

# That Which Is Perfect

by G.W. North

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*The completion of the Bible does not mean the withdrawal of spiritual gifts, and the Church will remain until the second coming of Christ.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:20, John 14:12, Acts 2:17-18, Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 1:7, 1 Corinthians 12:28, 1 Corinthians 13:10, Ephesians 4:11-13, 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21, Hebrews 2:4

**Topics:** "Spiritual Gifts", "The Church and the Bible"

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## Description

G.W. North emphasizes that the completion of the Bible does not signify the withdrawal of spiritual gifts from the Church, arguing against the misconception that the Bible is 'that which is perfect' mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13:10. He points out that the Bible is incomplete and that the gifts of the Spirit are essential for the Church until the second coming of Christ. North asserts that the Church, as the Body of Christ, retains its spiritual gifts and abilities, and that these gifts are vital for its function and growth. He warns against branding contemporary operations of these gifts as false, which could verge on blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, he concludes that while the Bible serves God's purposes, the Church transcends it and will endure eternally, even after the cessation of temporary gifts.

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## Transcript

Some have erroneously thought that when God gave to the Church the completed canon of scripture He did so with a view to the withdrawal of His spiritual gifts, making one the substitute for the other. Going farther, some have said that this is what is intended to be understood from the word 'perfect' in verse 10 of chapter 13, 'when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away'. But this is obviously not so, because:

- (a) it presupposes that God only gave the gifts as a substitute for the Bible, which just is not true;
- (b) it assumes that the Bible is 'that which is perfect', whereas we know from internal evidence that the Bible is incomplete. There are at least three letters of Paul's missing, beside some works by prophets of the Old Testament. The Bible is not in that sense 'perfect' although it is perfect enough for God's purposes by it among men in this age;
- (c) by inference it brands all present-day operations of the gifts as false, a notion which is so shudderingly near to blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, that except Peter's generous words 'I wot that through ignorance ye did it, brethren' avail today for men who say such things, all hope would be lost, for it is the

Holy Ghost who works these gifts in the Body of Christ;

(d) it loses sight of the truth that the Church is His many-membered Body and His Body cannot lose its innate natural abilities;

(e) it totally ignores the words of the apostle in I Corinthians 1:7, where he says that while waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus, the Church is to come behind in no gift, plainly implying that the gifts shall remain in the Church which is His Body until the second coming of Christ. When this event takes place 'that which is perfect will come', for it will mark the consummation of the age;

(f) it fails to accept the statement in 12:28, that without any time note or limit God hath set men with their gifts in the Church.

We see then that the Bible as we know it was added to the Church and owes its existence to the Church. This is because partly it came through the Church and exists in its present format and wholeness by the design and labours of the Church. It is well also to remember that the Church is greater than the Bible, and when the Bible shall cease to be, the Church shall still be. It will then have no need of the special gifts nor of the temporary gifts, such as Tongues and Interpretation and Prophecy and Discerning of spirits and Healing and Miracles and the Bible. These all being partial, shall be done away, and the perfect and complete Church shall abide eternally.

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