

Chapter 6

THE SERVING GIFTS DESCRIBED

In the gifts passages, the term "ministry" or "service"¹ is used in a general sense, in a wider sense, and in a restricted sense. In I Peter 1:10, it was noted that all gifts are to be ministered toward others. But then in verse 11, the same term is used to distinguish those who serve from those who speak, that is, in a more narrow sense of non-speaking gifts. However, in Romans 12:6-7, the charismata are said to be of two kinds, whether prophecy whether ministry. So a gift can definitely be called "ministry." It is proposed that the gift of ministry, as such, is any service gift which does not specifically qualify as any one other of the several service gifts. Thus in the general sense, all gifts are to be ministered to one another, in the wider sense the non-prophetic gifts are ministerial (serving) gifts, and in the restricted sense, there is the gift of ministry.

In the classification of serving gifts have been included all those which are not specifically so termed so as to qualify them as communicatory gifts or as having a special sign value. These are, in the order here presented, the gifts of ministry, of ruling, of giving, of showing mercy, of faith, of discernment of spirits, of helps and of administrations.

¹Arndt and Gingrich, 183. See on diakonia; dianokeo; diakonos.

(Acts 19:22), Onesiphorus (II Timothy 4:19), and Onesiphorus (Philippians 2:25),
 for charitable endeavors, Barnabas and Saul (Acts 12:25) as well as
 unnamed others (I Timothy 5:17).

MINISTRY

As noted above, all gifts are for ministry. And there is a whole classification called the serving gifts. Within these, the particular gift of ministry is clearly the widest in its scope of services rendered to the Body of Christ. Ministry can be service of any kind.² Now the person who serves, ministers things, to people, as a minister of God (Romans 13:4; II Corinthians 6:4; I Thessalonians 3:2) and of Christ (II Corinthians 11:23; Colossians 1:7; I Thessalonians 4:6).

Who Serves

(Luke 22:27; Romans 15:8). As followers of Jesus (John 12:26). Ministry does not appear to be limited to any particular class or group of people. Those performing service in the New Testament include women (Matthew 8:15; 27:55; Mark 1:13, 31; 15:41; Luke 4:39; 10:40; John 12:2; Romans 16:1), angels (Matthew 4:11; Mark 1:13; Hebrews 1:14), government officials (Romans 14:4), lords (Luke 12:37), domestics (Luke 22:27; John 2:5, 9), and slaves (Luke 17:8). In the church the servants comprise the specially gifted (I Peter 4:10-11; Romans 12:6-7), those appointed to a task (Acts 6:1-2), volunteers according to ability (11:29), office holders (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:10, 8, 12, 13) and even apostles (Acts 1:17, 25; 20:24; etc.). It seems fair to say therefore that the gift of ministry may find expression through any rank or office within the church; the servers are not necessarily the women or the ignorant.

Among those mentioned by name are, for menial tasks, Martha (Luke 10:40; John 12:2), for special assignments, Timothy and Erastus

²Arndt and Gingrich, 183.

(Acts 19:22), Onesiphorus (II Timothy 1:8), and Onesimus (Philemon 13), for charitable endeavors, Barnabas and Saul (Acts 12:25) as well as unnamed others (11:29; II Corinthians 8:14; 9:1, 13), and for spiritual vocations, Archippus (Colossians 4:17), Epaphras (1:7), Tychicus (4:7; Ephesians 6:1), Timothy (I Thessalonians 3:2; I Timothy 4:6), and Stephanus and his household (I Corinthians 16:15).

Ministry ought to be the aspiration of all believers and is the goal of those who equip the saints (Ephesians 4:12; Hebrews 6:10).

Jesus was the example par excellence of the servant (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; Luke 22:27b; Romans 15:8). As followers of Jesus (John 12:26), service determines who is first (Mark 9:35), who is greatest (Matthew 20:26; 23:11; Mark 10:43), and who is chief (Luke 22:26).

Whole churches can be distinguished for their ministry of service (II Corinthians 8:14; 9:1, 13; Revelation 2:19). The Old Testament prophets ministered to the church before God had ever revealed that there would be such an expression of the Kingdom (I Peter 1:12).

There may be no rest for the wicked, but that necessitates that there be no lapse of vigilance on the part of the saints for there are even false ministers. They may be Jew haters (Matthew 25:44) or Judaizers (II Corinthians 11:23). Only one Person is ultimately exempt from false ministry, Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:17).

The Nature of Ministry

The gift of service concerns itself both with whom it is to serve and with what task it is to perform. The minister must, as well, look to the manner in which he performs his service, with an eye on the goal which is to be reached.

The realm of ministry. Ministers serve only those whom they regard as worthy of their efforts or those to whom they are, for any reason, obligated, as servants to their lords (Matthew 22:13; Luke 17:8; 22:27; John 2:5, 9). For the followers of Jesus this is primarily directed to one's working fellows (Matthew 20:26; 23:11; Mark 10:43; 9:35). Thus some were given to ministering to Jesus and his company during His time on earth--although He did not come for the express purpose of being served--(Matthew 4:11; 25:44; 27:55; Mark 1:13, 31; 8:15; 15:41; Luke 4:39; 12:37; cp. John 12:26). One's ministry may be considered to be towards certain fellow Christians (e.g., Acts 11:29; 15:25; 19:22; Romans 16:1; II Corinthians 8:19; II Timothy 1:18; Philemon 13; Hebrews 6:10; etc.) or he may regard himself as a servant of the whole body of Christ, the saints in general, or a whole church (Acts 6:1; 6:4; Romans 13:4; I Corinthians 16:15; II Corinthians 3:3; 8:4; 9:1; 11:8; Ephesians 4:12; Colossians 1:7, 25; 4:7; I Thessalonians 3:2; Hebrews 1:14; 6:10; I Peter 1:12; 4:10-11). It is possible to direct one's ministry to particular ethnic groups, such as Jews (Romans 15:8) and Gentiles (Acts 21:19; Romans 11:13). One observation may be in order at this juncture: the minister views his services as benefiting usually a group of people rather than singling out certain needy ones whom he may serve. He may be more particular about his job.

The service of ministry. As has already been presented above, ministry ranges all the way from menial chores, to the daily administering of practical services (e.g., Acts 6:1-4), to organizing long range charitable endeavors (relate Acts 11:29; 12:25; Romans 15:31; II Corinthians 8:4, 19; 9:1, 13). Ministers concentrate on accomplishing in order to do their job (II Corinthians 11:8).

prescribed services through to their goals. They may have preferences, however, for particular ministries, for there is a variety of gifts, and, correspondingly, a variety of ministries (I Corinthians 12:4-5). And as different as may be the regular services to be performed in a local church, there may be an equal number of specially appointed ministers whom we call deacons (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:8, 10, 12, 13).

A number of ministries are mentioned in the New Testament. This is due, of course, to the fact that every Christian has a ministry through which he expresses his spiritual gift. This is true of apostles (Acts 1:17, 25; 6:4), including Paul (Acts 20:24; 21:19; I Corinthians 3:5; II Corinthians 3:3, 6; 4:1; 5:18; 6:3, 4; 8:19; 11:8; Ephesians 3:7; Colossians 1:23, 25; I Timothy 1:12). Some believers, like Onesiphorus, minister in many things (II Timothy 1:16-18). Ministers are hard workers, sometimes even putting their work before their own spiritual and material needs.

The manner of ministry. The minister's work is above all the practical labor of providing for others' needs, whether physical (e.g., Matthew 20:28; Luke 17:8; Romans 16:1-2) or mental (e.g., Acts 20:24; I Corinthians 3:5-6; Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7-8; I Thessalonians 3:2; I Timothy 4:6). The reaching of the goal is important of ministers (Matthew 22:13; John 2:5; Acts 12:25; cp. 6:4; 20:24). To fulfill his duties, the minister may become distracted from more important spiritual needs (Luke 10:40; Acts 6:2-4), becoming very concerned about avoiding any failure or blame (II Corinthians 6:3; 8:19-20). So concerned are some to fulfill their task, that they may let others suffer in neglect in order to do their job (II Corinthians 11:8).

9:12-13) The good minister is one who first gives himself to the Lord (II Corinthians 8:4-5). He thereby gains a sense of divine sufficiency for his work (3:5-6). He is then ready to go to work (9:1-2) and sets himself to the task with determination (Acts 11:29; I Corinthians 16:15; Colossians 4:17), desiring to glorify his ministry before God and man (Romans 11:13; II Corinthians 8:19-22). With these attitudes, certain virtues especially befit the minister (see II Corinthians 6:4ff). He must be, above all else, patient and faithful (II Corinthians 4:1; 6:4; 9:13; Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 1:8; 4:7; I Timothy 1:12; I Peter 4:10-11; Revelation 2:19) with humility (see above). At the same time, he must take care to keep himself nourished on the words of faith (I Timothy 4:6) maintaining a grave attitude (3:8) and a pure conscience (3:12). Before a man be allowed to minister in the office of Deacon, he must first be proved and found blameless (3:10).

add to The effect of ministry. The work of ministry definitely builds up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12) and therefore qualifies as one of the greater gifts. Goodness and righteousness prevail (Romans 13:4; II Corinthians 3:9), hearts are comforted (Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7), and the saints are strengthened as to their faith (I Thessalonians 3:2), while others learn (Colossians 1:7). The unspiritual may be moved to jealousy and salvation (Romans 11:13-14), arriving at faith as the Lord gives opportunity to each (I Corinthians 3:5), for God is at work in others at the same time that the minister is working (Acts 21:19). Other believers take special note of faithful ministers (Matthew 20:26; 23:11; Mark 9:35; Romans 15:31; I Timothy 3:13; 2:1:18; cp. II Corinthians 3:3), and render thanks to God (Romans 15:8; II Corinthians

9:12-13; I Peter 4:10-12). Jesus Christ has declared a special affinity for those who minister (John 12:26; Revelation 2:19) and God honors them (John 12:26; Hebrews 6:10). The gift of ministry brings results to others, to oneself, and to God.

Summary

The gift of ministry is the God-given grace to perform various services through to their end. This is the widest gift in its application to the tasks which must be accomplished in the church. A behavioral description has been included in the appendices.

RULING

A ruler is, basically, "one who stands before, a front-rank-man."³ In the New Testament, the rulers are seen as (1) the officials and administrators in the church, and as (2) those who care for and give aid to people.⁴ "This is to be explained," says Reicke, "by the fact that caring was the obligation of leading members of the infant church."⁵ In fact it is required of the elders that they demonstrate an ability to lead. But that does not mean that everyone with the gift of ruling is necessarily an elder.

Who Rules

Ruling can be the function of any member of the local church.

³Liddell and Scott, 698, on prostates.

⁴A. & G., 713-4 on proistemi. All occurrences in the New Testament are intransitive. The participle indicates activity, not merely position.

⁵Reicke in Kittel VI:701.

Actually all are to have a concern in rule, especially as it pertains to the accomplishment of good deeds in order to meet pressing needs (Titus 3:8, 14). Phoebe was this kind of a person, so much so that she has been called in Romans 16:1 a servant of the church which was at Cenchrea. Within the church, however, certain ones can usually be identified as the rulers. These are those who diligently labor and who give instruction (I Thessalonians 5:12). As such, they may very well be given official positions as preaching and teaching elders (I Timothy 3:4-5; 5:17) or as deacons (3:12).

A ruler manifests certain character traits which fit him for his task. First of all, he is one who regards himself to be a servant of the church (e.g., Romans 16:1), regarding such a relation to others as carrying with it a kind of dignity (I Timothy 3:4). As such he maintains a keen sensitivity to the needs of the church (Romans 16:2) with attention on how to do the best for them (Titus 3:8), ever willing to learn some new angle on ministry (3:14). This requires a lot of attention and work, continual work, in a word, diligence (Romans 12:8; I Timothy 3:12; 5:17; I Thessalonians 5:12).

So valuable is the ministry of rulers to the church that they are allowed recognition for their work by the church. The ones who exercise rulership in meeting people's practical needs are worthy of commendation as they travel, and to have their needs met by the church (Romans 16:1-2). The diligent rulers who work at instruction are to be highly esteemed within the church (I Thessalonians 5:12-13). And the ruling elders who work hard at preaching and teaching are worthy of a double honorarium or compensation⁶ (I Timothy 5:17). In the case of

⁶So A. & C., 825

the rulers, the saying is certainly true, "the laborer is worthy of his hire."

The Nature of Ruling

The Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate Provider and Ruler of His church. Thus those who do the work of ruling and providing for needs stand in a special relation to the Lord (Romans 16:1-2; I Thessalonians 5:12). Ruling is therefore an honorable but a responsible work. For this reason, the Lord Jesus has specially gifted some in the church for this ministry (Romans 12:6-8). But ruling is also a task which can be learned (Titus 3:14). Whether one is a gifted or only a trained ruler, he must first demonstrate his ability to rule his own household before he is permitted to rule within the church in an official capacity (I Timothy 3:4-5, 12).

The responsibilities of rulers hardly extend beyond the local church (Romans 16:1-2; I Thessalonians 5:12; I Timothy 3:4-5). Their function is to serve and care for the church (Romans 16:1-2; I Timothy 3:5). This may be in regard to practical needs (Romans 16:2; Titus 3:8, 14) or in regard to laboring at instruction in the Word and teaching (I Thessalonians 5:12; I Timothy 5:17). Hence the two-fold emphasis within ruling on ministering to the mind and ministering to the body. Rulers are not simply administrators; that is another gift.

Rulers have the effect of doing that which is "good and profitable for men" (Titus 3:8). Their aim is to meet the pressing needs of the church and to guarantee productivity (3:14; cp. Romans 16:1-2). Leaders are not primarily policy makers or merely givers to people's needs. They often will not take a leadership position until they are chosen or asked to do so, but once they do, then they get right into the

work, set their aim on accomplishing their goal, and put all their efforts into the task. As leaders or officers they may appear to use people or to relegate details, or they may by-pass the slower ones in order to see a task through to its completion. Thus it is necessary for the rest of the church "to esteem them very highly in love because of their work" (I Thessalonians 5:12-13).

Summary

The gift of ruling is the God-given grace to lead the church in meeting pressing needs. The behavioral traits of the leader are described in the appendices.

GIVING

Some one has said somewhere that when God wants you to move, He gives the green light and the greenbacks. Much sound Christian work is accomplished because God moves people to give financially. This is often by those whom God has gifted especially in order that they may give. But not all giving involves money; and not all gifted givers are wealthy.

The givers⁷ in the New Testament represent a broad social spectrum. The relatively poor give (Luke 3:11), as well as the ordinary worker (Ephesians 4:28), besides the well-to-do (I Timothy 6:17-19). Neither is the gift of giving distributed with respect to vocational calling, for givers include general citizens (Luke 3:20), repentant thieves (Ephesians 4:28), and missionaries (Romans 1:11). The recipients

⁷This study is restricted to metadidomi (to share with another that which is already in one's position).

of giving comprise those who have need in general (Luke 3:11; Ephesians 4:28) but the saints in particular (Romans 1:11; Ephesians 4:28; I Thessalonians 2:8).

Certain qualifications exist for givers. For one thing, they must have something to give; thus they are often those who "are rich in this present world" (I Timothy 6:17). The giver usually has somewhat of a longing to share what he has (Romans 1:11), but he must be able to do so with unmixed motives, in other words, liberally (12:8). He is always ready and prepared to give (I Timothy 6:18), but he investigates to determine worthy causes (Luke 3:11) and desires to have personal involvement through his giving (I Thessalonians 2:8). Thus the giver desires to share in effective works and worthy people and to know that his involvement lends directly to the Lord's work.

The aim of giving is four-fold. Giving establishes other believers in their ministries (Romans 1:11) that the giver himself may contribute to the accomplishment of good (I Timothy 6:18). By this means he himself finds great encouragement (Romans 1:12) and earns for himself a future reward (I Timothy 6:19). The giver views an investment in the Lord's ministers as an investment in the Lord's work, which pays interest and guarantees a capital return. He would rather give to people than to organizations (cf. Rom. 1:11; I Thess. 2:8).

The giver shares with others only that which is something already in his own possession as a divine trust. This is why it is possible to say that the gospel and spiritual gifts are things which can be shared or imparted (Romans 1:11; I Thessalonians 2:8). The giver, however, may largely be concerned with the sharing of material things, whether in the nature of basic personal needs such as food and clothing

(Luke 3:11) or in the form of substantial monetary wealth (I Timothy 6:17-19). The gift of giving may well finance much of the Kingdom of God as it advances through the present age.

Three dangers lie as snares to the feet of the wealthy giver. He must be on guard not to become conceited in his wealth and the power which it has to make or break ministries, or to develop a false hope on the uncertainty of riches (I Timothy 6:17). And when he does share, it must be whole heartedly, with liberality and unhesitancy (Romans 12:8), remembering that "God loves a cheerful giver."

In summary, the gift of giving is the God-given grace to share possessions with other Christians for the work of the Lord. The giver's behavioral traits are outlined in the appendices.

SHOWING MERCY

God desires mercy over sacrifice (Matthew 9:13). Mercy was a provision of the law (Matthew 23:23) and is the essence of true religion (Luke 11:41). God Himself continually is merciful (Luke 1:58; Romans 9:14ff; Philippians 2:27; I Timothy 1:2; II John 3; Jude 2). But there will be no mercy in hell (Luke 16:24ff). To be merciful is to go out of one's way to care for his neighbor who is in need (Luke 10:36-37); it is, above all, to be helpful where others have trouble (Matthew 15:22-27; Luke 1:54; Hebrews 4:16). Now mercy is expected from all citizens of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 5:7; 6:1-4) and is a mark of the wise believer (James 3:13, c. 17). But for some Christians, mercy is a special gift which determines their principal ministry in the Body of Christ.

The Parties to Mercy

Mercy extends only to people; it is not looking so much for something to do or for a task to accomplish, but for someone to help, some misery to heal. Thus this gift has relevance only to a community, to two or more people. There is he who shows mercy and he who receives mercy.

He who shows mercy. Even the ungodly show a token mercifulness to one another (Matthew 6:1-2; Acts 3:2), which can be a stimulus within them to know the Source of all mercy (Acts 10:1). Jesus Christ is the supreme example of mercifulness, (1) on earth, as Lord (Matthew 15:22; Luke 1:58), as Son of David (Matthew 9:27; 15:22), and as Master (Luke 17:13); as well as (2) in heaven, as our Lord and faithful High Priest (I Corinthians 7:25; I Timothy 1:2; II:1:16; Hebrews 2:17; II John 3). Mercy thereby makes of one a disciple of Jesus, whether he be an important apostle, as Paul (Acts 24:17), or an humble woman, like Dorcas (Acts 9:36).

But mercifulness presupposes certain character traits in the one who is particularly marked by that quality. Negatively speaking, there are three traits which must be absent, lest attempts to show mercy be spurned, for these three things will cause contempt on the part of those in need: inconsistency or injustice (Romans 9:14; James 2:13), a sense of obligation or constraint (Romans 9:15, 18), or any attitude of condemnation or censoriousness (Matthew 12:7). Positively, however, mercy must be a true expression of great love⁸ (Ephesians 2:4; II John 3)

⁸On the connection of mercy with love, see Trench's remarks (170).

and compassion (Matthew 20:31-32) in the fear of God (Acts 10:2; Jude 23), accompanied by cheerfulness (Romans 12:8), sympathy (Hebrews 2:17; 4:15-16), fairness (Matthew 23:23), patience (Romans 9:23; I Timothy 1:13), and truthfulness (II John 3). To see mercy through to its goal, a man must be characterized by great faithfulness (Luke 1:50, 72; Hebrews 2:17) and willingness to make and maintain peace (I Timothy 1:2; Hebrews 2:17; James 3:17-18; II John 3; Jude 2). This requires grace (I Timothy 1:2; Hebrews 4:16; II John 3). The gift of showing mercy is ineffective apart from a full display of the fruit of the Spirit.

He who receives mercy. Mercy responds to a number of stimuli. It will reach out to the demanding (Matthew 9:27; 15:22ff; Luke 17:13) as well as the display of humility (Matthew 17:14; 18:26). Usually only a knowledge of a need is required to move mercy (II Timothy 1:16ff), even if the miserable one is ignorant of his own need (I Timothy 1:13). Mercy knows no restrictions on eligibility for help. It reaches out to (1) those who are close, i.e., the righteous (Luke 1:50, 58, 72; Romans 9:23; Galatians 6:16; Philippians 2:27) and to (2) those who are afar, the undeserving, e.g., disobedient, blasphemers, persecutors, aggressors (Romans 11:30-32; Ephesians 2:4; I Timothy 1:13; I Peter 2:10). Where there is misery, mercy shows up there.

The Nature of Mercy

Mercy does not sit and feel sorry--that is pity--mercy has something to show, it acts, it ministers. It may have to make itself known, it may not know ahead of time what it will do, but the effects which it produces are worth the effort.

The method of mercy. Exactly what to do is nowhere prescribed for showing mercy. So the merciful man needs to follow examples of mercy as he has experienced them (Matthew 18:33) and to take care to provide the same for others, that they too may show mercy (I Timothy 1:13). One thing that it tries to do is to receive and respond to requests that come its way (Mark 10:51). If they are not forthcoming, mercy may call for requests (Matthew 20:32). Now mercy insists that it be understood that its services are by free grant (II Timothy 1:18), but mercy also is careful to supply only what is truly needed, being interested in lasting results rather than temporary relief (Acts 3:1-6).

The deeds of mercy. Divine mercy reaches into both the physical miseries of men (Matthew 9:27; 17:14ff; Luke 18:13ff; Philipians 2:27) and the spiritual (Matthew 15:22ff; Luke 1:77ff; Romans 9:23; 11:25-32; Ephesians 2:4; Titus 3:5-7; Hebrews 2:17; I Peter 1:3ff; 2:10), enabling men for ministry (I Corinthians 7:25; II:4:1). The New Testament provides no list of deeds which constitute mercy, and gives very few examples (see Matthew 6:1; Luke 10:36, 37; 12:33; Acts 9:36) of the merciful deeds of believers. Perhaps that is why some are specially gifted, mercy will come as an outflow of their spiritual life. Howard comments, "As in many of the gifts, the details, such as what specific needs are to be met by what specific acts of mercy, are left to the discretion and the imagination of the Spirit-controlled believer."⁹

⁹Howard, 185.

The effect of mercy. The miserable man who receives of true mercy experiences complete healing (see above) so that he is able in turn to perform ministries to others (I Corinthians 7:25; II:4:1). Mercy gives one a vital hope for the future (I Peter 1:3-4) and a present enjoyment of life (Jude 21). The response to mercy is to glorify God (Romans 15:9) through the giving of thanks (Luke 17:15f) and testifying to God's goodness (Mark 5:19). This in turn may stimulate others to praise God (Luke 18:43). Mercy often sees as the immediate outcome of its ministry that men desire to follow Jesus (Matthew 20:29-34). Thus mercy looks not only to helping men in their misery, but to what those men will be able in turn to do for Jesus Christ.

The reward of mercy. The merciful have upon them as a divine judgment, the evaluation of "blessed" (Matthew 5:7) and are assured of receiving mercy from God (5:7; 6:4). Their deeds arise as a memorial before God (Acts 10:4) and they shall have reward in heaven (Luke 12:33). The merciful are the Christian Christians.

Summary

The gift of showing mercy is the God-given grace to meet the needs of men in their misery. This is a much broader gift in its scope than is the gift of helps (which see). A behavioral description of this gift is outlined in the appendices.

FAITH

"If you have faith as a mustard seed," said Jesus to his disciples privately, "you shall say to this mountain, 'Move from here to

there,' and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you"

(Matthew 17:20). On another occasion He expanded the same thought:

Have faith in God. For verily, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you shall not only do what was done to the fig tree, but whoever shall say to this mountain, "Be removed, and be cast into the sea," and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will come to pass, he shall have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, all things whatever you shall ask in prayer, believing that you are receiving, they shall be yours.¹⁰

At I Corinthians 12:9, faith is listed among the spiritual gifts along with others of a miraculous nature. Then at 13:2, it again appears with the familiar ring of the Gospels, "If I have all faith, so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing." Thus the spiritual gift of faith seems to be that determined faith in prayer of which Jesus spoke. Arndt and Gingrich's note seems to be to the point:

In addition to the pistis that every Christian possesses . . . Paul speaks of a special gift of faith that is the possession of a select few 1 Cor 12:9. In this category he understands p. as an unquestioning belief in God's power to aid men with miracles, the faith that 'moves mountains' 13:2¹¹

All men are invited to believe, God having provided a worthy object for faith in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (Acts 17:31). All Christians in fact do have faith, faith for salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9; etc.), and faith for serving God (Romans 12:3), both as gifts from God. But certain specially gifted believers have from God an extraordinary faith (I Corinthians 12:9; 13:2). They are those who provide great vision to the Body of Christ for service by their believing

¹⁰The combined accounts of Matthew 21:20 and Mark 11:22 are from Cheney, 151-2. The accompanying note reads, "This hyperbole was similar to one in common Jewish use concerning the seemingly impossible."

¹¹Arndt and Gingrich, 669.

that God intends to accomplish the seemingly impossible, to move mountains, as it were. (Mark 11:23; etc.). One's position should remain firm (I

Corinthians 13:7). God Himself is the object of all extraordinary faith. In fact, the whole Trinity is integral with the great believer, for miraculous faith is of the Father (Mark 11:22), through the Son (Acts 3:16), and in the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:9). Several things tend to characterize the man gifted with faith. (1) Once he has visualized that which he believes God intends to do, he has no doubt within himself that God will bring it to pass (Matthew 21:21; Mark 11:22f; cp. Romans 14:22; James 1:6). (2) He has a strong affinity for the literal meaning of God's promises; his faith comes through hearing what kind of things God will do (Galatians 3:5). (3) His faith is operative and effective only as he allows the Holy Spirit free course in his life (I Corinthians 12:9; 13:2; Galatians 3:5). (4) His convictions about God's intentions provide real assurance of their future reality; so he is quite futuristic in his orientation (Hebrews 11:1-2). And therefore (5) he lays down plans and a course of action with their goal as the realization of the vision of faith (e.g., Hebrews 11:3-39). The man of faith is a doer as well as a believer. And if he is any kind of a leader, he will provide the vision and goal for the ministries of Christian men with many other gifts and talents.

Because of his necessary contacts within the church of Christ, the man of faith needs also to be a man of integrity and character, lest he lead many into error through his strong determination. Faith must, in a holy fear, guard against conceit (Romans 11:20). Because of faith's strong rest in God, it must be balanced by love for the saints and the other fruit of the Spirit (I Corinthians 13:13; Ephesians 6:23; Colossians

1:4; I Thessalonians 1:3; 3:5-10; I Timothy 1:14; 2:15; 6:11; II:1:13; 2:22; Titus 2:10; 3:15; etc.). One's position should remain firm (I Corinthians 16:13 and many references) and fill his speech (Romans 10:8; II Corinthians 4:13), being enhanced by great courage with perseverance (II Corinthians 5:17; II Thessalonians 1:4; Revelation 3:10; 14:12). As an example to other believers, it is imperative that a man gifted of faith employ personal discipline in the area of personal conduct (Colossians 2:5; I Timothy 4:12; II:3:10). Likewise he must be sound in doctrine, lest his accomplishments through faith give a false authentication to wrong theology (II Corinthians 8:7; I Timothy 4:6; II:3:10; 4:10; James 1:3; I Peter 5:9). And, lest the man of faith should bring ridicule and condemnation upon the works of God by his moral failures, he must be beyond reproach morally (Galatians 5:22; II Thessalonians 1:11; 2:13; I Timothy 2:15; II:2:22; II Peter 1:5), maintaining a clear conscience (I Timothy 1:19; 3:9; Hebrews 10:22).

Finally, in order that his great faith may provide direction to the Body of Christ in its common ministries, he must be a man of action, working toward what he believes God is going to bring to pass (I Thessalonians 1:3; II:1:11; I Timothy 6:12; II:4:12; Hebrews 11:24-32; James 2:22; Revelation 14:12). The gift of faith is not the special feature of itinerate miracle workers or the divine authentication of new or variant doctrines. The gift is given in order that the church may have direction in new and greater ventures for God in new avenues of ministry. The man of faith accomplishes little of and by himself.

In summary, it appears that the gift of faith is the God-given grace to believe God for great accomplishments. This gift is distinct from miracle working and from healing (I Corinthians 12:9). The

probable behavioral traits of a man of faith have been outlined in the appendices.

DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS

To discern is to judge between two alternatives, to separate one from another.¹² The spiritual gift in view has the function of separating or judging between spirits.¹³ Hay understands the gift on this wise:

In view of the fact that the members of the body of Christ face the continual opposition of a host of evil spirit-beings and that these beings may pose as messengers of light and may counterfeit the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it is necessary that there should be a gift of discernment to enable the believer to distinguish between true and false.¹⁴

Thus as prophets speak forth their revelations in the local church, they must be discerned by the others (I Corinthians 14:29).¹⁵

Discernment is the opposite of faith (Cf. Romans 4:20; James 1:6; cp. Matthew 21:21; Mark 11:23). The discerning man is one who is doubtful regarding a matter and cannot bring himself to credulity. He has difficulty with his own critical spirit toward those who doctrinally vary from himself though believers (Romans 14:1; Acts 11:2), but at the

¹²Diakrino is "to separate one from another"; diakrasis is "separation" (L. & S., 189). The etymology is dia, two, and kri, to separate.

¹³A. & G., 184. The objective genitive.

¹⁴Hay, Church Order, 189. Hay also suggests that these passages relate to the gift: I Corinthians 12:10; 2:14-15; Acts 5:3; I John 4:1-2; Revelation 2:2; and Mark 8:32, 33.

¹⁵All of the references used in this study employ the very Greek terms for discernment, suggesting the common elements of meaning which accompany the word in all its occurrences.

same time tends to be introspective and self-condemnatory (I Corinthians 11:31). In fact, he must exercise careful caution in his judgments, for to misjudge another is to condemn himself (I Corinthians 11:29). Three things may render his judgments erroneous, a personal sin problem (Matthew 16:3), religious biases (Acts 11:2), and a temporal value system (James 2:4).

The effective use of the gift of discernment requires certain characteristics on the part of the gift bearer. Through a divine disciplining process in his own life (I Corinthians 11:31-32), he has his senses trained to discern good from evil (Hebrews 5:14). For the gift of discernment may well distinguish spirits, but it is only by wisdom, as gained from the Scriptures, that he can know which is the good spirit and which is the bad (I Corinthians 6:5). He in himself does not have the authority to pass sentence, and he must be careful only to follow the patterns and principles of Scripture (as did the archangel in Jude 9).

Discernment penetrates through three levels of the human personality: (1) outward appearances (Matthew 16:3; contrast James 2:4), (2) reasoning processes (Romans 14:1), and into (3) the spirit (I Corinthians 12:10; cp. 14:29). He must not stop at the first two levels, that is condemned in the Bible. His concern is the spiritual state of others, whether they are motivated in their spirits by that which is ultimately good or by that which is by nature evil. This is especially important in regard to prophetic ministries (I Corinthians 14:29). When a prophet speaks, the discernor is impressed neither by the prophet's dress, mannerisms or eloquence, nor by the reasonableness of the prophet's argument or position; he simply does not easily accept

what is being said, he is troubled in his spirit. Only as he is able personally to weigh the message or some part of it by Scripture, or learn elsewhere some factual information about the personal life of the prophet, will he understand why he was troubled. He may grow in this skill (Hebrews 5:14).

A caution is in order at this juncture. The gift of discernment of spirits does not appear to have within its province the recognition or determination of other men's spiritual gifts. It is exactly this kind of practice that is condemned in I Corinthians 4:7, where there was an evil attempt to evaluate those things which were given to the believers from God. The gift distinguishes spirits, not gifts.

In summary, it appears that the gift of discernment of spirits is the God-given grace to distinguish good from evil in the realm of the spirit. In the appendices may be found an attempt to place the behavioral accompaniments of this gift into outline form.

HELPS

One of the "greater gifts" certainly must be helps, for by it the Body of Christ is benefited, if not actually edified. Helps has unfortunately been called by some laymen as "the garbage gift," the gift to which all the undesirable tasks are relegated. The word helps occurs only at I Corinthians 12:28 in all of the New Testament. But a cognate form does occur in three other verses:¹⁶

¹⁶ antilambano; antilambasis (compare usage of sunantilambano, Luke 10:40; Romans 8:26, which word was not known to the author when this study was written). The literal meaning is to "take someone's part" (A. & G., 74); compare Thayer's "mutual acceptance" (50). A. & G., loc. cit. suggest that the plural at I Corinthians 12:28 refers to "helpful deeds."

He has given help to Israel His servant,
 In remembrance of His mercy,
 As He spoke to our fathers,
 To Abraham and his offspring forever. (Luke 1:54)

In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner
 you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus
 that He Himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."
 (Acts 20:35)

And let those who have believers as their masters not be disrespect-
 ful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all
 the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers
 and beloved. (I Timothy 6:2)

And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets,
 third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps,
 administrations, various kinds of tongues. (I Corinthians 12:28)

Our understanding of the New Testament usage of the term help will be
 drawn from these four verses. A few observations may be made:

(1) The helper may be at any rank of authority within the local
 church. Elders help, even God helps; but also those in lowest subjection
 can perform helps.

(2) Help can be extended to a group (cf. Israel), to a class
 (cf. the weak), to individuals (cf. masters), or to the church; but the
 helper is always ministering to people--the task per se is not his first
 concern, but who is to be helped.

(3) The helper is willing to work hard, out of merciful concern,
 in order to be of help to people who cannot help themselves. He may
 balk, however, at doing tasks for people who are able to help themselves;
 he does not like to feel used, only needed.

(4) Help tends to flow along the lines of existing relationships.
 Helpful elders minister to the weak of their flock, even as God gives
 help to the seed of Abraham. The gift is "in the church."

(5) Help endeavors to meet the specific, practical needs of

people; it is not merely doing a job for somebody, but helping them directly.

(6) There is with the gift of helps a sense of obligation to minister to those in need, which comes out of an awareness of his belongingness in the church and Christian brotherhood. Elders know that the flock has been put in their charge. Even God helps Israel according as he had spoken to Abraham.

(7) As in the case of the gift of mercy (Matthew 5:7), the helper is aware of a special "blessing" from the Lord Jesus. He feels the fact that God approves of his ministry; and this contents him.

Thus, in summary, it appears that the gift of helps is the God-given grace to meet the practical needs of Christians who cannot help themselves. The above material, stated in behavioral terms, has been put into the appendices.

ADMINISTRATIONS

The word administration¹⁷ occurs only at I Corinthians 12:28 in the New Testament. It was not at all an unknown term in the first century, for it was employed to describe both gods and political leaders, those who steer and direct the courses of people.¹⁸ A related word occurs twice in the New Testament where it is translated "pilot" and "shipmaster"; the literal meaning is that of "helmsman," one who

¹⁷ Kubernesis; kubarnetes. At I Corinthians 12:28, A. & G. state that "the pl. indicates proofs of ability to hold a leading position in the church . . ." (457).

¹⁸ See Fyer in Kittel, III:1035-6. The word occurs in the LXX at Proverbs 1:1; 11:14; 24:6.

directs the course of a ship. So our New Testament understanding of administrations comes from these three passages:

But the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the captain of the ship, than by what was being said by Paul. (Acts 27:11)

For every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'what city is like the great city?'. (Revelation 18:17b-18)

And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues (I Corinthians 12:28).

Several observations can be drawn from the function of the administrator from these verses:

(1) The administrator is an integral member of a larger body of people; just as there are many officers aboard ship, so there are many gifted members of a local church in which this gift functions.

(2) He is distinct from the head authority figure, but also from other workers; as the helmsman is not the captain nor one of the sailors, so this gift is not necessarily the chief shepherd in a local church, but is nonetheless in a governmental position.

(3) He does confer with chief authority figures; like as the pilot conferred with the centurion and the captain, so this gift may be in a position to exchange ideas with the elders of a local church.

(4) He enters into the decision-making process for the charting of a course of action; similarly as the pilot discussed with the captain and the centurion, and the decision was made to sail, so this gift is important to the important decision-making or policy setting within the Christian assembly.

(5) He is persuasive in character; and just as the centurian was persuaded despite Paul's warnings, so this gift may be accompanied by a danger, namely, determination in spite of wiser though unofficial counsel.

(6) He is keenly sensitive to efficiency, decriing the loss of possible gain; like the shipmaster who cried over the loss of the great city, so this gift may render one intensely interested in obtaining the maximum potential from the stewardship in his local assembly.

(7) He may be stipended; a shipmaster makes his living from the sea, and a church administrator may very well earn a salary for his work in a local church.

In summary, then, it appears that the gift of administrations is the God-given grace to set policy or to effect important decisions on behalf of a Christian assembly. A brief outline of the above observations appears in the appendices.

SUMMARY

Service, or ministry, is a common theme in the New Testament, and the word "ministry" has multiple uses. All spiritual gifts imply a ministry to perform. But some spiritual gifts, those distinguished from the prophetic (speaking) gifts, may be classified as the ministerial (serving) gifts. Among these are included ministry (the most flexible of the serving gifts), ruling, giving, showing mercy, faith, discernment of spirits, helps, and administrations. All of these gifts have certain elements in common with other gifts, and some are wider in their scope than others. This seems to suggest that the serving gifts are not exclusive, tightly categorized ministries, but are rather overlapping emphasis, according to the grace which God has dealt to each one.

A behavioral description of each of these gifts has been outlined in the appendices. There does not seem to be any evidence in Scripture that any of these serving gifts has been withdrawn from the present divine economy or that any should be expected to cease.

The four spiritual gifts remaining to be discussed could possibly have been included in the previous two chapters. These four are themselves two speaking gifts, kinds of tongues and interpretation of tongues, and two serving gifts, gifts of healings and effects of miracles. But one distinctive common to these four alone seems to distinguish them sharply enough for separate consideration. They are sign gifts.

Miracles are designated as signs in II Corinthians 12:12 (compare Acts 2:22; 8:13; Hebrews 2:4), healing at Acts 4:16, 22 (compare Mark 16:17-18); and tongues by Mark 16:17 and by I Corinthians 14:22. Interpretation of tongues, by virtue of its close relation to tongues, is grouped here as well. Now a sign is basically any indicator which points beyond itself to the greater figure beyond it. Thus that greater figure provides the authentication or validation of the event which is designated a sign.¹

Two passages of Scripture which relate spiritual gifts and signs seem to indicate that the purpose of signs, and presumably therefore of sign gifts, was fulfilled within the apostolic period of church history. In each of these passages, the sign gifts functioned to confirm the apostolic message, in each the Lord's apostles who bear the message.

¹ See Bengel's, in Kittel, VIII:240, on Acts 2:22; 4:22, and 258-9 on I Corinthians 14:22; II:12:13.