

**GIFTS,
OFFICES,
AND
THE OPERATION
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT
CHURCH**



Earl R. Borders

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and
the Operation
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New Testament Church**

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Printed by:

Church of God, God's Acres
675 N. Cedar Street
Newark, OH 43055

www.GodsAcres.org
www.GospelTrumpeter.com

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CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTION

Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

As we begin an examination of this vital subject, I have a dual burden behind this study. The first, and most obvious, is to instruct, as "all scripture is given . . . for instruction" (2 Timothy 3:16). The second burden, which is equally important, is that through exposure to these truths concerning the gifts and offices desire might be created within you to "covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31) so that "a man [might] desire the office" (1 Timothy 3:1). For the truth to be perpetuated until our Lord returns in His second advent requires the continual operation of spiritual gifts in the filling of ecclesiastical offices. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 11:29, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." The Expanded Greek Translation of the New Testament renders it this way: "For the gifts in grace at the calling of God are with respect to a change of mind irrevocable."

The Lord has never changed His mind concerning the gifts deemed necessary for the successful operation of the New Testament church. The gifts and offices that led to the successful operation of the primitive church are just as vitally needed for the church's successful operation today. As revered leaders step off of the stage of action, gifts do not die with them. Just as Elijah's mantle fell upon Elisha (2 Kings 2:13-15), so it is in the plan of God today. God wants to call and prepare successive leadership. However, it is important to note that Elisha coveted the gift Elijah had (2 Kings 2:9) and desired to fill his office. God is looking for just such ones today. The cry is the same as in Ezekiel 22:30, which reads, "And I sought for a man among them . . ." It is our burden, as you study this booklet, that not only will "the eyes of your understanding . . . [be] enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18) but also that a desire will be created in you to "covet earnestly the best gifts," that we may see no office deficient or lacking.

GIFTS AND OFFICES

In our text the Apostle spoke of "having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us" (Romans 12:6). Here we clearly see that there are different gifts: not all receive the same gifts. First Corinthians 12:8-9 says: "For to *one* is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to *another* the word of knowledge . . . To *another* faith . . . to *another* the gifts of healing . . ." and so forth. Not all receive the same gifts, and there is a very valid reason that it is ordained that way. The gift is the talent or ability that equips one to fill a particular office. It would be difficult indeed to be called as one of the "teachers" (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11) and not have "the word of knowledge" (1 Corinthians 12:8) or to be "called to be an apostle" (Romans 1:1) without the gift of "faith" (1 Corinthians 12:9). The gifts equip the persons for the offices that the Lord desires they fill.

The Apostle Paul said in Romans 11:13, ". . . I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." First Timothy 3:1 declares, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." Ephesians 4:11 gives us a listing of the ministerial offices in the church: ". . . some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Here we have five offices listed. Some scholars question the Ephesian text as to whether "teachers" is a separate category, but 1 Corinthians 12:28 makes it clear that it is a separate office. Each of these offices is essential. Without the operation of each of these offices, the church will be deficient and handicapped, as a body with a missing member.

Our text tells us "all members have not the same office" (Romans 12:4). We have "gifts differing" (Romans 12:6), and those different gifts are placed in different offices. The church is operated through those offices. In sectarianism men who do not have the gifts fill offices, and the results are tragic. The wise man said, "Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain" (Proverbs 25:14). This is why Babylon is so dry and parched. Conversely, the Lord does not want one on whom He bestows gifts and talents to hide his "talent in the earth" (Matthew

25:25), but rather to be willing so that his "gift maketh room for him" (Proverbs 18:16) and to make the personal sacrifice required to step up and fill the office, or offices, the Lord may be calling him to fill.

MANY MEMBERS—ONE BODY

One of the most famous and frequent analogies the Apostle Paul used in his writings regarding the church is that of a body, and so it is in our lesson text. In verse 4 of our text he proclaimed that "we have many members in one body." The church is "one body," but as with the natural body, for it to function properly, it requires the operation of many members. There must ever be a spirit of cooperation among the "many members." Each member must recognize the importance of the role of the others and "should have the same care one for another" (1 Corinthians 12:25).

We also must recognize that because there are different gifts, "the grace that is given to us" (Romans 12:6) is in relation to our gift. One should fill the office that coincides with his or her gift. For example, one may have the gift to fill the office of an evangelist and have a tremendous ability in that area, yet not have "the word of wisdom" (1 Corinthians 12:8) necessary to be a successful pastor. Much havoc has been brought about over the years by ones not abiding in their calling. Grace is only given for the particular gift that one possesses. Our lesson text says, "Think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (verse 3). In the Ephesian epistle the Apostle declared, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Ephesians 4:7). There is only grace in proportion to the gift given. When one steps outside the bounds of that gift, the grace is not operational. Therefore, it behooves us to "covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31) and also to have an understanding of those gifts that we possess and abide within their bounds. Those gifts will prepare us for service in particular offices, but we must be cautious that neither our zeal causes us to overstep our gifts, nor our hesitance causes us to fail to step up when the Spirit of God directs.

In this booklet we will study what a gift actually is, what it is used for, and how we are to use it. Also, we will study the various offices that must be filled for the successful operation of the church. It is my desire that we study these truths so that each of us will have the keen sense that we truly need to have an ear to "hear what the Spirit saith" (Revelation 2:7).

GIFTS

*1 Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.
Ephesians 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.
8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

In this chapter, I want to begin to examine the term the Apostle Paul styled as *gifts*. In 1 Corinthians 12:1 he penned, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." It is evident from this phrase that, though the congregation in Corinth came "behind in no gift" (or as one rendering says, "there is no gift in which you are deficient") (1 Corinthians 1:7), that they were lacking understanding concerning these "gifts" and their proper operation. Certainly, if this congregation in the first century, where all these gifts were operating, needed teaching, it is even more crucial for the church in the twenty-first century, that is shedding the effects of the sectarian taint of the cloudy day (Protestantism), to receive clear instruction concerning these gifts.

WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL GIFT?

In our Scripture text the divine penman was inspired to pen, "Now concerning spiritual gifts . . . I would not have you ignorant." One rendering says, "not right for you to be without teaching." Notice that the Apostle denoted these as *spiritual* gifts. One translation offers this passage as, "I do not want you to be ignorant about manifestations of the Spirit." The Greek word for *spiritual* in our text is **pneumatikos**. It literally means "non-carnal, supernatural." This word does not appear in the Greek Septuagint or the Gospels. It is a post-Pentecost word. It indicates those things that have their origin with God and therefore are in harmony with His character. It describes those qualities that proceed from God's nature and are produced in the life of the saint through the Spirit of God. Therefore, gifts that are truly "spiritual gifts" have a spiritual nature. When the Scripture speaks of spiritual gifts, it is not speaking of masons, carpenters, or other physical inclinations or talents. Certainly, children of God will sanctify these abilities to the work of God, and they will serve as great blessings; but in light of this text, these types of abilities are not what is being dealt with.

The word *gifts* is **charisma** in the original Greek. Outside of the New Testament this is not a word that was in common usage. In classical Greek it is rarely used. In the New Testament it is characteristically Paul's word. This word **charisma** occurs seventeen times: fourteen in the Pauline letters, twice in the pastoral epistles (also written by Paul), and once in 1 Peter. The meaning of this word is that of a free and undeserved gift, something that comes from God's nature, conveyed by God's grace, and given to God's people. It could never have been achieved, attained, or possessed by any human efforts.

WHO HAS SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

Are these spiritual gifts for some spiritually elite group of people? Who is able to have these spiritual gifts? Consider the word used by Jesus in Matthew 25:15 where He declared that He gave "to *every* man according to his several ability." Here Jesus indicated that "*every* man" receives a talent. In 1 Corinthians 7:7 the Apostle Paul substantiated this when he penned, "But *every* man hath his proper gift of God . . ." In 1 Corinthians 12:11 the sacred writer reveals the encouraging truth that "the selfsame Spirit" divides to *every* man "severally as he will." Here we find that not only does "every" saint receive a gift, but the word *severally* means "specially assigned" (*The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*). What a beautiful, inspiring truth!

Every saint has at least one of these spiritual gifts, and they are "specially assigned," based on Jesus' words, "according to his several ability." The Emphatic Diaglott says, "according to his RESPECTIVE capacity." Several truths are notable here. As children of God, we are "all the members of that one body" (1 Corinthians 12:12), and "unto *every one of us* is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Ephesians 4:7). Every member has a gift, as part of the one body, "the church" (Colossians 1:18), and "every joint supplieth" (Ephesians 4:16), or every member ministers to a need or provides a function in the church by the operation of that particular gift. It is worthy of mention that although "every one of us" has a gift, not everyone fills the offices mentioned in Ephesians 4:11.

Though it requires "gifts" to be qualified to fill an office, many who have these spiritual gifts do not fill the particular offices mentioned there. For example, in Romans 12:8 the Apostle listed the gift of giving. Certainly ones

may have this gift and yet never receive a call to be "apostles . . . prophets . . . evangelists . . . pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11). This reveals to us that all the gifts supply a vital part to the body of Christ, that each member and the operation of his or her gift is vital. Although he or she may not hold an office that is particularly mentioned, the operation of his or her gift is vital to the successful operation of the body.

THE OPERATION OF THE GIFTS

It should always be remembered that any gift one may have is just that—a gift. It is from God (James 1:17). It is nothing of which one should be proud or boastful. The Apostle Paul declared, "But by the grace of God I am what I am . . ." (1 Corinthians 15:10). The gift should be operated humbly, "in honour preferring one another" (Romans 12:10), allowing the gift to make room for itself (Proverbs 18:16). Also, we each should not allow jealousy or envy to work, as the Lord apportions "according to his RESPECTIVE capacity" (Matthew 25:15; The Emphatic Diaglott). In His wisdom the Lord knows which gifts we are best matched to by our temperament, emotional composition, and physical abilities. We should not be selfish with our gifts. First Corinthians 12:7 tells us, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." One translation says, ". . . that he may use it for the common good." Another says "for the profit of all." The gift that each saint possesses is not for his or her own selfish benefit but, rather, as Paul told the Corinthians, "Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church" (1 Corinthians 14:12). The Amplified Bible gives us a more descriptive rendering: "Since you are so eager and ambitious to possess spiritual endowments and manifestations of the (Holy) Spirit, [concentrate on] striving to excel and to abound [in them] in ways that will build up the church." Any time ones seek to operate their gifts, it should be divinely prompted, in divine order, and for the benefit and edification of the body.

DIVIDING TO EVERY MAN

In 1 Corinthians 12:11 notice the particular wording the Apostle employed. He declared that the Spirit is "dividing" (a present tense verb) to every man. This tells us that this is a continual and ongoing working of the Spirit in the church throughout every period of time. Not only is He giving gifts and abilities to those newly saved, as they are added to the church, but in view of the Apostle's admonition to "covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31) it indicates that if we "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matthew 5:6), we "shall be filled." That is, if we "covet earnestly" what the Spirit is still "dividing," we can receive additional gifts. What an encouraging thought! We can desire more spiritual gifts. God is desirous to impart them for the betterment of His body. May we never be satisfied but ever strive for "the best gifts."

CHAPTER 3

WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE

1 Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit.

Beginning with this chapter, we want to examine two particular gifts that are specifically mentioned in the New Testament. In our text for this chapter, as well as in Romans 12:6-8, we see that the Apostle Paul enumerated specific spiritual gifts. In these listings of specific gifts, the divine penman is certainly not implying that it is an exhaustive and entire list of all spiritual gifts. Certainly these gifts are central and crucial to the successful operation of the New Testament church. However, it is also evident that these passages are not all-inclusive of all gifts. The Psalmist prophesied in Psalm 87:7 that "the singers [and] . . . the players on instruments shall be there." We know that there are indeed those who are especially gifted to be one of "the singers" or "the players."

Again, it is also evident from the words of our Lord in the Parable of the Talents that gifts are distributed "according to his several ability" (Matthew 25:15). This verse says, "And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one." This reveals that the apportionment rests with the divine and that some may receive "several" gifts. These gifts possessed by various members of the body of Christ are for a twofold purpose: "mak[ing] increase of the body" and "the edifying of itself" (Ephesians 4:16). As we view these specific gifts mentioned in the Pauline epistles, we also want to see how they were practically performed in the morning-time brethren who held various offices.

THE WORD OF WISDOM

In verse 8 of our lesson text the Apostle penned, "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom." It is needful that we ever be reminded that these gifts are "given." We are not talking about natural abilities, inclinations, or propensities, but we are talking about "gifts." In the beginning of this Gospel Day, the ministry had a number of what was termed "unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts 4:13). The average high school graduate today is probably much better educated than many of the initial morning-time ministers, yet they "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). Again, verse 8 speaks of "the word of wisdom." The Greek word for *wisdom* is **sophia**. The meaning of this word is "the insight into the true nature of things." The ancient church father, Clement of Alexandria, said it is "the knowledge of things both human and divine and of their cause."

Sophia is the ultimate understanding and insight to matters both human and divine that can only come from a divine source. It enables one to understand beyond the realm of human comprehension and to perceive realities as they are in the spiritual and eternal scheme, and it enables the possessor of this ability or gift to act accordingly. Solomon prayed for **sophia**: "Give me now wisdom [**sophia**]" (2 Chronicles 1:10). Daniel and the three Hebrew children had this wisdom as well: "God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom" (Daniel 1:17). This particular attribute is crying for men to seek it: "Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?" (Proverbs 8:1). The wise man admonished us, "Get wisdom, get understanding" (Proverbs 4:5).

Let us view this gift in its New Testament setting. When the first deacons were selected in the New Testament, the qualifications were: "men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" (Acts 6:3). Wisdom is a very vital gift to the successful operation of the church. When Stephen, one of the seven deacons, disputed with the Jews, Acts 6:10 says that "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake."

The Apostle Paul said he was "a wise masterbuilder" (1 Corinthians 3:10). The wise man said, "Wisdom hath builded her house" (Proverbs 9:1). We know this "house" is the church (Hebrews 3:6; 1 Timothy 3:15). The Apostle Paul was successful because of the gift of wisdom he had. This was evident in how he turned the Pharisees and Sadducees against each other and diverted their attention away from him (Acts 23:6-10). We can see his "word of wisdom" in how he administered church discipline (1 Corinthians 5:13; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8). We see his wisdom and

his patient teaching of newly established congregations in Colossians 1:3-9. Wisdom is certainly an essential gift necessary to fill the office of an apostle or to sow new congregations. Certainly this gift of "the word of wisdom" served this Apostle well as he established and nurtured several congregations and wrote at least thirteen books of the New Testament.

THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

The latter portion of verse 8 of our text proclaims, ". . . to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit." Here a different gift is portrayed. The wording "to another" implies that one may receive the gift of "wisdom" and not receive "knowledge." Also, the converse is true. One may have "all knowledge" (1 Corinthians 13:2) and not have "the word of wisdom." However, if the Spirit sees fit, one may have both. The Greek word for "knowledge" is **gnosis**. This word means, according to *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, "knowledge of an especial kind." Jesus referred to it in Luke 11:52 as "the key of knowledge." It is the ability to open something to another, to give another entry or access into that which had previously been closed to them. In Romans 2:20 the Apostle Paul equated "knowledge" with "the truth in the law."

Look at the words of the brethren Jesus communed with on the Emmaus road: "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32). This is what "the word of knowledge" does—it provides the one who possesses this gift with "the key of knowledge," the ability to open the Scriptures to others so that truths which were closed and not visible are opened and clearly seen. The Apostle Paul, as is evident through his great host of writings, had this gift as well (2 Corinthians 1:11).

But let us consider another brother who had this particular gift. In Acts 18:24-28 we are introduced to a brother named Apollos. Luke, the beloved physician, said he was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures" (Acts 18:24). Once Aquila and Priscilla had "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:26), it is apparent that he had "the word of knowledge." Acts 18:28 says "he mightily convinced the Jews . . . shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ." It is evident from the Apostle Paul's words that Apollos had a little different gift than Paul. First Corinthians 3:5-6 speaks of both Paul and Apollos, and verse 6 says, "I have planted [that is the work of an apostle], Apollos watered." Apollos was one who cultivated and nurtured the seed. What office does this "word of knowledge" correlate with? Teaching. Ephesians 4:11 says that "he gave some . . . teachers." Also, "God hath set some in the church, . . . thirdly teachers" (1 Corinthians 12:28). Romans 12:7 speaks of "he that teacheth." Apollos, being "mighty in the scriptures," had this gift of knowledge. The Holy Spirit matches the gift with the ministry and mission that is given to its possessor. In the New Testament, Apollos was such a renowned teacher that he was spoken of and associated with the Apostles Paul and Peter (1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:5-6; 4:6). One noted scholar said this about the importance of teaching: "The message of Christ needs not only proclaimed; it needs to be explained. Exhortation and invitation without a background of teaching are empty things." Martin Luther and a number of scholars have attributed the writing of the Book of Hebrews to Apollos. Whether this be true or not, it is apparent that he had this gift and that it served as a special benefit to the New Testament church. In this time of evening light with the "little book open" (Revelation 10:2), the Lord desires to impart much more knowledge. Daniel prophesied of our day and said "knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4). This gift is very vital to the successful operation of the church today.

FAITH, HEALING, AND MIRACLES

- 1 Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.
 2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.
 3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.
 4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.
 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.
 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.
 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.
 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;
 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;
 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.*

In this chapter we mainly want to examine three gifts that are listed in verses 9 and 10: faith, healing, and miracles. These three gifts are interrelated and are to be functional in the New Testament church for a specific purpose. In Mark 16:17 Jesus said, "These signs shall follow them that believe." One of the signs He mentioned was "they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:18). Then verse 20 tells us that "they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." The Emphatic Diaglott renders it, "ratifying the WORD through the ACCOMPANYING Signs." These particular gifts—faith, healing, and miracles—are specifically incorporated into the plan of God to serve as confirmation, or ratification, of both the truth that is being heralded and the validity of those who are heralding it. This is one reason that the enemy, through false religion, has seized upon these particular gifts to make a demonstration to the public; it is their attempt to claim legitimacy. So we want to examine these gifts and the place they are ordained to fill in the furtherance of the Gospel.

Our lesson text says in verse 9 that in the apportioning of the spiritual gifts, "to another [is given] faith by the same Spirit." This indicates that this particular faith spoken of in this text is a gift. This is not something that every child of God is given. We know that every child of God is "saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8). We know that when the Holy Spirit makes His advent into the heart of a new convert, one of the attributes He brings as part of "the fruit of the Spirit" is faith (Galatians 5:22). We know every saint has faith because we could not endure "the trying of your faith" (James 1:3) without possessing it. However, the language of our text is clear that the faith spoken of in verse 9 is not something everyone possesses. It is speaking of a gift of faith.

To see an example of this gift we need look no further than the first Christian martyr, Stephen. Acts 6:5 tells us that "Stephen [was], a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." It is clear from the description that Stephen's faith was especially notable, that he had a special gift of faith. The account in Acts goes on to tell us, "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people" (Acts 6:8). James 2:20 says that "faith without works is dead." Many times the gift of faith works in conjunction with "the gifts of healing" (verse 9) and "the working of miracles" (verse 10). In James 2:22 we are instructed that "by works was faith made perfect" (the Greek translation says "complete"). Those who have this gift have a completely operational faith that can be seen in the works of healings and miracles. These three gifts are especially used in apostolic work, in establishing the validity of the claims of the Gospel and in preparing an unbelieving people to hear the Gospel. These gifts take the Gospel from a purely spiritual realm to a natural realm that the unregenerate may behold. It is a confirmation of the truth of the Gospel. Men may debate doctrine, argue theology, and perhaps even question your testimony, but Acts 4:14 tells us, "And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it."

HEALING

The last portion of verse 9 speaks of "the gifts of healing." This expression is unique in the sense that "gifts" is spoken of in the plural tense. Everywhere this is mentioned, it is spoken of in this manner. First Corinthians 12:28 speaks of "gifts of healings" and in 1 Corinthians 12:30 the Apostle posed the question, "Have all the gifts of healing?" Why is it spoken of in this manner? The Emphatic Diaglott renders this phrase as "Gifts of Cures." In Matthew 10:1,

when Jesus initially commissioned the twelve, we read, ". . . he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." It takes a different cure to heal disease than to heal just sickness, and a different cure, yet, to heal those vexed by unclean spirits. Each different cure is actually a different gracious gift. Notice that when verse 10 of our text speaks of "miracles," it speaks in the plural. So it does, also, when it speaks of "discerning of spirits" and "kinds of tongues." Needless to say, there are different spirits and different languages and certainly no two miracles are exactly the same. So it is with "healing." Each "healing" that is spoken of in our text is the operation of a unique gift fitted for the occasion or circumstance for which it is to be manifested.

Let us consider some biblical instances where this occurred. In Acts 3:1-11 we have the account of the lame man at the gate Beautiful. Notice specifically the Apostle Peter's words: "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee" (verse 6). He did not say, "such as John and I have." Why? John had a different gift. What gift did Peter have? He had the "gifts of healing." It is worthy of mention to note that Peter did not pray over the lame man nor anoint him with oil. Those are the biblical practices that the elders as a whole are instructed to engage in for healing (James 5:14), but Peter was operating a special gift or ability.

Another "manifestation of the Spirit" is recorded in Acts 5:15. It says, "Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them." Verse 16 says, "There came also a multitude out of the cities round about . . . bringing sick folks . . . and they were healed every one." This was another gracious gift; this was not the normal course of healing. It was a special gift. One scholar renders the phrase in 1 Corinthians 12:9 as "the special gifts of healing."

MIRACLES

In verse 10 our text speaks of "the working of miracles." The Greek word in this text is **dunamis** and means "power, a supernatural power." The Apostle Paul had this gift, as evidenced in Acts 19:11-12: "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them . . ." We also see this in Acts 20:9-12, where a young man "fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, . . . his life is in him."

The Apostle Peter had this gift as well, as we see in Acts 9:36-42, in the raising of Tabitha, or Dorcas, from the dead. These gifts were especially beneficial to those with the calling to the office of an apostle. An apostle is going into virgin areas and sowing the seed of the Gospel and attempting to raise up new works. The manifestation of these gifts—faith, healing, and miracles—serves as a confirmation of the Word they preach. Consider the raising of Dorcas. Acts 9:42 tells us, "And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord."

It is also beneficial to an evangelist. Acts 8:6 tells us, "And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." Acts 21:8 speaks of "Philip the evangelist." The operation of these gifts as a "manifestation of the Spirit" enables the unregenerate, the unsaved, and even the sectarians (who rest on human senses rather than the divine) to see the truth on a visible level and be convinced of its veracity.

In this day, with a religious society about us steeped in humanism and unbelief, may God help us to "covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31), gifts that can be used in the face of an unbelieving world to help sow the truth in new localities and enable honest hearts to see where the truth is and where they may assemble.

PROPHECY AND PROPHETS

1 Corinthians 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.

Romans 12:6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

In this chapter we will look at several verses of Scripture; however, you will notice there is a common vein of truth that unites these texts. We want to now examine the portion of 1 Corinthians 12:10 that declares "to another prophecy." We also find this gift spoken of in Romans 12:6, which states, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy . . ." Then we see the corresponding office of one who has this gift mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:28-29 and in Ephesians 4:11. The Ephesian letter relates it, "he gave some . . . prophets." The realms of modern religion are quick to say that this is an Old Testament office, that it is obsolete or antiquated, but it is here employed in the same verse as evangelists, pastors, and teachers. If the office of prophet is obsolete or relegated merely to the first century, to be consistent with the other offices, should those be obsolete as well? In truth, the "gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Romans 11:29). Each of the offices and the gifts that are necessary to fill those offices are New Testament offices and are to be filled by Him that "might fill all things" (Ephesians 4:10). So we want to consider this gift of "prophecy" and the corresponding office of the New Testament prophet.

When we begin to consider this sacred truth, immediately we begin to question, what is prophecy? What does this term mean? This term is broader than commonly realized. The Greek word is **propheteia**, and it involves two aspects. First, a *foretelling* of things to occur, and second, a *forth-telling* or, as defined by *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, "a gifted faculty of setting forth and enforcing revealed truth . . . matter of divine teaching set forth by special gift." Let us consider these two aspects of "prophecy." Acts 21:10 mentions "a certain prophet, named Agabus." This lets us know that he was a New Testament prophet. Was this a gift or a "manifestation of the Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:7)? Look what he said when he prophesied to Paul: "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle" (Acts 21:11). This was a foretelling. Agabus was the same prophet who "signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world" (Acts 11:28). Verse 27 uses the term *prophets* in the plural: "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch." So it is evident that this office is a New Testament office, one utilized by the Spirit and one filled by several individuals.

We read in Acts 21:8-9 that Philip the evangelist had four daughters who prophesied. We can clearly see this was a frequent and functional gift in the New Testament church. So the first aspect of prophecy is foretelling. The Apostle Paul had this ability as well. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3 he prophesied and declared, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first . . ." In 1 Timothy 4:1 he proclaimed, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith . . ." In 2 Timothy 3:1 he said, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." Here we can readily see that the Apostle Paul was foretelling.

The other aspect of this gift is forth telling. There are those who receive prophecy, and there are those who understand prophecy and expound it. Many times the gift incorporates both, as in the case of John. John received "the words of the prophecy of this book" (Revelation 22:18), but he also had an ability to expound on other prophecies. Consider his words in 1 John 2:18, which says, ". . . as ye have heard that antichrist shall come [that term is not employed in the Revelation; he was expounding on other prophecy], even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." The word *prophecy* in our text, or the Greek word **propheteia**, comes from **pro**, which means "forth," and **phemi**, which means "to speak." According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, it means "speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God. It is the declaration of that which cannot be known by natural means."

In Revelation 10:11 John was told that he would eventually leave the confinement on Patmos and "prophecy again

before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." It is evident that John had the gift of prophecy and filled the office of a prophet. In Revelation 22:9 John was told by the messenger of the Revelation, ". . . I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets . . ." This lets us know that John was numbered among the brethren who were prophets. In this day of such religious confusion concerning prophecy and Revelation, it is certainly a vital gift, not only to foretell that which lies ahead, but to "forth tell" those previous prophecies and revelation truths that have brought the people of God to the position of the present day. The Lord desires that we understand prophetic truths. "Prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe" (1 Corinthians 14:22). It is to edify and instruct the church. "He that prophesieth edifieth the church" (1 Corinthians 14:4). The Lord desires that these prophetic truths be "forth told" so that we have a historical bearing of where we are, of what has occurred down through the Gospel Day, and of how we arrived at where we are today. God also desires that the New Testament church have prophets who can tell where we are going and what yet lies ahead in the prophetic spectrum.

PROPHETS

The office of prophets was no small, unimportant office in the New Testament church. Look at how frequently (and in the plural) it is mentioned in the Book of Acts. Acts 11:27 says, "And in these days came prophets [plural] from Jerusalem unto Antioch." Acts 13:1 tells us, "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets [plural] and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen . . . and Saul." These offices of "prophets and teachers" were fully functional in the early morning time of the New Testament church. Acts 15:32 reads, "And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them." In 1 Corinthians 14:37 the Apostle Paul said, "If any man think himself to be a prophet . . ." It is clear that this was an accepted and functional gift and office in the first century. It is just as vitally needed in this twenty-first century. Let us not embrace the false thinking of sectarianism that this gift is obsolete.

All the gifts are "to profit withal" (1 Corinthians 12:7). Without the operation of each of these biblical gifts, the body will experience a deficiency. All "are necessary" (1 Corinthians 12:22). If ever the saints scattered abroad needed the prophetic truths heralded to expose the falsities of sectarianism so that they can come leaping and shouting home to Zion, it is today. If ever the church needed enlightenment on what lies before her and how to achieve her task, it is today. The Apostle placed great importance on this gift when he said, "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy" (1 Corinthians 14:1). Again, God help us to "covet earnestly" (1 Corinthians 12:31) these gifts so that the church may benefit.

CHAPTER 6

DISCERNMENT AND MERCY

1 Corinthians 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.

Romans 12:8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

In this chapter we want to consider two gifts that complement each other. These two gifts operate very closely together, for it is necessary to have the one in order to properly know when to dispense the other. Our text in the Corinthian letter speaks of "discerning of spirits," and in the Roman epistle a gift of "mercy" is mentioned. It is rather astounding that mercy would be listed as a specific gift. In Romans 12:8 the Apostle penned, ". . . he that showeth mercy [let him do it], with cheerfulness."

Rarely do we think of showing mercy as a gift, but it is evident from its inclusion in this listing that it is so. These two gifts have a correlation, because without discernment how can it be known whether a situation warrants judgment or mercy? Let us examine these two biblical gifts, for they are as needful to the successful operation of the church today as they were in the first century. In a day of a specious apostasy, the operation of these gifts is essential.

COMMON SALVATION

Jude 3 speaks of our "common salvation," and there are several attributes that are "common," or universal, to all who possess this experience of salvation. The most familiar is that we all share "temptation . . . such as is common to man" (1 Corinthians 10:13). But there are other aspects of commonality as well. Malachi, the prophet, spoke of this New Testament dispensation and declared: ". . . in that day [a prophetic expression of this Gospel Day] when I make up my jewels . . . Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Malachi 3:17-18). This prophetic passage tells us that each of the "jewels," or saints, have a certain amount of discernment; it is common to all. In 1 Corinthians 2:15 we are told, "But he that is spiritual judgeth [the margin says 'discerneth'] all things . . ." We can see that every spiritual person has a certain amount of discernment. Each of us is enjoined, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:36). But in this chapter's text we see more depicted than just the common dispensation of these abilities; we see specific gifts.

WHAT IS DISCERNMENT?

When our text says "to another discerning of spirits," of what is it speaking? First, it reminds us, by the incorporation of the words "to another," that not everyone receives this specific gift of discernment. But what is this gift? What is discernment? First Corinthians 2:15 gives us an insight. It tells us "he that is spiritual judgeth all things." The Greek word for *judgeth* is **anakrino** and means "the exercise of a discerning judgment of all things as to their true value" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*). It is the same word used with reference to trying one judicially ("examined," Acts 28:18; "examine," 1 Corinthians 9:3). It is the ability, through "the manifestation of the Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:7), of judging between that which is of the Holy Spirit and that which is prompted or promoted by another spirit. It is judging between that which is divine and that which is diabolical. One rendering of 1 Corinthians 12:10 says, "the ability to distinguish between different kinds of spirits."

EXAMPLES OF THE GIFT OF DISCERNMENT

Let us consider some biblical accounts where this gift was in operation. In Acts 5:1-10 the account of Ananias and Sapphira is recorded. When they "kept back part of the price," the only ones "privy to it" (verse 2) were Ananias and his wife, Sapphira. Yet when Ananias came before Peter, in verse 3, Peter said, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" How did Peter know that? Ecclesiastes 10:20 says, ". . . a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter." That "bird" is symbolic of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16); the gift of discernment, given by the Holy Spirit, revealed the matter to Peter.

Look at when the Gospel was introduced to Samaria. Acts 8:13-14 says: "Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip [notice that Philip's call was as an 'evangelist'; Acts 21:8]. . . . Now when the apostles [those responsible and gifted to start new works] which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John." To understand why Peter was selected, look at what occurred in verses 21-23. Peter discerned Simon's spirit, saying in verse 23, "For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Peter was sent because he had the gift of discernment. Certainly the Lord used Philip the evangelist in a great way in Samaria, but there were limitations to his abilities, and there was a place where other members of the body needed to operate their gifts and fill their offices. Another manifestation of discernment is seen in Paul's rebuke of the "damsel possessed with a spirit of divination" (Acts 16:16). In this passage (Acts 16:16-18) the damsel spoke the truth, but the spirit she possessed was discerned by Paul to be devilish. This is a very necessary and important gift in the field of apostolic work. When one goes into a new area, he does not have the time to learn or to get to know the people as well perhaps as a pastor would. He needs to be able to discern what he is dealing with so that he can operate appropriately.

DISCERNMENT WITH MERCY

Thus far we have seen discernment operate in a manner that required rebuke and judgment to be meted out, but there is another aspect to discernment. In Acts 11:19-26 we read where the Gospel was first purposely introduced to the Gentiles in Antioch. When "tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: . . . they sent forth Barnabas" (verse 22). But when Barnabas "came, and had seen the grace of God" (verse 23), look at what he did. "Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul" (verse 25). Why? In Romans 11:13 Paul called himself "the apostle of the Gentiles." In Antioch the first Gentile congregation was established, and Barnabas discerned Paul's call to the Gentiles.

Consider the young man "John, whose surname was Mark" (Acts 15:37), who traveled along on the first missionary trip taken by Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13:2). "John departing from them returned to Jerusalem" (Acts 13:13). Thus, when they were ready to take their second journey, "Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work" (Acts 15:37-38). Here we see discernment working in conjunction with "he that sheweth mercy" (Romans 12:8).

John Mark, who later wrote the Gospel of Mark, was Barnabas' nephew (Colossians 4:10). No doubt, he may have known him better than Paul did, but Barnabas also discerned something in Mark that others did not see at that juncture (just as he earlier discerned a special ability in Paul); and he felt it warranted mercy rather than judgment. The brethren recognized that he had this gift, for in Acts 4:36 he was "surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,)" Later the Apostle Paul saw merit in John Mark as well. Speaking of Mark in 2 Timothy 4:11, Paul said, "he is profitable to me for the ministry," and he instructed the Colossians, "If he come unto you, receive him" (Colossians 4:10).

If not for Barnabas' discernment and gift of showing "mercy, with cheerfulness" (Romans 12:8), this tender plant would have been crushed in its growth and could never have developed into the stalwart leader that John Mark became. There is a time for judgment and a time for mercy; discernment distinguishes between these seasons. In 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 Paul admonished that severe judgment be put on one who had his father's wife, but in 2 Corinthians 2:6 he discerned, "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment . . ." He added, ". . . confirm your love toward him" (verse 8). This is a very vital gift. This gift can help a pastor know how to administer discipline. It can aid pastors or teachers in recognizing those coming up under them whom the Lord has His hand on. Properly exercised, this gift can reveal the devious "Simon the Sorcerers" trying to work among us and put the proper judgment on them. Additionally, if it is working as it ought, it can also recognize the Apostle Pauls and John Marks whom the Lord would like to raise from obscurity to the leadership of the church.

TONGUES AND INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

1 Corinthians 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.

In this chapter we want to consider the last two gifts mentioned in our text: "divers kinds of tongues" and "the interpretation of tongues." These two gifts have been greatly misrepresented and misused in the realms of religion. Modern Pentecostal movements advocate that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of the Holy Ghost baptism and that this is an evidence that all should receive. However, the writer clearly stated that "all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" (1 Corinthians 12:11). The questions posed in 1 Corinthians 12:30, "do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" beg the obvious answer of no. No more than all are apostles or prophets as the question is posed in the preceding verse (verse 29). This expressly lets us know that it was never ordained that *all* would be recipients of these gifts. This explicitly teaches us that we do not all receive the same gifts. The word "initial" does not appear in the Scriptures, and the only place "evidence" appears in the New Testament is where it declares that "faith is . . . the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). It is *faith* that is evidence, not a manifestation of "tongues."

WHAT ARE DIVERS KINDS OF TONGUES?

The sacred writer informed us in his elaboration on "diversities of gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:4) that there is one gift known as "divers kinds of tongues" (verse 10). What does this mean? One rendering expresses it well: "*still* another person is able to speak in languages he never learned." The word "divers" in The Expanded Greek Translation of the New Testament is "various." The phrase is offered as "various kinds of languages." The Emphatic Diaglott says "different languages." This gift is not speaking in some unintelligible manner but rather in a language understood by the hearer.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

In the Scriptures there are three explicit occasions where we see this gift in operation. The most famous account is the Day of Pentecost, so called because it was a Jewish feast, the Feast of Pentecost. The word *Pentecost* comes from the Greek word **pentekoste** and literally means "fiftieth." The Feast of Pentecost derived its name because it was fifty days after the Jewish Feast of Passover. In Acts 2:1-38 the complete account is recorded. Several truths are notable in this account. Verse 4 says they "began to speak with other tongues" (the Greek word is **glossa**, which means "languages"), and verse 6 says that "every man heard them speak in his own language." Several truths are here revealed to us about this gift. First, the languages they heard were understandable. Verse 11 says, "We do hear them speak in our tongues [or languages] the wonderful works of God." Second, the purpose for the gift is revealed, which was to communicate the Gospel. Third, when the spiritual gift of languages is operating, there is no need of interpretation. In each of the three instances where we see this gift operating—Acts 2:1-38; Acts 10:44-47; Acts 19:6—we see these three truths substantiated.

In Acts 2:9-11 sixteen distinct localities or ethnic groups are enumerated. In verse 14 we read, "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, . . . hearken to my words." Then, in verses 15-36 he preached the Gospel. Verse 37 tells us, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart" It is evident that his message was understandable to all sixteen dialects, yet Acts 4:13 informs us that Peter was "unlearned and ignorant" as far as formal education was concerned. This was the operation of a gift; Peter spoke, and they each heard him "speak in our tongues" (Acts 2:11). Acts 10:46 says, "For they heard them speak with tongues" Also, 1 Corinthians 14:18 states, "I speak with tongues more than ye all," but there is no scriptural evidence that Paul had the *gift* of languages. This reveals to us that one may have gained an ability through education to speak in languages they learned, but that is not the gift mentioned in our lesson text. It is obvious in the three accounts in Acts that it was the operation of this gift. It is beyond the scope of this study, but it should be mentioned that the "*unknown* tongue" spoken of in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 14, has nothing to do with this gift. It refers to the practice that was taking place in Corinth, of ones speaking in a language they knew but that was unknown to the hearers.

WHY WERE TONGUES USED?

The three instances where we see the employment of this gift were historic occasions. We read in Acts, Chapter 2, that the truth was introduced to "Jews, devout men" (verse 5); it was introduced to the Jewish nation. In the case at Cornelius' house, it was a confirmation that the new covenant incorporated "the Gentiles" (Acts 10:45; Acts 11:17-18). The Gospel reached the full spectrum of men when the twelve Samaritan disciples at Ephesus embraced the message "and prophesied" (Acts 19:1, 7), or the Twentieth Century New Testament says "to preach" (Acts 19:6). (Dr. Lawrence J. Chestnut in his book *True Bible Tongues*, devotes the entirety of Chapter 10 to what he denotes as the twelve Samaritans at Ephesus.) This gift is to be used to communicate by declaration or acceptance of the Gospel.

In Genesis 11:1-9, when men aspired to build their own way to "reach unto heaven" (verse 4), God said, ". . . let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech" (verse 7). A condition was created where "the LORD scattered them" (verse 8), and "the name of it [was] called Babel" (The Septuagint, "Confusion"). In the three instances we are studying of first century civilization embracing truth, we see a return to "that which was from the beginning" (1 John 1:1). Through the Gospel and its acceptance, men from "every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5) were brought back into unity and were able to understand one another by the operation of this spiritual gift. This is why it occurred on three occasions and to three distinct groups: the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Samaritans (a mixed race of Jew and Gentile). These three accounts substantiate the truth of Acts 10:35, which reads, "But in *every nation* he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

Yet today, if a language barrier exists and impairs the ability to communicate the Gospel, this gift can be a "manifestation of the Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:7) to enable the speaker to preach in a language previously unknown to him and to communicate the Gospel. It still acts as a confirmation of the Word (Mark 16:17-20).

INTERPRETATION

First Corinthians 12:10 also speaks of the gift of "the interpretation of tongues." Again, this is one of the spiritual gifts spoken of in this chapter. First Corinthians, Chapter 14, speaks of an "interpreter" (verse 28) and of "let[ting] one interpret" (verse 27), but that does not necessarily indicate a spiritual gift. One may be able to interpret a language because of his familiarity with it or because of educational training. This "interpretation" mentioned in our text is a gift. The word *interpretation* in our text is **hermeneia** in the Greek language and means "translation." **Hermeneia** comes from the Greek word **Hermes**, the Greek name of the pagan god Mercury, who was regarded as the messenger of the gods. It denotes "to explain" and is used for explaining the meaning of words in a different language" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*).

Though not a New Testament account, we see an example of interpretation in Daniel 5:25-28. In Daniel 5:5 "fingers of a man's hand . . . wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall." The wise men of Babylon "could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation" (Daniel 5:8). The ministers in spiritual Babylon still cannot read the Word and understand its message yet today. But Daniel had "an excellent spirit" (Daniel 5:12), and he interpreted the message of truth (Daniel 5:26-28).

The purpose of the New Testament gift of interpretation is to make the truth understandable to the masses when it is sent in a language they do not understand. Today one may travel to foreign soil to encourage a missionary work but be unable to speak their language and not have the gift of languages. In those cases the Lord will use one with the gift of interpretation so that God's Word may be understood. These gifts are needed yet today. The field is still the world (Matthew 13:38), and the commission is still, "Go ye into all the world" (Mark 16:15). As long as there are language barriers, there will be a need for the operation of these gifts.

CHAPTER 8

MINISTRY AND HELPS

Romans 12:7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

We have completed our study of the gifts enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; however, there are additional gifts mentioned in Romans 12:6-8 and in 1 Corinthians 12:28 that warrant our consideration. Romans 12:7 tells us, "Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering." And a small but very important word is inserted in our companion text: "helps." So in this chapter we want to examine these gifts of *ministry* and *helps*.

WHAT IS HELPS?

The word *helps* is a very small word, yet it fills a very large need in and amongst the Christian community. In the original Greek the word for "helps" is **antilepsis**. It is a compound word, composed from two root words: **anti**, which means "in exchange," and **lambano**, which means "to take, lay hold of, so as to support." *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* tells us it is "one of the ministrations of the local church, by way of rendering assistance, perhaps especially of help ministered to the weak and needy." So it is one, according to the semantics of the word, who takes or lays hold of a burden to exchange his time and efforts to help and support others. *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* defines **antilepsis** as "one who aids and assists." This is a very important gift in any locality. Those who are called "continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4) cannot give the due devotion and attention to those spiritual functions if they are distracted by "the daily ministration" (Acts 6:1) or "the daily service" (The Emphatic Diaglott).

Every pastor in every locality needs those who, though not perhaps called to preach per se or maybe even to teach a class on a regular basis, feel the burden for and receive the gift of "helps." These may work with the outcasts in a community, prepare meals at the time of a funeral, or minister to sick or needy saints. The corresponding verb to the word **antilepsis** is in the following passages: Acts 20:35, "support the weak"; 1 Timothy 6:2, "do them service"; and Luke 1:54, "holpen [helped] his servant." For the successful operation of the church in any community, it is necessary for this gift to be operating. Without this gift it appears to those observing that, though an excellent biblical message is preached, it is poorly translated into practical service to reach the level where many human needs reside.

EXAMPLES OF HELPERS

Many times we marvel at the great Gospel work wrought by the Apostle Paul. We read of his great accomplishments, and we stand in awe at the depth and divinity of his writings, but we must not lose sight of the fact that for him to be able to do those many things, he had to have a great host of helpers. Acts 21:8 speaks of "we that were of Paul's company." For a pastor to devote his attention to "prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4), or for an evangelist to travel to a locality and spend time in the prayer closet and study, there needs to be a "company" who feels a burden and has a gift to step up and perform other functions and fill other needs. Paul was blessed with such helpers.

In Romans 16:3 Paul penned, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus." In Romans 16:9 Paul said, "Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ." In 1 Corinthians 16:15 he spoke of "the house of Stephanas . . . that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." *The Amplified Bible* renders it, ". . . how they have consecrated and devoted themselves to the service of the saints (God's people)." Another rendering says, "They have laid themselves out to be of help to Christ's people." Then in 1 Corinthians 16:16 Paul made a startling statement: "That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth." The Amplified Bible makes this pronouncement clearer when it says, "I urge you to pay all deference to such leaders and to enlist under them and be subject to them . . ." Certainly, a local work that is deficient in those who are helpers is limited in the scope of outreach and service, not only to their own but to the community they are attempting to reach. This gift of "helps" has two facets: its physical aspect in supporting the temporal matters and its spiritual aspect in supporting the saints and the ministry.

It is obvious that many times these "helpers" also help in the spiritual aspect when the need arises. It is evident that Stephen labored in that aspect when he presented the truth to the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:1-53). It is also apparent that

Priscilla and Aquila engaged in more than the physical aspect as they took Apollos aside "and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:24-28). So one who has this gift of "helps" may also be one who fills a pulpit for an absent pastor or teaches a class in the absence of a teacher or who helps in other spiritual capacities that may need to be filled for a space of time.

We see the successful operation of this gift recorded in Acts 6:1-7. In Acts 6:2 we read that "the twelve . . . said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables." So the brethren appointed "seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost . . . over this business" (Acts 6:3). This leads us to our text in Romans 12:7, which says, "Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering."

WHAT IS THIS MINISTRY?

This clause of our text that speaks of "ministering" portrays the office that is filled by the one who has the gift of "helps." The Greek word for "ministry" here is **diakonia**. It is the same word used in Acts 6:1—ministration. It is also found in Romans 15:31 as "service," in 2 Corinthians 9:1 as "ministering to the saints," and in 2 Corinthians 9:12 as "administration of . . . service." But perhaps what gives the greatest insight is that it is a form of the word from which the English word *deacon* comes. When Paul set forth the requirements for the office of a deacon, in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, the word used for *deacon* (verse 8) is **diakonos**. So in our text in Romans 12:7, this "ministry," or **diakonia**, is actually the office of a deacon. The ones selected in Acts 6:3 are commonly referred to as the Seven Deacons.

When the Roman epistle says, "Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering," what does it mean? Some have mistakenly used this to say ones should just sit and wait for some event to occur that would propel them into a position. What is the Apostle actually saying in this phrase? One scholar makes this passage less vague when he renders it as, "If we have received the gift of practical service, let us use it in service." The word *wait* in our text is not a passive word but means "to look for." We are to look for opportunities to be of service. In the morning-time church, this office was an accepted and functional office. In Philippians 1:1 the Apostle wrote, "To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." For the Word of God to prosper in any locality, it is vital to have this office filled. We may call them by other titles, but regardless, we must have those who fill this role. Unless there are those who tend to this aspect of the work of God, the pastor will become overburdened, distracted, and too pressed for time to "feed the church of God" (Acts 20:28).

QUALIFICATIONS

Though it is vital that ones covet the gift of helps and fill the office of a deacon, it is also necessary to be aware that there are biblical requirements and there is a reason for them. The reason is that these people may well be the most visible examples in the community they are attempting to win. Hence they should be examples of the message and truth that is preached. Second Timothy 2:6 says, "The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits." If those who have this gift and fill this office indeed meet the biblical qualifications, they can have "great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 3:13). As Stephen the deacon, they can be effective in such a manner that people are not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which they speak (Acts 6:10). There is a great need in every locality for ones to desire to have the gift of helps and serve in practical service and be willing to engage in spiritual services whenever it is needed.

EXHORTETH AND GIVETH

Romans 12:8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

In this chapter we want to draw our focus in on two gifts specifically spoken of in our Scripture text: "he that exhorteth" and "he that giveth." We do not commonly think of these as gifts, but verse 6 says, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us . . ." It is also notable that verse 6 begins this particular topic of gifts, and verses 6-8 are all one sentence, teaching us that the components of these verses are part of a whole. They are all dealing with the same tenor of thought—the gifts.

EXHORTATION

It is well to be aware that, as a gift, this particular ability transcends a specific office. In 2 Timothy 4:2 Timothy was admonished to "exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine," and in verse 5 he was instructed to "do the work of an evangelist." Part of "the work of an evangelist" is to "exhort." Acts 11:22-23 tells us that "Barnabas . . . exhorted them all," and Acts 13:1 mentions "teachers; as Barnabas." (We know he was not one of the "prophets" (Acts 13:1), because Acts 11:27 says, "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch." Barnabas was already at Antioch, and his role was that he "taught much people" (Acts 11:26). So we see that evangelists exhort and teachers exhort.

In 1 Peter 5:1 Peter said, "The elders which are among you I exhort . . .," and 1 Peter 1:1 styles him as "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ." The ability to exhort works through many offices. It is obviously an important gift for the Apostle Paul admonished the young minister, Timothy, to "give attendance . . . to exhortation" (1 Timothy 4:13).

WHAT IS EXHORTATION?

Our text says, "Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation." What is "exhortation"? The Greek word for "exhorteth" (a verb) is **parakaleo**. According to *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, it means "to encourage, comfort, console." *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* says "to console, to encourage and strengthen by consolation, to comfort." It is obvious this was one of the gifts Barnabas possessed. Acts 4:36 refers to him as "The son of consolation," or The Expanded Greek Translation of the New Testament renders it as "the son of encouragement."

The words **parakaleo** (exhorteth) and **paraklesis** (exhortation) are akin to the word **parakletos**, which is used for the Holy Spirit, who is called "the Comforter" (John 14:26). The word that is rendered in our text as "exhorteth" is translated "comforted" in Matthew 2:18, Matthew 5:4, and 2 Corinthians 1:4, as well as in many other Scriptures; and as "comforteth" in 2 Corinthians 1:4. This portrays at least a couple of very vital truths to us. One, that though one may be an apostle, an evangelist, or a teacher, and be entrusted with great abilities or insights, he must never lose sight of the fact that he is dealing with human creatures who have feelings and who are emotional and often irrational beings who may need to be encouraged and consoled and comforted from time to time.

It also portrays a deeper truth. In the Greek language the word "Comforter" is **parakletos**, but in Latin it is **fortis**, from which our English word *fortify* comes. It means "to make brave, to strengthen." Truly anointed exhortation consoles and comforts by sending inspiration that strengthens ones, makes them brave, and assures them that through the Holy Spirit they have sufficient to continue victoriously. Each message and each lesson should be delivered with words that lift and inspire to bravery in this "good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12).

THE GIFT OF GIVING

The second phrase of our lesson text enjoins, "he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity." What an unusual gift! The Greek word for "giveth" is **metadidomi** and means "share" or "impart." It is the same word that is used in Romans 1:11, which says, ". . . that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift . . ." It is also translated in this manner in Luke 3:11 and 1 Thessalonians 2:8. Here is a portrayal of a gift that ones have where they are willing to impart, or share, that with which they have been entrusted for the work of the Gospel. This goes from the most basic "distributing to the necessity of saints" (Roman 12:13; see also 1 Corinthians 9:1-15) to selling of one's excess to provide funds to support

the ministry in the propagation of the Gospel. Acts 4:32 tells us, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things [plural] which he possessed was his own." Verse 34 says, "For as many ['of them that believed'; verse 32] as were possessors of lands [plural] or houses [plural] sold them," and verse 35 says they "laid them down at the apostles' feet." Certainly, not all who "believed" (verse 32) had the gift of giving, but this text is a vital portrayal of the principle that lies behind Christian giving.

This passage in Acts is one that many times has been viewed improperly. Notice that these believers were possessors "of lands or houses" (verse 34) in the plural. Some who were saved were, no doubt, more financially endowed than others. Romans 12:1 tells us the Lord only asks for "your reasonable service." These were not being asked or compelled to sell their homes. Rather, those who had "lands" or "houses" (plural) sold of their excess with which they had been blessed and brought it to the Apostles for distribution. It is evident that saints still owned homes from several other Scriptures written subsequently to this. (See Acts 12:12; Acts 21:8; Acts 28:30; Romans 16:5; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2 and 22.)

Let us look closer at this "distribution." Many people are of the impression that the primitive church lived in a communal setting, having sold everything they had, and were fed and kept by the church. This is an erroneous conception of what actually occurred. Acts 5:1 clarifies it: "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession." Why were they doing this? Acts 4:33 says, "And with great power gave the *apostles* witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all [the apostles]." Verse 34 says, "Neither was there any among them [who has he been speaking of? the Apostles] that lacked [why?]; for as many as were possessors . . . sold . . . and brought the prices of the things that were sold." Verse 35 tells us where they brought it: "And laid them down at the apostles' feet." They were selling of their excess to provide funds to supply the Apostles so that they could carry the Gospel forth. In our day we have seen ones who have felt led to sell farms or other possessions and give to support mission fields and missionaries. This is a very needful gift in the work of God. No doubt the work of God could advance at a much quicker pace if those who were capable would support apostles going forth, sowing the seed, and planting new congregations. No doubt, evangelists could go on the field if they were enabled financially to where they did not feel compelled to hold secular jobs to support their families.

Where one may be called to fill one of the offices of "apostles . . . prophets . . . evangelists" (Ephesians 4:11), another, who has been blessed with the wherewithal to do so, may be given this gift of giving to provide the means so that one can be financially able to labor in the field. Today many small congregations that may need to be evangelized and encouraged cannot afford to call, and the evangelist cannot afford to go, due to financial constraints. There is a great need for "he that giveth" to provide support for the furtherance of the Gospel. Our text says, "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity," or with honesty of aim, purpose, integrity, without any mixture of a selfish purpose. When one gives, it should be as unto the Lord. There is, I repeat, a great need today for "he that giveth."

RULETH AND GOVERNMENTS

Romans 12:8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Next, let us consider two gifts that are under great assault from the enemy of souls. They are absolutely essential to the divine operation of the New Testament church. In Romans 12:8 the inspired penman admonished, "he that ruleth, with diligence." In the companion text in 1 Corinthians 12:28 he speaks of "governments." In Matthew 24:12 Jesus prophesied of a time when "because iniquity [the Greek word **anomia**, which means 'contempt and violation of the law'] shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." We live in a time when there are those who are contemptuous of people in authority and who "despise government" (2 Peter 2:10). So it is vitally necessary to understand the role these gifts play in the theocratic governance of the church.

WHAT IS MEANT BY "RULETH"?

When the sacred writer employed the term "ruleth" in the clause "he that ruleth" (Romans 12:8), what does this term actually mean? The Greek word in this passage is **proistemi**, and according to *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, it means "to set on place before; to set over; to be over . . . preside over." *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* says "to set over, appoint with authority." It is the same Greek word used in 1 Thessalonians 5:12, which reads, ". . . know them which labour among you, and are over you [**proistemi**] in the Lord . . ." It is also employed in 1 Timothy 5:17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour." However, there is another way that it is used that gives us an insight as to one of the offices for which this gift is very beneficial. This same Greek word is rendered "maintain" in both Titus 3:8 and Titus 3:14.

God is a God of order. From the most vast galaxies to the most minute atoms and molecular structures, everything of divine creation is of the most perfect order. Should the church, the apex of His creation, "the apple of his eye" (Zechariah 2:8), be any less so? Certainly not! God is infinitely a God of order; He "is not the author of confusion" (1 Corinthians 14:33). He desires that "all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). For this to be so, there must be people whom God gifts and calls to keep the order. In the face of conflicting ideas and a very real enemy who is ever trying to hinder and stymie the church, there must be those who have authority. First, this gift to rule or "be over" with "authority" is befitting to an apostle. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians: "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers [or one rendering says 'you have only one father']: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me" (1 Corinthians 4:15-16). One who fathers, or establishes, a work in truth does the work of an apostle and has an authority that goes with that calling. The authority of an apostle is wider than a particular locality. In 2 Corinthians 11:28 Paul mentioned "that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (Greek, *congregations*). One rendering says, "I have the daily burden of responsibility." We see this working very well in the foreign fields.

The next office for which this gift is necessary is a pastor. Notice that one meaning of the Greek word **proistemi** is "maintain." Once a work is established, there must be someone qualified and capable to oversee that work and to maintain order. Yes, growth is important, but maintenance is important as well. A pastor is to maintain that which the apostle started and to carry the work on. In order for divine order to function as intended, those in positions of oversight need to be honored and obeyed. (See Hebrews 13:7 and Hebrews 13:17.) Submitting to divinely-appointed authority is essential for the operation of theocratic government.

GOVERNMENTS

In tandem with the gift of "ruleth," or oversight, is what Paul mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:28 as "governments." This word in the Greek is **kubernesis** and does not appear anywhere else in the New Testament. It is a unique word and literally means "to steer," as in the pilotage of a ship. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* defined it as "those who act as guides in a local church." A pilot is not the captain of the ship nor is he responsible for its voyage; but when the ship reaches a certain portion of the water, the pilot performs a special function. It is obvious from the

wording in verse 28 that this mention of "governments" is distinct from "apostles . . . prophets . . . teachers." *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* defines the word as "office of a . . . director." One translation says "administrator" and another "manager." One scholar says that "Paul is referring to the people who carry out administration of the church." These are those who hold special areas of authority in a local congregation. They work under the auspices of the pastor. We might call these people Sunday school superintendents, song leaders or music directors, choir directors, and youth leaders. This could also encompass radio ministers, nursing home visitation coordinators, or any area of the work of God that has a particular function or ministry and requires a specific gift, burden, and oversight.

Notice that this term "governments" is in the plural. Every congregation needs several of these types of leaders. Acts 20:28 lets us know that pastors, those who have the oversight ("the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers"), have the responsibility and authority to determine, under divine direction, whom they "may appoint over" (Acts 6:3) each area of "governments" or responsibility in a congregation.

SUBMISSION

For the work of God to function as the Lord desires, we must submit to those in the various positions of authority. Without authority there would be chaos. To have order there must be people in authority. Any thinking person will come to conclusions and form opinions. To do so is totally natural. Where it becomes dangerous is when one airs opinions that are contrary to the leaders. Then it can become sowing "discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:19), one of the things that the Lord hates (Proverbs 6:16). A leader may not always move as we think he or she should or make the decision we feel should be made. This is where submission comes into focus. As long as we agree, there is no need to practice submission; submission comes into focus when we disagree. We must hold our peace and yield to the will and direction of the leader to be submissive. The work of God is too vast and has too many facets for the pastor to personally oversee every area. Therefore, he must place leaders in positions to oversee specific areas of the work. Today, spirits are working that want to wreak havoc in the work of God. They may not contest a pastor personally or directly but will raise up and contest one of these other leaders. We need to be "easy to be intreated" (James 3:17). Consider the welfare of the body as a whole and submit for the work's sake.

CONCLUSION

These gifts, "ruleth" and "governments," are vital to the proper operation of the church. "He that ruleth" is dealing with the wider authority exercised in conjunction with the office of an apostle or pastor. But "governments" is extremely important to the operation of a successful local work. To cooperate with these is to work for the common cause, while to work against these is to work against Christ and the ministries of His body.

CHAPTER 11

APOSTLES AND EVANGELISTS

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

We have concluded our study of spiritual gifts, with the exception of "teaching" (Romans 12:7), which we shall consider in Chapter 12. We now begin the aspect of our study where we closely consider the various offices or particular ministerial positions in the body of Christ. In this chapter we want to examine the offices of apostles and evangelists. (We dealt with the office of prophets in Chapter 5.) As we begin to consider these offices, it is well to be reminded that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Romans 11:29). The Expanded Greek Translation of the New Testament renders it, "For the gifts in grace and the calling of God are with respect to a change of mind irrevocable." God has never changed His mind on the gifts or offices necessary to operate the church. Isaiah 46:10 tells us that He is the One "declaring the end from the beginning."

Psalms 147:5 says that "his understanding is infinite." God, in His infinite foreknowledge, knew what the church would need before He instituted it. We bring these Scriptures to our remembrance because there are religious advocates all about us who claim the office of an apostle vanished with the first century. However, all it takes is viewing our text, and we can clearly see that this is not so. If apostles are obsolete, then so are teachers, evangelists and pastors, for these are all listed in the same passages. We need to drop such sectarian thinking and realize this office is as much for the twenty-first century as it was for the first century. It shall be needed as long as time stands and the church is in operation in the world.

WHAT IS AN OFFICE?

In Romans 11:13 Paul penned, "I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." In Romans 12:4 he said, ". . . all members have not the same office." First Timothy 3:1 speaks of the "office of a bishop," and 1 Timothy 3:10 mentions the "office of a deacon." So we can see that the word *office* is frequently employed. What does this term mean? In Romans 12:4 the Greek word for "office" is **praxis**, which comes from **prasso**, which means to "perform repeatedly or habitually." Thus **praxis** is "a functional office," a role that one fills repeatedly or habitually. The gifts are the abilities that equip one to fill the various roles or offices in the church, and the office is that function or role one fills.

APOSTLES

As we look at this particular office, notice that in each roster, or listing, "apostles" is mentioned first. Paul made it a point in 1 Corinthians 12:28, which says, "And God hath set some in the church, *first* apostles . . ." In Ephesians 4:11 it is the same: "And he gave some, apostles." Why are apostles listed first? Because without the operation of this office there is no need, no place, for the others to function. Let us lay aside some erroneous conceptions entertained by some. As already mentioned, this office is as permanent as those recorded with it: "evangelists . . . pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11). Additionally, even in the morning-time church, the office was wider than just the original twelve. Paul was not of the twelve, and it is very obvious that he was an Apostle (Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1) and "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Corinthians 11:5). There were others as well. Not only was Barnabas a teacher, but Acts 14:14 tells us he was an Apostle as well. James, the brother of the Lord, was an Apostle (Galatians 1:19). Others were named as Apostles, such as: "Andronicus and Junia . . . who are of note among the apostles" (Romans 16:7); "Silvanus, and Timotheus" (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2:6). So we can see it was an office that went beyond the initial twelve and an office that is to be functional yet today.

WHAT IS AN APOSTLE?

When we talk about "apostles," what does this term actually mean? In Hebrews 3:1, when the Hebrew writer spoke of Christ, he not only referred to Him as the "High Priest of our profession," but he employed another term we seldom

consider. He said, "Consider the *Apostle* and High Priest." What does this term *apostle* mean? The Greek word for *apostle* in every New Testament text (except one where it speaks of "false apostles"; 2 Corinthians 11:13), is the word **apostolos**. This word is formed from two components: "**apo**" (from) and "**stello**" (to send). It means "one sent forth" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*). Our Lord is referred to as "the Apostle" (Hebrews 3:1) because He was the first "one sent forth."

Galatians 4:4 tells us "God sent forth his Son." This word does not only mean "one sent forth" but also "one sent as a messenger or agent, the bearer of a commission" (*New Testament Greek Analytical Lexicon*). Here we begin to gain an insight to this office. The apostles have a special call to fulfill the great commission: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

Let us "consider the Apostle . . . Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1) for a moment. He was "one sent forth." What did He do? In Matthew 13:3 we read, "Behold, a sower went forth to sow," and we are told, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man" (Matthew 13:37). So, Christ is likened to "a sower," one who sows or plants. Then, in Matthew 16:18, He is styled as a builder: "I will build my church." He was "the Apostle," the initial sower and builder. Now consider what Paul said: "I have planted" (1 Corinthians 3:6), and "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation" (1 Corinthians 3:10). To the Corinthian church Paul said, "I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Corinthians 4:15). The work of an apostle is a divine call to go forth and sow the seed of the Word, to plant, raise up, and build new congregations of the true church. If there was ever a day that we needed this office functioning, it is today. Many people over our land have not heard truth in so long that the ground is almost once again virgin soil and ripe for the precious seed of truth.

EVANGELISTS

Our text in Ephesians continues, "And he gave some . . . evangelists." We should be reminded that to fill any one of these offices requires a divine call. Paul said in Galatians 1:1 that he was in his office "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ." In our text we see the specific office of "evangelists" mentioned. Luke referred to "Philip the evangelist" in Acts 21:8. It might also be mentioned that just as one may be endowed with several gifts, so may one fill more than one office. Barnabas was both an apostle (Acts 14:14) and a teacher (Acts 13:1; Acts 11:25-26). But what is the office of an evangelist? The word *evangelist* comes from the Greek word **euangelistes**; it comes from **EU-well** and **aggelos** ("a messenger") and means "one who announces glad tidings, an evangelist, a preacher of the Gospel" (*New Testament Analytical Greek Lexicon*). We can look at the work of Philip in Acts, Chapter 8, where it says he "preached Christ unto them" (verse 5). We see that he held a revival effort in Samaria and predominantly preached salvation. When he was told by the angel to "go toward the south . . . unto Gaza" (verse 26), he preached unto him [the Ethiopian eunuch] Jesus" (verse 35). Revival broke out in Samaria and to actually establish a new work there, apostles were sent down (verse 14). One who truly has the ability to fill the office of evangelist is one who has a special ability to preach the salvation message and to deal with the lost and the backsliders. Once a work is established in a locality, the apostle or pastor may feel burdened to have an evangelist come in so that more people may be moved to salvation. In our day we loosely call anyone who holds a meeting an evangelist, but in the truest biblical sense, it is a specific calling and a specific office. Every minister should be able to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:5), though it may not be the predominant office he is called to fill. There may be brethren who are evangelists who have the particular calling of evangelism; perhaps they may not deal with just initial salvation, but rather preach soul-searching messages of things that affect our salvation. It is a ministry that focuses mainly on the individual experience. This is an office that is broader than a local work. Those called to be "apostles . . . evangelists" must deny themselves and be willing to spend most of their time enduring the rigors of the field, and they should be highly regarded for doing so. Both are very needed in the work of the church.

PASTORS AND TEACHERS

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

Romans 12:7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching.

Our Scripture text in Ephesians lists five distinct ministerial offices. Each of these is vital "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12). Without the operation of each of these offices, "the work of the ministry" is incomplete, "the perfecting of the saints" will be deficient, and the body will lack edification, or the building up, the Lord ordained. In this chapter we want to consider the last two offices mentioned in Ephesians 4:11—"pastors and teachers." There are those who question whether "teachers" is a separate office or merely a part of the pastoral role. Yes, one of the qualifications of a bishop, or pastor, is that he must be "apt to teach" (1 Timothy 3:2), but that is no different than being admonished to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:5). To do so does not make one an evangelist, nor does being "apt to teach" make one a teacher. It is evident from our companion text in 1 Corinthians 12:28-29 that the office of "teachers" is a distinct office. Verse 28 clearly says "thirdly teachers," and in verse 29 the question is posed, "Are all teachers?" The correct reading of Ephesians 4:11 ("some, pastors and teachers") is as one scholar rendered it: "others to be evangelists, or pastors, or teachers." So these are two distinct ministerial offices.

PASTORS

This listing of ministerial offices includes the one with which, perhaps, we are the most familiar: "pastors." Though we are most familiar with this word and commonly use it, the word translated as "pastors" appears only one time in the entirety of the New Testament, and that is in this text. The particular Greek word translated as "pastors" in our text appears eighteen times in the New Testament, and with the exception of Ephesians 4:11, it is translated every time as "shepherd" or "shepherds." The Greek word is **poimen**. This word literally means "a shepherd, one who tends herds or flocks." Here we begin to gain an insight to this particular office. It is one whose primary responsibility is the protective care and feeding of a local flock. In John 10:16 Jesus referred to the church as "one fold," but this fold is comprised of many local congregations. Paul admonished "the elders of the church" (Acts 20:17) to "take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God" (Acts 20:28). Peter reiterated this same truth when he enjoined "the elders" (1 Peter 5:1) to "feed the flock of God" (1 Peter 5:2) and be "ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3). So the primary responsibility of a pastor is to provide an example, care and feeding to the flock of God.

The religious world makes great distinction and confusion of the terms "bishop," "overseer," and "elder." Let us consider these terms. In 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9 are recorded the qualifications of a "bishop." These qualifications are beyond the scope of our study; however, let me say that "if a man desire the office of a bishop" (1 Timothy 3:1), he should give prayerful consideration to these biblical requirements. Notice that in Titus 1:5 Paul instructed Titus to "ordain *elders* in every city," and then in verse 7 he said, "For a *bishop* must be blameless." Here it is evident that he was speaking of the same person. The word in the Greek for "elders" is **presbuteros**. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* tells us that it is a word that refers to "rank." This is a general term that refers to all ministers. In Titus we see that "bishops" were elders. In 1 Peter 5:1 Peter declared himself to be an "elder." Peter was also an "apostle" (2 Peter 1:1). So "elder" is a "term of rank" (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*) that applies to all ministers. The term "bishop" (1 Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:7) comes from the Greek word **episkopos** and means "officer in general charge of a church . . . overseer" (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*). This is nothing more than the office of a pastor. The same Greek word, **episkopos**, is translated as "overseers" in Acts 20:28. The office of a pastor has the general charge, or oversight, of a local congregation. He is responsible to serve as an example, to provide its care and general oversight, and to "feed the flock of God" (1 Peter 5:2).

"HE THAT TEACHETH"

Romans 12:7 mentions a specific gift that we want to consider in conjunction with this study. The latter portion of this verse says "or he that teacheth, on teaching." This verse lets us know that "teaching" is a specific gift. One noted biblical scholar said this: "The message of Christ needs not only to be proclaimed; it needs also to be explained. . . . Exhortation and invitation without a background of teaching are empty things." Teaching is a specific gift. The Greek word for "teacheth" is **didasko** and means "to explain, expound." This is a special ability to take that which was previously not understood and make it understandable. This is a keen ability to expound the Scriptures and make even deep truths understandable. A good example of the definition of Bible teaching is found in Nehemiah 8:8. It says, "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." The Septuagint renders it, "Esoras taught and enforced it with a knowledge of the Lord so that the people gained understanding by the reading."

Whenever Israel went "for a long season . . . without a teaching priest" (2 Chronicles 15:3), they ended up in a pitiful condition. This gift of "teaching" enables one to fill a very vital role in the Kingdom of God. Teaching was such a major portion of Christ's ministry (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 21:23; Mark 6:6; Luke 5:17; 13:10; 13:22) that Nicodemus, one who was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, said, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God" (John 3:2). Why? Because He could explain spiritual truths and the Scriptures as no one had previously. What was Jesus able to do? Look at the words of the brethren on the road to Emmaus: "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32). The Amplified Bible renders it, ". . . as he opened and explained to us [the sense of] the Scriptures?" Luke 24:45 tells us, "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." This is the God-given gift of teaching.

TEACHERS

In 1 Corinthians 12:28-29 and Ephesians 4:11 we read of the distinct office of "teachers." This is as much a ministerial office as apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors. Acts 13:1 tells us, "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen . . . and Saul." Here we clearly see that "teachers" was a functional office in the morning time. Barnabas was a "teacher" (Acts 11:25-26; Acts 15:35), as very possibly was Apollos (Acts 18:28). This office is vitally important today. In the first century it was important because, as Gentiles came into the church, they were totally unfamiliar with the Old Testament precepts and prophesies upon which the New Testament was premised. In our day, truth has been so obscured by the confusion and false teaching in the dark and cloudy day of Babylon that men find truth as foreign to their thinking and understanding as the first century Gentiles did. This office is vitally needed to pierce through this great host of false religious teachings and heretical interpretations and explain the truth of the Scriptures. Men can never properly respond to truth until they understand it. There is a great need in this day for a teaching ministry, ministers whose gift and calling is to teach, explain, and expound the Scriptures. As one well-known minister stated, "What is needed is less pounding and more *expounding*."

DESIRING GIFTS AND EVERY JOINT SUPPLIETH

1 Corinthians 12:31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

1 Corinthians 14:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

In our study of spiritual gifts, it has been our hope that not only have "the eyes of your understanding . . . [been] enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18) concerning these biblical truths, but that it has created a desire for these gifts as well. Also, it might be well to clarify that, though these gifts prepare and equip ones to fill ministerial offices, certainly, one may have a gift and not specifically receive a call to the ministry. There are good saints who have, for example, "discerning of spirits" (1 Corinthians 12:10) but yet do not have a call to the ministry. Please notice at the conclusion of the listing of gifts in the Corinthian letter that the sacred writer said, "But covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31). The Amplified Bible renders it, "But earnestly desire and zealously cultivate the greatest and best—the higher [gifts] and the [graces]." In 1 Corinthians 14:1 we are admonished to "desire spiritual gifts." Again, The Amplified Bible says to "earnestly desire and cultivate the spiritual endowments." First Timothy 3:1 says, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." Note that the common word in each of these passages is *desire*. For truth to be perpetuated down throughout the ages, these gifts must continue as men pass off the stage of action. For that to be accomplished, the Lord seeks to create a desire to where ones covet, desire, and pray, seeking those gifts. As Jesus tarries and time passes, gifted men who fill various offices will step off the stage of action. If the Lord has His perfect will, when an Elijah is taken, there will be an Elisha ready for that office.

PURPOSES OF THE OFFICES

In Ephesians 4:11-16 we see not only the listing of the various offices in the church but what they accomplish as well. Notice that verse 10 ends with a period, and verse 11 starts a new sentence. The sentence begun in verse 11 does not conclude until the end of verse 16. This teaches us that each of these verses are a part of the whole, all dealing with a common vein of truth. Verse 11 specifically lists the offices of the ministry; then in continuance verse 12 says, "For the perfecting [complete qualification; The Emphatic Diaglott] of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Here are three of the purposes of the offices. Without the gifts and the particular aspect that each one of these offices brings to the ministry, our "perfecting" or being "brought to completion" would be deficient.

Teaching without evangelism, for instance, could fill our minds with truth yet leave our hearts unstirred, lukewarm, or indifferent. Evangelism without teaching could produce a shallow people. Without apostleship we would think only of maintaining what we have without thought of sowing the seed in new areas. We need each of the offices "for the perfecting of the saints." It takes the operation of each of the offices to do "the work of the ministry." The ministry is not any one of these offices but a composite of them all.

The third purpose in verse 12 is that "the body of Christ" (the church; Colossians 1:18) be edified (one rendering says "building up"). These things cannot be accomplished unless "every joint supplieth" (verse 16) his or her part. The Apostle Paul, when speaking of the various gifts and members, said all "are necessary" (1 Corinthians 12:22).

MORE PURPOSES

In Ephesians 4:12 three purposes are enumerated, showing the vital importance of the functioning of the offices

mentioned in verse 11. In verses 13-14 four more purposes are listed, making a total of seven, the biblical number of perfection. Verse 13 tells us, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith . . ." This teaches us that as these ministerial offices "speak the same thing, and . . . [are] perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10) and "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27), it is a convincing agent, and honest hearts will "come in the unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13).

When all the various abilities and offices "lift up the voice . . . together" and "see eye to eye" (Isaiah 52:8), preaching and teaching the Bible message, it will work a unifying work. Not only will it bring the saints together, not only will it call them out of Babylon (religious confusion; Revelation 18:4), but it will bring them to "the knowledge of the Son of God (Ephesians 4:13). What does this mean? The Apostle was speaking of those who were already saved. What type of knowledge is this? The Greek word here is **epignosis** and means "full discernment, acknowledgment." This tells us that it takes the operation of each of these ministries for us to have a full discernment and acknowledgment of all the aspects of truth. We can only discern prophetic truth when the prophet heralds it in our hearing. We can only come to "the knowledge . . . the Son of God" (verse 13) desires that we have on some obscure Scripture when the teacher explains it. We can only see how to deal with a perplexing problem when the shepherd takes the pastoral staff and guides us. We discern or acknowledge truth when it is set before us by the officer who has the gift.

The sixth purpose spoken of in verse 13 is closely related to the fifth. Paul wrote that we are to come "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Here Christian maturity is portrayed. This was what the Corinthians were robbing themselves of when they said, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas" (1 Corinthians 1:12). Each of those men had different gifts, and giving vent to a party spirit to where they were being moved to follow a particular minister that they preferred robbed them of the gifts and abilities the others had to help foster their spiritual maturity. Recognizing the importance and place of each gift permits the saints to allow each to help bring them to spiritual maturity. The Amplified Bible renders this portion of the verse as, "That [we might arrive] at really mature manhood (the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection), the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ and the completeness found in Him."

The seventh purpose is mentioned in verse 14, which says, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine . . ." The culmination of it all is stability and a steadfast experience.

EVERY JOINT

Verse 16 teaches us that when "every joint supplieth" its part, it is an "effectual working" and it "maketh increase of the body." It also edifies it. These verses, Ephesians 4:11-16, are all part of one sentence because they are conveying one central vein of truth, the truth that there are reasons behind these offices and that each is needed for the successful operation of the New Testament church. We have seen that this text holds forth at least seven distinct purposes for why "every joint" must supply its part. This is why the Apostle admonished us to "desire spiritual gifts." Without the operation of these gifts and offices, the church becomes deficient in what they would supply. May God help us to recognize the importance of every gift and office and to "covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31).

As we conclude this study, I pose the question that David asked in 1 Chronicles 29:5: "And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?" Are you willing to consecrate yourself and earnestly seek and desire to receive these gifts for the betterment of the church and its work in an unregenerate world? The future of the church begins today, and it could begin with you!