the Church? Was the rock Christ himself (“this *petra*,” distinguished from *Petros*)? If the latter, then how are the revelation, the confession and the keys related to the rock/foundation and the building?

What seems clear from all of this, however, is that since this story is written in canonical Scripture, it has some claim upon the reader other than to relay historical information. It would seem that Peter’s prophetic confession is in some sense *paradigmatic and archetypal* for all who would be believers in Christ. The pericope would also seem to suggest that this revealed confession unlocks the kingdom to the confessor, and that the whole assembly of confessors, the Church, would rest and be built up on the rock—either this confession about Christ, or Christ himself (Rom. 15:20; 1 Cor. 3:11), or both.

Ephesians 2:20 relates to Peter’s confession along the four points above. 1) The “apostles and prophets” (those who receive and confess *revelation*) parallel “Peter” and the importance of his “revelation” about 2) Christ, the “cornerstone” (chief of the “foundation”). 3) The temple is then “built” upon this foundation “in him” || “I [Christ] will build my Church.” 4) The *archetypal* (“*foundational*”) *roles* of the apostles and prophets *result from their prophetic confession*: a) the play on words for “rock” (“cornerstone”), connecting their prophetic confession to the “foundation,” b) just as Peter now may unlock the kingdom because of his revelation, so now, also both Jew and Gentile have access “*by one Spirit*” (Eph. 2:18). Note that the Gentiles once were “excluded from *citizenship in Israel*” (2:12) but now are “no longer foreigners and aliens, but *fellow citizens with God’s people*” (2:19).

But *how* are both Jews and Gentiles brought into this citizenship/kingdom, or what *activity* is involved to enter? Through the work of Christ *all* have “access to the Father *by one Spirit*” (2:18. In the NT era “Spirit” was virtually synonymous with “prophecy”). The next verse

continues on about inclusion into God’s household, which is “*built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets* (personifications of revelation, as Peter’s “foundational” confession), with Christ as the *chief* cornerstone” (also implied in the Peter’s confession pericope). Here the metaphor changes slightly where all are being built “*in him*,” “*in the Lord*,” “*in him*,” (thrice: vss. 21 and 22, clearly a “revelatory” state as we know him “according to the Spirit”) and finally, “being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives *by his Spirit*” (another revelatory reference).

On this suggestion, then, that the “foundation” of apostles and prophets represents a parallel expression of Peter’s confession with the subsequent inclusion of the Gentiles, we offer an interpretation of Eph. 2:20. Contrary to the cessationist or exclusivist notion that a certain type of revelation accredited the status of apostles and prophets, a much deeper dynamic is portrayed in this passage: that the “foundation of the apostles and prophets” symbolizes a way by which *everyone on earth* may enter into God’s temple/ kingdom/covenant/citizenship/ household, that is, by the *Spirit-revealed* confession of Christ Jesus.

The passage exists not to prove the Papal authority or the uniqueness of the apostles and prophets, but rather to express the “foundational” means of entering divine fellowship: “No one can confess ‘Jesus is Lord!’ except by the Spirit.” *This confession*, then, is the “foundation of the apostles and prophets!”¹⁸

Certainly this apostolic and prophetic revelation is not limited to this group in Eph. 2:20, unless of course, Paul is speaking of *all believers* as being “foundational!” In 1:15-23 Paul’s goal for the reader (and not merely for first-century Ephesians if this book is to be regarded as canonical for the Church), via his prayer, is that “the Father may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know [“experience first hand”] him better.” Paul continues by further describing “wisdom and revelation”: “that the eyes of your *heart* may be enlightened in order that you may know [“experience first hand”] the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and His incomparably great power [δύναμις—most often in the NT, “miracle working power”],” which is *like* God’s resurrection power. Paul wishes the revelation to the reader

¹⁸ Marcus Barth takes a related view of this “confession-as-foundation.” “Most likely the term ‘foundation’ in 2:20 is more fully explicated by 4:7, 11; 6:19-20, *i.e.*, by those verses in Ephesians that speak of the preaching, exhorting and warning activity of the spokesmen of God assigned to the Church by Christ.” *Ephesians*, ABC (New York: Doubleday, 1974), pp. 315-16.

to move to the extent that they know that Christ is exalted above *all* powers and nations using the language of Psalm 2. Paul then, seems to be setting the goal for *revelation of the inclusion of all nations* under Christ, who in the Church “fills everything in every way.” In other words, it is clear that both canonically and therefore normatively, *all believers* are to share in the “revelation” of the Gentile inclusion in the Church. Paul does not pray that the reader be given the “New Testament” of “wisdom and revelation,” but the “*Spirit* of wisdom and revelation,” the content of which is both clear and propositional.

Another passage, Eph. 3:14-19, illustrates the normative, shared and continuing revelation expected for *all* believers. Again, Paul prays, indicating the ideal for the readers, that the Father “may strengthen you with power [δύναμις, again] through His Spirit [of revelation and wisdom] in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your *hearts* [center of spiritual perception] through *faith* [not in this passage through the NT, but via a subjective awareness/assurance] . . . that being rooted and established in love [for the Jews or Gentiles?] you may have power together with *all the saints* to grasp [the extent] of the love of Christ [again, the unity of Jew and Gentile?] . . . that you may be filled to the measure of *all* the fullness of God.” Cessationists restrict this kind of outpouring only for the “foundation gifts” of apostles and prophets. But in what sense should we understand the “foundation gifts/offices” of the Church? Let us now examine the cessationist argument from Eph. 2:20.

Unpacking the Metaphor, “The Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets”

In what sense is the “foundation” comprised of apostles and prophets? For the cessationist argument to work it must prove that when this “foundation” group died, their Scripture-creating authority and gifts necessarily died with them. Several responses are in order.

First, a general observation. Even if the parallel between the archetypal and paradigmatic Petrine confession to the Eph. 2:20 passage is denied, and the apostles and prophets are seen as human deposits of Scripture, it remains to be proven that no one could replace them or that their revelatory gifts belong exclusively to them and not to the Holy Spirit. However, the fatal exception to the cessationist argument-by-analogy is the presence of Christ Jesus as the main element in the “foundation.”

Let us lay out the premises of this cessationist argument-by-analogy.

Premise #1: The term, “foundation” is necessarily a descriptor of *a limited period of time, i.e., a “generation.”* Necessarily, then, this “foundation” *cannot* indicate an “archetypal event” shared by all believers, like a confession, nor can it refer to a normative, replicatable “pattern,” say, of ministry. Moreover, “foundation” cannot be a metonymy for the building as a whole.¹⁹

Premise #2: Anyone constituting this “foundation” necessarily cannot function past this “foundational” time-frame, either as a person, or as a class of activity that is essentially and characteristically associated with that person, *e.g.,* apostleship or prophecy. The death of those constituting the “foundation” necessarily demands the death of their characteristic gifts, which then, in some sense, are transmuted into a body of enscripturated doctrine.²⁰

Premise #3: Jesus Christ is a constituent part, as the “chief cornerstone,” indeed the very essence, of this “foundation (1 Cor. 3:11).”²¹

These premises lead us to a fatal dilemma. If the “foundation” is necessarily limited to the first century, then the life and the essential characteristic “Jesus-class” activities, such as regeneration, justification and sanctification, perforce have ceased and have been reduced to a body of enscripturated doctrine. On the other hand, if Christ is alive and active in His ministry in the Holy Spirit, then the “foundation” must be stretched to include the present time.²² If either is the case, the cessationist interpretation of Eph. 2:20 fails.

¹⁹ A premise contradicted by K. L. Schmidt, “θεμέλιος,” *TDNT*, 3:63.

²⁰ On “foundation” as a deposit of doctrine, see W. Schmithals, *The Office of Apostle in the Early Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1969), p. 43, esp. n. 91.

²¹ E. Fowler White, “Gaffin and Grudem on Ephesians 2:20,” 304 n.6. “Strictly speaking, for Gaffin the foundation of the Church consists of Christ (Eph. 2:20b; 1 Cor. 3:11) and the apostles and prophets. The laying of the foundation (Isa. 28:16) began with Christ (*e.g.*, Matt 21:42-44) [*sic!*] and concluded with the apostles and prophets as witnesses to Christ (*e.g.*, Luke 24:44-48).” So Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost*, 91-93, 107-08.

²² A cessationist response to this syllogism might be that there is a sense in which “Jesus-class” activities might well have “ceased” in one of two ways. *First*, Jesus’ earthly ministry was “foundational,” since at his ascension and reign, His ministry changed in fundamental ways. So, the analogy would run, apostles and prophets would have an earthly ministry, receiving and issuing “Scripture-quality” revelation during the “foundational” period, but after their death, their ministry would continue in their Scriptures.

At this point, however, the analogy would be quite shaky. The ascension of Jesus—the end of his “foundational” period—precipitated a profusion of miraculous, revelatory Spiritual gifts, which then encountered *another* terminating “foundational” period: that of the apostles and prophets. The “foundations” are neither congruent temporally, nor

Two further difficulties derive from the cessationist argument-by-analogy. 1) The “joining” of *all* elements of the building/temple *in Christ who is the foundation*. 2) The clear references to Christ as being the *last* or *final* stone in the building/temple.

1) If verses 21 and 22 are normative and canonical for all the Church, then the cessationist argument becomes untenable, in that the argument demands that *whole Church* is necessarily limited to the generation of the apostles and prophets. As the text states: “*in whom* [Christ the cornerstone] *all the building is being fitted together* (συναρμολογουμένη) and “*in whom* [Christ the cornerstone] *you also are being built together* (συνοικοδομεῖσθε). The metaphor is about the connection of the building growing into a holy temple “*in the Lord*.” The “foundation,” then, cannot represent a limited time or a generation if “the *whole building*” is so categorically and individually “in Christ,” “in the Spirit.” If Christ is limited to the first-century “foundation,” then how can subsequent generations of Christians, indeed the whole

conceptually. Moreover, the point of the cessationist analogy is that the apostles and prophets were, in and of themselves, the *gifts* of apostleship and prophecy. On this reasoning, Jesus Christ is, in and of himself, a *gift* of salvation, which would die when He physically died.

But these apostles and prophets in no sense continue *personally* to participate in the lives of believers today via the Spirit *as Christ does*. Moreover, Christ’s gift does not die with him, but rather is *made viable only in His death*. These points open up such a serious disjunction between the foundational members that one must seek another interpretation of the metaphor.

A better analogy would be: the Church is founded on a blended metaphor of Christ himself and the Spirit-revealed confession of Christ, the Son of the Living God, a confession like that of the apostles and prophets, *i.e.*, a revelatory experience, which, *like the present ministry of Christ, continues through the Holy Spirit*. This calls to mind the maxim from the Book of Revelation: “The Spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.” The Spirit of prophecy cannot be simply equated with the unfinished canon of the New Testament!

A *second cessationist rejoinder* might be to insist that there is an analogy between the apostles/prophets *and* Jesus, in that both spoke Scripture-quality words until the end of “foundational” period, when the canon was completed.

Again, for the cessationist “foundation” metaphor to hold, it must treat Christ, as part of that foundation, in identical ways as the apostles and prophets: the central and characterizing expression of Christ, certainly involving the gift of Salvation itself, would need to cease at His death—a position flatly contradicted by the very Scripture cessationism purports to defend.

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith not be based on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power (1 Cor. 2:4-5).

Church, be so emphatically “in Christ”—a typical Pauline expression, which is a characteristic of each and every believer?

2) This insight is further supported by the use of the term, “cornerstone” for Christ in this and in other contexts. Considerable debate²³ continues over the placement of the cornerstone, whether as part of the foundation, as the cessationists would insist, or as the high “capstone”²⁴ or “stringer”—a long stone at the corner of a building which holds two walls together as interlacing fingers, that is, the two “walls” of Jew and Gentile.²⁵

Where the NT writers cite Ps 117:22, “The stone which the builders rejected has now become the head of the corner (κεφαλὴν γωνίας)” (Mt. 21:42 || Mk. 12:10 || Lk. 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pt 2:7), it seems abundantly clear that the position is exalted or high and not a part of the “foundation.” The contrast is drawn, on the one hand, between a rejected stone, not included in the building, but likely lying undetectable, on the ground (perhaps hidden in weeds), as a “stone of stumbling” (Isa. 8:14, cited in 1 Pt. 2:8, *cf.* Mt. 21:44 || Lk. 20:18), and on the other hand, as later being chosen to be exalted at the “head of the corner.”²⁶

The cessationist metaphor is hereby faced with a difficulty. Even if we concede that Christ is the “foundation” of the Church in Eph. 2:20 and 1 Cor. 3:11, perhaps derived from Peter’s confession, we *also* have a Christ who is clearly placed as the “capstone” or “head of the corner.” Since the cessationist argument depends wholly on its understanding of the building stones as persons whose temporally-limited, characteristic gifts and activities die with them, what are we to make of Christ’s appearance at the very “end” of the Church’s time-span? Would not the cessationist “foundational” metaphor demand that Christ’s characteristic gifts and activities continue to the end of the Church period? If this is true, and if Christ is the most essential element of the “foundation,” then what does that say about the other members of the foundation? Does not this necessarily demand that

²³ See the summary in A. T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*. Word Biblical Commentary, 42 (Dallas: Word, 1990), p. 154.

²⁴ G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), p. 66: “The top-most angle or point of a pyramid, obelisk, etc.”

²⁵ So Cyril, *Is.* 3.2 (2.397E) and John of Damascus, *Hom.* 4.30 (MPG 96.632c).

²⁶ Elwell expresses a common misconception in that he seems to feel that it is difficult to have a “stone of stumbling” if placed in the foundation as a cornerstone, “but metaphors can be stretched.” The point of two of our passages (Mt. 21 and Lk. 20) is that the stone cannot be in the building at all if it is indeed, “rejected”!

their “foundational” gifts also continue until the same time? If not, why not?

3) A final observation involves the historical point of view of the apostolic writer of this metaphor himself, St Paul, a fact which renders the cessationist interpretation of this passage impossible. In verse 20 Paul says that the Ephesian Church was built upon the apostles and prophets, past tense. That being the case, according to this cessationist view, apostleship and prophecy, gifts that cessationists rigidly tie to the canon of Scripture, could no longer be in operation at the time of Paul’s writing to the Ephesians, for Paul is clear that the incorporation of the Jews and Gentiles has already taken place. At least one level of stones had been laid on the completed “foundation.” How, then can Paul continue to receive and transmit divine revelation, or even call himself an apostle? Even if we deny the Pauline authorship of Ephesians, someone with “Scripture-level authority” wrote Ephesians *after* a generation of stones had been laid on the “foundation.” If the cessationist interpretation of Ephesians 2:20 is correct, Paul did not have the authority to say that apostleship and prophecy no longer existed, for he himself would no longer be an apostle.²⁷

Apostles, Prophets and Scripture

The cessationist model of apostles and prophets as *essentially* serving as repositories of unwritten Scripture is a caricature. The connection between these gifts and the NT canon is simply not as explicit in Scripture itself as the cessationists would have us believe. For example, when one actually adds up the number of words in the NT written by apostles, as opposed to non-apostles, the ratio is an astonishing 49%-51% respectively! Apostles, even by the most conservative Evangelical attribution of NT authorship,²⁸ have written *less than one-half* of the New Testament! Moreover, if the circle of apostleship is so closely guarded, remember that Paul who was *not a member of the original twelve* wrote 43% of the “apostolic” 49%! The Acts account records the heavy emphasis the eleven made on the *physical* presence with Jesus.²⁹ The apostleship of Paul breaks this

²⁷ I owe this observation to Robert Graves, “That Glorious Day,” *Pneuma Review* 3:2 (Spring 2000), p. 45.

²⁸ Assuming here that Hebrews is not written by an apostle. Few Evangelical today believe this book to be written by Paul! For our purposes the books written by apostles are: Matthew, John, the Pauline corpus, including Ephesians and the Pastorals, 1,2 Peter, 1,2,3 John, Revelation.

²⁹ “Therefore it is *necessary* to choose on of the men who have been with us the *whole time* the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, *beginning from John’s baptism* to

physical link,³⁰ which by implication, tends to universalize the exclusive apostolic contact with Jesus. He insists that “we no longer know (experience) Christ according to the flesh (via weak, human capacities)” (2 Cor. 5:16), but now according to the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17). The central point, here, however, is that NT Scripture itself is unaware that a new “canon” is being produced by the apostles, and in no case is it stated that even *one* task of an apostle was to write Scripture!

Moreover, the apostolic “authority” is far from clear. Most of Paul’s references to apostles are negative and critical (*e.g.*, 2 Cor. 10-12; Gal. 1-2); he finds he must spend strenuous effort even to defend his own apostleship, which seems generally contested, and unrecognized even by some of his own Churches! On the other hand, the “super-apostles” (2 Cor. 11:5) opposed the major message of Ephesians, the reconciliation with the Gentiles by faith and not the law. Were these apostles from James in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:12), who intimidated even Peter, the first Pope, to withdraw from his mission to the Gentiles? At least two of the three “pillars” of the Jerusalem Church seem to have also turned against this mission! The pattern of apostolic commitment to sound doctrine, then, seems scattered at best. By conservative reckoning, *four* apostles (Matthew, John, Paul and Peter) had a hand in writing the NT, but many more did not.

The relationship between NT *prophets* to the NT canon is even more obscure. It is true that the Spirit is seen to inspire prophetically the Scriptures some ten times,³¹ the same Spirit reveals and causes prophetic utterances of other kinds 153 times! While one can show that the Revelator regarded his book as “prophecy” (Rev 22:18-19), it is a great leap to assume, therefore, that all NT prophecy must be oral Scripture!³² Indeed, the *specific functions* of NT prophecy are explicitly written: to praise and glorify God (Acts 2:14), for edification, exhortation and consolation (1 Cor. 14:3, *cf.* Acts 15:32) and the equipping of believers toward ultimate spiritual goals (Eph. 4:12-13). One hypothetical case of prophecy offered by Paul (1 Cor. 14:24-25) shows prophecy revealing the secrets of the heart to lead toward

the time when Jesus was taken up from us” [*NIV*, italics mine].

³⁰ As the events of Pentecost appear to do also, since the filling up of the “12” seems to have been actualized, not with the election of Matthias, who is never heard from again, but rather in the 120 as the symbolic community of the New Israel comprised of prophets.

³¹ Mt. 22:43; Mk.12:36; Acts 1:16; 28:25; Heb 3:7; 9:8; 10:15; 1 Pt 1:11,12; 2 Pt 1:21.

³² Robert L. Thomas, “The Correlation of Revelatory Spiritual Gifts and NT Canonicity,” *Master’s Seminary Journal*, 8 (Spr 1997), pp. 5-28.

repentance. Certainly none of these explicit purposes that the *New Testament itself describes* of prophecy hints at the writing of a NT document!

Moreover, the examples of prophecy in Acts show utterly different purposes for their expression than that of accumulating an oral reservoir of Scripture! Agabus informs the Antioch Church of an impending famine, motivating a charitable contribution for needy believers in Judea (Acts 11:27-30). Antioch prophets commission Paul and Barnabas for a mission outreach (Acts 11:1-3). Judas and Silas “encouraged and strengthened” the Gentile Churches with an unrecorded prophetic message after the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15:32-33). Ephesian converts prophesied, but nothing is recorded of the content (Acts 19:6). The Tyrean disciples “through the Spirit” urged Paul not to go to Jerusalem (Acts 21:3-4). Philip had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses (Acts 21:9). Agabus prophetically warns Paul that he would be arrested and bound if he went to Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-11). In no case do any of these prophets or the narrator of these texts indicate that any prophetic utterance was intended as a “foundational doctrine” on which the Church would be built! Certainly and obviously these cases of prophecy were *recorded* in Scripture, but there is no indication from these texts whatsoever that the *essential function* of prophecy was to serve as oral Scripture until it could be reduced to writing. If, indeed, the function of the gifts determine their duration, then it is clear that demanding the cessation of apostles and prophets because of their input into the process of writing Scripture is based on the most tenuous NT indications. The strong and explicit functions of these gifts seem to evidence, rather, their continuation until their tasks are complete at the *Parousia*. Ephesians continues its description of apostles and prophets in 4:11-13 where it describes the gifts being given to the Church *until (mechri) we all* enter the eschatological state of “attaining to the *whole measure* of the *fullness* of Christ.”

Concluding Statement

The most unsettling premise of the ‘foundational’ argument is the notion employed of what ultimately is the ‘foundation’—the most important element or core value—of the Church. Some cessationists appear to be insisting that the ‘foundation’ is the established doctrine of the NT documents. As one committed to the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture, I would never seek to minimize the central significance of the Bible for faith. Nevertheless, the Bible in general,

and Ephesians in particular, does not identify *itself* as the foundational core of the Church. Rather, the *disclosure experience of Christ*, although within its biblical framework, is truly the foundation of the Church. St Paul was concerned that Christians’ faith rested *not* on *words*, but on ‘a demonstration of the Spirit’s power’ (I Cor. 2.14). This strongly suggests that normatively, a system of propositions, however true they may be, is not the basis for faith; rather it is *Christ himself*, through the *activity* of the *Spirit* of Christ, with a strong overtone of revelation, that characterizes this foundation.

The Essence of the New Covenant: The Spirit of Prophecy – Isaiah 59.19-21 as the Programmatic Statement of the New Covenant in the Acts of the Apostles¹

Abstract

Perhaps due to traditional discomfort with the continuing gift of prophecy in the Christian community, the new covenant/promise of Isaiah 59.19-21 has received scant attention in both theology and biblical studies. By contrast, Luke views this Isaianic passage not only as a fulfillment of the Pentecost events in Acts 2-4, but also employs it as the very structure of this second volume as well.

Intertextual “dependence” via the use of identical words and phrases is less convincing if the underlying argument and narrative plot are not also demonstrated. Employing synonymous rather than identical expressions, Luke weaves Isa. 59.19-21 into a coherent narrative flow in Acts 2, describing: 1) The powerful rushing sound 2) of the wind/Spirit and the “words in the mouth”/speaking (Joel 2) 3) which cause 4) the universal 5) fear of 6) the Lord’s name and his glory. 7) In this way, the redeemer (Ps 16) 8) comes to Zion/ Jerusalem 9) to Jacob/Jews, who, upon their repentance, 10) will receive the covenant/promise of the Spirit 11) that shall not depart from him nor from his children nor from their children forever.

The conceptual and structural use of Isa. 59.19-21 in the early chapters of Acts, then, solves a number of puzzles. This Isaianic prophecy serves as the programmatic statement for the Book of Acts, building upon its mirrored programmatic passage (Isa. 61.1-2) of the first volume, the Gospel of Luke. In Luke, Jesus is the bearer of the Spirit and his gifts; in Acts he is the bestower of the Spirit “for you, for your children, and for all who are far off.” Hence, the very thesis statement of the Book of Acts—the essence of the new covenant—could not be more clear in denying cessationism.

At the conclusion of the Pentecost narrative of Acts chapter 2, Peter cites an obscure Isaianic passage “This promise is for you and for your children and for those who are far off.” The passage which scholars

¹ This appendix appears as a two-part article in the *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (2008). Used here with permission.

have neglected, represents the thematic cornerstone, even the programmatic prophecy of the new covenant, for the Book of Acts.²

Traditional Christian conceptions of the new covenant found New Testament support from Hebrews 9, the Paschal narratives (“the new covenant in my blood”) and in the Old Testament, principally from Jeremiah 31.31-33 and Ezekiel 36.26-28. It appears that throughout the most recent five centuries of Christian scholarship, another equally explicit Old Testament promise of a covenant has been almost completely ignored, *viz.*, Isaiah 59.19-21. This passage, which also promises a new covenant, brought by the “redeemer,” upon repentance from sins is cited in the New Testament twice: Acts 2.38-39 and Rom. 11.26-27. While recent literature has duly noted the extensive emphasis upon the fulfillment of scripture by Luke-Acts, and in particular, the prophecies of Isaiah, chapter 59 receives no serious consideration.³ Even literature specifically on our passage has failed to link it to the agenda of Acts 2, despite the clear allusions throughout the chapter, which occur in a strikingly parallel sequence, and particularly the close paraphrase of Isa. 59.21 at its climax.⁴

² *E.g.*, the major commentaries by C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles: In Two Volumes*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), J. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1996), E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles, A Commentary* (E.t. Bernard Noble and Gerald Shinn, updated by R. McL. Wilson. Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), L. T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* Vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1992), H. C. Kee, *To Every Nation under Heaven: The Acts of the Apostles* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1997), J. Pelikan, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005).

³ Štefan Porúbčan, S.J. (*Il Patto Nuovo in Is. 40-66* [The New Covenant in Isa. 40-66], *Analecta Biblica* 8 [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1958]) discusses Isa. 59.21, esp. in pp. 206-09, 259-60, but makes no NT connections. So also, Wansuk Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes: The Spirit of God in the Book of Isaiah* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 151, 156. David W. Pao (*Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000], p. 116) lists a reference to Isa. 59.21 only in a footnote without comment. Bart J. Koet (‘Isaiah in Luke-Acts,’ chapter 5 in *Isaiah in the New Testament*, eds. S. Moyise and M. Menkin [London: T & T Clark, 2005], pp. 79-100) fails to mention Isa. 59 as does K. D. Litwak (*Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts: Telling the History of God’s People Intertextually* [London: T & T Clark, 2005]). So also, Petrus Gräbe (*New Covenant, New Community: The Significance of Biblical and Patristic Covenant Theology for Contemporary Understanding* [Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2006]).

⁴ Chris Thomas, in ‘The Charismatic Structure of Acts’ (*JPT*, 10.13 [2004], pp. 19-30), argues that the structure of Acts is determined by ‘literary markers’ *e.g.*, Acts 6.7; [8.3]; 9.[28-]31; 12.24; 16.5[-6]; 19.20, in each case summarizing the ‘spread of the Gospel and growth of the church’. One might also note that each of these literary markers—summary statements—involve the spread, specifically, of ‘the word’

Here a problem of intertextuality emerges: convincing literary “dependence” can appear in the form of identical vocabulary, but at the same time fail to provide the matrix of continuous structural flow in the text. The original audience, who read texts aloud and whose ears were exquisitely attuned to the words of scripture, quite likely was also alert to narrative structures as well.⁵ Certainly, this is the general thesis of Rebecca Denova, though she does not treat the contribution of Isa. 59 to the structure of Acts.⁶ By contrast, Craig Evans offers evidence for incidental literary influence of Joel on the Pentecost narrative, but his data fail to demonstrate that the *structure* of the Pentecost narrative was thusly shaped.⁷ Similarly, Lüdemann and Wedderburn have

(prophetic power) of God, my supplemental passages added in brackets. He shows that there is a tight correlation between these markers and the content of each related panel: charismatic anointing by the Holy Spirit on key individuals (‘children’? 2.39), spreading geographically (from Jerusalem to Rome—the two loci of Isa. 59.19, east and west!).

This paper will show that by seeing Isa. 59.19-21 as the thematic and structural template of Acts, Thomas’s basic insights are vindicated. This paper would also argue that several other significant themes are woven cyclically throughout the structure: e.g., ‘the word’, ‘name of Lord/Jesus’, the exalted, active Lord/Jesus, ‘Jerusalem’, ‘Jews’, ‘Gentiles’, ‘covenant/promise’, ‘signs and wonders’. A major, recurring theme in Acts of unjust imprisonments with the authorities coming to fear the name of the Lord and releasing their captives fulfills another Isaianic prophecy (24.14-26) see note 41, below.

⁵ For an intriguing reconstruction of how the earliest audience ‘heard’ the biblical quotations and allusions in the reading the Luke-Acts texts, see François Bovon’s section, ‘the art of quotation’ in his “How Well the Holy Spirit Spoke through the Prophet Isaiah to Your Ancestors!” (Acts 28.25), *New Testament Traditions and Apocryphal Narratives*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series (Allison Park, Penn.: Pickwick Publications, 1995), pp. 43-50. The Jewish/Christian culture consisted of at least some who ‘examined the scriptures daily’ (Acts 17.11) or weekly (Lk. 4.16, cf. 2 Cor. 3.14-15; 1 Tim. 4.13). The attitude toward scripture in the Prologue of Sirach (1.1) is instructive. Indeed, as an expression of the Hebrew *mashal* wisdom tradition, Luke-Acts, as other New Testament documents, appears to employ subtle allusions and patterns as a teaching device, since the sudden ‘Aha!’ insight/discovery phenomenon after intense ‘seeking out’ (*midrash*) had the effect of strengthening the memory of that insight.

⁶ ‘The rhetorical argument that frames the plot consists of a demonstration that what the prophets said would happen did indeed happen, from the birth . . . of Jesus of Nazareth to Paul’s mission in Rome. This reliance upon a prophetic plot structure is even more apparent in Acts.’ *The Things Accomplished among Us: Prophetic Tradition in the Structural Pattern of Luke-Acts*. JSNT 141 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), p. 28. For background on the role of plot in the narrative in Luke-Acts see William Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), pp. 17-36.

⁷ Craig Evans, ‘The Prophetic Setting of the Pentecost Narrative,’ *ZNW* 74.1-2 (1983), pp. 148-150. Evans’s list in note 6 shows that, while Luke and Joel indeed

produced many fascinating examples of extra-biblical literary parallels to the text of Acts, but also failed to show that the movement of Luke's argument was affected. Finally, Craig Keener actually discusses the relationship of the "programmatically" prophecy of Luke (Isa. 61:1-2) and Acts 1:8 with "2:16-21 (interpreting Joel) [as] programmatic for Acts."⁸ Keener's observation is so very close, but his Joel quotation fails to account thoroughly for the explicit themes in Acts 2 and elsewhere to the extent that Isa. 59:19-21 does. These examinations have managed to suggest only a patchwork of sources for Acts 2, suggesting an incoherent narrative.⁹

By contrast, this paper will show that, despite a lower frequency of identical vocabulary, literary dependence in Acts 2 and surrounding chapters appears in the form of synonyms and looser allusions to the

share common *words*, they do not share a common coherent *narrative* as Acts 2 does with Isa. 59.19-21.

⁸ Craig Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts: Divine Purity and Power* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), p. 190.

⁹ A.J.M. Wedderburn, 'Traditions and Redaction in Acts 2.1-13,' *JSNT* 55 (1994), p. 27. The article supplements the work of G. Lüdemann, *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary* (London: SCM, 1989). These studies of the minutiae of 'sources' behind the text of Acts suggest a failure to extract oneself from a modern academic culture and clutter of 'sources' and documents to appreciate the historiographical process of Luke and his writing. By his own account Luke's Christian culture included extensive travel, exposure to most of the relatively few early Christian communities, and acquaintance with numerous eyewitnesses of the events which he records. The time is overdue to challenge the widespread notion that the 'church' to which each NT document was written was a hermetically sealed community which 'knew' of no others. Recent research has demonstrated massive cross-fertilization of ideas and theologies in the earliest Church. See, e.g., Richard Baukham (ed.), *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). Luke's writing practice and vision for his works, then, were not at all limited to editing a conflicting mass of documents, as a modern biblical scholar. Hence, if there were oral or even written material about Pentecost, it is likely that Luke would have learned about them, even if he did not pedantically footnote every option in his writings, as Wedderburn (p. 30, n. 6) seems to suggest in his comments on J.E.H. Hull. Barrett attempts to reconstruct Luke's process of gathering 'information,' not necessarily literary sources, and concludes by asserting that Luke was not interested in creating a literary masterpiece of 'skilful arrangement' and 'chronological precision' (*Acts*, 1.57). Rather than to seek for the message of Acts in a multitude of extraneous secular sources, could we not simply take Luke's *explicit, stated* methodology seriously (Lk. 24.27, 44-48; cf. Acts 1.16, 20) by seeking out the 'fulfillments' of scriptures that vindicate the mission of Jesus 'according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God' and Jesus' own orientation toward the scriptures? For a summary of recent hermeneutical approaches to Acts, see Todd Penner, 'Madness in the Method? The Book of Acts in Current Study,' *Currents in Biblical Research* 2.2 (2004), pp. 223-93.

structure or sequence of events in prophecy of Isaiah 59.19-21—the neglected promise of the redeemer’s covenant of the Spirit.¹⁰

The early chapters of Acts amplify the Isaiah sequence, which includes: 1) The powerful rushing sound 2) of the wind/Spirit and the ‘words in the mouth’/ ‘speaking’ (Joel 2), 3) which cause 4) the universal 5) fear of 6) the Lord’s *name* and His glory. 7) In this way, the redeemer (Ps 16) 8) comes to Zion/Jerusalem 9) to Jacob/Jews, who, upon their repentance, 10) will receive the covenant/promise of the Spirit 11) that shall not depart from him nor from his children nor from their children forever.

The sequence of presentation in this paper follows that of Acts as it applies the Isa. 59 passage, since the two diverge slightly—in sequence, not content—at the beginning. Each section cites a relevant segment of the Isaiah passage followed by a discussion of its application to the early chapters of Acts. Let us now examine the themes in the Acts sequence.

1. The powerful rushing sound of the wind/Spirit (“ . . . *for he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind/Spirit of the Lord drives.*”)

The Pentecost account begins with a puzzling phenomenon: “And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind . . . tongues, like fire, appeared, distributed¹¹ among them, and [a tongue] rested [lit.: sat] upon each one of them.” (καί ἐγένετο ἄφνω ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἡχος ὥσπερ φερομένης βιαίς . . . καὶ ὤφθησαν αὐτοῖς διαμεριζόμεναι γλῶσσαι ὥσπερ πυρὸς καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐφ’ ἓνα ἕκαστον αὐτῶν). Certainly, this is intended to play to the senses as

¹⁰ Isa. 59¹⁹ ‘So they shall fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind/Spirit of the Lord drives. ²⁰’And he will come to Zion as redeemer, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,” says the Lord. ²¹“And as for me, this is my covenant with them,” says the Lord: “My Spirit which is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your children, or out of the mouth of your children’s children,” says the Lord, “from this time forth and for evermore.”

¹¹ The inexplicable description of the individual tongues as ‘cloven’ or ‘divided’ for διαμεριζόμεναι, as represented in a bishop’s miter, seems inappropriate. Elsewhere signs, wonders, miracles, and the Holy Spirit’s gifts are ‘meted out’ or ‘distributed’ (μερίσμοις) in Heb 2.4. This is similarly described in 1 Cor. 12.7 and 11 διαμερίζω is used to describe the distribution of the paschal bread in Lk. 22.17 and Jesus’ clothing in 23.34. The RSV seems correct: ‘distributed’ as beneficial goods underscoring the ‘giving’ or ‘placing’ of the Spirit of prophetic speech (‘tongues’) upon each one of the ‘children’ of Israel, the 120 (Isa. 59.21).

theophany.¹² Some explain Luke's inclusion of the wind and tongues of fire with the events of Sinai, paralleled at Pentecost,¹³ as symbolizing the inauguration of a new covenant.¹⁴

¹² As in Jer. 28.16 LXX: 'When he utters his voice there is a tumult of waters in the heavens' (εἰς φωνὴν ἔθετο ἡχος ὕδατος ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ).

¹³ J.E.H. Hull, *The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles*. Denied by J.D.G. Dunn, (*Jesus and the Spirit* [London: SCM, 1975], pp. 140-41), though this seems to contradict this association he makes in his *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM, 1970), pp. 47-49. The Sinai analogy, while it may be useful to Luke's purpose, is at best, incidental and localized to these phenomena (Acts 2.2-3): its themes do not carry throughout the chapter as do those of Isa. 59.19-21. Nonetheless, the Sinai covenant implied more than the reception of a new ethical code and national identity, as traditional theology emphasizes. (See the insightful treatment of the Sinai theme in Acts 2 by Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* [Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], pp. 179-89). Rather, the unspoken analogy with Pentecost (the celebration of the Feast of Sinai, or at least *Shevu'ot*, 'firstfruits') represents the offer of the covenant to the Israelites to be 'priests,' that is, those who received revelation from God to pass on to others. At very least, Pentecost as an agricultural festival celebrating the 'firstfruits' (of the Spirit) is an analogy noted by St. Paul (Rom. 8.23). The term 'first fruits' also suggests by the multiples of 12 and the Spirit the emergence of the prototypes of the 'New Israel' (Cf. Jas 1.18; Rev 14.3-4), the 120 (probably not an allusion to the 120 satraps over the gentile world in Dan. 6.1 as the 12 were to rule over the 12 tribes of Israel, Lk. 22.29-30), led by the 12, who, had just been ratified by divine lot in the immediate context—a fairly long section (Acts 1.16-26). So, Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 183. Interestingly, in Lk. 9 and 10, the 12 and the 72, respectively, (representatives of the new Israel?) were commissioned to announce/present the Kingdom of God.

¹⁴ Alternatively, one could argue that Luke is inserting here a *contrasting parallel* (the new covenant vs. the old, as 2 Cor. 3) with the events of Numbers 11, which occurred immediately after the events of Sinai:

1) God sent fire on the sons of Israel to punish them for their complaining (11.1-3, cf. Isa. 29.24); in Acts God sent tongues of fire on the 120 (and the 'men of Israel' 1.15; 2.22, 36) to 'tell of the mighty works of God' (2.11).

2) The sons of Israel afterward were 'sitting and weeping' (καθίσαντες ἑκλαιον, 11.4); in Acts 2.3 the blessing (Lk. 24.50-51) of theophanic flames 'sat upon each one of them' (ἐκάθισεν ἐφ' ἕνα ἑκαστον αὐτῶν) 'where they were sitting' (οὗ ἦσαν καθήμενοι) 'speaking God's deeds of power' (2.11). Earlier (Lk. 24.49) Jesus commands the disciples to 'stay in the city' (lit. 'sit' καθίσατε), which might be an echo of the Elijah/Elisha narrative in the LXX Four Kingdoms 2. Croatto, 'Jesus, Prophet Like Elijah, and Prophet-Teacher Like Moses in Luke-Acts,' *JBL* 124.3 (2005), pp. 456-57.

3) In Numbers 11 the Spirit came upon only the 70 elders, 'and they prophesied' (11.25). Moses wished that 'all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!' (11.29). In Acts the Spirit came upon the 120, the expression of 'all Israel'—each one of them.

4) Numbers records that while the 70 prophesied, 'they did so no more' (11.25), implying the withdrawal of the Spirit. Acts affirms that 'the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off (>Heb: עַד-עוֹלָם), cf. every one whom the

The literary structure in Acts 2.2, however, seems closer to Isa. 59.19b than to the narrative of Sinai at three points: 1) While at Sinai God descends upon the mount “in fire” (LXX Ex 19.18) and, indeed, there are “sounds” (αἱ φωναὶ) of the trumpet and of God’s “answer” (φωστῇ), translated as “thunder” in the RSV, the literary connection is less clear than it is with Isa. 59.20, where the rare word for “mighty/violent” (βίαιος)¹⁵ sound appears also in Acts 2.2 (βιαιας). 2) In Acts 2.2 the “driving mighty wind” (φερομένης πνοῆς βιαιας, Acts 2.2) echoes the language of Isa. 59.19b, כְּנַהַר צֶרֶחַ רוּחַ יְהוָה נִסְסָה בּוֹ: כִּי־יָבוֹא (“Because He comes like a river/torrent through a narrow passage [which] the wind [or Spirit] of Yahweh drives”). The Gk in Acts: φερομένης corresponds to the Heb נִסְסָה.¹⁶ 3) In both passages, the polyvalent character of רוּחַ/πνοῆς, respectively, suggesting either “wind” or divine “Spirit” offers a strikingly parallel pattern: appearing first as a driving wind and then as the covenant Spirit. In Isaiah 59.19 the wind (רוּחַ) of Yahweh drives the rushing water sound, generating fear of God from across the world. Then in v. 21, the same word (רוּחַ) is used as the covenant Spirit bestowed on the prophet and his descendants. Similarly in Acts 2 the driving wind (πνοῆς) from “heaven,” a periphrasis for God, immediately emerges as the promised πνεῦμα bestowed on the 120 and ultimately to the 3,000 (2.4). Moreover, it causes bewilderment, amazement, marveling (2.5-7), telling in all their languages “the mighty works of God” (2.10). This “rushing, mighty wind,” however, is integrated with another, repeated element in Isaiah 59.21, which Luke emphasizes with abundant repetition.

Lord our God calls to him’ (2.38-39). This ‘limited and temporary’ vs. ‘universal and permanent’ contrast might be behind the phrase, ‘the whole house’ ὅλον τὸν οἶκον), possibly as an allusion to the Lord’s presence and blessing of the Ark of the Covenant lasted only three months to Obededom and ‘his whole house’ (εὐλόγησεν κύριος ὅλον τὸν οἶκον)—an identical phrase. However, the theophanic initiation of Isaiah’s calling as a prophet, portraying the Lord ‘sitting’ and filling the house with his glory (πλήρης ὁ οἶκος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ) may shape the text of Acts 2.3.

¹⁵ The LXX, βίαιος, translates an apt expression in Hebrew: ‘like a river narrowed or constricted’ (כְּנַהַר צֶרֶחַ). The ‘I-shaped’ wadis (gullies) on the E. slope of the North-South 900 meter ridge in Judah were notorious for their violent, roaring flash floods when funnelled through narrow passages, only a few meters wide but often 30 to 40 meters deep, hence, the Heb., צֶרֶחַ (‘constricted’). The LXX, perhaps not familiar with this phenomenon, nonetheless captures the flavor: ὀργῇ, ‘angry, raging.’

¹⁶ Or, ‘causes [it] to flee.’ The Hebrew verb is the polel form of נָס, ‘to flee.’

2. The “Words in the Mouth”/Speech (“*. . . my Spirit which is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your children, or out of the mouth of your children's children . . .*”)

Some have rightly noted the connection of the Spirit and repeated references to speaking in tongues in Acts. While there is disagreement over the resulting theological conclusions,¹⁷ Luke’s repeated references to Spirit-inspired speech in Acts 2 express a different function: to emphasize still another element in the fulfillment of his programmatic passage: Isa. 59.21. In Acts 2.2-4, Luke blends two elements of his Isaiah text: the “mighty rushing” sound of vs. 19 and the quintuple reference to speech “words . . . mouth . . . mouth . . . mouths . . . mouths”/ of vs. 21 as the phenomena which elicit in the international onlookers strong attentive fear, discussed below.¹⁸ The notion of the

¹⁷ Most recently, Craig S. Keener, “Why Does Luke Use Tongues as a Sign of the Spirit’s Empowerment?” *JPT* 15 (2007), pp. 177-84.

¹⁸ Luke’s connection of the coming of the covenantal Spirit is with speech, as echoed from Isa. 61.1-3 and 59.19-21, occurs elsewhere in his second volume. Chapter 9 diagrams these fulfillments in a chiasmic, contrasting parallel:

(a) *breathing* (ἐμπνέων) *threats* and murder

(b) against the disciples of the Lord,

(c) binding them;

(d) he left Jerusalem,

(e) encountered Jesus,

(f) was blinded,

(g) went to Damascus.

At the midpoint, Ananias is sent to heal and commission Saul, the attacker of the people of the Lord, as Elijah who fed and healed the blinded Syrian invaders from Damascus (2 Kg 6.18-23). Then Saul:

(g’) was in Damascus,

(f’) blind and fasting, received his sight (a definitive act of Jesus, Isa. 61.1),

(e’) was baptized (entered covenant of the Spirit from the redeemer/Jesus whom Saul boldly proclaimed)

(d’) travelled to Jerusalem (vv. 26-29)

(c’) was ‘strengthened’ and went (unbound/freed—Isa. 61.1-2) ‘in and out among them in Jerusalem’ (v. 31)

(b’) was with the disciples (in Damascus and in Jerusalem),

(a’) was *proclaiming/proving/preaching boldly* (‘Spirit upon you and words in your mouth’ Isa. 59.21), because Saul, like the Church (v 31), experiences the ‘[prophetic] *comfort*’ (τῇ παρακλήσει) of the Holy Spirit (“divine *breath*” πνεύματος ἁγίου).’

The conversion narrative of Saul is further laced with themes from the two programmatic passages of Luke and Acts Isa. 61.1-2 and 59.19-21. The summary section (9.31) reflects again the themes of Isa. 59.19-21. After Saul, the proclaimer of Jesus and his Spirit is moved to the gentile cities of Caesarea (named for the emperor of most of the world) and Tarsus, ‘the church *throughout all Judea and Galilee and*

“word of God” in scripture should not be confused with the traditional articulation of doctrines and preaching. Rather, Luke-Acts seems to convey the more biblical notion of “word of God” centrally as the expression of divine power that *effectuates* as well as articulates God’s purposes. Hence, to “receive the word of God” in Luke-Acts essentially means, not simply to apprehend ideas, but to become empowered with the covenant Spirit who places God’s “words in your mouth.”

To demonstrate the fulfillment of the covenant prophecy, Luke seems to reiterate Isaiah’s own emphasis on the relationship of the promised Spirit and speech where ever he can.¹⁹ 1) The direct and first result of the filling of the Spirit in 2.4 is emphasized via parallel

Samaria had peace and was built up; and walking in the “*fear of the Lord*” [Isa. 59.19] and in the *comfort of the Holy Spirit* it was multiplied.’ Saul’s paradigmatic experience is repeated in Acts 10.45-46; 11.1. ‘Now the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the *Gentiles* also had received the *word of God* [To Cornelius: Peter] will *declare* to you a *message* by which you will be saved, *you and all your household*.’ As I began to *speak*, the *Holy Spirit* fell *on them* just as *on us* at the beginning. And I remembered the *word* of the *Lord*, how he said, “John *baptized* [covenant ratification] with water, but you shall be *baptized* with the *Holy Spirit*.” If then *God* gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand *God*?” When they heard this they were silenced. And they *glorified God*, saying, “Then to the *Gentiles* [to ‘those who are afar off’ as to Jacob] also *God* has granted *repentance* unto life.”²⁰

¹⁹ This is true because Luke’s template here (Isa. 59.21) identifies the words of God with the prophet’s own. Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes*, p. 140. O’Reilly (*Word and Sign*, pp. 69-70) shows that Peter’s Pentecost sermon is structured around the centrality of ‘the word.’

- (a) (14) Σταθεῖς δὲ ὁ Πέτρος σὺν τοῖς ἑνδεκά . . .
- (b) ἐπῆρεν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπεφθέγγετο
- (c) τὰ ῥήματά μου.
- (d) (17) ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα
- (e) οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν καὶ θυγατέρες ὑμῶν
- (f) (18) ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος μου
- (g) (19) τέρατα . . . καὶ σημεῖα τέρατα
- (h) (21) τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου
- (i) (21-22) **σωθήσεται...ἀκούσατε τοὺς λόγους τούτους**
- (h') (22) Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον
- (g') τέρασι καὶ σημείοις
- (f') (33) τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου . . . ἐξεχέεν
- (e') τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν
- (d') καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς εἰς μακράν
- (c') (40) ἑτέροις τε λόγοις πλείοσιν
- (b') διεμαρτύρατο καὶ παρεκάλει
- (a') λέγων σώθητε

construction: “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to *speak* in other *tongues*, as the Spirit gave them *utterance*.”²⁰

2) Interestingly, the verbs *filled/gave* resulted in *words*, a sequence that follows Isa. 59.21, “My Spirit which is *upon* you, and my *words* which I have *put in your mouth*. Perhaps to show the connection of this theme, Luke changes the locus of the Spirit in Isaiah from “upon” (אֲשֶׁר עָלַיִךְ LXX: πνεῦμα τὸ ἐμὸν ὃ ἐστὶν ἐπὶ) to the Spirit *filling* (ἐπλήσθσαν) those who were *given utterance*. This description makes it clear that the speech-giving Spirit was somehow *inside* the recipients, hence the words were *in* their mouths as Isaiah described. Luke further echoes the LXX when he uses the same verb for the Spirit’s “giving” utterance: δίδωμι: ἐδίδου (imperfect tense in Acts) and ἔδωκα (aorist in Isaiah).²²

3) Through the mouths of the multitude, Luke offers a quintuple witness to the fulfillment of Isaiah’s “speaking” theme: “each one heard them *speaking* in his own *language*” (2.6) “How is it that we hear, each of us, in his own native *language*? (2.8) “*telling* in our own *tongues*” (2.11).²³

4) After introducing Peter with an OT archaism, “he lifted up his voice”²⁴ the speech formula introducing two prophetic sections, Joel 2

²⁰ Luke’s emphasis upon the Spirit bestowal *resulting in* prophetic utterance is a view not shared by all, e.g., Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 406.

²¹ Earlier, Acts 1.8, Luke seems to be content, in alluding to Isa. 59, to retain the original, coming *upon*: ἐπελθόντος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς, where the ‘upon’ is repeated: ἐπ-ελθόντος and ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς. In his following chapter, however, Luke is stressing the idea of the Spirit and words being *in* the mouth.

²² The LXX translation wanders to a broad paraphrase at the end of this verse, while Luke follows the Heb. text more closely. Luke tends to correct his LXX text ‘in the direction of a Hebrew *Vorlage*.’ Koet, ‘Isaiah in Luke-Acts,’ p. 87. Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 185, insists that Acts’ use of the LXX here requires that Peter’s speech originated with Luke. An alternative explanation might be that Luke used the LXX where he could because his readers, who were reading Greek after all, would be more familiar and comfortable with consulting their native language translation, as would be true, say, with English readers today. The fact that Luke corrects the LXX, as in this case, with the Heb. original points to an opposite conclusion to Haenchen’s about the source of Peter’s sermon.

²³ Luke here is correcting the charge of some onlookers that instead of being filled with the Spirit, the tongues speakers were drunk, essentially a charge of false prophecy, based on the same criticism of classical Hebrew prophets (e.g., Jer. 13.13; esp. Isa. 28.7).

²⁴ Haenchen suggests it is based on קוּלִי נִשָּׂא, meaning, somewhat blandly, ‘to begin to speak.’ *Acts*, p. 178 n.3. The OT parallels, however, use a variety of verbs, most of which carry the idea more tightly of ‘*raising* one’s voice,’ usually weeping loudly or speaking loudly (and prophetically) to a group, e.g., Gen. 39.15 or Jg. 9.7.

and Ps. 16, is similar: “give ear to my *words* (2.14, 22). Peter repeatedly drives the point home: “I *say* to you confidently” (2.29), “And he *testified* with *many other words* and *exhorted* them, *saying*...” resulting in: “So those who received his *word* . . .” (2.40-41). In this regard, Joel, David and even the Lord (the exalted Jesus) are portrayed as speaking as prophets (2.16, 25, 31, 33, 34, respectively).

5) Luke’s addition, “and they shall prophesy” to his citation of Joel has drawn the attention of scholars who have offered a variety of reasons for this insertion.²⁵ If, however, Luke wishes to drive home the connection of the Spirit with speech to support his thesis that Isa. 59.21 is here being fulfilled, then his addition is understandable. In all of this, Luke’s goal seems to present overwhelming evidence of the connection with the Spirit and “words in the mouth,” an important theme in Isa. 59.21 and at most junctures in Acts where the Spirit is poured out.²⁶

Finally, the expression, “words in the mouth” in Acts further demonstrates the impact of Isa 59.21 in that *repetition of this theme* throughout indicates *the very structure of the book of Acts*. As seen in note 4, above, each panel in the book is summarized by references to the growth and spread of “the word” or speech (Acts 4.4; 6.7; 8.4; 9.27-31; 12.24; 16.5-6; 19.20). Beyond this is the constant, repeated theme of the prophetic word being spoken as fulfillment of the covenant promise of the ‘words in the mouth’.²⁷

When the expression is used by Luke it carries the idea of loud (Acts 14.11; 22.22), prophetic speech (Lk. 1.42; 11.27; Acts 4.24).

²⁵ E.g., Peter R. Rodgers, ‘Acts 2.18: καὶ προφητεύσουσιν,’ *JTS* 38 (1987), pp. 95-97. Luke’s addition, ‘and they shall prophesy’ (καὶ προφητεύσουσιν) may allude to an almost identical term in Num. 11.25, 26 and 1 Sam 19.20 where the connection of the Spirit with the phrase, ‘and they prophesied’ (LXX: καὶ προφητεύουσιν) recurs.

²⁶ Acts 10.46; 19.6 and probably also in 8.18 where the reception of the Spirit was something one ‘saw,’ as in 2.33 ‘he has poured out that which you see and hear.’ Apostolic preaching is also marked by ‘opening the mouth’ as in Ac. 8.35; 10.34; 18.14; cf. ἀνοίξει τοῦ στόματός μου in Eph. 6.19, probably based on Jesus’ exhortation in Lk. 21.15. ‘Luke is a valuable but indiscriminating guide when it comes to asking questions about the religious experiences of the earliest Christian communities. . . . in the case of prophecy: he lumps it indiscriminately with glossolalia . . .’ (Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, p. 195). Luke’s indiscriminate lumping, however, makes much more sense if he is describing the fulfillment of Isa. 59.21, which is the fear-inducing wonders of the mighty rushing wind as emblematic of the ‘driving Spirit’ and the accompanying ‘words in the mouth.’

²⁷ After the Pentecost events, other passages describe the ‘word’ going forth: Acts 4.29, 31; 5.5; 6.2, 4; 6.11; 7.22; 8.14, 25; 10.44; 11.1; 13.5, 7, 15, 44, 46, 48; 13.49; 14.3, 25, 27; 15.35, 36; 16.6, 36; 17.13; 18.5, 11; 19.10. Sixty-five more times the words, “speak” and its variants describe a prophetic or inspired ‘word’.

3. Which Cause (“... for/because ...”)

A small, but significant detail in both texts shows even more clearly Luke’s dependence upon Isa. 59. The *causal connection* between the theophanic sound and the attentively fearful reaction of the international audience is explicit in both passages. Isaiah 59.19 asserts that the universal response of fear of both Yahweh’s name and glory²⁸ comes *as a result* or “because of” (Heb: כִּי, LXX: γὰρ) of the theophanic sound. Luke amplifies this conjunction into: γενομένης δὲ τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης συνῆλθεν τὸ πλῆθος (“*At this sound the multitude came together*”): with this expansion, he seems bent on establishing the fulfillment even through this minute detail in his Isaiah passage. The sound is connected here with an even greater expansion and emphasis of the prophecy: the themes relating to the *fear* of the Lord.²⁹

4. The Universal Fear of the Lord (“from the west [lit. setting], and ... from the rising of the sun”)

Luke’s universalism has been a staple of commentators for generations.³⁰ Luke speaks of: “good news of great joy for all the people” (Lk. 2.10), “salvation ... prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles” (Lk. 2.30-31), the genealogy of Jesus traced to the progenitor of all peoples, Adam, vs. Matthew’s Gospel to Abraham (Lk. 3.38), and John’s announcement that “all flesh shall see the salvation of God” (Lk. 3.6). Luke concludes his Gospel with the instruction that “repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Lk. 24.47). Acts reiterates this instruction to be witnesses “to the end of the earth” (1.8).³¹

The question, however, is *why* does Luke stress this theme? The explicit citation of Joel’s prophecy certainly provides support for

²⁸ וַיִּירָאוּ מִמֶּעֶרֶב אֶת־שֵׁם יְהוָה וּמִמְזוּרַח־שָׁמַשׁ אֶת־כְּבוֹדוֹ

²⁹ The notion of יָרָא (fear) and its cognates carries the strong element of ‘respect,’ ‘attentiveness,’ ‘heeding,’ or ‘a willingness to hear.’ True hearing results in ‘the crowning concept of the obedience which consists in faith and the faith which consists in obedience.’ G. Kittel, ‘ἀκούω,’ *TDNT* 1, p. 219.

³⁰ E.g., Haenchen, *Acts*, 169-71, esp. p. 169 n.5. A. Schlatter, *The Theology of the Apostles*. E.t. A. Köstenberger (Grand Rapids: Baker [1922] 1999), pp. 38-39. Gary Gilbert, ‘The List of Nations in Acts 2,’ *JBL* 121.3 (2002), pp. 497-507. W. R. Hanford, ‘Deutero-Isaiah and Luke-Acts: Straightforward Universalism?’ *CQR* 168.1 (Jan 1967), pp. 141-52.

³¹ Following Gilbert, ‘List of Nations,’ p. 519.

diversity, universal, to be sure, but with a focus on the Spirit's outpouring within the social structure.³² By contrast, the Isaiah 59 passage seems to fit better the international or geographical focus of Acts 2.5, 9-11a. In fact, Luke's defining statement of the group listed is: "men from every *nation under heaven*" (vs. 5, also, 4.12).³³ "Under heaven" can be evocative of the sun's arc in the sky (2.19-20), under whose rising and setting dwell the peoples of all geographical areas. In most instances where this expression like, "from the rising of the sun to its setting" appears in the Hebrew scripture, the universal acknowledgement of the Lord is at issue.³⁴ This is the case in also Isaiah 59.19, "So they shall fear the name of the Lord from the west (Heb: מֵעֶרֶב > עֶרֶב, "enter, go in, withdraw"—the setting action of the sun) and [fear]³⁵ his glory from the rising of the sun."

Luke then lists 17 nations, including Galilee and Judea, which appear to be representative of the known world. Luke's specific use of Isa. 59.19 appears to show the universal fear, and perhaps hegemony, of the Lord Christ.³⁶

5. Fear of the Lord's Name and His Glory ("So they shall fear the name of the LORD from the setting [of the sun], and [fear] his glory from the rising of the sun.")

Since the characteristic reaction of the world to the mighty, rushing incursion of the Lord in Isa. 59.19 is "fear"—of the Lord's name and of his glory—then it seems that Luke is repeatedly paraphrasing this theme an incredible five times! The verbs: "bewildered" (συνεχῆθη,

³² The 'all flesh' certainly is a universalistic term abundantly attested in the Hebrew scriptures (Gen 6.17; 9.16; Isa. 66.23), but it carries more the idea of 'all *kinds* of life—animal or human' or '*varieties* of people,' e.g., male or female, than it does 'all the nations or peoples of the world.' The context in Joel seems to address 'the sons of Zion' (2.23) 'in the midst of Israel' (2.27) . . . 'in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem' (2.32; Heb. 3.5). The Pauline material on diversity—the *kinds* of people and their *status*—within the church seems to paraphrase Joel 2.28-29, e.g., in Gal. 3.26-29, cf. Col. 3.11.

³³ Acts also repeats this expression in 4.20 'there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.' Is the 'name under heaven' an allusion to Isa. 59.19?

³⁴ E.g., Ps. 50.1 'The Lord . . . summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.' Ps. 113.3; Mal 1.11. Close to the idea of universal acknowledgement of the Lord and its phrasing of Isa. 59.19 is Isa. 45.6 מְזִרְחֵ שֶׁמֶשׁ וּמַעֲרִיבָה יְדֹעוּ מִמְּזִרְחֵ שֶׁמֶשׁ וּמַעֲרִיבָה

³⁵ The Heb. accusative case (אֹתִי-כְבוֹדִי) takes the action of the verb, 'fear,' hence, it is the fear of the Lord that is universal, the terms 'name' and 'glory' of the Lord are used here as metonymous.

³⁶ Gilbert, 'List of Nations,' pp. 497-529.

2.6) . . . “amazed and wondered” (ἐξίσταντο δέ καὶ ἐθαύμαζον, 2.7) . . . “amazed and perplexed” (ἐξίσταντο δὲ πάντες καὶ διηπόρουν, 2.12), all appear to paraphrase the verb from Isa. 59.19, “fear” (יִרְאָה > יִרָא, LXX: φοβηθήσονται). In every case, the “attentive fear” is emphasized and amplified—all in response to the sounds the diverse multitude was hearing.

This use of the Isaianic “fear” theme in Acts 2 also answers a recurring question: Why does Luke cite the ominous celestial phenomena from Joel, since it seems quite extraneous to the report of the Spirit’s coming? Surely there is more to the citation than providing verbal filler to bring one to the appeal, “all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”³⁷ The section shows that the exalted Jesus performs wonders and is sovereign in the heavens and on the earth (2.19; 2.22, cf. 4.24; 14.15; 17.24). If, however, the expected result of the coming of the “day of the Lord” and the Spirit is fear, then these anxiety-provoking, theophanic portents would certainly contribute to it.³⁸ Luke may be again showing fulfillment here by allusion to several key themes: heaven, sun, the coming of the Lord, with the result of a universal appeal from Joel 2.32: “whoever” and “name of the Lord”—all of them echoes of the Isaiah passage.³⁹

The four-fold use of the expression, “wonder,” in its verb form identifies the response of the multitude to the theophanic events of Pentecost. But in its nominal use the term seems to extend this response to the celestial events of Joel (“wonders . . . and signs” (2.19), the “signs and wonders” of the exalted Jesus (2.22) and the “wonders and signs” of the apostles (2.43).⁴⁰ Hence the summary: “And fear came upon every soul.”⁴¹ Certainly the repentance, baptism and

³⁷ Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 86. I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), p. 161. Turner, *Power from on High*, p. 272.

³⁸ Exod. 15.11, 14; Deut. 4.34; Ps. 139.14; and, most importantly, Isa. 24.16-23, as above.

³⁹ Luke may be using the rabbinic device of citing the part for the whole, since the remainder of this Joel passage continues with Luke’s Isaianic Zion/Jerusalem theme: ‘for in Mt. Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said / and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.’

⁴⁰ It is clear that the exalted Lord Jesus is ‘pouring out that which you see and hear,’ that is, the theophanic wonders through the apostles (2.33). The outpouring implies expressions of enthronement as described in Eph. 4.7-13. The odd sequence, ‘wonders and signs,’ describing both the celestial events and the miracles of the apostles, seems to convey the idea of the same divine, Christological source and essence.

⁴¹ It would be tempting here to suggest that this fear is in response to the realization that one had supported a failed coup attempt against the Messiah. This is

devotion to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, communal meals and

the central point of Peter: The theophanic events of Pentecost and the continuing wonders and signs, essential characteristics of the earthly Jesus, were now being manifested through the apostles. These wonders and signs, then, that represented the almost physical presence of the exalted Lord Jesus, demonstrated the failure of the revolt: 'This Jesus whom you crucified, God has now made Lord and Christ.'

In this connection, Luke may have depended on the allusions of divine retribution from Isa. 24.14-26 to *provide the missing link* between the heavenly wonders and the *fear* of the 'men of Israel,' thereby providing the scriptural rationale and fulfillment for the introduction of Jesus' betrayal and punishment of the perpetrators in Acts 2.22-23, 35-37. Against the universal singing and praise to the Lord in Isa. 24.14-16 a sharp contrast appears in v. 17, just as in the Pentecost narrative. 'But I [Peter?] say, ". . . Woe is me! For . . . the treacherous deal very treacherously" . . . ²¹On that day the LORD will punish the host of heaven, *in heaven*, and the kings of the earth, *on the earth*. ²²They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and *after many days* [Joel 2.28-29; Acts 2.17-18] they will be punished. ²³Then the *moon* will be confounded, and the *sun* ashamed; for the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and *before his elders he will manifest his glory*' (fulfilled in Acts 1.15-26?). The 'men of Israel' who were among the 'lawless men' who 'treacherously' (Isa. 24.16) crucified their redeemer who has so wondrously 'come to Zion' is now threatening to punish both the heavens and the earth. The interest of Luke in Jesus' exaltation (Lk. 24.51 and Acts 1.9-11; 2.24-36) is connected with not only the bestowal of the Spirit and wonders, but just as prominently, his cosmic rule which also elicited fear.

Luke may further allude to Isa. 24.23 in that he mentions the darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour (12-3PM) in 23.44, though he does not mention an earthquake. Curiously, Matthew makes much more of it (27.52-54, cf. 2 Sam 22.8-10). Nevertheless, Luke's use of Isa. 24.14-23 is more obvious, though inverted in Acts 16.22-39 where *leaders treacherously* 'shut up in a prison' (δεσμετηρίον Isa. 24.22) Paul and Silas. All the bound, Gentile prisoners, however, were set free of their bondage (Isa. 61.1c; Lk. 4.18) after hearing the *singing* of praises (Isa. 24.14, 16: 'from the ends of the earth we hear songs of praise' מִכִּנְיֵי הָאָרֶץ זִמְרָה שְׁמַעֲנוּ). Luke again abandons the LXX here for the Hebrew). In the *midnight* darkness ('the sun is ashamed'), suddenly (ἄφνω < Acts 2.2) the "foundations" (τὰ θεμέλια < Isa. 24.18d) trembled.' The conversion of the jailer follows Isa. 59.19-21 and the covenantal promise of the Spirit to him and his children. He '*feared greatly*.' But Paul and Silas said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, *you and your household*" (16.31). 'And they *spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house*' (v.32) 'and *he was baptized at once, with all his family*' (v. 33), '*he rejoiced with all his household that he had believed in God*' (v. 34). Is this yet another example of Luke's obsessive repetition of the fulfillment of scripture, in this case, Isa. 59.21, 'this promise is to you *and to your children* and to all who are afar off' (Acts 2.39)? 'I will put my Spirit upon you, and my words in your mouth and in the mouth of *your children* . . . forever.' The story concludes with the treacherous leaders of Philippi being brought to account 'and they *feared*' (v. 38).

The theme of unjust imprisonment and vindication of the prisoner is substantial in Acts, as in the case of the imprisonments of Peter: 4.1-31 (and John); 5.17-41; 12.1-19, and imprisonments of (and by) Paul: 8.3; 9.1-20; 16.19-39; 22.4-27.44; 28.31. The last seven chapters of Acts report Paul's imprisonment and repeated vindications.

prayers all expressed the “fear of the Lord,” but the “wonders” theme seems to evoke a more general and universal “fear” on “*every* soul.”

The connection of the *wonders*, however, involves a progression: the outpouring of the Spirit and speech, which causes wonder (2.7) and presages the “wonders” in the “heavens above and earth beneath”—the expression of divine power in the cosmos,⁴² which the onlookers had just experienced in the mighty, rushing wind. All this serves as the introduction for the “day of the Lord, the great and manifest (observable) day”—the day of Isaiah’s redeemer. These wonders express the same Source as the “mighty works, wonders and signs” of *Jesus* “which *God* did *through him* in your midst, as you yourselves know” (2.22). When “wonders and signs” are being done by the apostles, this means, then, that these are the physical expression of *Jesus*, who, “having received from the Father the promised [covenantal] Holy Spirit, he has poured out [Joel’s term] this which you see and hear!” The crucified, disgraced Jesus, effectively, has taken over the role of God: these “wonders” are a function of his divine enthronement (*cf.* Lk. 22.69): “Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet.” In this way, Jesus is portrayed as generating *both* the wonders in heaven *and* those on earth (“I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth beneath”). Peter then draws the net: “Let *all* the house [including the treacherous leaders?] of Israel know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified,” hence, the connection of “fear upon *every* soul” and the “wonders and signs” of the apostles.⁴³

This response of fear, then, seems to epitomize the universal response to the Pentecost events, which, to Luke, is identified with the *universal* fear of the Lord described in Isa. 59.19. The chapter concludes, significantly, with a move to the glorification of God (2.43)—an expression of godly fear—being viewed with “favor” by “*all* the people,” again, echoes of the themes from Isaiah 59. Luke,

⁴² Daniel 6.26c-27 ‘for he is the living God, enduring for ever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues, he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth . . .’ *Cf.* Isa. 24.23.

⁴³ Note the related OT themes of wonders, name, redeemer, covenant, Israel/Jacob combined in the following: Ps. 77.14-15 (LXX: 76.15-16): ‘You are the God who works wonders (θαυμάσια), who has manifested your might (δύναμιν) among the peoples. You, with your arm *redeemed* your people, the sons of *Jacob* and Joseph.’ Ps. 78.4-6 (LXX: 77.4-6); 105.5-10; 111.2-10; 135.7, 9, 12-13; Jer. 32.20 who has shown *signs and wonders* in the land of Egypt, and to this day in *Israel* and among *all mankind*, and has made for you a *name*, as at this day. You brought your people *Israel* out of the land of Egypt with *signs and wonders*, with a strong hand and outstretched arm, and with great *terror*.’ The italicized words indicate themes in Isa. 59.19-20.

however, is at pains to emphasize that this universal “fear” fulfills still another theme from our passage.

6. Fear of the Lord’s *Name* . . .

According to Isa. 59.19, because of Yahweh’s mighty display of power, inhabitants of the earth will fear the “*name* of the Lord” and his glory. Predictably, then, indicating that the thesis holds, Acts develops this theme of “name” to a far greater extent than any other New Testament document, some 59 times.⁴⁴ Of those, 26 refer to the names of individuals, *e.g.*, “a man named Ananias.” What is striking, however, is that while Acts uses the phrase, “the name of the” “Lord,” “Jesus” or “Lord Jesus,” a total of 19 times,⁴⁵ it uses the term, “name” in *reference to* the Lord or Jesus 33 times.⁴⁶

This ambiguous application of “name” to “Lord” or “Jesus” seems to reflect the relationship of the Lord (Yahweh) of Isa. 59.19 and 21 to the redeemer of Isa. 59.20, perhaps clarifying the rationale for Luke’s selection of this passage as the narrative plot for Acts 2 and the introduction of Jesus as “Lord and Christ.” Jesus has already been introduced as “redeemer” in Lk. 24.21, *cf.* Lk. 2.38, so just as in Isa. 59.21, it would also be his role to send the new covenant Spirit. It was entirely logical, then, that Peter ties repentance and the gift of the Holy Spirit with the initiation via baptism into the “name” of Jesus Christ. Acts 2, then, lays out the sequence of the coming of the Spirit in theophanous power, inducing fear (wonder, amazement and repentance) as the multitude comes to fear the name of Jesus, who, as Peter explains, is behind it all (2.33-39, 43).⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Noted by Silva New, ‘The Name, Baptism, and the Laying on of Hands,’ in F. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, V, Pt. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1933), pp. 121-34. Barrett, *Acts*, 1, p. 139.

⁴⁵ Four times Acts uses the term ‘name of the Lord’ (2.21; 9.15, 28; and 15.17); ten times, ‘name of Jesus’ (3.6; 4.10; 4.18; 5.40; 8.12; 9.27; 10.48; 16.18; 26.9), and five times the terms are blended, ‘name of the Lord Jesus’ (8.16; 19.5, 13, 17 and 21.13). By contrast, this term ‘name of the Lord’ or ‘name of Jesus’ occurs in Matt and John only twice, Mark and Luke three times, the most anywhere else in the NT is 1Cor. at four.

⁴⁶ Mt. refers to the name of Jesus in any connection 14 times and Lord, 5 times. Mark: 7 and 1, respectively; Luke: 6 and 4; John 11 and 7.

⁴⁷ This sequence, based on the pattern of Isa. 59.19-21, is repeated in the next chapter of Acts. This time the programmatic statement of Luke (Isa. 61.1-2 with 35.6a >Lk. 7.22) is blended in: 1) because the redeemer comes to Zion 2) the power of the Lord appears 3) causing the name of the Lord to be feared, 4) which causes repentance 5) and the reception of the covenant Spirit (‘times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord’). Peter and John, the representatives of Jesus’ power (3.12 and 16) approach the temple (Zion). A lame man, not allowed into the temple, ‘saw’ (ἰδὼν) Peter and

In chapters 3 and 4, the theme of the “name of the Lord”/“name of Jesus” is developed more thoroughly as the central theme in the narrative (3.5, 16; 4.7—the focus of the inquiry and its response is “by what power or what name?” 4.10, 12, 17, 18) and, significantly, is associated with other familiar themes of Isa. 59.19-21. 1) divine power (3.6, 16; 4.7, 10, 12, 17, 18, 30), that caused 2) fear (“filled with wonder and amazement,” “utterly astonished” 3.10, 11; 4.13), 3) “words in mouth,” witness, speaking boldly or prophetically (3.4; 4.8, 13, 19-20, 29-31), 4) repentance (3.15, 19, 26), 5) covenant (3.25), and, 6) the bestowal of the Spirit (“times of refreshing . . . from the presence of the Lord,” 3.19; 4.31).

Pentecost in Acts 2 began with a display of mighty power and the outpouring of the covenant Spirit in much speech. One task of chapter 2 was to link this display to the person of Jesus. The next two chapters develop this link by focusing on the power of the “name” of Jesus in the case of a “notable sign” (4.16) of the lame man. This two-chapter exposition on the name of Jesus is bracketed in a chiasm by theophanic events:

- (a) all *gathered* in one place which was filled with a *violent, rushing wind*
the *disciples* were *filled with the Spirit and speech* (2.1-4)
- (b) *fear* (φόβος) from the onlookers at the signs and wonders of the
apostles (2.41)
- (b') healing of the lame man by apostles which causes *fear* (ἐπλήσθησαν
θάμβους καὶ ἐκστάσεως, ἑκθαμβοί 3.1-11)
- (a') the theophanic *shaking* of the place where the *disciples* were *gathered*
and their *filling with the Spirit with prophetic speech* (4.33).

Luke, however, takes pains to emphasize the connection in chapters 3 and 4 of the *name* of Jesus with the display of God's power, the reaction of fear and repentance. It is the command to rise up and walk in “the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth” that is central to the healing miracle. This point is repetitively pounded home: that against human power and piety (3.12), it is “faith in his *name*, his *name* itself has made this man strong” and “faith that is through *Jesus*” has given “perfect health.” Again, in the next chapter (4.7-12, 17-18) *the central focus* of the trial in Jerusalem was, “by what *power* and by what *name* did you do this?”⁴⁸ Again, Peter affirms that “by the *name* of Jesus

John; Peter, with John, ‘stared intently’ (ἀτενίσας) at the lame man, and say, ‘Look (βλέψου) at us!’ The lame man ‘fixed his attention’ (ἐπέιχεν) on them, fulfilling, ‘The eyes of the blind shall be opened.’ On the lame man’s exclusion and Acts’ corrective, see Mikeal Parsons, ‘The Character of the Lame Man in Acts 3-4,’ *JBL* 124.2 (2005), pp. 295-312.

⁴⁸ ‘Power’ and ‘name’ appear to be used here almost as synonyms.

Christ of Nazareth” the miracle occurred. This leads to a generalization about the centrality of what appears to be the *universal fear of the Lord’s name* from Isa. 59.19 “there is no other *name under heaven . . .* by which we must be saved” (4.12). The reaction of the council again mirrors the connection of the power of God (“a notable sign”) and the doubly-emphasized warning against speaking “in this name” (4.17) or “in the name of Jesus” (4.18).⁴⁹ Finally, the same point is made in the prayer of the disciples: “stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed *through the name of your holy servant Jesus*” (4.30).

Moreover, the conclusion of Peter’s sermon (3.12-26), just as the conclusion to his Pentecost sermon (2.25-26), summarizes and focuses on themes of Isa. 59.19-21, including those of: the prophetic children (“sons of the prophets and of the covenant” (3.25), the blessing (the Holy Spirit), and the redeemer being sent to “bless” (*cf.* Lk. 24.50-51) after the preparation of repentance (note the “so that” 3.19) by “first” “turning each of you (of Jacob) from your wicked ways,” then “all the families of the earth will be blessed” (3.25) in the “universal restoration” (3.21, *cf.* Isa. 59.19). Importantly, all the foregoing material, according to Peter’s speech, is thoroughly derived from biblical precedent and prophecy, much of which appears to be based on Isa. 59.19-21.⁵⁰ This passage also provides the template for the introduction of the most important new element in the Pentecost events: the role of the redeemer Jesus.

7. The redeemer comes (“And he will come to Zion as redeemer” or, “A redeemer will come to Zion”)

⁴⁹ Paul also counted himself among those who opposed ‘the name’ of Jesus in 26.9 despite the ‘promise’ (ἐπαγγελία) made to ‘our ancestors,’ the ‘twelve tribes,’ now ironically being resisted in court by ‘the Jews,’ from Jerusalem, who were promised this covenant (26.4-11). P. Elbert, ‘Possible Literary Links Between Luke-Acts and Pauline Letters Regarding Spirit-Language,’ in *The Intertextuality of the Epistles: Explorations of Theory and Practice* (eds. T. L. Brodie, D. R. MacDonald, and S. E. Porter; New Testament Monographs 16; Sheffield: Sheffield-Phoenix Press, 2006), pp. 226-54.

⁵⁰ ‘You are the descendants of the prophets (lit.: “sons of the prophets” *cf.* 3 Kgdms 2.3,5,15; 4.38; 6.1) and of the covenant that God gave to your ancestors, saying to Abraham, “And in your descendants all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you, to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.’

While Deutero-Isaiah supplies a robust “redeemer” theme in its literature,⁵¹ the redeemer of 59.19-21 specifically ties his coming to Zion and the repentance of Jacob with the covenant/promise of the Spirit. Acts 2.22-39 develops these themes more fully, but not before Lk. 24 and Acts 1 at least similarly outline these connections.⁵² These passages supply the plot for Acts, so it is significant that the Isa. 59 themes appear here as well as in Acts 2.⁵³

Luke 24.44-53, after alluding to Jesus as redeemer in 24.21, drives home the crucial importance of seeing the OT scriptures fulfilled *in Jesus*. This emphasis should signal the reader to be alert to echoes, key words and phrases, which were the characteristic, rabbinic way in the NT writings of citing the larger message of the OT passages.

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, “These are my *words* which I *spoke to you*, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses *and the prophets* and the psalms must be fulfilled.”⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures,⁴⁶ and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,⁴⁷ and that *repentance and forgiveness of sins* should be preached in *his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem*.⁴⁸ You are *witnesses* of these things.⁴⁹ And behold, *I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city*, until you are clothed with power *from on high*.”⁵⁰ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he *blessed* them.⁵¹ While he *blessed* them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.⁵² And they returned to *Jerusalem* with great joy,⁵³ and were continually in the *temple* blessing God.

Jesus is at pains to identify the Spirit Source of his climactic summary as “my words which I spoke to you” before the crucifixion. The message has not changed: “everything written about me” is to be fulfilled—“according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2.23). From his summary of the essentials of his mission, what

⁵¹ Isa. 44.23c For the LORD has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel. 48.20c; 49.26b; 60.16 ‘I, the Lord, am your Savior and your redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.’

⁵² These passages tend to be repetitive and supplementary as a device to weave the two volumes together. K. D. Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts*, pp. 159-60. The theme of Jesus as Redeemer being the occasion of repentance is also found in Acts 5.31; 11.17-18; 13.23-39; 17.30-31; 19.2-6; 20.21-27. Note here also connections with the themes of Zion, Jews and the Holy Spirit.

⁵³ Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, pp. 21-23.

clues point to the specific scripture that is being fulfilled? Here at the end of Lk. 24, echoes of Isa. 59.19-21 abound.

The redeemer comes to Zion ("Jerusalem," "the city"), to those in Jacob who *turn* from *transgression* ("repentance and forgiveness of sins"—the work of a redeemer). Thus the "*name* of the Lord" will be feared by "all nations" (Isa. 59.19), "beginning from Jerusalem," the place where the redeemer makes his appearance (Lk. 18.31).⁵⁴ Jesus establishes himself as the source of the Father's (a late Isaianic name of God) promise (a synonym for "covenant"), which, Jesus says, "I send . . . from on high."⁵⁵ Twice Luke records a "blessing," suggesting a prophetic bestowal of the covenant/promise, as at that point Jesus ascends into heaven ("on high") whence the Spirit will come. The disciples return to "*Jerusalem* with great *joy*" and are last seen "continually in the *temple* (Zion) *blessing* God" (Acts 1.11). The disciples are to be "witnesses," which suggests an anticipation of the covenantal Spirit who puts "words in your mouth," vss. 51-53, cf. Lk. 12.13).⁵⁶ In this passage, then, adopting the themes of Isa. 59.19-21, Jesus is established with (or as) the Lord as the authority who delivers the covenantal Spirit.

Acts 1.1-11 replicates these themes from our Isaiah passage, specifically in 1.4.⁵⁷ In the first verses of Acts 1, Luke makes clear that the importance and focus of his two volumes is what *Jesus* did and

⁵⁴ 'Beginning from Jerusalem' implies that Luke's universalism is always tethered to its prophetic source: 'the city.' Luke-Acts mentions Jerusalem 90 times against 51 times for all the rest of the NT. Barrett lists the reasons for remaining in Jerusalem: it is a holy place, the locus of the crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and the gift of the Spirit, 'the continuity between Israel and the church' (Conzelmann) and the *parousia*. Acts 1.72-73. Emmanuel Asante is closer when he suggests that Luke's focus on Jerusalem shows that 'the redeemer of Jerusalem is the universal Messiah.' 'The Theological Jerusalem of Luke-Acts,' *Africa Theological Journal* 15.3 (1986), p. 181. Asante, however, does not connect this insight with the same themes in Isa. 59.19-20. Nor does J. K. Elliot, 'Jerusalem in Acts and the Gospels,' *NTS* 23.1 (1977), pp. 462-69.

⁵⁵ 'It is important to note that even at this early stage [events of Pentecost] Jesus was understood not merely as a sort of archetypal Christian charismatic, but religious experiences of the earliest community, including experiences like those enjoyed by Jesus himself, were seen as dependent on him and derivative from him.' Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, p. 195.

⁵⁶ Cf. Lk. 12.13 where words are given by the Spirit. This is likely an allusion to another 'new covenant' prophecy of the Spirit from Jer. 31.31-34, developed in John 14.26, 1 John 2.27 and Heb 8.8-12.

⁵⁷ Kurz notes that 'this prologue to Acts introduces the rest of the book by functioning as a summary of some key aspects of the upcoming plot line.' *Reading Luke-Acts*, p. 22.

taught (v. 1). He did so “until the day he was taken up,” making the point of his divine authority (v. 2). The verse continues noting that Jesus had given orders “through the Holy Spirit,” showing his authority as a prophet, perhaps like Elijah,⁵⁸ who was empowered to pass on the Spirit to the apostles (the Twelve representatives of the New Israel),⁵⁹ “whom he had chosen,” also an act of authority. In vs. 3, Jesus “presents himself alive,” the reflexive here emphasizes that he alone took the initiative. “After his passion” marks the contrast of his death with his resurrected state “by many proofs.”⁶⁰ He also “appeared to them during forty days,” a number, usually involved in probation or testing.⁶¹ Jesus’ “speaking of the kingdom of God” implies divine authority. He contrasts John’s water baptism with his own promise of their being “baptized with the Holy Spirit” (v. 5). A similar contrast is made from the disciples question about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. The “times and seasons” of the restoration the “Father has fixed by *his own* authority” (1.7). Jesus then seems to be inserting himself as the mediator of the new covenant of the Spirit. “*But* (by contrast) you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come *upon you*; and you shall be *my witnesses*⁶² in Jerusalem . . . to the end of the earth.”⁶³ Could this sentence be the fulfillment and paraphrase of “The

⁵⁸ The Elijah/Elisha parallels for the bestowal of the Spirit have received substantial attention. M. Öhler, *Elia im Neuen Testament: Untersuchungen zur Bedeutung des alttestamentlichen Propheten im frühen Christentum* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997). J. Severino Croatto, ‘Jesus, Prophet Like Elijah and Prophet-Teacher Like Moses,’ *JBL* 124.3 (2005), pp. 455-58.

⁵⁹ Luke 6.13; 9.1, esp. 22.30 where the twelve seem to have equivalent functions of the 70 elders of Israel.

⁶⁰ The odd expression, ‘many proofs’ is attested in Hellenistic literature. D. L. Mealand, ‘The Phrase, “Many Proofs” in Acts 1.3 and in Hellenistic Writers,’ *ZNW* 80.1-2 (1989), pp. 134-135.

⁶¹ Where Jesus was in the wilderness 40 days, possibly paralleling the 40 years of the Israelites’ wilderness experience, but more likely replicating the intercession for Israel by Moses on Mt. Sinai 40 days (Deut 9.12) without food or water (9.18, 25). Stephen (Acts 7) notes that in the life of Moses, 40 years elapsed before decisive events (7.23, 30, 36, 42) while other contexts indicate a time of testing (13.18, 21). See ‘The Gospel of the Forty Days’ in Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005), 38-41.

⁶² Isa. 43.10-12, “‘You are my witnesses,’ says the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am He. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.”’ Is Jesus citing this passage as an indication of his deity? “‘I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior. I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses,” says the LORD.’ The odd repetition of ‘I, I am the Lord’ (יְהוָה וְאֲנִי זֵאת בְּרִיטִי אֲוֹתָם) is reminiscent of Isa. 59.21 (אֲנִי אֲנִי).

⁶³ ‘To the ends of the earth’ (ἕως ἑσχατοῦ τῆς γῆς) is a phrase which appears

redeemer will come to Zion . . . and I—this is *my* covenant with them—I will put *my* Spirit *upon* you and *my* words *in your mouth* . . . *forever*”? Once again, Luke seems to show fulfillment not by strict literal correspondence, but by the correlation of concepts:

- 1) Jesus sends Spirit || Yahweh sends “my Spirit”;
- 2) upon you || upon you;
- 3) in Jerusalem || in Zion
- 4) my witnesses (speakers?) || my words in your mouth;
- 5) to the end of the earth || for endless generations, forever.

It is verse 4, however, that adumbrates the argument Luke makes in Acts 2 about the role of Jesus in introducing the Spirit in Jerusalem. Luke is making no less than a claim for Jesus’ deity, or at least identification with Yahweh as redeemer (Lk. 24.21) from Isa. 59.20-21.⁶⁴ This ambiguity between the Spirit as being the “promise of the Father” on one hand, and the bestowal of it by Jesus on the other, seems to be quite reasonably derived from the Isaianic text itself.

As we shall see in Acts 2, Luke linked the redeemer (Lk. 24.21) with his promise (covenant) to send the Spirit “in the city” (Zion) until the Twelve (the new Israel/Jacob) are “clothed with power from on high” (24.49)—the climactic summary of the instruction. Importantly, the Luke 24 passage is obsessively concerned with Jesus fulfilling scripture, a major one of which appears to be Isa. 59.19-21. The end of Luke’s Gospel, then, sets the stage for the fulfillment of the Isa. 59 redeemer theme in Acts 2.⁶⁵ Immediately afterward, in the second volume, the first eleven verses of Acts also summarize the important climax, the goal of Jesus’ mission continued from Luke: Jesus’ established authority as identified with the Lord to send the Spirit.⁶⁶

Luke, early in Acts, makes a crucial move forward on his agenda of showing Jesus to be the fulfillment of scripture: to follow the template of Isa. 59.20-21 showing *Jesus is Isaiah’s redeemer who*

four times in Isaiah LXX (8.7; 48.20; 49.6; 62.11). In each case it is a message of the Lord that reaches out to this extent; similarly, 45.22-23.

⁶⁴ The definitive study on the question of the attribution of deity to Jesus is L. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003). For Christ devotion in Acts, see pp. 177-206.

⁶⁵ The Lord as redeemer is a strong theme in Deutero-Isaiah, being so described 13 of the 18 times in the OT.

⁶⁶ Traditional Christianity would focus on the crucifixion with perhaps the resurrection as the most important elements of the faith. Important as they are, for Luke-Acts, at least, it appears that the real ‘punch line’ of these documents is the establishment of Jesus’ cosmic authority and his bestowal of the Spirit of power—again, along the lines of Isa. 59.19-21.

bestows the Spirit. In the proem of Acts, Luke offers a retrospective as “all that Jesus *began* to do and teach,” implying that the second volume would *continue* the description of what Jesus would “do and teach.”⁶⁷ It is important to note that Luke’s summary of this “doing and teaching,” that immediately follows in 1.2-11, concentrates on a theme that Luke develops more fully in Acts 2.22-36, the authority of Jesus as the sender of the Spirit.

Luke, however, faces a problem: just as his audience was aware that Jesus had been “attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs,” they also knew he had been killed and buried (Lk. 24.18-20; Acts 1.19; 2.23). How, then, could Jesus be relevant to the Pentecost events? Explicitly, Luke uses Ps. 16 to introduce the central role of Jesus into the events of Pentecost, but this passage only overlays a deeper structure of four arguments from Isa. 59.19-21. First, Jesus the redeemer continues his past expression of God’s attesting “mighty works, wonders and signs” by coming in the audience’s *present experience* in theophanous wonders (Acts 2.22, 33, cf. 2.2 from Isa. 59.19 “for *he will come* like a rushing stream, which the wind/Spirit of the LORD drives”). Second, the living redeemer further fulfills his Isaianic role by *being the occasion* of “repentance to Jacob” (2.34-39). Third, the redeemer seems both distinct from Yahweh, but ambiguously the same—a picture one can derive from the Isaiah template.⁶⁸ Peter describes Jesus as both “Lord and Christ.” Fourth, accordingly, Jesus assumes the role of Yahweh himself by introducing the new covenant of the Spirit accompanied by the words in the mouth

⁶⁷ Barrett, *Acts*, 66-67. J. Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), pp. 109-10.

⁶⁸ The RSV identifies the redeemer with Yahweh himself: “And *he* will come to Zion as redeemer . . .” says the Lord. “And as for me [or, and I,] this is my covenant with them [Jacob/Israel], says the Lord: my Spirit . . .” The NIV translates the verse more isolated from its context but more true to the grammar: ‘A redeemer will come to Zion,’ as does the LXX: ‘καὶ ἔξει ἐνεκὲν Σιὼν ὁ ρυόμενος . . .’ > **וּבֹא לְצִיּוֹן גּוֹאֵל**. The Lord speaks of the redeemer in the third person, suggesting distance. This is a fairly rare phenomenon in the OT, the closest being Isa. 41.14 and Ps. 110.1! This translation, of course, does not *demand* that the redeemer is a person distinct from Yahweh, but it does suggest at least ambiguity which is translated into a kind of binitarianism in Acts 2. Luke similarly deals with the relation of the Messiah to David as well as to Yahweh in 20.41-44.

In Acts 1.4 Jesus commands, “wait for the promise of the Father,” which, he said, “you heard from me.” Codex D adds to this latter phrase: ‘from my mouth.’ Is D clarifying an echo of Isa. 59.21 about the bestowal of the Spirit ‘on you’ (second person singular, the redeemer/prophet of Isa. 61.1-2, 8?) and ‘my words in your mouth,’ which then are also placed in the mouth of subsequent generations, forever?

(2.33-38).⁶⁹ Moreover, just *where* this occurs is of importance to both Isaiah and Luke.

8. “And a redeemer will come to Zion”

Luke’s fascination with Jerusalem likely expresses his corresponding fascination with the fulfillment of the Isa. 59.20 prophecy about Jesus.⁷⁰ It is doubtlessly for this reason that Luke insists that the promised Spirit would come upon the disciples if they stayed/sat “*in the city*” (Lk. 24.49). They were to do so *only until* they were to be “clothed with power from on high,” so the connection with the bestowal of the covenant Spirit upon them and its fulfillment in Jerusalem becomes clearer. Acts 1.4 emphatically repeats this command: “he charged them *not to depart from Jerusalem*, but to wait for the promise of the Father.” The “power from on high” came in the mighty, rushing wind/Spirit at Pentecost, as predicted, both by Jesus and Isaiah, in *Zion/Jerusalem*. Luke has already established the centrality of Jerusalem in the arrival of the redeemer and the Spirit in Lk. 18.31. “And taking the twelve, he said to them, ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written of the Son of man by the prophets will be accomplished.’” In the absence of any other explanation, is it not likely that Isa. 59.20 was behind this logion? Similarly, Anna’s prophecy of Jesus (Luke 2.38) is revealing with respect to this Isaianic passage: She “spoke *of him* to all who were looking for the *redemption* (λύτρωσιν) of *Jerusalem*.”⁷¹ It would be Jesus, in other words, who would come as a redeemer to Zion. In explicit terms in Acts 3, the emblematic lame man is redeemed from

⁶⁹ In Isa. 59.21 Elsewhere in DeuteroIsaiah, Yahweh is identified as the redeemer (e.g., Isa. 47.4; 49.7, 26; 54.5, 8; 60.16 ‘I, the LORD, am your Savior and your redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob,’ 63.16 ‘Thou, O LORD, art our Father, our redeemer from of old is thy name’).

⁷⁰ On the significance of Jerusalem in Luke-Acts, see note 49, above. It is possible that Luke 2.42-50 and chaps. 19-21 should be read with Isa. 59.20 as its background: the initial attempts of the Redeemer coming to Zion (Jerusalem) and the failure of ‘Jacob’ to repent, all in anticipation of the events of Pentecost when the Redeemer comes in the power of the Spirit.

⁷¹ The term, ‘redemption’ (λύτρωσιν), here and in Lk. 24.21 (‘the one who would redeem (λυτρούσθαι) Israel’) is derived from a different root than the LXX of Isa. 59.20 (ρύόμενος), though conceptually they are the same. ‘In the NT it is the redemption which is awaited for Israel or Jerusalem, Luke. 1.68; 2.38, *i.e.*, from the yoke of enemies, Luke. 1.71. The reference is not to a ransom but to a redeemer, *cf.* Luke. 24.21. At root we have here the same ideas of the redemption of Israel by God’s pardoning grace as in Ps. 110.9; 129.7, so that λύτρωσις is virtually the same as σωτηρία, *cf.* Lk. 1.69, 77.’ H. Büchsel, ‘λύτρον,’ *TDNT* 4. p. 351.

exclusion “in the name (and power) of Jesus” and enters the temple whole (3.1-11).

In Acts 2, the setting of the Pentecost festival is further described as “Jerusalem” (v. 5) where Peter’s audience was addressed as “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem” (v. 14). More often, the Zion theme repeatedly appears in the form of expressions about the temple.⁷² The feast of Pentecost has good Jews, appropriately, in the temple, “all together in one place” (ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ), a phrase that occurs three times in Acts 2.1, 44 and 47 and often associated elsewhere with gathering together in unity for worship.⁷³ The end of the Pentecost narrative summarizes a part of the early life of the church as “attending the temple together” (2.46). The mighty wind “fills all the *house* where they were sitting,” likely the temple or its precincts, but certainly within the sense of “Zion.”⁷⁴ Luke’s emphasis on this location must have a reason: could it be that the wondrous appearance of the redeemer in Zion once again finds its fulfillment in Isa. 59.19-21? The redeemer comes to Zion for a dual purpose: to redeem those who repent (sec. 9) and to bestow the covenant of the Spirit (sec. 10).

9. “. . . to those *in Jacob* who *turn from transgression*”

Peter introduces Jesus into his sermon for at least two reasons: not only to show the central role of Jesus as redeemer who pours out the Spirit, but also as the redeemer who is the occasion for the preparatory repentance of *Jacob*. Hence, Peter brackets both ends of the “Jesus section” of the Pentecost sermon (2.22-38) by an address to “Men of Israel”/“house of Israel,” which are synonyms for “Jacob” (Isa. 59.20).⁷⁵ Accordingly, a major theme in Peter’s introduction of Jesus represents an appeal for repentance (2.23 and 38): “This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.” He concludes with the parallel: “Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” The audience, the men of Israel (Isaiah’s “Jacob”), “when

⁷² Luke elsewhere associates Jesus and the temple (‘a redeemer comes to Zion’) frequently: Lk. 2.27, 37, 46; 4.9; particularly in his climactic manifestation to Israel: 19.45, 47; 20.1, 5, 37, 38; 22.52, and 53.

⁷³ E.g., Jer. 50.4-5 (LXX 27.4-5); Ps. 33.4; 55.14; 102.22; 133.1.

⁷⁴ Contra Haenchen, *Acts*, 168, n.1.

⁷⁵ The difficulty with the inclusion of Judah in the list of nations, Acts 2.9, may be resolved if Luke is deliberately emphasizing the fulfillment of Isa. 59.20. Certainly, Peter specifically addresses, ‘Men of *Judea* and all who live/have settled in Jerusalem’ (2.14) as those to whom the covenant is originally intended.

they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’ And Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.’” Isaiah 59.20-21 reiterates the broader Old Testament teaching that the Messianic era would be characterized by the remission of sins (Isa. 43.25; Jer. 31.34b; 33.8; 50.20; Micah 7.18-20), hence it is understandable that repentance here is expressed in baptism as the link between the redeemer and the new covenant of the Spirit.⁷⁶

Moreover, the term, “brethren,” used both to (v. 29) and from the audience (v. 37) further suggests the ethnic identification with the house of Israel and carries with it the redemptive overtone of family obligation for rescue and reconciliation.⁷⁷ The climactic and concluding functions of the presentation of the redeemer, then, is to elicit repentance to Jacob/Israel in Jerusalem as preparation for the giving of the promised Spirit, the very sequence of Isa. 59.20-21.

To summarize these last sections: The first action of the redeemer was to come in a theophanic wonder (Isa. 59.19 || Acts 2.2, 23), secondly, to come in this way specifically to Zion/Jerusalem (Isa. 59.20 || Luke 24.45-49; Acts 1.4), and thereby to cause repentance to Jacob/ Israel (Isa. 59.20b || Acts 2.36-38). All this is to produce the climactic purpose of the Pentecost narrative: the ongoing bestowal of the covenantal Spirit.

10. “...this is my *covenant* with them, says the Lord: my Spirit ...”

The Pentecost narrative is further bent on demonstrating the contemporary fulfillment of Isaiah’s *covenant* of the Spirit (59.21). Instead of using the word, “covenant” (LXX, διαθήκη), however, Luke substitutes the term, “promise” (ἐπαγγελία), of the Spirit (Lk. 24.49; Acts 1.4; 2.33; 3.39). Elsewhere in Acts, this substitution is retained: Acts 7.17; 13.21, 32; 26.6-7. In this Luke seems to follow biblical

⁷⁶ Also, Lk. 24.47; Acts 5.31; 10.43; 13.23-39; 26.18; Eph. 1.7; Col 1.14; 1 Jn. 1.9; 2.12. A. Richardson, *Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1958), p. 349. C. H. Dodd’s classic, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (New York: Harper & Row, 1936), pp. 21-24 notes that the sermons of Acts always conclude with an appeal for repentance, the offer of forgiveness and of the Holy Spirit. This pattern is not accidental if one sees Isa. 59.20-21 lying beneath it, since it reinforces Luke’s emphasis on fulfillment of scripture to demonstrate divine foreknowledge and authority for Christian belief and activity.

⁷⁷ Lev. 25.47-48, among numerous other OT passages, suggests that the term, ‘brother,’ involves cultural requirements for assuring the welfare of the extended family, or even nation, e.g., Mt. 18.15; Phlm. 16.

usage generally, where ἐπαγγελία refers to “covenant”: Rom. 4.13-14, 20; 9.4, 8; 15.8; 2 Cor. 6.16-7.1; Gal. 3.14-17, 29; 4.23-28; Eph. 1.13; 2.12; 3.6; Heb. 4.1; 6.12, 13, 15, 17; 7.6; 11.9, 13, 17; 8.6; 9.15; 10.36; 11.39; 2 Pt 3.9. Indeed, the terms, “covenant” and “promise” are placed in synonymous parallel in: Gal. 2.12; Eph. 3.17; Heb. 8.6; 9.15, cf. LXX: 1 Chr 16.16; Neh. 9.8. So in Peter’s direct quotation of the Isaiah prophecy, the substitution for “covenant” is clear: “This *promise* (ἐπαγγελία) —covenant—is to you and to your children and to all that are afar off” (2.39). If, then, we substitute “covenant” for Luke’s “promise” with respect to the outpouring of the Spirit, then his theme of the Isa. 59 fulfillment stands out more sharply (Lk. 24.49; Acts 1.4; 2.33).⁷⁸

One might also argue that baptism is a rite for entering the new covenant of the Spirit.⁷⁹ Certainly Jesus’ own baptism, which precipitates the Spirit coming upon him (Lk. 3.21-22), appears as archetypal for his “children” to follow him. Peter’s urging the Jews to repent, be baptized and be filled with the Holy Spirit is essentially an invitation to follow the template of Isa. 59.20-21. This offer ultimately, however, is not limited to “Jacob,” but to all those described in 59.19 as well: “for this promise is to you and to your children and to all who are afar off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Certainly, St Paul follows Luke’s pattern with respect to the covenant mediators, i.e., ‘our competence is from God who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life’ (1 Cor. 3.6). Similarly, Heb 8.15. These NT passages appear to repeat the message of the new covenant prophecy of Jer. 31.31.

⁷⁹ Baptism is ‘the eschatological sacrament of the outpouring of the Spirit in the latter days’ (Richardson, *Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, p. 349. In this connection, see also, Lk. 3.16; Acts 1.5; 2.38; 10.47; 11.16; 1 Cor. 12.13, cf. Matt 28.19 where a number of Isa. 59.19-21 themes: ‘Go therefore and make disciples of *all nations*, baptizing them in the *name* [and promise of] of the *Father* and of the *Son* [redeemer] and of the *Holy Spirit* . . . I am with you always, even to the *end of the age*.’ ‘With the baptism of Christ the age of the Spirit begins in the full sense (Mt. 3.13 ff. and par.). As the dove of Noah after the flood indicates the dawn of a new epoch (Gen. 8.8 ff.), so the dove-like form of the Spirit indicates the dawn of a new creation rising with Christ from the baptismal waters (cf. 1 Pt. 3.19 ff.) . . . being then imparted to the disciples as the Spirit of Pentecost.’ O. Proksch, ‘ἅγιος in the NT,’ *TDNT* 1, p. 104.

⁸⁰ ‘God is the προκαλούμενος at Ac. 2.39 and 16.10, and the Holy Spirit at Ac. 13.2. Jesus is often called the προκαλούμενος τοῦ μαθητᾶς αὐτοῦ, or τὸν ὄχλον, Mt. 10.1; 15.10,32; 18.2; 20.25; Mark 3.13,23; 6.7; 7.14; 8.1,34; 10.42; 12.43; Lk. 18.16.’ K. L. Schmidt, ‘καλέω,’ *TDNT* 3.500. Luke appears comfortably to attribute the designation, ‘Lord’ to Jesus as does Paul. L. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 108-18.

Isaiah 59.21, then, drives the sequence of the covenant's bestowal in Luke-Acts.⁸¹ The Father's promise is bestowed on the redeemer (Isa. 61.1-2, 8, *cf.* Lk. 4.18), who then bestows it upon subsequent generations forever.

11. “. . . shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your children, or out of the mouth of your children's children, says the LORD from this time forth and for evermore.”

The final element in the plot line of our Isaiah passage (vs. 21), which is traced by the Pentecost narrative, describes the *permanence* of the Holy Spirit covenant. This description and offer of the covenant represent the climax of Peter's Pentecost sermon, “For this promise is to you and to your children and to all who are afar off (πᾶσιν τοῖς εἰς μακρόν).” The expression “afar off,” (εἰς μακρόν) seems to carry the primary idea of extended time in the future, just as Isa. 59.21. The only occurrence of εἰς μακρόν in the LXX appears in 2 Sam 7.19 describing successive generations of the house of David.⁸²

It may be, then, that Luke plays on the ambivalence of the term: to be “afar off” in *both* time (later generations) and accessibility (religious and ethnic distance). The bestowal of the covenant Spirit—the core theme of the Christian message in Acts—to successive generations of “children”⁸³ forever, is a pattern with support in the biblical tradition.⁸⁴ Indeed, St Paul cites this very passage⁸⁵ as the

⁸¹ The sequence of symbolic events is similar in Luke 4 and Acts 1. At both the beginning and resumption of his ministry, Jesus appears in the power of the Spirit for 40 days; he is speaking and tempted about kingdom issues; he deflects the temptation; he speaks of the Spirit and his mission from a passage in Isaiah!

⁸² Interestingly, the fairly rare μακρόν appears twice in Isa. 59, where, *e.g.*, salvation, righteousness and even God himself are remote or at a distance, *cf.* Ps. 9.21; Jer. 2.5. O. Preisker, ‘μακρόν,’ *TDNT* 4.372.

⁸³ The Lukan idea of ‘children,’ aside from being a direct citation of Isa. 59.21, *cf.* Lk. 11.13, involves the idea of ‘someone with the same characteristics,’ as in Lk. 3.8; 7.35, or as members of a group: Lk. 13.34; 18.16; or even covenant community: Acts 13.33. In Luke, ‘children’ are often the recipients of the Spirit or revelation, perhaps echoing Isa. 59.21 (Lk. 1.17; 35, 41, 44, 76, 80; 2.32, 35, 40; 7.35; 11.13; 13.34; 16.8 (where ‘light’ = revelation; 18.16-17); Acts 13.33.

⁸⁴ *E.g.*, in descriptions of the extent of the Christian experience: Mt. 24.14; 25.32; 28.19-20; Mark 13.10, 17; Luke. 1.32-33, 47-50; 2.29-32; 24.47; Acts 1.8; Rom. 1.5; 4.16-18; 16.25-26; Gal. 3.8; Col 1.23; 1 Tim. 3.16; Rev 12.5; 15.4; 19.5; 21.24-26. These may have their grounding in such passages as, Gen. 18.18; 26.4; 1 Chr 16.6-36; 20.6; Ps. 2.8; 22.27; 65.5; 67.2; 72.11; 82.8; 86.9; 96.3; 102.15; 117.1; Isa. 2.2-4; 45.22; 49.6; 52.10; 61.8-11; 66.18, 20; Jer. 3.17; 16.19-21; Dan. 7.14; Hab 2.5; Zeph 2.11; Zech 14.9.

⁸⁵ “. . . as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish

universal principle to which one could appeal for the ongoing possibility of salvation for Jews: “The gifts (*charismata*) and the call of God are irrevocable” (Rom. 11.29). The citation, of course, is not direct. Nevertheless, the simple “for” (γάρ) formula for introducing scriptural proof follows that of Luke, citing Peter, for the same passage (Acts 2.39).⁸⁶ Paul’s point is that the “*charismata*,” a rare term, but one which for Paul refers to the specific, broadly prophetic working of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 12.6; 1 Cor. 12), are permanent, and, by implication, are offered to all.⁸⁷

On the other hand, offering the promised covenant Spirit to those who are “afar off” has support for describing religious or spiritual distance, as relating to Gentiles.⁸⁸ Indeed, can we detect in Lk. 24.36 the pattern of the “peace to those who are near and to those who are afar off” of Isa. 57.19? “Jesus himself stood *among them* [those who are near] and said to them, ‘Peace be with you,’” concluding with the promise that “*repentance and forgiveness of sins* [peace?] is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations [those who are afar off].” Certainly, this is the stance in Eph. 2.13, which describes the readers as “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise (ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας—an allusion to Isa. 59.21?), having no hope and without God in the world” are also “ὤμεις οἱ πότε ὄντες μακρὰν” (“you who were once afar

ungodliness from Jacob” . . . “and this will be my covenant with them” when I take away their sins. As regards the gospel they are enemies of God, for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable’ (Rom. 11.26-29).

⁸⁶ Marion Soards lists a valuable series of clear ‘signals’ that scripture is being quoted in Acts such that can elicit unanimity ‘among all parties.’ Less clear is that the Isa. 59.21 passage is introduced as proof with only a simple ‘for’ (γάρ). *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), p. 60, n.139.

⁸⁷ Support for the permanence of spiritual gifts, at least in this present age, appears in: Rom. 11.29; 1 Cor. 4.4-8; 13.8-13; Eph. 1.13-23; 3.14-21; 4.11-13, 30; 5.15-19; 6.10-20; Phlp 1.5-10; Col 1.9-12; 1 Thess. 1.5-8; 5.11-23; 2 Thess. 1.11-12; 1 Pt 1.5; 4.7-12; 1 John 2.26-28; Jude 18-21, *cf.* Jer. 32.20.

⁸⁸ Haenchen, *Acts*, 184, however, suggests that ‘Acts 22.21 and especially Ecclesiasticus 24.32, corroborates the spatial [*sic*] interpretation of this expression. The listeners cannot take it as a reference to the Gentile mission.’ Actually, the passages Haenchen cites probably show the duality of meaning here: temporal *and* spiritual (Gentile-like) distance. Acts 22.21 may well represent echo Isa. 57.19 ‘far away to the Gentiles.’ Ecclesiasticus 24.32-34 clearly describes both: ‘I [wisdom] . . . will send forth her light afar off. I will yet pour out doctrine as prophecy, and leave it to all ages for ever. Behold that I have not labored for myself only, but *for all them that seek wisdom.*’

off”).⁸⁹ Hence, the covenant of the Spirit, then, “is thus extended in time and space . . . addressed not only to Jews but to distant races.”⁹⁰

For all of the controversies over the bestowal of the covenant Spirit, *viz.*, the recipients, the timing, extent, preconditions or characteristics (who, when, where and how), the major concern for Acts seems to be simply *that* people receive the Spirit. For Luke, this composite experience of repentance, the bestowal of the Spirit, and the words in one’s mouth is the supreme ratification of the new covenant and the fulfillment of the programmatic prophecy (Isa. 59.19-21) that undergirds his second volume, the Book of Acts. The next section examines the relationship between the programmatic prophecies which shape the Gospel of Luke and Acts.

Isaiah 61.1-2 and 59.19-21—The Programmatic Statements of Luke and Acts

Bernard Gosse is the only scholar this author has discovered who suggested that the eternal covenant of the Spirit promised in Isa. 61.8 is bestowed on the individual described in 61.1 *and on this individual’s children* in a late interpolation, *i.e.*, Isa. 59.21.⁹¹ Gosse’s intriguing connection may well be shared by the author of Luke-Acts, though with, of course, very different recipients of the covenant in mind. Where Gosse has suggested that the recipient was a figure⁹² contemporary with the post-exilic interpolator, it would appear that Luke clearly saw Jesus as embodying the covenant which is then shared with the new Israel and their descendants forever.

⁸⁹ Preisker (‘μᾶκρόν,’ *TDNT* 4, p. 372) notes the clear citation of Isa. 57.19 in Eph. 2.12-17. The following verse combines themes of Isa. 59.19-21. ‘for through him [redeemer] both of us [universal fear of Lord] have access [via repentance] in one [promised covenant] Spirit to the Father.’

⁹⁰ Barrett, *Acts*, I, p. 155.

⁹¹ ‘*L’Alliance d’Isaïe 59.21,*’ *ZAW* 101.1 (1989), pp. 116-18. Craig Keener actually discusses the relationship of the “programmatic” prophecy of Luke (Isa. 61:1-2) and Acts 1:8 with “2:16-21 (interpreting Joel) [as] programmatic for Acts.” Keener’s observation is so very close, but his Joel quotation fails to account thoroughly for the explicit themes in Acts 2 and elsewhere to the extent that Isa. 59:19-21 does. Craig Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts: Divine Purity and Power* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), p. 190.

⁹² Gosse suggests that this figure was a post-exilic High Priest. ‘*L’universalisme de la Sagesse face au Sacerdoce de Jérusalem au retour de l’exil (Le don de `mon Esprit’ et de `mes Paroles’ en Is 59,21 et Prov 1,23),*’ *Transeuphratène*, 13 (1997), pp. 39-45, also in ‘Isa. 59,21 et 2 Sam 23,1-7, *l’opposition entre les lignées sacerdotales et royales à l’époque post-exilique,*’ *BN* 68 (1993), p. 11.

Moving from the *recipients* of the covenant, Alexander Rofé offers a suggestion as to the *content* of the Isa. 59.21 covenant that would fit the period. While he recognizes that the terms, “‘spirit’ and ‘word’ belong to prophetic stock, yet there is little doubt that they have been reinterpreted here to designate the Torah.”⁹³ As support, Rofé argues that: 1) Josh 1.8 applies the same expression (*lo’ yāmûsû mippikā* Heb: לֹא־יָמוּשׁוּ . . . מִפִּיךָ) “shall not depart out of your mouth” to the book of the Torah. He notes that this string occurs elsewhere only in Isa. 59.21 as an argument for this redefinition. The string, however, is not as it actually appears in Josh 1.8, where the term, “book of this Torah” (סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת) is inserted between “will not depart” and “from your mouth.” The two passages, on their faces, are actually making different points.

2) Rofé further argues that since the “covenant is with a whole community,” indicated by the term, *’otām*, “with them” (“those in Jacob who turned back from sin”)⁹⁴ it is unlikely that the Spirit of prophecy could be so widespread. Only a covenant of Torah study could be so envisioned. But the point of the context is exactly the opposite, where the fear of the Lord would be universal, from the setting to the rising of the sun (59.19) *because*, as Luke would point out (“at this sound”), the Lord comes “like a rushing torrent driven by the *ruach* of the Lord (רוּחַ יְהוָה)” to Jacob (Israel), to those who repent. Similarly in v. 21, the covenant of the *ruach* and its prophetic speech is clearly given universally “from this time forth and for evermore” (מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם). Indeed, in the Joshua tradition (Num. 11.29), no less an authority than Moses actually *corrects* Rofé’s rabbinic reinterpretation that the covenant could not be the bestowal of the Spirit of prophecy. Moses holds out the ideal: “Would that *all* the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit upon *them!*” In both contexts (Isaiah 59 and Numbers 11) Israel/Zion/Jacob are intended as the recipients of the Spirit—their numbers being only limited by their repentance in Isa. 59.20 and unlimited in Num. 11.29, to *all the Lord’s people*—which may extend even *beyond* Israel.

3) Rofé continues: the covenant of Isa. 59.21 does not describe a “future redemption” extended to Jacob, but merely continues Joshua’s Torah covenant (Josh 1.8). This is true, he argues, since Isa. 59.21

⁹³ Alexander Rofé, ‘The Piety of the Torah Disciples at the Winding-Up of the Hebrew Bible,’ in *Bibel in Jüdischer und christlicher Tradition* (Frankfurt am Main: Hain, 1993), p. 83.

⁹⁴ ‘The Piety of the Torah Disciples,’ p. 82.

“does not organically belong” to the immediate context describing Israel’s sin and subsequent redemption in the future (59.1-20). Even though the 59.21 “interpolation” refers, via *’otām*, to “those in Jacob,” the covenant “speaks of the present—‘from now’—describing the covenant which has never been denounced.” In Christian terms, this passage is no promise of a redeemer who bears the new covenant of the Spirit, but rather represents a late interpolation which reinterprets terms usually describing prophecy (*ruach* and *davar*) into excitement over studying scripture. The covenant is the old one: “its definite substance is in Israel’s knowledge of the Torah”!⁹⁵

Two observations are in order here. First, to preserve his argument, Rofé must appeal to higher critics: the passage is an interpolation from a different hand, era and interests. Hence, the context, which would deny the theory, need not be considered. Moreover, the canonical Isaiah constantly juxtaposes, as it does here, the present evils against future redemption (*e.g.*, Isa. 29.22; 49.7; 50.1-2; 54.8), so one need not posit a later interpolation for 59.21. In any case, for our purposes, the author of Acts seems oblivious to the sophisticated, scholarly sensitivity to the “multitude of sources” behind his text. He treats these three verses in Isa. 59 as a unit that applies to the new covenant of the Holy Spirit, sent by the redeemer, Jesus, exalted as Lord and Christ.

Conclusion

The understanding of Luke’s use of Isa. 59.19-21 as the fulfillment template of Acts 2 and elsewhere solves a number of puzzles:

1) Against the tradition in scholarship that Acts is a confused jumble of sources, the narrative of the Isaiah passage corresponds compellingly with the narrative sequence of Acts, providing a coherent, detailed structure of the Pentecost story. No other Old Testament passage provides a similar sequence.

2) The Isaianic passage outlines the very essence of the new covenant Gospel: its universality and the centrality of the Spirit

⁹⁵ ‘The Piety of the Torah Disciples,’ p. 84. This expression would resonate deeply with Christian scholastics of every age, including many conservative Evangelicals today. This ‘reinterpretation of both “spirit” and “words” expressed, consciously or unconsciously, the belief of a late generation that since prophecy had passed away, its function—the Lord’s address to Israel—was devolved to the Torah and its students.’ Rofé cites a sage of the early Hellenistic period: ‘Up to now prophets have prophesied by the holy spirit [*sic*], from now on, incline your ear and listen to the words of the sages’ (*S’Olam Rab.*, 30). For a literature review on the cessation of prophecy in Judaism see Benjamin D. Sommer, ‘Did Prophecy Cease? Evaluating a Reevaluation,’ *JBL* 115.1 (1996), pp. 31-47.

identified with the redeemer. This correlation of Isaiah and Acts 2 also explains: 3) the choice of supporting prophecies in their sequence, Joel 2 and Ps. 16, respectively; 4) Peter's address to those in Zion/Jerusalem contrasted against the actual audience who represented the nations of the world as well as Jesus' earlier insistence on the disciples' waiting in Jerusalem/"the city" for the promised/covenant Spirit; 5) Luke's puzzling fascination with speech/"words" at the various comings of the Spirit (Acts chapters 2, 8, 9, 10-11, 19). It would seem that, beyond the fascination of Pentecostals with Luke's association of speech with the coming of the Spirit as "evidence" of the Baptism of the Spirit has merit beyond mere rationalistic apologetics. Luke is making a larger point: that the essential fulfillment of the promised new covenant in *Spirit and speech* is pounded home at each stage the promised covenant advances.

6) The emphasis of the new covenant promise of the Spirit of inspired speech is on its *permanence* from generation to generation. Isaiah almost obsessively repeats the consequence of the covenant as being permanent to all earthly generations, as does Paul, paraphrasing the same citation in Rom. 11.29.

7) The emphasis upon the *power* and *speech* of the Spirit throughout the narrative and in its template, Isa. 59.19-21, shows that the conclusion of the Pentecost narrative is not a call for repentance. Traditional theology simply does not comprehend the full nature of this new covenant: it is not a matter of becoming regenerated by the Spirit as a way of dealing with the cost of sin and attaining heaven. Rather, the reverse: the new covenant sees repentance and baptism *only as preparation for the gift and mission of prophethood* on all generations, indeed, "all flesh." The "wonders, signs and mighty works" of Jesus and of his apostles, are normative for every recipient of the promised covenant and are part of the "commission" of the new Israel (Luke 9 and 10; Acts 1.8).

Finally, 8) it would seem that, just as Isaiah 61.1-2 is the "programmatic" and defining passage for Luke's first volume, Isaiah 59.21 serves the same role for Luke's second volume, the Book of Acts. The second programmatic prophecy builds upon the first: the prophetic Spirit of the Lord bestowed upon Jesus in Luke now in Acts is extended to his "children and [his] children's children" forever. Understanding the sequence of these programmatic passages is important because, just as the church has largely neglected the central agenda of Jesus' mission in the Gospel of Luke—not only for repentance, but the power of the Spirit to prophesy, heal, raise from the

dead and deliver from demons⁹⁶—the church, correspondingly, has failed to apply the central message of the Book of Acts: that the essence of the new covenant is the action of the exalted redeemer who, “mighty in deed and word,” having received the Spirit of the Lord, would in turn, bestow this promise upon his repentant “children and his children’s children, forever.

⁹⁶ See Graham Twelftree, ‘The Miracles of Jesus: Marginal or Mainstream?’ *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 1.1 (2003), pp. 104-124.

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