

men would arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Acts 20 : 29, 30. It cannot therefore be that the gifts, placed in the church to guard against these very evils, were ready, when that time came, to pass away as having accomplished their object ; for their presence and help would be needed under these conditions more than when the apostles themselves were on the stage of action.

We find another statement in Paul's letter to the Corinthian church, which shows that the popular conception of the temporary continuance of the gifts cannot be correct. It is his contrast between the present, imperfect state, and the glorious, immortal condition to which the Christian will finally arrive. 1 Corinthians 13. He says (verses 9, 10), "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." He further illustrates this present state by comparing it to the period of childhood with its weakness and immaturity of thought and action ; and the perfect state, to the condition of manhood with its clearer vision, maturity, and strength. And he classes the gifts among those things which are needed in this present, imperfect condition, but which we shall have no occasion for when the perfect state is come. "Now," he says (verse 12), "we see through a glass, darkly ; but then face to face : now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known." Then he states what graces are adapted to the eternal state, and will there exist, namely, faith, hope, and charity, or love, "these three ; but the greatest of these is charity."

This explains the language of verse 8 : "Charity never faileth ;" that is, charity, the heavenly grace of love, will endure forever ; it is the crowning glory of man's future, immortal condition ; but "whether there be prophecies, they shall fail ;" that is, the time will come when prophecies will be no longer needed, and the gift of prophecy, as one of the helps in the church, will no longer be exercised ; "whether there be tongues, they shall cease ;" that is, the gift of tongues will no longer be of service ; "whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away ;" that is, knowledge, not in the abstract, but as one of the special gifts of the Spirit, will be rendered unnecessary by the perfect knowledge with which we shall be endowed in the eternal world.

Now if we take the position that the gifts ceased with the apostolic age, because no longer needed, we commit ourselves to the position that the apostolic age was the weak and childish age of the church, when everything was seen through a glass, darkly, but the age that followed, when grievous wolves were to enter in, not sparing the flock, and men were to arise, even in the church, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them, was an age of perfect light and knowledge, in which the imperfect and child-