

which assist in its proclamation to the world and its application to the life of the community.²

The term "prophecy," however, Chapter 5

sense in the gifts passages. In I Corinthians 14 and Romans 12:6 several

gifts or ministries are included in the word. But in the restricted

sense. This chapter and the next two will list and describe each of the several spiritual gifts which have been found in the four passages dealt with in chapters 2 and 3. Three categories will be employed: (1) the speaking (prophetic) gifts, (2) the serving (ministerial) gifts, and (3) the sign (confirmational) gifts. The rationale for this three-fold breakdown will be presented progressively. Both I Peter 4:11 and Romans 12:6-7 speak of prophetic and ministerial gifts. The Romans passage includes two specific speaking gifts, teaching and exhorting. Prophecy as a specific gift occurs in the listing at I Corinthians 12:8-10 as do also two more gifts of a prophetic nature. These are the utterance of wisdom and the utterance of knowledge.

(19:10). Some young girls say prophecy (21:9). But certain men in particular can be termed prophets (21:9). Judas and Silas (15:32) and

Agabus (21:10). In fact, in the Epistles, it is clearly stated that not

all are prophets in a technical sense, not all are prophets, are they?

among all the spiritual gifts in Scripture. Note, for example, Romans 12:6; I Corinthians 14:1, 24-25, 39; I Peter 4:11. Bartling observes:

One thing is clear: Pride of place in all of the lists is given to those gifts which magnify the Word of God's grace and

¹Propheteuo; prophetes; prophetis; prophtikos; propheteia. The etymology of "prophet" is pro-, forth, -the-, to shine, -tes, agent, or "an agent for speaking forth." For the sense of the related word "preaching" (kerusso), see the appendices.

which assist in its proclamation to the world and its application to the life of the community.²

The term "prophecy," however, occurs in both a wider and a more restricted sense in the gifts passages. In I Corinthians 14 and Romans 12:6 several gifts or ministries are included in the word. But in the restricted sense, prophecy is a specific spiritual gift (I Corinthians 12:10; 13:2; 14:6). Yet it is probably safe to say that the several kinds of prophetic gifts, those described in this chapter, have certain properties in common with prophecy per se. All involve necessary verbal communications.³ We turn here to the gift of prophecy.

Who Prophesies

In the Gospels, prophecy is exclusively the domain of the Old Testament Scriptures and of them through whom those Scriptures came. In the Acts of the Apostles comes the transition to the new economy where now prophesying is exercised by those who receive the Holy Spirit (19:6). Even young girls may prophesy (21:9). But certain men in particular can be termed prophets, as were Judas and Silas (15:32) and Agabus (21:10). In fact, in the Epistles, it is clearly stated that not all are prophets in a technical sense, "Not all are prophets, are they?" (I Corinthians 12:29). These men, i.e., prophets, have the specific

² Bartling, p. 7.

³ May, Church Order, suggests that prophecy "is provided for the carrying out of the Lord's command to preach the Gospel to every creature and should be sought by all," and that a prophet is "a preacher who gives forth the Word of God in the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit. The active presence of the Holy Spirit, inspiring and empowering, controlling and guiding changes what would be merely a discourse uttered by man into a 'gift' or 'manifestation' of the Spirit" (187, 221).

purpose of equipping the saint for ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12). It remains, however, the responsibility of the whole church to place special emphasis on the ministry of prophesying (I Corinthians 14:1, 24, 39). So although all believers are encouraged to prophesy, not all are gifted to do so; the gift of prophecy is the particular possession only of some.

The Nature of Prophecy

Prophecy is distinguished from other forms of communication, specifically, revelation, knowledge and teaching (I Corinthians 14:6; Acts 13:1). On its own right, prophecy is a manifestation of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:7, c. 10; 14:1), it is charismatic (Romans 12:6), and it has special significance to believers (I Corinthians 14:22). But by way of caution, it must be clarified that prophecy, as important as it is, is partial at best and temporary (I Corinthians 13:9), and is subject to error (I Corinthians 14:29; I Thessalonians 5:19-22). Yet prophecy carries with it a certain weight of authority, for it is divinely given (Revelation 11:3), is divinely commissioned (Matthew 23:34; Acts 3:18; Hebrews 1:1), and is divinely sanctioned (Matthew 7:22; James 5:10).

The source of prophecy. Three origins for true prophetic messages are denied in Scripture, oneself (John 11:51) as well as private insight and the human will (II Peter 1:21). Rather prophecy is strictly spiritual in its ultimate source. Four agencies are involved: (1) God the Father (Revelation 22:6), (2) God the Son (I Peter 1:21), (3) God the Holy Spirit (Acts 28:25; I Thessalonians 5:19-20), and (4) the prophet's own spirit (I Corinthians 14:32). The Holy Spirit relates to the gift of prophecy in a seven-fold manner:

1. The Holy Spirit is upon the prophet (Acts 19:6).
2. He is in him (I Peter 1:10).
3. He fills him (Luke 1:67).
4. He moves him (I Peter 1:21).
5. He works in him (I Corinthians 12:11).
6. He distributes to him (I Corinthians 12:11).
7. He indicates to him (I Peter 1:10).

The message of prophecy. Prophecy can take the form of either spoken words (II Peter 3:2) or written words (Matthew 11:13; Acts 2:17; etc.). The subjects dealt with by prophecy tend to be the greater themes of divine truth, particularly, (1) accomplished redemption and salvation (Luke 1:68-70), (2) testimony about Jesus (Revelation 19:10), (3) the Gospel of God (Romans 1:1-2), (4) the righteousness of God (Romans 3:21), and (5) the mystery of Christ (Ephesians 3:3-5). The prophetic message can be by nature a revelation from God (I Corinthians 14:29; Ephesians 3:5; Revelation 1:3), that which discloses the secrets of men's hearts (I Corinthians 14:24-25), or even predictions (e.g., Acts 11:27; 21:10). But the aim of any prophetic message is to speak "to men for edification and exhortation and consolation" (I Corinthians 14:3). Thus prophecy cannot be limited to communications of only an extraordinary or predictive nature. It is speaking forth divine truth, regardless of the immediate source of the message being communicated.

The ministry of prophecy. The gift of prophecy, as all spiritual gifts, finds expression through a variety of ministries. A prophet is, at base, simply one who is gifted to speak (John 11:51; I Corinthians 14:3, 29; Hebrews 1:1; II Peter 1:21). That speaking can be in the form of a vocalization (Acts 13:27) or in written form (Matthew 1:2; Romans 16:26). Generally speaking, he is making things known to men (Romans 16:26), whether by witnessing (Romans 3:21; Titus 1:13), by relating

divine promises (Romans 1:2), by teaching (Romans 12:6-7; Revelation 2:20; cf. Acts 13:1), or by exhorting (Romans 12:6, c. 8). Prophetic ministries can often be expected to be accompanied by certain other considerations, namely revelation, knowledge and doctrine (I Corinthians 14:6). In less usual instances, prophecy has been coincident with great signs (John 6:14; Revelation 11:6), with miracles (Matthew 7:22), and with glossolalia (Acts 19:6). Thus prophecy, in its communicating to men, is not necessarily limited to any rigidly prescribed mode of behavior.

The effect of prophecy. Prophecy's effect upon people, that is, the work it does, can be looked at from the two angles of intended purpose and/or actual result. First, a prophet is one means by which God visits His people (Luke 7:16); and as such has special significance for those who believe, as opposed to signs for the faithless (I Corinthians 14:22), thus fulfilling the requirement for charismatic manifestations in the church (I Corinthians 14:1). Whenever some one prophesies, he "speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation" (I Corinthians 14:3), thereby accomplishing the reason that prophets are given to the church, viz., "to equip the saints unto the work of ministry" (Ephesians 4:11-12). It is also by specific prophetic utterances that a minister of Jesus Christ may "fight the good fight," so to speak (I Timothy 1:18; 4:14). The results which accrue in the lives of those receiving prophetic ministry are several, for thereby (1) the brethren profit (I Corinthians 14:6) and (2) all learn (14:31). In particular, (3) people come to believe divine truth (Luke 23:25; Acts 26:27; Romans 15:26; I Timothy 1:18-19), or to exercise faith therein, (4) the ignorant (Revelation 11:13), and they will have cause to rejoice (18:20).

and the faithless are convicted of their sin (I Corinthians 14:23-24), (5) the disciples are strengthened (Acts 15:32), and (6) those who give careful attention to prophecy are singularly blessed (Revelation 1:3). For the Christian minister, prophetic utterances are integral to his keeping a good conscience (I Timothy 1:18-19). Thus the aim of the minister with the gift of prophecy is people-orientated, not merely message conscience.

The termination of prophecy. From the discussion of this and other gifts in relation to Christian charity, as found in I Corinthians 13:8-10, it is clear that prophecy is a temporary gift. The principle for spiritual gifts is that "when the perfect comes, then the partial will be done away." At the Coming of Jesus Christ, all prophetic ministries will apparently be discontinued. But on the basis of the same principle, it is suggested that certain forms of prophecy may be expected to disappear when something more perfect comes to replace it. Prophets are subject to Scripture (I Corinthians 14:37), they must minister according to the analogy of the faith (Romans 12:6), and they must be careful to speak only the words of God (I Peter 4:11). For these reasons, it is likely that prophecy by direct divine impetus through revelations (I Corinthians 14:30), wherever it might occur, should be expected to cease when Scriptural revelation becomes available to the church.

The reward of prophecy. The prophet is not without honor from men, except in his geographical place of origin (Matthew 13:57). At the end times, however, God Himself will have a reward for His prophets, (Revelation 11:18), and they will have cause to rejoice (18:20).

The Regulation of Prophecy

Since prophecy fulfills such an important task of communicating the word of God to men, it is not surprising that Scripture places certain regulating limitations on it, in order to assure minimum corruption by the depraved human mind or by deceiving spirits. These regulations apply to prophecy in its preparation, in its position, in its presentation, and in its reception. First, in its preparation, prophetic ministry must be careful to be in accordance with the analogy of the faith (Romans 12:6), which involves giving heed to New Testament Scripture (I Corinthians 14:37). This requires careful search and inquiry (I Peter 1:10). Secondly, the prophet's position is always in subjection to proper authority (I Corinthians 11:4-5)--he is never autocratic. He must keep control of his own spirit (14:32), for alien spirits may drive one to impulsive, unrestrained behavior. Thus it is cautioned that any prophecy must always be done out of a motive of love, lest it be worth nothing (13:2). Thirdly, as the prophets speak, they must make their presentation only one at a time (I Corinthians 14:31), being careful to do all things properly and in an orderly manner (14:39-40).⁴ Now, it must be recognized that prophets and their messages are subject to error, for not all spirits seeking to gain the control of prophets are from God. Therefore, fourthly, as prophetic messages are received, there is a need for the discernment of spirits (I Corinthians 12:10). Prophets are required to discern as each one of them speaks (14:29). In fact, it is possible that prophetic utterance may fall into disrepute among Christian

⁴The tongues speakers were apparently not the only transgressors of public decorum at Corinth. The prophets themselves may have been jockeying for position. This can even happen today with unregulated meetings, as actually endorsed by some (e.g., Williams, 27-30).

assemblies, if it is not well regulated. So congregations, rather than to despise prophecies, ought to approve them and keep the good parts of them (I Thessalonians 5:19-22). In the Gospels, teaching is done by God

Summary

The gift of prophecy is the God-given grace to declare by spiritual impetus, according to the analogy of the faith, the great themes of divine truth, unto the saints, for edification and exhortation and consolation, convicting sinners and strengthening the disciples.

TEACHING

At least seven⁵ words are used in the New Testament to relate the concept of teaching, all based on the same word, didaskō. Teaching is quite widely used in the Bible, but always with two basic ideas in mind. Rengstorff says of didaskō that:

It denotes "teaching" or "instructing" in the widest sense, whether the point at issue is the imparting of information . . . , the passing on of knowledge . . . , or the acquiring of skills The word calls attention to two aspects, being applied on one side to the insight of the one who is to be instructed and on the other to the knowledge presupposed in the teacher. In relation to the second aspect . . . the example of the teacher forms a bridge to the knowledge and ability of the pupil. Thus didaskain is the word used more especially for the impartation of practical or theoretical knowledge when there is continued activity with a view to gradual, systematic and therefore all the more fundamental assimilation.⁶

The content of teaching is not so important to understanding the spiritual gift as is the process by which it is done and the effect it has.

⁵Didasko; didaskalia; didache; didaskalos; didaktikos; didaktos; thedidaktos; pseudodidaskalos.

⁶Rengstorff, in Kittel, II:135.

Who Teaches

Teaching is properly the domain only of those in positions for leadership and responsibility. In the Gospels, teaching is done by God the Father, by Jesus the Son, and by the Holy Spirit, as well as by John the Baptist and by the Lord's apostles. Other than these, only the Israeli leaders, including Nicodemus, are in teaching positions. The Pharisees were abhorred at the thought that the blind man should propose to be their teacher (John 9:34). The same is true in the Acts of the Apostles, where the only ones teaching are Jesus (1:1), the apostles (4:2; 5:21; etc.), Barnabas and the like (13:1), and individuals such as Paul (18:1; 28:31; etc.) and Apollos (cf. 18:25). Besides these, only the advocates of Christian circumcision attempt to teach (15:1).

The warning of James holds true in the Epistles, "Let not many of you become teachers" (3:1). Although there is the teaching that falls upon the more mature believers generally (e.g., Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 5:12; James 3:1), the task is usually the duty of the church leaders, including elders and bishops (I Timothy 3:2; 5:17; Titus 2:1, 7, 10; cp. I Timothy 2:24). These are men who have been specially gifted and placed into the church by God for the teaching job (Romans 12:7; I Corinthians 12:28-29; 14:26; Ephesians 4:11). Those mentioned in the New Testament by name include Paul and his associates, the apostles, Timothy and Titus. Teaching is strictly forbidden to be exercised by women in the church (I Timothy 2:12). Other than these, there are only the teaching ministries of God, His Son and the Spirit (I Thessalonians 4:8; Ephesians 4:21; I Corinthians 2:13; I John 2:27), and the teachings of the Scriptures (e.g., Romans 15:4; II Timothy 3:16). Of course, the rebellious, the religionists and the deceivers are always going about

with their false teachings (Ephesians 4:14; Colossians 2:22; Romans 2:20-21; I Timothy 4:1; II Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:11). In the Book of Revelation, it is only the evil who attempt to teach (2:14, 20, 24).

The Nature of Teaching

Frankly, although teaching is referred to as a spiritual gift only once (Romans 12:6-7), it has a wider range of methods and activities than any one other of the gifts. It appears to be a more general gift, some of the others being restricted to ministries which are also included within teaching. That which is often defined as the gift of teaching, in reality, may be closer to the gift of the utterance of knowledge.⁷

The source of teaching. Except when the doctrines of men are being condemned (Matthew 16:12; 15:9; 5:9; Mark 7:7; 12:28), teaching in the Gospels bases its message only on divine truth (Matthew 22:16; John 7:16, 17), including the Scriptures (Matthew 19:16; Mark 10:17; Luke 20:28; etc.) and the words of Jesus (Matthew 28:20; John 14:26; cp. Matthew 7:29; Mark 1:21, 22; Luke 4:32). The same is true in the Acts. False teaching points to religious customs (15:1), whereas true teaching is that done by Christ's apostles (2:42) in the name of Jesus (4:18; 5:28) as they spread the Word of the Lord (13:7, c. 12; 15:35) with their base in the Scriptures (18:24-25).

The source of teaching in the Epistles is also limited to divine revelation, the doctrine of God our Saviour (Titus 2:10). Teaching must

⁷ See the helpful definitions offered by Zuck (65) and Walvoord (169).

accord with the glorious gospel (I Timothy 1:10) and the analogy of the faith (Romans 12:6-7). It finds its message in the words of God (Hebrews 5:12), in the Word of God (I Timothy 4:5-6; 5:17; II Timothy 4:2, 3, 5-6; Titus 2:5-7), in the Scriptures (Romans 15:4; II Timothy 3:16), and in the apostolic traditions and epistles (II Thessalonians 2:15; Titus 1:9; cp. II Timothy 3:10). There are false teachings which have their source in men (Galatians 1:12; Ephesians 4:14; Colossians 2:2) and in demons (I Timothy 4:1). The means for distinguishing strange doctrines from the true is simply put in I Timothy 6:3-5, which reads:

If any one advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

Thus teaching is a process whereby the contents of Scripture are effectively transmitted from one person to another.

The message of teaching. The content of teaching appears to be as extensive as the contents of the Scriptures themselves. In the Gospels, teaching seems to follow the very general categories of (1) theology: the relationship of the Father and the Son and of the Son and believers, the identity of the Son; the death, resurrection and ascension of the Messiah; the Kingdom; the new birth and eternal life; signs and future things; and (2) righteous living: repentance and forgiveness; the keeping of laws and commandments; how to pray and testify; the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount; as well as (3) warnings regarding religious customs, greed and the precepts of men. The teaching found in the Acts centers largely around the Person of

Jesus Christ: the Word of the Lord, His Messiahship, His resurrection, His Lordship; and, from the Word of God, anything profitable regarding faith and repentance, and life and salvation.

According to the Epistles, "all Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for doctrine" (II Timothy 3:16) and so teaching's realm is as great as that of the Bible. However, teaching limits its content to the needs of its learners. Immature believers need to be taught the elements of the oracles of God (Hebrews 5:12) and the significance of baptism (6:2). Unbelievers need to be taught to know the Lord (8:11). Churches must be taught the apostolic traditions (II Thessalonians 2:15), all things pertaining to Christ (Colossians 1:28; II John 9; etc.), all wisdom (Colossians 1:28; 3:16), spiritual renewal (Ephesians 4:21), to love one another (I Thessalonians 4:9), and to persevere (Romans 15:4). Sound teaching is also needed for Christians in various social roles (e.g., I Timothy 4:11; 6:2). Teachings can also be categorized whether those of the Lord Jesus (I Timothy 6:3), those of Paul (I Corinthians 4:17; etc.), or of the Law (I Timothy 1:7). Systematic teaching, with great patience, lies at the basis of all successful preaching, reproof, rebuke and exhortation (II Timothy 4:2). But the "anointing" which every believer receives from God is that which teaches him for certain whether he has eternal life and abides in Christ (I John 2:25-27). False teachers and their heresies will continue to plague the church as always (Ephesians 4:14; I Timothy 1:3, 7; Titus 1:11; II Peter 2:1). Again, only immorality, idolatry and "the deep things of Satan" are subjects for didactic concern in the Revelation (2:14, 15, 20, 24).

7:25; Mark 1:22, 27) and with dignity (Titus 2:7), but always careful to speak plainly (Mark 8:31), perhaps employing parabolic illustrations

The ministry of teaching. The ministry of the New Testament teacher can be examined from several angles. It seems to be useful at this juncture to look at his actions, attitudes, mannerisms, circumstances and accompanying duties. Throughout the New Testament, teaching is principally a form of verbal communication (Gospels: Matthew 5:2; 7:28; Mark 4:1-2; 12:38; Luke 4:32; John 6:59; 18:19; etc.; Acts 4:2; 13:25; 17:19; 21:21; Epistles: I Corinthians 2:13; II Thessalonians 2:15; I Timothy 4:6; 5:17; Titus 2:1, 7; Hebrews 8:11). As to the actions involved, the teacher is found:

1. Preaching (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 11:1; Acts 28:31; I Timothy 2:7; II Timothy 1:11).
2. Evangelizing (Luke 20:21; Acts 5:42; 15:35).
3. Crying out (John 7:28).
4. Reminding (John 14:26).
5. Announcing (Acts 4:2).
6. Admonishing (Colossians 1:28; 3:16).
7. Exhorting (I Timothy 4:13; 6:2).
8. Prescribing (I Timothy 4:11).
9. Commanding (Colossians 2:22).

Thus the spiritual gift of teaching may be found having its expression through any of a variety of forms of ministry. The attitudes of the teacher are of such a nature that his message carries with it a note of divine authority, for he supposedly ministers by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 4:14-15), he regards his ministry as unto the Lord (Acts 13:1-2), and he is keenly aware that he is especially the object of divine judgment (James 3:1-2). Yet toward men he remains compassionate (Mark 6:34), impartial (Matthew 2:16; Mark 12:14; Luke 20:21), and very patient (II Timothy 4:2; 3:10). These attitudes are reflected in the mannerisms which he displays, as he speaks authoritatively (Matthew 7:29; Mark 1:22, 27) and with dignity (Titus 2:7), but always careful to speak plainly (Mark 8:31), perhaps employing parabolic illustrations

(Mark 4:42; Luke 6:40; etc.), always stressing accuracy (18:25) and truthfulness (Ephesians 4:21).

Teaching responsibilities may take one into quite differing kinds of circumstances. Teaching can be done openly (John 18:19-20), by the shore of the sea (Mark 2:13), or from a boat (Luke 5:3). On the other hand, it may be in a special meeting place, such as the temple (Matthew 26:55; Mark 14:49; Luke 21:37; etc.) or wherever the church assembles (I Corinthians 14:26). In fact, the teacher may be ambulating (Mark 6:6) and merely passing through a place (Luke 13:22). Caution must be exercised with those who come for the express purpose of bringing some new doctrine (II John 10). Regarding when to teach, there is no requirement; one may teach only on special days (Luke 4:14-15; 13:10) or on a daily basis (Luke 19:47). As well as his teaching duties per se, the teacher, by virtue of his position, may have some accompanying duties as well. Thus those who teach the nations to observe Christ's commandments are also to baptize them (Matthew 28:19-20). But at the local level, the teacher may be the pastor (Ephesians 4:11, Greek), with the responsibilities to preach, to reprove, to rebuke, to correct, to exhort and to train (II Timothy 3:16; 4:2). It is very difficult to lock the gift of teaching into a tight little pigeon-hole or to tie it strictly to a chalkboard and lecturn. But it is safe to say that the teacher concentrates on effectively communicating the doctrines of Scripture through whatever means will work.

A note about the teacher's personal life may be in order here. Teachers must be living examples of the things which they strive to teach (John 13:13-15; Titus 2:7). This requires much attention to oneself (I Timothy 4:16), until he is able, so to speak, to bridle his

whole body (James 3:1-2), even, on occasion, taking time in his ministry to fast (Acts 13:1-2). The undisciplined teacher may be able to articulate the data and facts of Scripture in a clear manner, but he may not, at the same time, succeed in communicating that truth which grips and changes people.

The effect of teaching. What happens to people who come under the hearing of New Testament teaching? Not all wish to learn. But many do. The effects which the gifted teacher can expect in his hearers may be examined as to goals attained, attitudes affected, actions and personal rewards. Some of the Scriptural goals of teaching are, generally speaking, the profit of all (I Corinthians 14:6) and that all may be edified (14:26). Jesus promised that those who are willing will know whether doctrine be true (John 7:16-17), and so may come to a knowledge of the things given us by God (I Corinthians 2:13). Effective teaching eliminates the necessity of reteaching (I John 2:37), and those taught gain a knowledge of what to say in answer (Luke 12:12; John 8:28). Exact, true teaching is an absolute necessity for a relationship with God and His Son (II John 9). Thus the careful teacher pays attention to himself and to his teaching, in order that he might insure an on-going salvation both for himself and for those who hear him (I Timothy 4:16). Various sentiments or attitudes are found in response to teaching. Amazement is often the hearers' first reaction (Matthew 22:16, 22, 24, 32; Mark 1:22, 27; 11:18; Luke 9:43; John 7:14-15; Acts 13:12). Many will agree with the teaching (Luke 20:39) and some will desire to know more. Gladly, others will be accused by their consciences (John 8:9) and so will repent and believe (Acts 20:20-21), coming into a true heart obedience to the things taught (Romans 6:17). But of what

good are attitudes unless they be followed by actions? The teacher will be pleased if the hearers are interested enough to ask questions (John 3:2; 18:19), but he is seeking observance and obedience to his doctrine (Matthew 26:18-19; 28:15, 20; Luke 22:11-12; John 20:16-18), not mere praise for himself (Luke 4:15). It is only through such obedience that disciples come to be called Christians (Acts 11:26). Learners are likely to follow their teacher (II Timothy 3:10), but it is hoped that the Holy Spirit will summon some of them to their own special work (Acts 13:1-2). Yet there are the daily, mundane affairs of life for which believers need teaching (Titus 2:1, 10; etc.), that they may learn to behave in mutual love (I Thessalonians 4:9). Caution to teachers: disciples follow their teacher (Matthew 8:19-23; 23:8; 26:18-19; John 13:13-14).

However, the initial acceptance of doctrine by some is somewhat imperfect (Mark 9:17, 24; John 7:28, 31) and these, as well as all, need continued teaching for growth, for disciples become like their teacher (Luke 6:40). But as they do so, they must be warned, they will be treated like their teacher (Matthew 8:19-23). Scriptural doctrine is essential for equipping the man of God (II Timothy 3:16-17), for sound doctrine will enable especially bishops, in turn, to exhort others (Titus 1:9)--ministers must be taught. That faculty which the teacher aims to develop in his hearers is faith (I Timothy 2:7) wherein he needs to be established (Colossians 2:7) and constantly nourished (I Timothy 4:6). Thus the hearers may learn the full privileges of their position in Christ (Ephesians 4:21) and to find their completeness in Him (Colossians 1:28). Now, the hope that comes through perseverance and encouragement is obtained from God only through instruction in the Scriptures (Romans 15:4-5). When the teaching process is truly an

expression of a gracious spiritual gift, those who are growing will certainly enjoy listening to teaching (Mark 12:35-37) and will even rise early in the morning to hear more (Luke 21:37-38), even if only to be brought to remembrance of things which they already know (John 14:26), and as others hear of this teaching, they too will hurry to come (John 11:28-29). The gifted teachers must speak, and must doggedly continue to teach, for there are always false teachers who oppose sound doctrine (Romans 16:17). These appeal to the immature, employing doctrines which are inoffensive to hear (II Timothy 4:3), until they are able to lead them about with any wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14). They will not even hesitate to upset whole families (Titus 1:11). So that even saints will submit to human religious decrees (Colossians 2:20-22), and some, giving heed to demonic doctrines, will fall away from the faith (I Timothy 4:1-2).

Not everybody responds positively to the gifted teacher. Some will turn and go away sad (Matthew 19:16, 22; Mark 10:17, 22), some will fail to understand (Mark 9:31), and others will rebuke the teacher (Matthew 15:7-9; Mark 7:7; John 8:31-32). Especially the legalists and religionists will oppose the gifted teacher (Matthew 21:23; Luke 20:1, 21) and even cause active dissension in the churches (Acts 15:1). Their methodology includes attempts to entrap the true teacher in his teachings (Matthew 22:16; Mark 10:1-2; John 8:2-3; etc.) and schemes to destroy his ministry (Matthew 11:17-18; 26:55; Luke 19:47; cp. John 7:28-29). Teaching is not only a spiritual gift, but a spiritual battle as well. Immorality and religious compromise are the false teachers' principal devices for misleading saints (Revelation 2:14-15, 20; see II Peter chapter 2).

The reward of teaching. Because of the great responsibility of the teacher for the spiritual lives of so many, it is urged that not many become teachers, for they incur a stricter judgement (James 3:1). But his value is so high and his task so essential in the church, that the apostle Paul wrote, "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching" (I Timothy 5:17). And not only is the pay good, but, teachers, "you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you" (I Timothy 4:16). (Romans 15:5; II Corinthians 1:2; 2:17; 3:20; 7:16; II

Summary

The gift of teaching is the God-given grace to communicate as a leader, the totality of Scriptural truth, to all classes of the saints, for their continuous nourishment, whereby they become personally and corporately obedient to Jesus Christ. (I Timothy 2:16; Hebrews 5:17-18); (2) by Jesus Christ, toward the

EXHORTING

The words for exhortation used in the New Testament³ have a wide range of uses and translations, but they can be grouped into three basic meanings: (1) encouragement, exhortation, (2) appeal, request, and (3) comfort, consolation.⁹ But there are certain common dimensions to be found in all three. For one thing, in all occurrences there is some

³Parakaleō; paraklēsis; paraklētōs. The etymologies para-, beside, -kaleō, to call, may well be overplayed in popular works, for as Schmitz notes, "the sense 'to call in' fades into the background in the New Testament (Kittel, V:799).

⁹Arndt and Gingrich, 623.

form of communication, decidedly verbal. In fact, exhorting is one of the prophetic, speaking gifts (I Corinthians 14:3; Romans 12:6-7; Acts 15:32). For another thing, there is always an appeal to the will,¹⁰ whether for a course of action or for the restructuring of one's attitudes towards seemingly adverse circumstances.¹¹

Who Exhorts

All kinds and classes of people are found in Scripture exhorting one another. There is even a divine exhortation: (1) by God, toward believers' hearts (Romans 15:5; II Corinthians 1:3; 2:7; 5:20; 7:6; II Thessalonians 2:16; Hebrews 6:17-18); (2) by Jesus Christ, toward the Father, toward Israel, and toward believers (Matthew 26:53; Luke 2:25; Philippians 2:1; I John 2:1); (3) by the Holy Spirit, toward apostles and toward the church (John 14:16, 26; Acts 9:31), and (4) from the Scriptures, toward believers (Romans 15:4; Hebrews 12:5-6). Apostles, in turn, have exhortive ministries toward whole churches and the hearts of individual believers (Acts 15:31; 20:1, 2; Romans 15:14; I Thessalonians 4:1; I Thessalonians 2:3; Philemon 7, etc.). Other Christian ministers do the same, but deal with various social classes separately (Acts 4:26; I Corinthians 14:3; I Thessalonians 5:1; Titus 1:9; 2:6, 15; etc.).

¹⁰ Notice the infinitives, clauses and imperatives which follow the verb, lower in the text. Murray's comment is helpful, "As teaching is directed to the understanding, so is exhortation to the heart, conscience, and will" (Romans, II:125).

¹¹ Hay distinguishes exhortation from the gift of mercy by the following illustration: "A believer visits another who is sick to minister spiritual encouragement. To do this he requires the Paraclete gift of words of love. Or, the visiting believer may go into the kitchen and prepare a meal, or help care for the children. For such ministry the gift of Showing Mercy, or acts of love is needed" (Church Order, 192).

In fact exhortation is encouraged as the business of churches and believers in general (Acts 28:14; II Corinthians 2:7; 8:4; I Thessalonians 4:18; II:2:17; Hebrews 3:13), not being confined, as is teaching, to the leaders. Outside of the Christian community, however, exhortation is largely confined to the making of requests (Matthew 8:34; 18:29; Mark 1:40; 5:17; Acts 13:42; 19:31). A word of caution is due here regarding the use of exhortation: exhorting is valid only for the moving of others themselves to action, never for the obtaining from another his permission to let the exhorter himself do something. In this case, exhortation is always for wrong motives (Matthew 8:31; Mark 5:10, 12, 17; Luke 8:32; Acts 24:4).

The Nature of Exhorting

Exhortation is a very effective ministry. With only two exceptions, one, the attempted use of exhortation by a prophet (Acts 21:12), every occurrence of exhortation found in the New Testament did successfully move some one to action. Exhortation is a powerful tool. The other exception was in the case of severe bereavement, a mother's loss of her children (Matthew 2:18).

The source of exhortation. The Apostle Paul's sometime traveling companion, Barnabas, provides an enlightening study in the qualities which make one a successful exhorter. His gift of exhorting was early recognized, for his name, Joseph, was changed by the apostles to Barnabas, which translated means Son of Exhortation (Acts 4:36). A number of responses and qualities are predicated of him in Acts 11:23-24 where he had been sent to the new church at Antioch:

Then when he came and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord; for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord.

The life virtues of the exhorter are so important to the success of his ministry. Even God exhorts out of His great love (II Thessalonians 2:16). And unless one has been approved by God and entrusted, there is a danger that his exhortation may come from error or from impurity or by way of deceit (I Thessalonians 2:2-3). But with the right kind of heart, the exhorter will easily respond to the real needs and earnest requests of people (Matthew 2:18; 8:5; Mark 5:10, 23; 6:56; 7:32; 8:22; Luke 7:4; 8:41). Although some men, by virtue of their respected positions, are required or expected to perform the ministry of exhortation (I Timothy 4:13; Titus 2:15; Philemon 9-10; I Peter 5:1), but even these do so with a sense of close identification with their hearers (Colossians 2:2).

The message of exhortation. With the few exceptions where the actions sought by exhortation are merely implied from the context, the behavior change is clearly stated in relation to the words for exhortation as they are found in the New Testament. Since they are so numerous, let it suffice at this juncture only to enumerate some that pertain to spiritual things: (a) as an infinitive:

1. To remain true to the Lord (Acts 11:23).
2. To continue in the faith (Acts 14:22).
3. To go across (to minister, Acts 18:27).
4. To present bodies as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1).
5. To strive together in prayers (Romans 15:30).
6. To keep an eye on those who cause dissensions (Romans 16:17).
7. To show love unto a repentant sinner (II Corinthians 2:8).
8. Not to receive the grace of God in vain (II Corinthians 6:1).
9. To walk in a manner worthy of our calling (Ephesians 4:1).
10. To think the same thing (Philippians 4:2).
11. To increase still more (I Thessalonians 4:10).
12. To make prayers (I Timothy 2:1, Gk.; cp. Hebrews 13:19).
13. Young men to be sober-minded (Titus 2:6).

14. To abstain from fleshly lusts (I Peter 2:11).
15. To contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3).

(b) as a command:

1. Be saved from this perverse generation (Acts 2:40).
2. Come over to Macedonia and help us (Acts 16:9).
3. Be imitators of me (I Corinthians 4:16).
4. Be reconciled to God (II Corinthians 5:20).
5. Admonish . . . encourage . . . help . . . be patient (I Thessalonians 5:14).
6. Shepherd the flock of God among you (I Peter 5:1).
7. Stand firm in (the true grace of God, I Peter 5:12).

(c) as a purpose or a result:

1. That you all agree . . . (I Corinthians 1:10).
2. That (a minister) should come to (a people, I Corinthians 16:12).
3. That (the church) be in subjection (I Corinthians 16:15-16).
4. That (a minister) complete a gracious work (II Corinthians 8:6).
5. That brethren should go ahead and arrange a gift (II Corinthians 9:5).
6. That you excel still more (I Thessalonians 4:1).
7. That (certain ones) should work quietly and eat their own bread (II Thessalonians 3:12).

Thus in the realm of spiritual things, the exhorter is one who urges believers on to act in a manner consistent with their faith, in a variety of circumstances and endeavors.

The ministry of exhortation. The New Testament exhorter works with a variety of tools, employs a number of techniques, and bases his message on divine provisions. He usually ministers with a certain intensity. The tools employed may be in the form of a lengthy message (Acts 15:32) or a doctrinally orientated letter¹² (Acts 15:31), although he is not limited to these. He employs the Scriptures (Romans 15:4; II Corinthians 6:1-2; Hebrews 12:5-8; 13:22), particularly the teachings

¹²The New Testament books of John, James and Galatians do not employ the terms for exhortation, they themselves being intensive exhortations.

of Jesus (John 14:16), and stresses the promises and provisions of God for Christian action (Hebrews 6:17ff). Whatever techniques are suited to his purpose may be employed. Verbal communication marks exhortation on every hand (Matthew 8:5, 31; Mark 5:10, 23; Luke 7:4; Acts 2:40; I Corinthians 14:3; I Thessalonians 4:18; Titus 2:15; Hebrews 12:5; etc.). This may be in the form of asking or requesting (Acts 25:2; I Thessalonians 2:11; 4:1; II Corinthians 10:1-2) or even of begging (Acts 16:39). The exhorter may be a preacher (Luke 3:18; II Thessalonians 4:2) or a writer (Hebrews 13:22). Much exhortation finds its effectiveness as logical deductions from sound Christian doctrines (note Romans 12:1; I Corinthians 4:16; II Corinthians 7:13; Ephesians 4:1; cp. Titus 1:9). But the intensity of the exhortative process affects also the very bodily movements of the exhorter. His very gestures and stance are used to communicate (Mark 1:40; 5:3; 18:29; Luke 8:41; Acts 16:9). In this all, it is essential that the exhorter himself be fully forgiving of his hearer's past failures as he urges him on to new action (II Corinthians 2:7). Or he may even choose to send his exhortation through mutually acceptable messengers (Acts 19:31; 20:1; 9:38). God's supernatural provisions are always at the basis of sound exhortation (note Hebrews 6:17-18). The exhorter urges men "by the mercies of God" (Romans 12:1), "By the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:30; II Thessalonians 3:12), "By the love of the Spirit" (Romans 15:30), "by the name of Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 1:10), "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:1). Thus effective exhortation attaches to itself the provisions and authority of God, which produces in the exhorter a kind of intensity in his expression. He ministers earnestly (Mark 5:10), not moderately (Acts 20:12), as though it were God speaking (II

Corinthians 5:20); and he does this with much determination (Acts 20:2; I Corinthians 16:12; I Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 13:19).

Quite often, the gifted exhorter is an elder or in some other responsible position, in which position various other duties may be required of him. Thus we find exhorters exercising this gift in conjunction with a variety of other ministries: preaching (Luke 3:18; II Timothy 4:2), teaching (I Timothy 4:13), testifying (Acts 2:40; I Thessalonians 2:11), edifying and consoling (I Corinthians 14:3; II Thessalonians 2:16-17), encouraging and imploring (I Thessalonians 2:11), and reproving and rebuking (II Timothy 4:2; Titus 2:15), in another word, strengthening the disciples (Acts 14:22; 15:32; I Thessalonians 3:2; II: 2:16-17).

The effect of exhortation. The highly effective nature of exhortation has already been noted. Two negative effects of exhortation cover the scope of its concern: (1) the avoidance of overwhelming grief (II Corinthians 2:7) and (2) the avoidance of an heart hardened by sin (Hebrews 3:13). Positively, likewise two effects are desired by the exhorter: (1) personal hope (Romans 15:4) and (2) the ability, in turn, to exhort others also (II Corinthians 1:4, 6). The means to these ends is also with the pervue of exhortation; two are divine, two are human: the divine are spiritual refreshing (II Corinthians 7:7, c. 13) and divine blessing (Matthew 5:4); the human are personal discipline (Hebrews 12:5-7) and a clear mind in adverse circumstances (I Thessalonians 3:3). Careful response to biblical exhortation is wise on the part of Christians, for the outcome is complete joy (Philippians 2:1-2), overflowing joy (II Corinthians 7:4, 13), and rejoicing (Acts 15:31) for

each individual, and, for the Christian assembly, group like-mindedness (Romans 15:5). Thus the exhorter is not urging men on to greater burdens and harder work, but to fuller appropriation of God's promises and the consequent personal full joy. of their faith (Luke 21:15). Now

Summary

The gift of exhortation is the God-given grace to urge men on to believe and act upon the promises of God, by a decisive act of their will, resulting in their personal hope and joy.

THE UTTERANCE OF WISDOM (Acts 7:10, 22),

This gift and the next, the utterance of knowledge, are listed as prophetic, i.e., speaking gifts, because they are, above all, a "word" (logos).¹³ "The word of wisdom is the word or speech which has wisdom as its content,"¹⁴ says Grosheide. Hence the definition, "The utterance of wisdom, speaking wisely."¹⁵ The word, or utterance, of wisdom is the spiritual gift of the man who is able to articulate divine wisdom. In the New Testament, there are two opposing perspectives, one good and the other evil, both called wisdom. The spiritual gift concerns only one of these, the good.

Who Is Wise

To the extent that all believers have embraced Jesus Christ, they all are wise (I Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:3, 17; Colossians 1:9;

¹³"The expression may take any one of many different forms, so that the exact trans. of l. depends on the context . . ." (A & G, 478).

¹⁴Grosheide, 285.

¹⁵Arndt and Gingrich, 478.

3:16; 4:5). But by reason of growth and maturity, some increase in wisdom (Romans 16:19; I Corinthians 6:5, cf. 2:6; Ephesians 5:15; James 1:5; 3:13). Special wisdom to answer opponents is promised to believers who are suffering persecution because of their faith (Luke 21:15). Now wise people are those who have good understanding of a matter (Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21; I Corinthians 1:19; James 3:13; cp. Revelation 17:9). Prophets and scribes were ranked with the wise by Jesus (Matthew 23:34). But some are specially gifted in order to speak wisely (I Corinthians 12:8). The Apostle Paul himself was so gifted (II Peter 3:15). Some others identified as possessing wisdom are Moses (Acts 7:10, 22), Solomon (Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31), Steven (Acts 6:3-5, 10), Paul and his associates (I Corinthians 2:7; 3:10) and Timothy (II Timothy 3:15). Of course, God is wise (Luke 11:49; Romans 11:33; 16:27; Ephesians 3:10); and Jesus Christ is the most wise man (Matthew 11:19; 13:54; Mark 6:2; Luke 2:40, 52; 7:35; I Corinthians 1:30; Colossians 2:3; Revelation 5:12; 7:12). This is all God's wisdom.

There is an opposing wisdom in the world as well (I Corinthians 1:20-21; 3:19). It is the wisdom of the natural man (I Corinthians 2:15) who may profess themselves as wise (Romans 1:22), including the strong, able and noble (I Corinthians 1:25-26). Such men are the writers and debaters of the age (I Corinthians 1:20), who, if purveyors of religious thought, are creators of various myths (II Peter 1:16). The Egyptians were known for their wisdom among the ancients (Acts 7:22). Unfortunately, some believers hold to the wisdom of the world (I Corinthians 1:20-21; 3:10; James 3:14-15), and their discourses must not be mistaken for the gift of the utterance of wisdom.

The Nature of Wisdom

Trench called wisdom "the striving after the best ends as well as the using of the best means . . . mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense."¹⁶ That may be a fine working definition for the moment, but how does one know which of several competing wisdoms is really the divine, if any? James offers a simple but effective means to distinguish true from false wisdom, in terms of identity and of behavior. The wise man is both a Christian and a well behaved man. James asks:

Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace (3:13-18).

Thus the gift of the word of wisdom is exercised by the man who is both consistent in his behavior and able to articulate the divine wisdom by which his behavior is regulated.

The source of wisdom. True wisdom has its ultimate source only in the triune God (Acts 7:10; I Corinthians 1:21, 24, 30; 2:7; 3:10; Ephesians 1:4; 3:10; Colossians 1:9; James 1:5; 3:17). Jesus Christ provided wisdom (Matthew 23:34) and continues to give wisdom (Luke 21:15). At the present the Holy Spirit is the mediate source of wisdom and understanding (Acts 6:3, 10; Colossians 1:9). Wisdom's principles are found

¹⁶Trench, 283.

contained in both Old and New Testament Scriptures (II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 3:15). Thus the speaker of wisdom must be a spiritual man who gleans his message from the Scriptures.

False wisdom finds its expression only in the present age (I Corinthians 3:18) as the working principles of the world system (1:20). It is markedly humanistic (2:13), being limited in sphere to the earth, gaining expression through the human psyche, and having as its impetus the demons (James 3:15). False wisdom, even among Christians, has a striking resemblance to current secular philosophies.

The message of wisdom. Wisdom, in the biblical sense, is not merely private insight, but can be expressed propositionally (Luke 21:15; Acts 6:10; I Corinthians 2:4-7; 12:8; II Peter 3:14-16). Christology is the central doctrine of Christian wisdom; everything must relate back to who Jesus Christ is and what He does (I Corinthians 1:30; cp. Colossians 1:28; 3:16). Now several cognitive skills are involved in the grasping of wisdom. These include reason (I Corinthians 3:20), discernment (6:5), cleverness (3:19; cp. 3:10), understanding (Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21; I Corinthians 1:19; Ephesians 5:15-17), epistemology (James 3:13, Gk.), and knowledge (Ephesians 5:15; Colossians 1:9). The knowledge involved in wisdom is the doctrine and principles of salvation (i.e., in the sense of sanctification, II Timothy 3:15; II Peter 3:15-16), particularly as they relate to grasping the will of God (Ephesians 5:15-17; Colossians 1:9) for Christian living (Ephesians 5:15; Colossians 4:5; James 3:13). The utterance of wisdom is highly practical. Robertson's definition seems to be to the point regarding this gift, stating that it is used:

to characterize the Christian worker who has an eminent power of apprehending revealed truth about God and man and their relation

in Christ, and who could bring this to bear upon the practical life of others through the persuasive use of speech.¹⁷

The ministry of wisdom. Articulated wisdom is integral to local church life. The church planter must be wise (I Corinthians 3:10), leadership requires wisdom (cf. Acts 7:10). Wisdom renders more effective the preacher (I Corinthians 1:21; 2:1; cp. Colossians 1:28), the teacher and the counselor (Colossians 1:28). Wise men are able to help maintain proper relationships within the church (I Corinthians 6:5) and toward those without (Colossians 4:5). Wisdom is definitely a requirement for effective Christian writing (II Peter 3:15-16). In fact, wisdom, not merely creed, is the basis of Christian faith, that is, carefully articulated wisdom regarding Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 2:5). Thus the gift of the utterance of wisdom may be expressed in several ministries, but always is the careful articulation of practical Christian truths to either groups or individuals (Colossians 1:28).

The effect of wisdom. The utterance of wisdom has as its aim to provide a basis for the active faith of Christian believers (I Corinthians 2:5). Negatively stated, this is so that God may crush Satan under the feet of believers (Romans 16:19-20); positively, that God may obtain honor (16:27). The particular principles for Christian living which wisdom stresses include these:

1. To know the will of God (Ephesians 5:15-17; Colossians 1:9).
2. To redeem the time (Ephesians 5:15-16; Colossians 4:5).
3. To be continually filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:15-18).
4. To be strengthened with all power (Colossians 1:9-11).
5. To speak to one another in spiritual terms (Ephesians 5:15-19).

¹⁷J. D. Robertson, 43.

6. To be subject to one another (Ephesians 5:15-21).
7. To give thanks to God in all things (Ephesians 5:15-20; Colossians 1:9-12).

The end result of wisdom for the Christian is to bear fruit in every good work, to increase in the knowledge of God, and to attain all steadfastness and patience joyously (Colossians 1:9-11).

Summary

The gift of the utterance of wisdom is the God-given grace for men of understanding to articulate the principles of Christian living, whereby believers may come to experience divine victory over evil in their daily lives.

THE UTTERANCE OF KNOWLEDGE

This does not, says Grosheide, "indicate the word spoken with knowledge, but rather the word which has knowledge as its content."¹⁸ The man with this gift is able to articulate knowledge of things divine. Knowledge¹⁹ is no mere intellectual apprehension or systemization of data, but implies a relationship with its object, an interaction. Thus the "knowledge of Jesus Christ" is a kind of "personal acquaintance"²⁰ with the living Lord. Furthermore, as Bultmann expresses, "Christian knowledge carries with it a corresponding manner of life."²¹ He explains:

¹⁸Grosheide, 285.

¹⁹Because of the wealth of occurrences of the terminology, this study has been limited to the nouns *gnōsis* and *epignōsis*.

²⁰Arndt and Gingrich, 163.

²¹Bultmann, in Kittel, I:707.

²²Ibid., pp. 707-8.

²³Greener, 157.

The Christian view of knowledge is thus largely determined by the OT. An obedient and grateful acknowledgment of the deeds and demands of God is linked with knowledge of God and what He has done and demands. It is in keeping that this Christian knowledge is not a fixed possession but develops in the life of the Christian as lasting obedience and reflection. For this reason gnosis is regarded as a gift of grace which marks the life of the Christian by determining its expression²²

The man who speaks Christian knowledge is communicating things to which believers can relate for Christian living. Cremer said that he has:

. . . insight which manifests itself in the thorough understanding of the subjects which come before it, and in the conduct determined thereby; which hits on what is right, in that it allows itself to be guided by the right knowledge of the object with which it has to do.²³

Who Gains Knowledge

While we may assume that all believers have knowledge of basic Christian truths, yet it is clear from Scripture that fuller knowledge is gained through specific means. (1) Through the law comes the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20), for it is a kind of embodiment of truth (2:20). (2) Enrichment in knowledge begins, however, as the testimony concerning Christ is confirmed in someone (I Corinthians 1:5-6). (3) Repentance is a necessary step toward knowledge (II Timothy 2:25), as is (4) the subsequent forgiveness of sins (Luke 1:77). (5) Salvation itself is a coming to the knowledge of truth (I Timothy 2:4). (6) The believer may continue to increase in knowledge by a continuous renewal process, according to the image of the One who created him (Colossians 3:10). This is accomplished through (7) the contemplation of the Person of Jesus Christ, the glory of God, and the conformation to His life and death (II Corinthians 4:6ff). This requires (8) that every speculation

²²Ibid., pp. 707-8.

²³Cremer, 157.

and lofty thing be destroyed and every thought become captive to the obedience of Christ (10:5). Further knowledge awaits the Christian as he (9) becomes knit together in love with other believers, attaining the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:2-3). (10) Now Christian knowledge is no private existential affair, but can be articulated and communicated.²⁴ And God has gifted some men to verbalize and communicate those things which pertain to Christian knowledge (I Corinthians 12:8; 14:6).

The Nature of Knowledge

Several metaphors are used in Scripture for knowledge. It is a "key" for entrance into the things of God (Luke 11:52); knowledge is a starting point. It is of great value, worthy of being sought as "riches" (Romans 11:33). But it is a hidden "treasure" only to be found in God's mystery, Christ Himself (Colossians 2:3). Those who attain knowledge come into great "light" (II Corinthians 2:14). Knowledge makes of one a "sweet aroma" unto God (II Corinthians 2:14).

The source of knowledge. Like wisdom, the ultimate source of all true knowledge is God Himself (Romans 11:33; 15:14; I Corinthians 1:5; II:2:14; 4:6; Ephesians 1:17; II Timothy 2:25; II Peter 1:3). Man attains this knowledge in the Son Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:3; I Corinthians 1:4-5), and is able to express it by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:67, c. 77; I Corinthians 12:8). Truth is attainable from the study of the Scriptures, but knowledge comes only from God.

²⁴ For the contemporary importance of this point, see Schaeffer, The God Who Is There, 92-99.

The message of knowledge. The contents of Christian knowledge, and therefore of the utterance of knowledge, are several. These themes may pervade the messages of this spiritual gift: (1) Truth as universally true, able to be propositionalized (I Timothy 2:4; II:2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1; Hebrews 10:26; cp. Romans 3:20), as embodied in the Scriptures (Romans 3:20). (2) The Lordship and saving work of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 1:4-6; II:2:14-15; Philippians 2:8; II Peter 1:2; 1:8; 2:20; 3:18; cp. Luke 1:77). (3) The good things which are in believers for Christ's sake (Philemon 6). (4) The unity of God in contrast to heathenism (I Corinthians 8:1-7). (5) The attributes or glory of God (Romans 1:28; I Corinthians 4:6; II:10:5; Ephesians 1:17; Colossians 1:10; II Peter 1:2, 3). Not every believer has this knowledge of God (see I Corinthians 15:34). This is especially true of (6) the righteousness of God for justification (Romans 10:2-3). (7) The will of God (Colossians 1:9) and (8) the mystery of God (2:2-3) are also key themes for the utterance of knowledge. Thus knowledge centers on the nature of God and His work, in such a manner that believers can relate to it with practical consequences (Titus 1:1).

The ministry of knowledge. Wisdom is a natural counter-part to knowledge, and they are ideally found in the same person or working in close conjunction (Romans 11:33; I Corinthians 12:8; Ephesians 1:17; Colossians 1:9; 2:2-3). The utterance of knowledge is of necessity a speaking ministry (I Corinthians 1:6; 12:8; II:8:7), closely allied with prophecy and teaching (I Corinthians 13:2; 14:6) in the communication of mysteries and of revelation (13:2; 14:6; Ephesians 1:17). In the man himself, a number of personal qualities are desirable. He must be

discerning (Philippians 1:9) and understanding (Colossians 1:9), but also known for his love (I Corinthians 13:2; II:6:6; 8:7; Philippians 1:9), faith (II Corinthians 8:7; II Peter 1:5), and upright character (Romans 15:4; II Corinthians 6:6; II Peter 1:5-7). No man will articulate things well unless he himself has a true personal knowledge of those very things.

SUMMARY

The effect of knowledge. Purely doctrinal knowledge, e.g., of the unity of God, has the effect of making a person arrogant (I Corinthians 8:1), with the result that he is not sensitive to the weaknesses of others who lack that knowledge (8:11). But knowledge in the proper sense of relating to truth is not so, but rather it has beneficial effects which accrue to the believer himself, to his fellow Christians, and to God. For himself, negatively, the believer's knowledge is his means of escape from the defilements of the world (II Peter 2:20). But positively, it is his means of gaining entrance into the things of God (Luke 11:52), his means to gain Christ (Philippians 3:8-9); it is for growth and maturity (Ephesians 4:13-14; II Peter 3:18), for the development of Christian character (II Peter 1:5-7), and for the approval of things excellent for blamelessness (Philippians 1:9-10), that the believer may develop a spirit of wisdom and revelation (Ephesians 1:17). At the same time his fellow Christians profit (I Corinthians 14:6), for he develops an ability to teach (Romans 2:20-21) and to admonish (Romans 15:14), thereby commending himself as a servant to men and God (II Corinthians 6:4-6). God certainly must desire that men grow in knowledge, for then they are able to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord (Colossians 1:9-10), and become "a sweet aroma . . . a fragrance of Christ to God" (II Corinthians 2:14-15).

Summary

The gift of the utterance of knowledge is the God-given grace for mature men to articulate the truths regarding the nature of God and the Person of Jesus Christ, whereby Christians grow and may expand their mutual ministries.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have suggested that one of three possible classifications of the spiritual gifts includes all those which are prophetic in nature, i.e., the speaking gifts. There are those which are concerned primarily with the verbal communication of divine truth. Included were the gifts of prophecy, of teaching, of exhorting, of the utterance of wisdom, and of the utterance of knowledge. In each instance it was discovered that the gift could be expressed through a variety of ministries, many of these in common between gifts. This seems to suggest that the several speaking gifts may not be exclusive, tightly defined entities, but rather more general areas wherein God's grace has gifted men differently for communicating His Word. A description of each of the gifts in behavioral terms has been included in the appendices.

¹ Arrdt and Gingrich, 1957. See on diakonia; diakonos; diakonos.