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THE NEW TESTAMENT SPIRITUAL GIFTS
AN EXEGETICAL STUDY

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary
Department of the New Testament

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Sacred Theology

by
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May 1944

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Alex H. Griesse

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Preface

In looking for a bibliography which might serve as a starting point in a study of spiritual gifts, the writer of this thesis found few works that dealt exclusively with a systematic treatment of the "charismata". The reason for this is obvious. The field is so extensive, so inexhaustible, that volumes might be written on each individual gift. Quite a number of books have been written on the subject of the Holy Spirit, some of which are good, and some of which are not very sound theology. Most of these works also have extensive treatment on the spiritual gifts, though not always complete.

The purpose of this treatise is, first of all, on the basis of Scripture, carefully to define the various gifts as they are listed in Romans 12, I Corinthians 12-14, and Ephesians 4; at the same time to note concrete examples of these gifts throughout the New Testament writings; secondly, to call attention to a few significant trends in history pertaining directly or indirectly to one or more of the spiritually gifts; and, finally, to state the basic principles which should guide us in our present day evaluation of spiritual gifts.

The chapters on the importance and present day possibilities of spiritual gifts are confessedly not as complete as they were at first intended to be. Due to a lack of practical experience the writer feels unqualified for the present to go into the subject any further than has been attempted.

THE NEW TESTAMENT SPIRITUAL GIFTS

I. EVIDENCES OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

It is the purpose of this paper to treat the New Testament gifts under the following heads: first, those which are strictly miraculous, and secondly, those which are related to knowledge and theology and administration. Under the former head I shall treat these spiritual gifts:

- Speaking with Tongues
- Interpretation of Tongues
- Inspired Prophetic Discourse
- Other miraculous activities

The latter group pertaining to knowledge and theology I shall treat in the following order:

- Wisdom and Knowledge
- Preaching and Teaching
- Charity Endeavors
- Government
- Discerning of Spirits

Mention of the spiritual gifts listed occurs again and again in the New Testament writings. Acts, Romans and Corinthians are the main sources to be considered. Starting with the outpouring of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, I shall endeavor to bring out the nature, the importance, and the present day possibilities of these gifts of the New Testament Church.

But before considering their use in the New Testament times, the question arises as to whether these gifts were found at all in the Old Testament times. Many of them were.

In the Old Testament there are no evidences of the gift of speaking with tongues according to the New Testament connotation.

What language Satan employed to beguile men into sin is unknown. Through the godless pride of men that followed, a confusion of tongues ~~—~~ resulted. God thereafter made use of the language of His chosen people in the Old Testament to reveal His Word of grace. In it we find frequent warnings against a misuse of the tongue.

There are numerous instances on the other hand of God using the tongues of men, especially the prophets' tongues, to speak His truth. In 2 Samuel 23, 2 David confesses: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His Word was upon my tongue." The tongue was regarded as an instrument to sing Psalms unto the most High and to honor Him for the works of His creation. Psalm 19, 3 exults: "There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." In one extraordinary case the tongue of an animal was used to reprove the false Balaam. There are instances of prophets thrown into a state of blended fear and wonder before the realization of the presence of God. But the sudden ability to use a foreign language and the gift of ecstatic speech worked in an individual by the Holy Spirit, which will be described in further detail in the following pages, comes into characteristic prominence first in New Testament times, after the Messiah had appeared in the flesh.

Among the New Testament spiritual gifts was the of interpretation of tongues. This reminds us that the Old Testament speaks frequently of the interpretation of dreams. The account of Daniel and the one of Joseph are interesting parallels in this respect. Daniel in turn interpreted the obscure hand writing upon the wall. Thus the way in which God revealed Himself in the Old Testament times required interpretation. The fact that the gift of inter-

pretation was present to a limited extent is evident. There was, however, no gift corresponding to the New Testament gift of interpretation of tongues.

Inspired prophetic discourse, in the sense of foretelling, was frequent in the era preceding the Messiah. This fact is so obvious that we need not dwell upon it at great length. Moses, who prophesied of the greater Prophet, Christ, also expressed a desire at one time that all the people might prophesy, Numbers 11, 29. The Apostle Peter sums up very nicely the spiritual gift of the Old Testament prophets in I Peter 1, 10-12:

"Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

Thus the prophets of old did not use their gifts and talents independently, but the Holy Spirit was doing the thinking and the speaking and they were seeking to comprehend what He said. The meaning of their prophecy became fully evident after Christ had come.

The gift of miracles was also prominent in the Old Testament times. Jehovah invested His called servant Moses with the power to do things that were supernatural. All through their wanderings amid heathen peoples God similarly gave evidences of His power. We find Moses always giving the honor to God for these manifestations. When, on occasion, he went beyond God's prescription in performing a miracle, smiting a rock twice instead of merely speaking to it to

cause it to give forth water, he forfeited his chance of entering Canaan. God's ways and purposes in performing miracles were not to be trifled with.

The wicked conditions obtaining at the time of the prophets Elijah and Elisha caused God to manifest His power through them in defiance of all Baal-worship. It was a means also used by God to succour the distressed. We are told that when Elisha succeeded Elijah he asked for a double portion of the spirit of Elijah. From all outward appearances and evidences he did receive a special measure of God's grace especially also in performing miracles. Both Elijah and Solomon are good examples in the Old Testament of individuals eager to have the Holy Spirit make use of them as His instruments.

It may be said that of all the gifts related to knowledge and theology not one was lacking in the Old Testament. It is Solomon who figures prominently in regard to the gift of wisdom and knowledge. Given an opportunity of the Lord to choose some special gift, he wisely chose this one. The references we find in Proverbs to the Eternal Wisdom, "Chockma", have some of the highest and noblest thoughts in them ever penned. The knowledge, "da'ath", found in Prov. 1, 4; 2, 6; and 5, 2, connotes a thorough insight into the knowledge and wisdom of God which only a truly-wise man, that is a God-fearing man, possesses. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom", Prov. 1, 7. To know the covenant God, to know His name, His work, and to acknowledge Him, was the prime necessity of God's people. The Holy Spirit was ever at work

impressing this knowledge upon their hearts and minds through the Word and through the rituals of their worship. The Spirit-inspired prophets had to impress this fact upon them so repeatedly due to their inborn tendency of worshipping idols, and falling away from the true grace of God. Other passages where the knowledge of Jehovah is stressed are:

Psalms 9, 11; 36, 11; 87, 4; Job 18, 21; Proverbs 1, 7; 9, 10; I Samuel 2, 12; Isaiah 1, 3; 11, 2.9.; Jer. 2, 8; 9, 2-5; Daniel 11, 32; Hosea 4, 1; 4, 6; 6, 6.

Prophecy in the sense of forth-telling in the Old Testament is practically the equivalent of the preaching and teaching carried on in the New Testament times. That such prophecy was a special gift of the Holy Spirit can be proved from the most remarkable incident in connection with the life of King Saul. Right after being anointed by Samuel as king; he met a company of prophets with musical instruments and was seized by the Spirit of God to utter such a stream of lofty discourse, that the people who knew him as the son of Kish asked, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" I Kings 10, 5-12. But once later in the life of Saul, at a time when he was seeking to kill David, he again was overcome in an extraordinary manner by the Spirit of God to prophesy, I Kings 19, 23-24. The length and the vehemence of the Holy Spirit's influence, which Saul experienced was to indicate that his persecution of David was an act contrary to the Spirit of Jehovah and if persisted in would lead to disastrous results.¹

Another instance of the Holy Spirit's work in the preaching

1. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary, O. T., Vol.1, p. 489.

of the Old Testament prophets is recorded in Nehemiah 9, 30:

"Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by Thy Spirit in Thy prophets; yet would they not give ear." Here we are told definitely that God was operative in the prophets through the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual endowment we may likewise predicate of the regular teachers in Israel before the exile. Teaching was carried on not only in the home by the pious Israelites in accordance with the injunction of Deuteronomy 6, 6-7, but it was also a special function of the priests as we see from II Chronicles 17, 9:

"They taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people." That the Lord truly considered them His representatives in this capacity is clear from Malachi 2, 7:

"For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Law at His mouth, for He is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." No one can serve as a messenger of the Lord unless the Spirit of God grants a special measure of grace to carry out this important duty. The same holds true of the teachers in the schools of the prophets at the time of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha.²

The Holy Spirit likewise distributed gifts of truly godly charity and service among His chosen people. A striking example is the service rendered by Bezaleel, whom God "filled with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and in understanding, and in knowledge,

2. A resume of the scope and activity of these schools is given in the Synodal Bericht of the Iowa District, 1906, p. 43 f.

and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones to set them, and in carving of timber; to work all manner of workmanship," Exodus 31, 3-5. Since the tabernacle was to be built after the pattern shown to Moses in the Mount", Exodus 25, 9.40. This was not mere architecture. It was the Word of God done into wood, gold, silver, brass, cloth, skin, and so forth. Here was a job God wanted done and so through His Spirit he guided Bezaleel in accomplishing the task.

Finally, also the Holy Spirit was influential in governing His people of the Old Testament. When the burden of ruling became too much for Moses, God commanded him to choose seventy elders to serve with him. Later in the period of the Judges the Lord called men and supplied them with special gifts and powers to help harrassed Israel against their enemies. Of Samson we are told that "the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times", Judges 13, 25.

A gradual degeneration of Israel was evident throughout the centuries before Christ. God in His grace supplied spiritual gifts frequently, but when they were persistently abused, these special favors were lost more and more until the people were practically bankrupt of them. Then in the fulness of time the Messiah came. Then came the fulness of the Spirit at Pentecost, and a new day had dawned for God's spiritual Israel.

II. THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN GENERAL

We have noted so far that neither the Holy Spirit nor spiritual gifts were lacking before Christ's appearance as the Messiah. Isaiah 11, 2 bears eloquent testimony to the work of the Holy Spirit in Christ. Much more could be said on that subject. But we are primarily concerned now with the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church of Christ. Although in a way this Church has been in existence since the beginning of the world, it is often said that the Church of Christ was founded on Pentecost. On that day certainly its influence was extended. It began to start reaching for the ends of the world, as never before. It was no longer to be confined to one locality of one chosen people.

The mustard seed was now to begin its phenomenal growth. The body was to grow into full stature with Christ as its head. As the members are not added to the body but grow out of it, so the growth of the Church was within it and did not come from without.³ The power to exist, to expand and grow must in the very nature of the case come from the Spirit within, which makes the body at all times conscious of its Christ-centered character.

The Church needs this power within to be able to resist

3. Kuyper, The Work of the Holy Spirit, p. 180

not only worldly powers but the more intriguing and powerful force of an invisible foe. It must not only be on the defensive, but following the principle that the best defense is the best offence, it must go out and conquer. It must not only survive the battle, but definitely come out the victor.

The Holy Spirit never works independently of or contrary to the Word of God. What he has spoken through the prophets and apostles will never be altered, for it is the Word of God. The Spirit Himself is God. And the gifts that he provides in accordance with His Word are truly the spiritual gifts of God.

To understand better the character of spiritual gifts we must examine the terminology of Scripture. We find that several Greek words are used to express the concept of "gift" in the New Testament. A gift offered to God is called in the Greek "dooron"; this word also signifies "benefaction", "bounty". "Doorea" differs from "dooron" in that it is always gratuitous. "Doorea" is also used of the gift of the Holy Ghost, Acts 2, 38. The word "charis" is very similar in its connotation. It, too, contains the idea of kindness which bestows upon one what he has not deserved. According to Thayer, "charis" is used of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting His holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ; keeps, strengthens, and increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection; and kindles them to the exercise of Christian virtues. In Ephesians 4, 7 the term "poikilee charis" is used as the "aggregate of the extremely diverse powers and gifts granted to Christians".⁴

4. Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p.666.

When "charis" is thus used as a "capacity and ability⁵ due to the grace of God" it already approaches in its meaning that which is better expressed in the derivative term "charisma". When a person has received "charis", salvation full and free", God in addition to this most necessary and fundamental gift, in the richness of His grace, very often supplies special spiritual faculties, endowments, virtues, sensations, desires, emotions, and affections which constitute also undeserved "charismata".

Thayer defines "charismata", as Paul is wont to use the term, as "extraordinary powers, distinguishing certain Christians and enabling them to serve the Church of Christ, the reception of which is due to the power of divine grace operating in their⁶ own souls by the Holy Spirit".

On the one hand, the grace of God and the special graces flowing from it must never be confused. Our salvation occurs only by means of the former. On the other hand, we should never lose sight of the inner connection between "charis" and the "charismata". The latter could not exist without the former; and if the former is in any way mutilated by false doctrine, there will be a corresponding and possibly even a greater mutilation of the latter. People who have the pure grace of God find it difficult at times to understand all the implications of the gifts of grace. How much greater is the possibility that those who do not have the doctrine of grace in its purity will as a result of

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 567

this misunderstand and misapply the plain Scriptural teachings in regard to the gifts of grace. The doctrine of the sola gratia must stand if we are to be enriched in the understanding of the special "charismata".

The Holy Spirit indicated in the very Scripture that He inspired that His work was to be held in abeyance until the objective redemption of the Mewwiah was complete. This fact is indicated in the prophecy of Joel, quoted by Peter in His Pentecostal sermon: "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh." John 7, 39 contains a similar thought. There the Evangelist John makes the statement according to the original translation: "For not yet was Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified." The use of "pneuma" here without the article or adjective "agios" has led us to interpret the expression not as the person of the Holy Spirit, but rather the special manifestations of the Holy Spirit which were to come on Pentecost.⁷ Such a miraculous outpouring had not yet occurred. Nor would it occur until after Christ's glorification, but it had to occur then. For when Christ withdrew His visible presence from the world, He was leaving the task of founding His Church to weak human instruments. The disciples of Christ had "charis" in their possession, but there was Satan using every trick at His disposal to sever believers from this "charis", to divide and corrupt the Church, to cause denial of the authority and the Kingship of Christ. But through all the ages to come, Christ would now through the Holy Spirit supply His believers with "pneuma" or "charismata" whereby He would

7. Dr. Arndt called my attention to this interpretation.

maintain a firm control of the affairs of the Church. He would provide confessing Christians with that inner bond between Himself and them which would stand them in good stead in the attacks of the gates of hell and accomplish great things in the kingdom of God. This would all be possible "not by might, nor by power, but by His Spirit."

At Pentecost, therefore, for the first time the true import of a glorified Christ dawned upon the disciples. The mysteries of Scripture began to unravel before their eyes. The Holy Spirit had found an entrance into their hearts. They became possessed, body and soul, with a fervor to carry out the mission of their Lord and to proclaim with boldness what they knew. They began to use the talents entrusted to them to gain other talents.

The primary purpose of every gift that the Holy Spirit gives is to bring others to Christ. The whole work of the Holy Spirit, as well as the work of those whom He brings to faith, revolves around the work of Christ.

As little as we can understand fully the mystery of the Life that is Christ, as little as we can comprehend the marvel of the communicatio idiomatum, so little is it possible for us to comprehend⁸ fully the spiritual life of a believer. The mystery of the union of the two natures in Christ is in a certain sense parallel to the mystery of God's work in human bodies and souls. The latter might be regarded as a shadow of the marvel that we have in Christ's divine and human natures. But we ought to be, as Krauth suggests

8. This factor should be a mitigating element in any criticism of this treatise on spiritual gifts.

in his discussion of this matter, "modest in our affirmation as to what is possible for God to do even in our natural bodies."⁹ "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is", 1 John 3, 2.

The Spirit who searches our hearts would have His believers search in Scripture with a childlike and humble faith in the Redeemer to learn more about spiritual gifts. He has to this end recorded for us descriptions of these gifts. Interestingly enough, the Spirit-filled apostle Paul in his epistles to the Corinthians, Romans, and Ephesians, and his co-worker Luke, the physician, in the book of Acts, through the Holy Spirit's inspiration, have given us the most extensive descriptions. In the twelfth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians, after stating that he would not have his brethren ignorant of spiritual gifts, the apostle Paul goes on in the fourth verse to describe these further; and we note here as the underlying thought that the great variety of spiritual gifts have a common source, namely the Holy Spirit:

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy, to another discerning of;¹⁰ to another diverse kinds of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues;

9. Krauth, Conservative Reformation, p. 806.

10. The Greek Homer has a passage in the Iliad (xiii) p. 730 that resembles this, but is far inferior in content and majesty of thought: "For to one God has given warlike deeds, to another

but all these worketh that ~~one~~ and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He wills."

Later in the same chapter another enumeration is made in verses 27-31; and the thought expressed in this passage is that while some have more gifts than others, it is impossible for all to have all:

"Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular. And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet I shew unto you a more excellent way."

The Epistle to the Romans contains the following enumeration of gifts in chapter 12, 6-9; and here Paul urges each to make the most of his own particular gifts:

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophecy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; 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. Let love be without dissimulation."

The latest enumeration of gifts that we have in the writings of Paul is that of Ephesians 4, 7-12. 16. Here the effectual working of the gifts is the important factor:

"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore He saith, 'When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.' (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

the accomplishment of the dance, to another the lyre and song."

He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ....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."

What a wealth of material is spread out before us in these brief passages of Paul! Luke, as stated above also treats spiritual gifts, but he has no formal enumeration of them. Accounts of separate gifts are interspersed throughout the book of Acts. I shall find occasion to refer to these passages repeatedly throughout the course of this treatise. The purpose that lies before us is to examine these spiritual "charismata" carefully, first, as to their nature; and this will comprise the greater part of the thesis. Secondly, I shall at the end make some deductions in regard to the importance of spiritual gifts. And thirdly, I shall include some considerations as to the present day possibilities.

III. THE NATURE OF THE GIFT OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Because Prof. Edgar J. Goodspeed in his parallel translation of the New Testament succeeds better than any other translator in bringing out the views that I am about to present on the speaking in tongues, I shall quote his translation of passages dealing with this extraordinary gift. The following are the references to speaking with tongues in the New Testament:

Mark 16, 17

"And signs like these will attend those who believe: with My name they will drive out demons; they will speak in foreign tongues." (The Authorized version has "new" tongues.)

Acts 2: 1-21

"On the day of the Harvest Festival, they were all meeting together, when suddenly there came from the sky a sound like a violent blast of wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And they saw tongues like flames separating and settling one on the head of each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to say in foreign languages whatever the Spirit prompted them to utter.

"Now there were devout Jews from every part of the world living in Jerusalem. And when this sound was heard, the crowd gathered in great excitement, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were perfectly amazed and said in their astonishment,

"Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears his own native tongue? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, of Judea and Cappadocia, of Pontus and Asia, of Phrygia, and Pamphylia, of Egypt and the district of Africa about Cyrene, visitors from Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them tell in our native tongues the mighty deed of God."

"And they were all amazed and bewildered and said to one another,

"What can this mean?"

"But others said derisively

"'They have too much wine!'

"Then Peter stood up with the eleven around him, and raising his voice addressed them,

"'Men of Judea," he said, "and all you residents of Jerusalem, let me explain this to you, and pay attention to what I say. These men are not drunk as you suppose, for it is only nine in the morning. But this is what was predicted by the prophet Joel, It will come about in the last days, God says, That I will pour out My Spirit upon all mankind; Your sons and daughters will become prophets, And your old men will have dreams. Even on my slaves, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit in those days, And they will become prophets. I will show wonders in the sky above, And signs on earth below, Blood and fire and thick smoke. The sun will turn to darkness and the moon to blood, Before the coming of the great, splendid Day of the Lord. Then every one who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'"

Evidently to be consistent in his interpretation of the speaking in tongues as it occurs in the Acts of the Apostles, Prof. Goodspeed has held that Acts 10, 44-46 and Acts 19,6 likewise treat of a speaking in a foreign tongue. Here we beg to disagree. However, we shall herewith submit also his translation of these two passages:

Acts 10, 44-46

"Before Peter had finished saying these words, the holy Spirit fell on all who were listening to his message. The Jewish believers who had come with Peter were amazed because the gift of the holy Spirit had been showered upon the heathen too, for they heard them speaking in foreign languages and declaring the greatness of God."

Acts 19, 5-6

"When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and when Paul laid his hands on them the holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in foreign

tongues and with prophetic inspiration.

In I Corinthians 12, 13, and 14 we again whole-heartedly approve of Goodspeed's translation of the "glossolalia". Here, we believe he has correctly interpreted this phenomenon to be an ecstatic speech. Since we have already quoted the passages which pertain to speaking in tongues in chapter 12 above in the preceding chapter, we shall quote here Goodspeed's version of the pertinent passages in I Corinthians 13, and, in its entirety, I Corinthians 14:

I Corinthians 13, 1. 8.

"I will show you a far better way. If I can speak the languages of men and of angels, but have no love, I am only a noisy gong or a clashing cymbal... If there is ecstatic speaking, it will cease."

I Corinthians 14

"You must pursue love, while you are cultivating the spiritual endowments, and especially inspired preaching. For anyone who speaks ecstatically is speaking not to men but to God, for no one can understand him, though he is uttering secret truths. But the inspired preacher does his fellow-men good and encourages and comforts them. Anyone who speaks ecstatically does himself good, but the inspired preacher does a congregation good. I want you all to speak ecstatically, but I especially want you to be inspired to preach. The man who is inspired to preach is more useful than the one who speaks ecstatically--unless he can explain what he says so that it may do the church some good.

"But as it is brothers, if I come back to you and speak ecstatically, what good will I do you, unless I have some revelation or special knowledge or message or teaching to give you? Even inanimate things, like the flute or the harp, may produce sound, but if there is no difference in the notes, how can you tell what is being played? If the bugle does not sound a clear call, who will prepare for battle?

"So if you in your ecstatic speaking utter words no one can understand, how will people know what you are saying? You will be talking to the empty air! There are probably ever so many different languages in the world, each with its own meaning. So if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall seem to the man who is speaking to be a foreigner, and he will seem to me to be one too. So since you are ambitious for spiritual endowments, you must try to excel in ways that will do good to the church. Therefore, the man who can speak ecstatically should pray for the power to explain what he says. For if I pray ecstatically, it is my spirit that pray, but my mind is helping nobody. Then what am I to do? I will pray ecstatically, but I will pray intelligently too.

"For if you utter blessings in ecstatic speech, how is an ordinary man to say Amen to your thanksgiving? For he does not know what you are saying. You are giving thanks well enough, but it is doing him no good. Thank God, I speak in ecstasy more than any of you. But in public worship I would rather say five words with my understanding so as to instruct others also than ten thousand words in ecstasy.

"Brothers, you must not be children mentally, in evil be babies, but mentally be mature. In the Law it says, 'By men of strange languages and by the lips of foreigners I will speak to this nation, and not even then will they listen to me, says the Lord.' So this ecstatic speaking is meant as a sign not to those who believe but to unbelievers, but inspired preaching is a sign not to unbelievers but to those who believe. Hence, if the whole church assembles and they all speak ecstatically, and ordinary people or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are crazy? But if they are all inspired to preach and some unbeliever or outsider comes in, he is convinced of his sin by them all, the secrets of his heart are exposed, and he will fall down on his face and worship God, and declare that God is really among you.

"Then what is the right course, brothers? When you meet together, suppose every one of you has a song, a teaching, a revelation, an ecstatic utterance, or an explanation of one; it must all be for the good of all. If there is any ecstatic speaking, let it be limited to two or three people at the most, and have one speak at a time and someone to explain what he says. But if there is no one to explain it, have him keep quiet in church, and talk to himself and to God. And let two or three who are inspired to preach speak, while the rest weigh what is said; and if anything is revealed to another who is seated, the one who is speaking must stop. For in this way you can all preach one after another, as you are inspired to, so that every one may be instructed and stimulated, for the spirits of the prophets will give way to the prophets, for God is not a God of dis-

order but of peace. This is the rule in all Christian Churches.

"Women are to keep quiet in church, for they are not allowed to speak. They must take a subordinate place, just as the Law says. If they want to find out about anything, they should ask their husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in church. Did God's message start from you Corinthians? Or are you the only people it has reached?

"If anyone claims to be inspired to preach, or to have any other spiritual endowment, let him understand that what I am now writing you is a command from the Lord. If anyone pays no attention to it, pay no attention to him. So, my brothers, set your hearts on being inspired to preach, and yet do not hinder people from speaking ecstatically. But let everything be done in a proper and orderly way."

Since the days of the apostles, interpreters have been at work trying to determine the exact nature of this gift of God. Many have tried to find rational interpretations both in regard to the miracle at Pentecost and also in regard to Paul's accounts of speaking in tongues. To refute this rationalization we ought to consider, first of all, the possible usages of the term in question.

The term "glossa" is used in three senses in the New Testament. It is, first of all, spoken of as a member of the body. Secondly, it is used in the sense of a language. And thirdly, it is used also of ecstatic speech.

There are then two forms of the gift of tongues. The first is the Pentecost variety which consists of a speaking in foreign languages. The second type is the Corinthian classification which was a vocal utterance inspired by the Holy Spirit without any use of the thinking faculties of the person speaking in this way. This form of speaking in tongues we commonly call ecstatic speech.

It is an interesting observation that older commentators have taken the Pentecostal experience and have tried to reconcile Paul's accounts with it, whereas the modern commentators have started to take Paul's accounts as a basis and have sought to reconcile Luke's account with it.¹¹ We shall attempt to show in our discussion of the nature of this gift that no reconciling of this kind is necessary. After a closer consideration of the available data, it will appear that we have here two distinct phenomena.

The Lord Himself had already made mention of the gift of tongues when He was about to ascend to heaven. In Mark 16, 17, Jesus informs the disciples: "These signs shall follow them that believe; in My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues." Ten days intervened between the Ascension of Christ and the day of Pentecost. During this time they waited at Jerusalem. Their faith was given time and opportunity to be confirmed and steadied. It is interesting to note that the speaking of tongues was to follow faith, and not to precede it. It was a "charismata" which came as a result of the "charis".

Furthermore, this gift was to be one of the "semeia". It was to be a miraculous gift. The Saviour calls it a speaking in "new" tongues, that is, foreign tongues. The adjective "new" indicates that one of the main characteristics of this gift was its unique, entirely different character, a newness in respect to its quality.¹² Something was to happen at Pentecost which was

11. Gutten, Speaking With Tongues, p. 30f.

12. Thayer, Ibid. of. "kainos" ad. loc. p. 317 f.

unheard of before. This fact supplies another reason why it is proper to include this gift among those of a miraculous nature.

The events of Pentecost came as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on that day¹³ was accompanied by many other unusual signs and occurrences. The "sound as of a rushing mighty wind" descended from heaven. This was the majestic way in which God was speaking and calling the assembly together. A further phenomenon was that of the cloven tongues. This factor has had an influence also upon the explanation of the miracle of speaking with tongues. We are told that the tongues were divided. Some have said that this points to a plurality of tongues. When we speak of a plurality of tongues we can hardly mean ecstatic speech since that is only one classification. The plurality of tongues must therefore mean a plurality of languages.

The miracle at Pentecost really consisted in this that the apostles were given the ability through the Holy Spirit to speak in a language "other" than their own Galilean Aramaic. Thus the account in Acts 2, 4 uses this very expression: "other tongues". According to Kittel the "Anderssprachigen" of Isaiah 28, 10 are¹⁴ speakers of a foreign language.

The fact that people of various languages heard the apostles in their own language seems to confirm further the view that the apostles spoke not an ecstatic speech, but a dignified and Spirit-

13. Many have sought to show a parallel between the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai and the giving of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. The Bible does not directly draw such a comparison.

14. Kittel, Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, Vol. II, of. "heteroglossos" ad. loc. p. 726. Kittel however disappoints

inspired discourse in a language which was unfamiliar to them prior to this great event.

But this view has been vehemently attacked. There are those who hold that "glossa" throughout the New Testament must be defined as ecstatic speech. A prominent historian, Dr. Schaff, holds this to be true. His claim is that the miracle did not lie in the tongues of the speakers, but in the ears of the hearers, who heard, at the same time interpreting the ecstatic utterances in their own language. This is, however, untenable; for the very expression "speaking with other tongues" emphasizes the fact that the miracle lay in the speaking. ¹⁵ It was not termed a "hearing of other tongues", as we should expect if we were to follow Dr. Schaff.

Kittel argues that the inclusion of those who dwelt in Judaea in the list of foreigners speaks against the interpretation of foreign tongues. In answer to this we say, that while the Jewish tongue was not foreign to their own people, it was a foreign tongue as far as some of the rest of the people were concerned. The inclusion of the term "Ioudaian" shows that all peoples were put on an equal basis. There was no longer a chosen nation.

Other have used the argument e silentio to refute the interpretation of a speaking in foreign languages. Their contention is that while the correct interpretation does hang somewhat in the balance, the case is settled from the fact that Peter mentions nothing about a speaking in foreign languages as a valuable

us by taking "heteroglossa" to mean a wonder language of the Holy Spirit and by identifying the phenomenon of Acts 2 with I Cor. 14. He believes "glossais lalein" a shortened form of "heterais

counter-argument when he was defending the disciples against the charge of drunkenness. The fact that he did not use such an argument, they say, proves that he was not speaking in foreign tongues. But does that necessarily follow? Peter no doubt knew that those who were making the charge knew as well as he did that foreign languages were being used. Peter knew that the charge did not spring from sound reasoning. It came from those who were mocking and ridiculing God's manifestations upon men, whom they considered to be common untrained, unlearned folk. Peter, therefore, answers their biting ridicule by laying bare in a simple straightforward manner the folly of their thinking.

Another commentator says that "the sudden communication of a faculty of speaking foreign languages is neither logically possible nor psychologically conceivable."¹⁶ But can we explain everything by our reason? We have already stated before that this is a miraculous manifestation of God. Can any human being understand the supernatural? Is not the very spirit world incomprehensible to us? Why then demand that every spiritual gift given by the Holy Spirit be explained in a natural way?

If the Holy Spirit chose to have the disciples utter in this particular case intelligible words of another language to carry out His special designs at a special occasion; whereas on another occasion, in a group where foreign languages were not needed, He caused an utterance of unintelligible sounds,

glossais lalein".

15. Cutten, Ibid. p. 18.

16 H.A.W. Meyer, Acts of the Apostles (Commentary), p. 64.

that is entirely the business of the Holy Spirit, and it is not for us to rack our poor brains about whether the Holy Spirit is able to accomplish either of these miraculous feats. The former explanation, though not accepted by unbelieving reason, is nevertheless in closest accord with the facts of the case. According to this view the apostles undoubtedly separated the people into their provincial groups, a matter easily accomplished, since those of the same community and of the same language would naturally gravitate toward each other in an assembly of this kind. The Holy Spirit then did His work through them in an intelligible language. No mention is made of an interpreter. On the contrary, the people are asking themselves: "How hear we, every man in our own language (dialektooi) wherein we were born?" The use of the word "dialektos" twice in verses 6 and 8 gives unmistakable proof of the correctness of our view. Nor dare we weaken the force of "heterais gloossais" in verse 4, or the "heemeterais gloossais" in verse 11.

There are no cases on record that the Pentecost miracle was ever repeated. There is nothing in the subsequent New Testament writings that would seem to indicate that this gift became a permanent possession of the apostles in their mission work. Papias and Irenaeus say that Peter did not know Greek well enough to preach it and that, therefore, Mark was his interpreter.¹⁷ If it were the purpose of God that the apostles should have the Pentecost gift as a permanent gift, wouldn't God have given

17. Papias tells us this in his "Fragments", Ante Nicene Fathers. Vol. I, p. 154 f.

this gift to the Apostle Paul, the chief of apostles? But Paul was not converted yet and, consequently, was not present at Pentecost. Later, too, it seems that the Apostle Paul may have found it difficult to understand the Lycaonian language, Acts 14, 11-15.

Most of the early writings of the Church Fathers and others seem to point to the view that a foreign language was spoken at Pentecost. Augustine for example seems to be very positive in this regard. He says that the Apostles began to speak in¹⁸ the languages of all Gentiles. Augustine further stated that the "fellowship of the Spirit", Phil. 2, 1 made itself manifest at Pentecost by making use of all languages there represented.

Cyril, Gregory Nazianzen, Jerome and Gregory of Nyssa¹⁹ speak in a similar vein. According to the compiler's note the account of Pentecost in Chrysostom's Homily of Acts 2 does not speak²⁰ plainly as to his actual view. Others have gleaned from his²¹ writings that he taught that each apostle had a definite language. The "Constitution of the Holy Apostles" identifies the Pentecost miracle with "new Tongues", Mark 16,17, which we have already taken to mean foreign languages.

18. St. Augustine, Opera, Vol. 7, p. 431.

19. Gatten, Ibid. p. 16 f.

20. George B. Stevens, professor at Yale, appended this note to Homily IV: "It is impossible to gain from this language any clear view of the author's opinion of the gift of tongues. The uncertainty of the text here still further embarrasses the subject. That the narrative means that they received at Pentecost a miraculous gift of speaking foreign tongues, is now almost unanimously maintained by modern scholars." (The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. XI, p. 28.)

21. McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia, Vol. X, p. 479.

A quotation from the "Constitution of the Holy Apostles"
 22
 reads as follows:

"But after ten days from the ascension, which from the Lord's day is the fiftieth, do ye keep a great festival; for on that day at the third hour, the Lord Jesus sent on us the gift of the Holy Ghost, and we were filled with energy, and we spake with new tongues, as that Spirit did suggest to us."

But while Acts 2 presents a definite case of speaking in foreign tongues, we cannot hold the same view in regard to the other two instances in Acts in which the speaking of tongues is mentioned. We see no reason for forcing ourselves to believe that Luke throughout the book of Acts holds to just one interpretation of speaking in tongues. We believe that the Holy Spirit speaking through Luke gives us very good reasons for holding that there are two distinct phenomena of speaking in tongues in the Acts of the Apostles. The other two cases where speaking of tongues are referred to are found in Acts 10, 46, where Cornelius and the Gentiles with him are said to have spoken in tongues; and the other in Acts 19, 6, where a group of disciples at Ephesus, after receiving the sacrament of Holy Baptism and the Holy Spirit, "spake with tongues and prophesied."

Some have held that the term "lalein gloosais" which is used in both of these cases is a shortened form of "lalein heterais gloosais" as it is used in Acts 2. That is, however, a rationalization of the text. The fact that no variant reading can be found in either account is an added cause why we should

take the text just as it is. If the copyists of Scripture were careful to maintain the distinction, why should we who believe in the verbal inspiration of Scripture overlook or destroy it? A careful examination of the way in which these two terms are used will demonstrate beyond question that the expression "lalein gloosais" connotes an ecstatic speech, and "lalein heterais gloosais", as we have already seen, a speaking in foreign tongues.

No mention is made in the account pertaining to Cornelius of a scattered group of races such as we find in the account of Pentecost. According to the whole sense of the narrative, the Gentiles who gathered in the home of Cornelius were immediate "kinsman and near friends", Acts 10, 24, and these, no doubt, spoke the same language. Speaking in foreign languages would have served no purpose whatsoever. However, the ecstatic speech, which was a speaking to God and a mode of praising Him, fits into the account very beautifully. They not only spoke in tongues, but also "magnified God". This is the prime characteristic of ecstatic speech.

There are those who oppose this view, however, and Kittel is one of them. He points to a similarity between the case of Cornelius and the Pentecost festival as it is stated in Acts 11, 15, when Peter recounts the incident at Caesarea to those of the church in Jerusalem. He states: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning." We would call attention to the fact that in both cases the Holy Ghost fell on them, but the passage does not say that the manifestations of the Holy Ghost

were similar in both cases. We know that the gifts of the Holy Ghost vary, and since the circumstances differed greatly, it appears that there was good reason for the Holy Spirit to vary His manifestations in the two instances under question.

There is even less similarity between the Pentecost account and that of the disciples of Ephesus who were baptized by Paul. Since these disciples knew of John's baptism, it is safe to assume that they had an acquaintance with the languages of Palestine, and the Hebrew language of the Jews. Since they were now residents in Ephesus it is also safe to assume that they had some sort of an acquaintance with the languages spoken there. It seems almost impossible that the Holy Spirit should be giving them the power to speak a language which they had not known before. We are told that they also prophesied, possibly in this way interpreting the speaking with tongues. It would be folly to assert that they spoke in an unknown language of some foreign country and that they then interpreted the foreign language into a language which was known. That would be an unnecessary operating in circles. Rather they spoke ecstatic utterances to God, and then interpreted this miraculous communion that they were having with God for the benefit of their fellow-men.

But let us now examine the main reference to ecstatic speech in the New Testament, namely, I Corinthians 14. In this remarkable chapter we have at least ten proofs that the phenomenon of speaking in tongues is here to be regarded as an ecstatic speaking and not a speaking in foreign languages.

The first reason is found in verse 2. Paul says there that

"he that speaketh in a tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God". The worshipful speaking to God referred to here can only mean ecstatic speech. A speaking in foreign languages would not fit the description here since that is primarily a speaking to men.

The second reason is also found in verse 2. Paul says that "no man understandeth". Could such a sweeping statement be made of a foreign tongue? Many people can understand a foreign tongue, but no man by his own intelligence can understand ecstatic speech because it is a speaking in the mysteries of God, and God alone can give special powers of interpretation if it is to be understood at all. Ecstatic speech alone fits this verse.

Verse 4 states the third reason why the phenomenon in question is ecstatic speech: "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself." The Holy Ghost causes one who has this gift to pour forth glowing spiritual emotions in such a way that his own spiritual growth is augmented. When foreign speech is used in God's service, the spiritual growth of those who understand the foreign speech is augmented, not the spiritual growth of the one who himself speaks. Hence we conclude that only ecstatic speech fulfills the demands of verse 4.

Still another reason, our fourth one, why ecstatic speech is the subject of I Corinthians 14, is found in the comparison of this phenomenon with inarticulate sounds of musical instruments, such as the trumpet or the harp, verses 7-10. The same thought is brought out in I Corinthians 13, 1, where the speaking in tongues without the Christian virtue of charity is described as a sounding

brass or a tinkling cymbal. Unintelligible ecstatic speech alone fits this analogy.

The fifth reason to support our view is stated plainly in verse 14: "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful." Paul describes one who speaks in tongues as being so filled with divine power that his mind, his "nous", his ability to use perceptions in a rational way, is rendered unfruitful. His spirit, his "pneuma", that is the capacity of service to God, is thoroughly roused by the Holy Spirit and wholly intent upon divine things, yet destitute of "nous", self-consciousness and clear thinking. To Paul the speaking in tongues appeared as a language of which man was not the author, but the organ of expression. It is the "spirit" that prayeth. This "pneuma" may mean in addition to the meaning given above, the Holy Spirit who inspires me. The intelligence is, therefore, held in abeyance over against the power of the Holy Spirit. Again, ecstatic speech fills the requirements of I Corinthians 14, 14.

In verse 18 Paul thanks God, that he speaks in tongues more than all others at Corinth. This leads to our sixth argument. That Paul was a master of the Greek language and knew his Hebrew tongue very well we cannot deny. Yet Paul at one time seems to have had some difficulty with the Lycaonian language according to the account of Acts 14. He did not understand immediately when the people at Lystra addressed Barnabas and himself as gods descended in the likeness of men. In view of this incident could

23. Dr. Arndt supplied me with this definition.

24. Ibid.

Paul then claims to be able to surpass any of the linguists of Corinth? We rather believe that his claim is that he could surpass any one of them in ecstatic speech. Paul possessed the gift of glorifying God superbly in a manner unequalled by any of his contemporaries or we might say, of any one who has lived since. At one time he tells us that he was carried up into the third heaven and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for man to utter. So Paul knew the limits and extent of ecstatic speech more than any other. Though his linguistic abilities were imperfect in certain languages, in this particular wonder language which was given to him by God he could speak more ably than others.

A seventh reason for upholding the view of ecstatic speech is found in the statement that tongues were a sign for the unbelievers. It is historically established by this passage that the gift of ecstatic speech at Corinth was to be sharply contrasted to the heathen oracles found there. The latter were nothing but the mockery of the devil. The true gift of ecstatic speech, which Christians at Corinth possessed, when carried out in public worship according to God's rules of order, would be a powerful refutation of the attempt of the devil to mimic God. Here was a wonder language which bade all unbelievers to take warning that this was a manifestation of the true God, far surpassing anything that they had in heathen temples. The whole content of I Corinthians 14, 22 seems to demand that we understand the apostle to be speaking of ecstatic speech.

We submit also an eighth reason. From what Paul says in verse 23 we make the deduction that the whole congregation or at least a good many of them were desirous of speaking in tongues in their public assembly. Was it foreign tongues they wanted to speak? If this were true, one would almost expect some where in the chapter a remark of some kind giving us a hint as to what foreign languages they were using. We find nothing of the kind. There is nothing either in the history of the congregation or in this chapter which would give us a satisfactory reason why the whole congregation should be desirous of speaking in foreign languages. On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence that would prove that ecstatic speech had an appeal to them. One writer states it thus:

"It was a gift congenial to the Corinthian temperament. They were all accustomed to the idea of divinity speaking through the lips of a human priest or priestess, who when seized by the power and inspiration of the god were plunged into a state of unconscious ecstasy, and so, in frenzy, delivered the oracular reply." 25

So impressed were they by the mystery and the novelty of this sort of gift, that all seemed to have an inordinate desire to make use of it.

The fact that Paul insists upon an interpreter who, as we shall see, was in need of a special gift of God to function in this capacity, gives us a ninth reason for believing this phenomenon to be ecstatic speech. A man need not have a special gift of God to function in the capacity of interpreting a foreign language. That can be a perfectly natural acquisition through the development of the intellect. But ecstatic speech, since it

was the special language of the Holy Spirit needed the Holy Spirit's power for interpretation.

And finally, our tenth reason, we glean from the statemnet of Paul: "Forbid not to speak in tongues". There was freedom of speech in Corinth as in most parts of the Roman Empire. We would hardly, therefore, expect Paul to make such a bland statement in respect to a foreing language. But if we consider this demand for Christian liberty to be made in regard to ecstatic speech, then the statement of Paul makes sense. There was an element in the congregatïon at Corinth that desired elimination of all ecstatic speech. Paul wants to emphasize that this would be reverting to the other extreme. Because he expects that they will still make use of this gift of God, he has given them in his inspired account definite regulations as to its use. In this way Paul evidences his approval for the Christian liberty of all those who possess this gift.

In summing up our findings on the nature of the gift of speaking with tongues in the New Testament, we find that the speaking with "other" tongues at Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2 is a speaking in foreign languages. Here there was a definite need for the sudden communication of the Holy Spirit in supplying the apostles with the ability to speak a foreign tongue, or several foreign tongues. In no other place in the New Testament do we find a parallel to Pentecost in this respect. All other references to speaking with tongues in New Testament writings are of the I Corinthians 14 variety, and these include Act 10 and 19, and I Corinthians 12 and 13.

Where the expression "lalein heterais gloosais" is found we have a speaking in foreign languages, and where the expression "lalein gloosais" occurs we have a speaking in the state of ecstasy. As we have shown, the former expression is found only in the Pentecost account of Acts 2. We do not know of a similar phenomenon occurring anywhere else. After that the New Testament writings speak only of a "lalein gloosais", which, upon careful examination we have found to mean always a speaking in unintelligible language.

The phenomenon of speaking with other tongues at Pentecost served a very definite purpose of bringing the Gospel to various individuals in their own language. The exact purpose of the ecstatic speech is more difficult to ascertain. It seemed to be a benefit more to the individual believer, however, than to others. It benefited the individual in this way that it gave him a special divinely inspired means of worshipping and communing with his God. To be a benefit to others, another gift was necessary. We shall, therefore, now consider the gift of interpretation of tongues.

IV. THE NATURE OF THE GIFT OF INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

The following are the Scriptural references to the gift of interpretation of tongues. Again we shall use the translation of Prof. Goodspeed in the listing of these passages:

I Corinthians 12, 10. 30

"Another, the working of wonders, another, inspiration in preaching, another, the power of distinguishing the true Spirit from false ones; another various ecstatic utterances, and another, the ability to explain them.... Is every one able to cure the sick? Can every one speak ecstatically? Can every one explain what it means?"

I Corinthisan 14, 5. 13. 26-28

"I want you all to speak ecstatically, but I especially want you to be inspired to preach. The man who is inspired to preach is more useful than the one who speaks ecstatically---unless he can explain what he says so that it may do the church some good..... Therefore, the man who can speak ecstatically should pray for the power to explain what he says..... The what is the right course, brothers? When you meet together, suppose every one of you has a song, a teaching, a revelation, an ecstatic utterance, or an explanation of one; it must all be for the good of all. If there is ecstatic speaking, let it be limited to two or three people at the most, and have one speak at a time and someone explain what he says. But if there is not one to explain it, have him keep quiet in the church."

The speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues are closely linked together. The two taken together seem to illustrate the way God has always dealt with man. Many of the things spoken by God in Scripture as they stand in prophecy are not understood. Even though they were spoken in intelligible words, many of the mysteries of the Word of God were not always grasped by the Old Testament covenant people, nor later by the New Testament disciples of Christ. In Luke 24, 37 Jesus is described on the way to Emmaus interpreting the Old Testament prophecy.

Beginning from Moses and continuing through all the prophets, he interpreted to them the Scripture concerning Himself. Jesus thus showed Himself to be of all Old Testament revelation and as such He was well qualified to give the correct interpretation throughout, not methodically, but according to the content of the Scriptural statements which the disciples were so slow to grasp. Since Jesus withdrew His visible presence from the disciples, the Holy Spirit has been sent to open the mysteries of God to them. And one of the ways in which the Holy Spirit has manifested Himself was to supply certain individuals with the gift of interpreting ecstatic speech.

In 1 Corinthians 12, 10 this gift of interpreting tongues follows in order the "genee gloosoon". This expression implies that ecstatic speech, though really of one nature throughout was far from being uniform in all of its manifestations. The word "genee" means according to Thayer: "many of the same nature or species". It was an utterance which "varied at different times and places in its mode and attendant conditions and in the impression it produced on the hearers; it is regularly spoken of in the plural".²⁶ Thus the varying character of ecstatic speech made its clear interpretation so much the more necessary.

In I Corinthians 12, 30, where again the gift of interpretation is mentioned alongside of its complementary gift of speaking in tongues, Paul informs us by means of a rhetorical question that by no means do all persons have this gift of

26. Thayer, Ibid. cf. "genee" ad. loc. p. 113 f. and Expositor's Greek New Testament, Vol. II, p. 889.

interpretation. Here the word "diermeeneuein" occurs, "dia"²⁷ intensifying the term by marking the transition from the speaking to the interpretation.

Strictly speaking, then, this type of interpretation is, as Kittel states it, not a translation (Uebersetzung), but rather a transposition into understandable thoughts (Umsetzung), a changing of the unintelligible language of the one in the ecstatic state to intelligible language. The interpreter, I Corinthians, 14, 28, was not one who as in the Jewish synagogue translated the Aramaic; nor was he one who spoke distinctly for one who spoke an address too silently to be audible; but it is the interpreting or exegesis (Auslegung) of the divine oracle of the one who speaks ecstatically²⁸ for the edification of the congregation, I Corinthians 14, 5.6.

This gift of interpretation can be given to one who himself²⁹ speaks ecstatically, I Corinthians 14, 13 but also to another Christian, I Corinthians 14, 27. If this charism is lacking in an assembled congregation, then the speaker can be of value only to himself, and should not speak in the assembly. Paul's rule is: Glossolalia is forbidden in public worship without ordered interpretation. This rule eliminates all mockery of Pentecostal sects and urges us to hold to the only genuine and deep spiritual working of the Word of God.

In I Corinthians 14, 27, Paul outlines the procedure to be followed if the speaking in tongues is interpreted in public worship. There should be (kata) an orderly succession of events.

²⁷. Thayer, cf. "diermeeneuein" ad. loc., p. 147. (Ger.: "verdeutlichen".)

²⁸. Kittel, Ibid. Vol. II, p. 661.

²⁹. The Apostle John who wrote of his experiences while in the ecstatic state in the Apocalypse may be a parallel.

It should be done -kata duo-by two --kata meros-- singly, severally, part by part. The --to pleiston treis-- indicates that no more than three should be speaking in tongues in a Christian assembly. An interpreter inspired by the Holy Spirit should be in control of the situation and really accomplish the purpose of edifying the church.

In summing up the nature of this gift, we must consider it to be a special dispensation of grace, a miraculous charism of explaining and expounding, given directly by the Holy Spirit for the edification of an assembled group.

This gift in its purpose came very close to the purpose of another spiritual gift of God given in the New Testament. Paul seems to give us the hint already in I Corinthians 14 that there was a close inner connection between the interpretation of tongues and the gift of prophecy. The former gift, however, was valueless and of no use whatsoever where the speaking in tongues did not precede. This is not necessarily true of the gift of prophecy. We shall next discuss the nature of that more important gift.

V. THE NATURE OF THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

The gift of prophecy is one of the more important gifts of a spiritual nature that we find in the New Testament. The passages which will be used in the discussion of the nature of this gift and the succeeding gifts, I have translated directly from the Greek text. I have followed no special order in the arrangement of these passages other than that which suggested itself as this material was formulated. The first passage is one of the more important passages referring yet to the Old Testament prophets:

Hebrews 1, 1

"God, after having spoken in many places and in many ways to the fathers of old by the prophets, has spoken at the last of these days to us through His Son, whom He has placed as an Heir of all, and through whom He made the worlds."

The next group of passages deal particularly with the life of a prophet as one would expect it to be around the time of Christ. By examining the prophet's place in the Jewish circle we can also receive some hints as to the nature of prophecy:

Luke 13, 33

"It is not possible that a prophet perish outside of Jerusalem."

Luke 11, 49

"On account of this the wisdom of God says: I will send unto them prophets and apostles, and of these they will kill and pursue, in order that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world of this generation, from the blood of Abel until the blood of Zacharias who perished between the altar and the house, might be sought out."

Matthew 23, 34. 37

"On account of this, behold, I send to you prophets and wise men and scribes; of these you will kill and crucify, and of them you will scourge in your synagogues and pursue from city to city.... Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and casts stones upon those who are sent to her, how often I desired to gather together your children, according to the manner in which a bird gathers her fledglings under the wings, and you did not desire it."

Matthew 13, 57

"Jesus said to them: A prophet is not without honor except in his fatherland and in his house."

Foretelling of the future is often considered an important phase of prophecy. Let us note a few passages that speak of the prophet from this angle:

Luke 1, 67. 76

"And Zacharias, his father, was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied... And also you, child, shall be called a prophet of the Highest."

John 11, 51

"This he spoke not of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die instead of the nations, and not in the stead of the nations alone, but in order that also the children of God which were scattered might be gathered into one."

Acts 11, 28

"And after arising, one of them, Agabus by name, signified that there was about to be a great famine over the inhabited world; which happened at the time of Claudius."

Acts 21, 10 - 11

"And after remaining there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, Agabus, by name, and

coming to us, and having taken the girdle of Paul, he bound his own hands and feet and said, "These things the Holy Spirit speaks: "The man whose girdle this is, shall the Jews thus bind in Jerusalem and shall deliver into hands of nations."'"

Acts 21, 4

"We remained here seven days after having found the disciples, who through the spirit said to Paul, that he should not go to Jerusalem."
(It is my belief that the word "spirit" here does not mean Holy Spirit.)

Of course, the book of Revelation also contains many passages of a prophetic nature, but it is almost impossible to begin to enumerate all of them here, and even to list them all would serve no further purpose than that which the passages above serve. Therefore, I have omitted them entirely.

Two passages in the life of Jesus, which indicate that a prophet, besides being able to foretell the future, was generally regarded to be able to make known hidden things of the past as well, are the following:

Luke 7, 39

"And the Pharisee who invited Him, seeing it, said within himself, 'If this One were a prophet, He would know who and what sort the woman is, who touches Him, because she is a sinner.'"

John 4, 19

"The woman said to Him, 'Lord, I see that you are a prophet.'"

A prophet was expected also to be able to do miracles. Again, two passages in the account of the life of Jesus make this clear to us:

Luke 7, 16

"And they glorified God, saying that a great prophet is raised up among us, and that God has visited His people."

John 9, 17

"They said therefore to the blind man again: 'What do you say concerning Him; because He opened your eyes?' And he said: 'He is a prophet!'"

Other passages which show us further functions of a prophet are listed below:

Acts 15, 32

"Both Judas and Silas, who were also themselves prophets, through much speech comforted the brethren and confirmed them."

I Corinthians 14, 29-32. 37

"But let two or three prophets speak, and let the others discern; but if it be revealed to another one who is sitting, let the first one be silent. For you all are able to prophesy one by one, in order that all may learn and all be comforted. Also the spirits of the prophets are obedient to prophets. For God is not of confusion, but of peace.... If any one seem to be a prophet or spiritual one, let him recognize the things which I write to you, that they are a commandment of the Lord."

I Corinthians 12, 9

"To another, prophecy."

Ephesians 3, 3-5

"By revelation was made known to me the mystery, as I have written before briefly, according to which you are able through reading it to perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not known to the sons of men as it is now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."

In the Old Testament one of the functions of the prophets was that of foretelling the future. ³⁰ Predictive powers did occasionally also exist among the New Testament prophets. At the birth of John the Baptist, Zacharias, his father, prophesied that his son would become the prophet of the Highest. The touchstone by which the truth of this prophecy must be gauged is this that the prediction must come true as foretold. We know that Zacharias' prediction did come true. Caiaphas unwittingly prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, John 11, 51. Here we have the Holy Spirit accomplishing a work in someone who was not even a believer. It shows that God overrules also the wicked in accomplishing His designs and bringing His predictions to their fulfillment. Agabus "signified by the Spirit that there would be great dearth throughout all the world, which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar", Acts 11, 28. Agabus also testified later according to the account of Acts 21 that Paul would be bound hand and foot as Agabus had bound himself with Paul's girdle. This actually took place when Paul arrived at Jerusalem. At the same occasion of the prophecy of Agabus, several disciples prophesied, Acts 21, 4, that Paul would encounter trouble; and they concluded on the basis of this fact that he should not go to Jerusalem. Their knowledge of the trouble that was at hand for Paul was correct, but their conclusion that he should not go and face it was a human conclusion, and not divine, as Paul, a more tried prophet than themselves was able to discern. At the same occasion also four daughters of Philip prophesied, but it is not stated that they prophesied of future things. We hesitate to conjecture

30. Here the "pro" is temporal, not local.

just how they did function as prophets. It is interesting to note that the Holy Spirit gave the gift of prophecy also to these young ladies. It must not be supposed, however, that they were usurping authority over the called elders of the congregation. Their prophecy, no doubt, occurred in an informal gathering.

The predictive powers of the Old Testament prophets find their main New Testament counterpart in the writer of the New Testament Apocalypse. The prophecy contained in this book is a chapter all by itself. But even the book of Revelation is not all prophecy in the sense of foretelling. The whole book is intended largely for the comfort and consolation of the whole Christian Church. ³¹ It can not be emphasized too strongly that the prediction of the future is only a minor phase of the concept of prophecy, and especially is this true of New Testament prophecy.

The people of Christ's day evidently also held that a prophet possessed a supernatural knowledge of hidden things, even though past. ³² This is substantiated in Luke 7, 39 where the Pharisees expected Jesus as a prophet to have a knowledge of the fact that the woman who anointed Him was a sinner. Similarly, after Christ had revealed to the Samaritan woman her adulterous life, she admitted: "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet", John 4, 19. The early Church Father Clement has therefore described a prophet as "one who always knows all things,

31. Fuerbringer, Notes on Revelation, p. 1.

32. Thayer, Ibid. p. 553

the things which have been as they occurred, the things which are as they are, and the things which shall be as they shall be." ³³

It was considered also the function of a prophet to perform miracles. Outside of the fact that the Old Testament prophets did wonders, we have New Testament evidence to this effect also that prophets were miracle workers. After Jesus had called to life the young man at Nain, the immediate reaction of the multitude was that "a great prophet is risen up among us". The blind man whose eyes Jesus opened, confessed before unbelieving Jews: "He is a prophet". But again, the miracles which a prophet performed did not constitute him a prophet. The main function of a prophet was, as we have already stated above, to transmit a divine message to a human audience. Jesus did this most ably. As God-Man, He spoke as never man spake.

A function of the prophets is stated in Matthew 23, 37. God desired to use His prophets as a means of gathering His children together under His sheltering care as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings.

A further function of the prophet is clearly stated also in Acts 15, where Judas and Silas are spoken of as prophets. These men, who were called chief men, "heegoumenoi", in verse 22, are called prophets in verse 32, and as such they had duties of exhortation and confirmation in the Christian assemblies. When Paul later chose a man to go with him to confirm the

33. Clement, Homily 2, 6, quoted from Thayer, Ibid. p. 553.

churches of Syria and Cilicia, he chose the prophet Silas. When the Holy Spirit did not permit Paul to go into Bythinia, this information may have been acquired through a revelation of the Holy Spirit given to Silas. However, Paul, too, was a prophet and the Holy Spirit may have given him the information directly.

A prophet may be described in the usual New Testament sense as "a man filled with the Spirit of God who by God's authority and command in words of weight pleads the cause of God and urges salvation of men."³⁴ Since it is by God Himself that the gift of prophecy is given, this may be truly termed a miraculous manifestation in the same way as we consider ecstatic speech a miraculous gift of God. The prophet is the organ or spokesman of the Paraclete in solemnly declaring to men what he has received by³⁵ inspiration. Every prophet, therefore, is given a special revelation which he is obliged to transmit to the people. Hebrews 1, 1 refers to the activity of Old Testament prophets in the words: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last times spoken unto us by His Son." The main purpose of the New Testament prophets was to give knowledge of the Christ who had appeared.

A prophet's life was really not as easy a life as many suppose. Much is said in the New Testament writings about the sorry treatment afforded the Old and New Testament prophets. The parable of the man who went to a far country and left his

34. Thayer, Ibid.

35. Ibid.

vineyard in charge of wicked individuals who did not hesitate to mistreat His messengers and, finally, also killed His own son is very pertinent to the treatment that prophets have always received. In spite of the fact that Christ Himself was the greatest of all prophets, the treatment that He received was far worse. The leaders of the Jews first feared to do Him injury because the people held Him to be a Prophet. Later they took more courage in their efforts to destroy Him.

Jesus continually spoke of the drastic action which His fellow-countrymen had taken against the prophets. He said once in disparagement of these rebellious acts: "It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem," Luke 13, 33. On another occasion He said: "I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute, that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation," Luke 11, 49. Similarly, the passage of Matthew 23, 34 points to the persecution that prophets were subject to: "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise-men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues and persecute them from city to city." Four verses farther down Jesus breaks out in woe-ful lament: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

It seemed that this treatment of prophets followed naturally because of the nature of their office. They had to rebuke sin and the people by nature hated to be rebuked for their sin.

Especially do people resent it when a fellow-countryman who serves as a prophet chides them. This is one of the reasons why Jesus made the statement that a prophet is without honor in his own country.

There is great reward, however, in receiving a prophet wholeheartedly with due Christian hospitality. The reward for such discerning acts of mercy is not, however, always apparent in this life. When Nicodemus stood up to defend the name of Jesus, both he and Christ's divinely appointed office as prophet were ridiculed and laughed down with the remark: "Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." But Jesus said at another occasion: "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward". This is a good passage to use in order to remind people that by all means they should receive Jesus into their hearts as a divinely appointed prophet, that they by no means lose the reward of this great Prophet.

An interesting case of the function of prophets in the religious assemblies of Christians appears in I Corinthians 14, 29-32. The Holy Spirit would on occasion, without impairing the self-government of such a group, make a special inner disclosure, ³⁶ apokalupsin, to one or more members of such a gathering of people assembled in Jesus name. This individual or these individuals would then through the Holy Spirit's work in them utter in glowing exalted but intelligible language what God wanted said at that occasion with a view toward instructing, comforting, encouraging, rebuking, convicting and stimulating the hearers. ³⁷

36. To be distinguished from "phaneroosis", external manifestation.
 37. Thayer, Ibid.

That this would necessarily be done in an orderly fashion follows logically from the assertion that God is a God of order. That the content of the prophecy thus spoken could not be in disagreement with anything spoken previously by inspiration of the Holy Spirit follows from the statement: "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." The souls of the prophets who speak in Christian assemblies are obedient to that which the Holy Spirit has spoken by inspiration in the Holy Scriptures. There is no New Testament prophet who says anything contradictory to Old Testament Scripture in the inspired account of the New Testament writings. On the contrary, there is often a close agreement between the two. John in the Apocalypse is in very close agreement with Old Testament prophecy in many particulars. It behooves every true prophet of God who speaks in Christian assemblies to be firmly built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Ephesians 2, 20, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." It follows naturally that a prophet must have an excellent acquaintance with Scripture.

It is clear from Scripture that the office of a prophet was an entirely distinctive work. There is danger that we overlook this special distinction when we speak generally of apostles, prophets, and teachers. Many have in this general way regarded these three offices as just one. But while we may indeed include these three classes of the servants of God under the general classification of those who speak the Word of God, the "lalountes ton legon theou", yet it is better to honor the distinctions.

38. The distinction between these offices is carefully outlined for us by Harnack, Mission and Expansion of Christianity, Vol. I, p. 319f.

For example, in Acts 13, 1 we are told that out of a group of five prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Paul, the Holy Spirit chose two to serve in a special capacity as apostles. Barnabas and Paul were chosen. They were to be prophets who were sent out. They were not to remain at a single place any longer than it was necessary for them to found and gather together a Christian congregation. The prophetic gifts of these two were unquestioned, however, already before they acted in the added capacity of apostles. Not only are they placed in the same class with prophets and teachers in the words of Acts 13, 1 but in the case of Paul, who had a direct revelation from God, we know from his account in Galatians that he preached the faith that he once sought to destroy, Gal. 1, 23. Barnabas, in turn was described as "a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," and the Holy Ghost through him added much people to the church, Acts 11, 24. The very name Barnabas means "son of exhortation" and exhortation was a chief function of the prophet, and hence Barnabas is marked as a prophet. But according to I Corinthians 12, 9 not all were prophets. It was a distinctive gift.

Truth that was hidden from man for ages was revealed to the apostles and prophets by the Spirit. Ephesians 3, 3-5 states how the Spirit accomplished this in the prophets: "By revelation he made known unto me the mystery.. which in other ages was not made

39. It was no doubt through the prophecy of Paul that Timothy was prepared for the ministry, I Tim. 1, 18; 4, 14.

40. Torrey, Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, p. 247.

41. Ibid. p. 249.

known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." The prophets of the New Testament did not therefore come to conclusions on the basis of their own reasoning or by any other means to which they some times falsely append the name "Christian consciousness", but they were aware of a consciousness wrought by revelation, by the Holy Spirit Himself. It was a consciousness which was the product of their study and absorption of the Word of God which the Holy Spirit had inspired. Thus the revelation given them in this way was really independent of their own thinking. Their human reason, carnal by nature, could not have originated such glorious truths as they were preaching.

Whenever some one received the gift of prophecy, he was an instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit. This factor establishes a connection between prophecy and ecstatic speech, with this difference that the former was intelligible at the outset and required no such aid as an interpreter.

In the case of the prophets who were given the task of writing the inspired Word of Scripture, not only their thoughts but their very words were the product of the Holy Spirit. This special work of the Holy Spirit dare not be tampered with. Rev. 22, 18-19 states very definitely that nothing of Scripture should be impaired, nor should supplementary material be added. As it stands, it is a monument erected by God Himself, complete in every detail and not subject to deterioration. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away", says the Holy Spirit through

Christ, Matthew 24, 35. The prophets who were used as the instruments of the Holy Spirit to pen the inerrant Scripture really are in a class by themselves.

/The sum and substance, therefore, of the gift of prophecy in the New Testament is as follows: We may rightly term it an explaining and expounding of the whole counsel of God to those for whom it lies hidden due to the dullness of their natural state according to which they are enemies of God. The purpose of prophecy is to bring them back to God. What a God-given privilege it is to first of all know Scripture well, and then to have the God-given endowment to be able to apply it to advantage./

The importance of such a gift is apparent to anyone who has any interest at all in the spread of Christ's kingdom. It is plain that the Apostle Paul urged Corinthian Christians to covet the gift. For then at least some of their number would be supernaturally illuminated and divinely called as expounders and preachers of the Word. Paul, the prophet, desired to bless the prophet's sons. He desired to cast his mantle over them by boldly encouraging them in their own work of instructing, stimulating, rebuking, convicting, and comforting; and rightly dividing the Word of truth in this way. Prophets should be candlesticks in their churches letting their lights shine brightly for those still in darkness.

Truly, prophecy is one of the greatest of all spiritual gifts. It is not a particularly inviting field of endeavor from a worldly point of view. We have seen that a prophet's life is at times a very trying one. It is not primarily concerned with the miraculous features of soothsaying or performing miracles as those who are continually looking for a sign like to imagine.

But it is nevertheless a miraculous working of God through the Holy Spirit. To the Greek it is foolishness, to the Jew a stumbling-block, but to the believer it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God; the simple portrayal of Gospel truth.

The implications that are connected with this simple but powerful means of spreading Christ's kingdom can be seen throughout the New Testament age. The importance of the gift of prophecy can hardly be overestimated. More will be said about the importance and present day possibilities, however, in another chapter.

The fact that there is a connection between a wonder worker and a prophet, as we have just seen, leads us now to take up the nature of the spiritual gift of performing miracles

VI. THE NATURE OF THE GIFT OF PERFORMING MIRACLES.

The following are some of the passages which come into the discussion of the nature of other miracles wrought by the Spirit of God in individuals:

Luke 9, 1

"And after calling together the twelve, He gave them power (dunamin) and authority over all demons and to heal diseases."

Luke 10, 19

"Behold, I have given to you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means harm you."

Mark 9, 14 ff.

"And coming to His disciples they saw a great crowd around them and scribes who were questioning with them, and straightway, when all the crowd saw Him, they marvelled, and running toward Him, they greeted Him. And He asked them, 'Why do you question with yourselves.' And one of the crowd answered Him: 'Teacher, I have brought my son to you, who has a dumb spirit; and wherever it takes him, it tears him, and he foams and gnashes the teeth and is exhausted. And I told your disciples, that they cast him out, and they did not prevail! But he said, in answering them: 'O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear you up? Bring him to Me.' And they brought him to Him. And seeing Him, the spirit seized him straightway, and falling on the earth, he rolled and foamed. And He asked his father, 'How long a time is it that this happened to him?' And he said, 'From childhood; and often it casts him also into fire and into water that it might destroy him; but if anything is possible, aid us by having compassion on us.' And Jesus said to him, 'As to whether it is possible, all things are possible to him who believes.' Immediately the father of the child cried out and said: 'I believe, help my unbelief.' And when Jesus saw that a crowd was gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit by saying to it: 'The dumb and deaf spirit, I charge you, come out of him, and no longer enter into him.' And after crying out and tearing him much, he came out; and he was as if dead, so that many said that he had died. But Jesus, taking his hand lifted him, and he stood up. And when He came into a house, His disciples asked Him privately: 'Why could not we cast it out?' And He said to them: 'This kind it is not possible for anyone to bring out except by prayer.'"

Luke 24, 48

"You are witnesses of these things; and behold I send you the promise of the Father. You shall remain in the city until when you shall put on power (dunamin) from on high."

Acts 1, 8

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes over you."

Luke 1, 35

"Holy Spirit will come over you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you."

Acts 4, 33

"And with great power did the apostles of the Lord Jesus give witness of the resurrection."

Acts 4, 7

"And standing them in the midst, they inquired:
'By what authority or by what name did you do this.'"

Acts 3, 12

"Why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety it has come about that he walks."

Acts 4, 10

"Let it be known to you all and to all people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, does this one stand before you whole."

Acts 6, 8

"And Stephen, full of grace and power did many wonders (terata) and great signs among the people."

Romans 15, 17-19

"I have therefore the boast in Christ Jesus as to things pertaining to God. For I would not dare to speak anything of the things which Christ did not work through me unto the obedience of the nations by word and deed, by power of signs and wonders, by power of the Holy Spirit."

2 Corinthians 12, 12

"The signs of the apostle were worked among you in all patience, in signs and wonders and powers."
(seemeiois, terasim, dunamesim)

1 Corinthians 2, 1-5

"And when I came to you, brethren, I came not to announce to you the witness of God by haughty word, or wisdom. For I judged not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was among you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my word and my preaching was not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of spirit and power, in order that your faith might not be in wisdom of men, but in power of God."

Ephesians 3, 7

"That the Gentiles be co-heirs, co-incorporated, and sharers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel of which I have become a servant according to the free gift of the grace of God, which was given to me according to the energy (effectual working) of His power."

Colossians 1, 29

"Unto which also I labor, contending according to His energy that which was wrought in me by power."

Philippians 4, 13

"I can do all things through Him who empowers me."

1 Timothy 1, 12

"I have grace in Him who empowers me, in Christ Jesus our Lord, because He counted me faithful by placing me in service, who was formerly a blasphemer and persecutor and slanderer."

2 Timothy 4, 17

"But the Lord set me aside and empowered me, that through me the preaching might be fully brought out and all nations might hear and I be delivered from the mouth of the lion."

The spiritual gifts that we have considered thus far were all miraculous. The speaking in "new" tongues, ecstatic speech, and prophecy all have appeared to be supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit demonstrated His power further in an immense variety of extraordinary actions. Some of the other manifestations of His power were the casting out of demons, the power to tread without peril upon serpents and scorpions, the power to be unharmed by deadly poisons and other cruelties inflicted upon God's apostles, the power to heal diseases, and even the power to raise from the dead.

There are several words which express the power that was manifested. The Greek expression "erga" is commonly used with reference to the Lord's miracles. Miracles with Him simply were "works." Miracles came natural to Him since He was the supernatural Son of God. "Erga" is not commonly used, however, as a term to indicate the miracles wrought through the apostles. Jesus does say in John 14, 12: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he who believes in Me, the works which I do, that one shall do also, and he shall do greater than these", but here, too, the word "erga" is used as the work of Christ even when it is done in the apostles. And the greater works to be done are really the works of Christ. It is usually said of the apostles that they received "power" or "powers" or that they performed powers or miracles (dunamis) in view of their connection with Christ.

A "dunamis" is a "faculty" which when exerted produces a "work".

This faculty, natural to the Lord, was imparted to men. The term "semeia" which means signs or tokens calling men's attention to what was happening is expressive of the marvelous character of a miracle from the human point of view; and similarly "thaumata", wonders, is a term expressing the tremendous effect which miracles had upon men. It is interesting to note that never are the Lord's miracles called "thaumata".⁴³

It is not necessary to undertake an explanation of the miracles worked through the Holy Spirit. Really it is impossible to explain the exact nature of a miracle. To do that we would have to explain God, and we know that is impossible. Whenever any act goes beyond the natural run of things, it becomes irreconcilable to human reason. Miracles are in a sphere set apart.

The miracles of our Lord are too numerous to be considered here in their entirety. The Bible itself tells us that Jesus did many miracles that were not even recorded. If we should succeed in some superficial way to gather the related facts of the recorded miracles, the whole story would not yet be told. We shall, therefore, rather concentrate our attention on the miracles performed through such individuals who are human, and even here we shall not be able to exhaust the various narratives. We shall satisfy ourselves therefore with some general observations regarding the nature of these miracles.

Scripture relates the accounts of the following individuals of the New Testament who possessed the spiritual gift of performing

43. McClintock and Strong, Ibid. Vol VI, p. 310 f.

miracles:

Apostles: Luke 9, 1; 10, 19; the Seventy: Luke 10, 17;
 Peter: Acts 3, 7; 5, 5; 5, 10; 5, 15; 9, 34; 9, 40;
 Stephen: Acts 6, 8; Philip: Acts 8, 6-13; and Paul:
 Acts 13, 11; Acts 14, 10; 16, 18; 19, 11; 20, 10;
 28, 5; 28, 8; 14, 3.

The apostles after Christ's departure were to stand up and testify for Him. With them the Lord identified His work. He that had all power, gave power to them. In Luke 9, 1 the Saviour grants the disciples authority over all devilish power. He repeats the same thought again in Luke 10, 19: "Behold, I have given to you authority over every power of the enemy." The disciples' power was actually Christ's power which they possessed through a personal faith. At one occasion it was demonstrated to disciples of Jesus that their own unbelief stood in the way of their full fruition of Christ's power in them. The lunatic, whom they had failed to restore because of their lack of faith, Christ had to restore Himself.

Some time later Jesus promised His disciples the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 1, 8, we read: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes over you." It was the same power that had worked the conception of Jesus, Luke 1, 35. It was the same power that Jesus possessed during His ministry. This power He gives to the apostles, who in His place carry on the visible ministry. Luke regards miracles as a charism given on Pentecost. From that time on especially, the disciples worked in demonstration of the Spirit and power, I Corinthians 11, 4.

Harnack has listed the following ways in which God demonstrated His power among the disciples after Pentecost. His list includes also some of the miraculous gifts which we have already discussed, but which shall be retained in the listing below for the sake of completeness:

1. "God speaks to the missionaries in visions, dreams and ecstasy, revealing to them affairs of moment and also trifles, controlling their plans, pointing out the roads on which they are to travel, the cities where they are to stay, the persons whom they are to visit.
2. "At the missionary addresses of the apostle or evangelists, or at the service of the churches which they founded, sudden movements of rapture are experienced, many of them being simultaneous seizures... The simple question: 'What must I do to be saved?' also bursts upon the mind with elemental force.
3. "Some are inspired who have power to clothe their experience in words--prophets to explain the past, to interpret and to fathom the present, and to foretell the future.
4. "Brethren are inspired with sudden impulse to improvise prayers and hymns and psalms.
5. "Others are so filled with the Spirit that they lose consciousness and break out in stammering speech and cries, or in unintelligible utterances which can be interpreted, however, by those who have the gift.
6. "Into the hand of others, again, the Spirit slips a pen, either in ecstasy or in exalted moments of spiritual tension; they not merely speak but write what they are bidden.
7. "Sick persons are brought and healed by missionaries or by brethren who have been but recently awakened; wild paroxysms of terror before God's presence are also soothed, and in the name of Jesus demons are cast out.
8. "The Spirit impels men to an immense variety of extraordinary actions-- to symbolic actions which are meant to reveal some mystery or to give some directions for life, as well as to deeds of heroism.
9. "Some perceive the presence of the Spirit with every sense; they see its brilliant light, they hear its voice, they smell the fragrance of immortality and taste its sweetness.-- Nay more; they see celestial persons with their own eyes, see them and also hear them; they peer into what is hidden or distant or to

come; they are rapt into the world to come, into heaven itself, where they listen to "words that cannot be uttered."

10. "A heroic faith or confidence in God is visible, able to overthrow mountains, and towering far above the faith that lies in the heart of every Christian; charitable services are rendered which are far more moving and stirring than any miracle; a foresight and a solicitude are astir in the management of life, that operate as surely as the very providence of God."

From Pentecost onward the apostles not only continued Christ's ministry and pronounced His message, but continued also to do His miracles. Acts 4, 33 tells us that "with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all." The "great grace" of which this passage speaks includes the spiritual gift of performing miracles. Grace is something that resides primarily in God. Therefore it was not by their own authority that they did miracles but by the power of their Lord. When they are asked after the healing of the lame man by what authority they do these things, Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost makes bold reply: "By the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand before you whole."

In the case of Stephen we have a similar situation. This first martyr of the Christian Church who true to his name early received his "crown" of life was described as being "full of faith and power." This power of God in him manifested itself in two ways: first, by his proclamation; and secondly, by the miracles which he performed.

Then the apostle Paul's outstanding activity manifested itself "en dunamei seemeloon kai teratoon, en dunamei pneumatos", Romans 15, 19. The "power of signs and wonders" is here identified with and placed in apposition to "the power of the Spirit."

This power Christ had wrought through him by word and deed to ~~make~~ the Gentiles obedient to the Gospel of Christ. There were four purposes that we shall enumerate in regard to the miracles God performed through this great apostle:

1. "His miracles attracted and were addressed to the crowd rather than the individual.
2. "Miracles were universally accepted as proofs of divine approval of the message and work of him through whom they were wrought.
3. "Miracles were a demonstration of the power of Jesus over pagan gods and demons.
4. "Miracles illustrated the character of the new religion as being one of charity and salvation, release from the bondage of sin and the power of Satan."

While the book of Acts is the chief source of our information regarding the miracles of Paul, his epistles make frequent mention also of the miracles performed through him:

2 Corinthians 12, 12

"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."

Galatians 3, 5

"He, therefore, that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?"

I Thessalonians 1, 5

"For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

These passages lend strong historical proof to the reality of Paul's miracles and to the fact that they were to be regarded as evidences of his apostleship.

Paul continually made mention of the relationship that existed between himself and Christ and the Spirit of Christ. Paul often refers to the "power of the Spirit" which was working effectually through him. To him Spirit and power were closely related. Since both "pneuma" and "dunamis" are used interchangeably to express the manner in which the exalted Lord is present with His own, they are for all practical purposes equivalents. Yet it must be borne in mind that the term "pneuma" points to the person of the Holy Spirit more so than does the term "dunamis," which expresses more His work. We must not make the mistake now made by Pentecostal sects in conceiving of the Holy Spirit as an impersonal power. It is correct in a sense to call the Spirit of God a power, but we must never forget to add that He is a very definite and personal power. As such He manifested Himself⁴⁶ in the life of St. Paul.

According to I Corinthians 1, 1-5, Paul came to this congregation not in the wisdom of men, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. In contrast to the weakness, fear, and trembling common to human nature, we have in Paul the demonstration of⁴⁷ the Spirit, the demonstration of power, yea, the very power of God.

Nor dare we overlook the expression common in the epistles

46. Kittel, Ibid. of. "dunamis", Vol. 2, p. 311.

47. Ibid.

of St. Paul that he did his work "en Christoo". Christ, Spirit, and power belong together. Christ is the basis of all. The Spirit leads to Christ. Power gives testimony of the true nature of Christ.

In the declaration of Paul, Christ is present as "pneuma" and manifests Himself as the power of God, upon whom mankind can base their new existence which comes through faith in the Gospel. As a proclaimer of Christ, the Spirit present in Christ shows forth the saving power of Christ and by means of His proclamation founds⁴⁸ believing ones securely upon Christ's saving power. This brings about the establishment of the Christian Church, the greatest miracle of all. Thus Paul has become a "servant of the Gospel" according to the gift of the grace of God given unto him according to the effectual working of His power, Ephesians 3, 7.

Paul often related and dwelt upon the miracle of his own conversion as the greatest one that he had ever witnessed throughout his life. Everything that Paul did thereafter in the performance of his duties as an apostle, even the miracles that he did, were the outgrowth of a most closely related connection with the living Christ; and in view of this relationship he can exult: "I am strong to do everything through Him who empowers me," Phil. 4, 13.

By and large the miracles that Christ wrought in the days of His flesh were of the same type as those wrought through the apostles. Christ had promised that the disciples would do the works that He did and even greater ones. We have already said

48. Ibid.

that not all of the miracles of Christ were recorded. Certain ones were selected for the holy record to give proof absolute of the divinity of Christ. There are indications also which lead us to believe that not all of the miracles performed by apostles are recorded. Acts relates no miracles in Corinth, yet in 2 Cor. 12, 12 we are told that signs and wonders and mighty deeds were done there. In Iconium Paul's bold speaking of the Word of God was accompanied by signs and wonders, Acts 14, 3. What these signs and wonders were, we are not told.

In four other towns, miracles are recorded of the Apostle Paul. At Lystra a cripple was restored, Acts 14, 11-12, and Paul and Barnabas were considered gods as a result of it. They had to point out that it was the living God who had created all things who had done this miracle. At Philippi Paul cast out a demon from a soothsaying girl. At Ephesus "God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them and the evil spirit departed from them." Through Paul at Troas, Christ raised up Eutychus, a miracle which was designed for the further proclamation of the Gospel in a setting somewhat similar to the one where Peter raised Dorcas.

Raising from the dead is a miracle manifestly in a class by itself. God had performed this miracle through the prophets three times in the Old Testament, three times it was that Christ performed this miracle, and the two apostles mentioned above were each given power to do the same miracle once in their lifetime. That this miracle was performed twice by apostles shows

that Christ was still exercising power over temporal death. But from now on the emphasis was to be placed on a rising from the dead as Christ rose, and that manner of rising from the dead was a much more glorious rising.

The miracle that Jesus performed of dispensing food to a hungry multitude was never repeated by the apostles for very obvious reasons. Christ's work of redemption was not to be confirmed by miracles which were continually stressing material welfare; rather there should be left the impression that a spiritual nourishment was now available for the souls that were sick and dying. There was now to be a dispensing of spiritual food such as there never had been before. It is true that the early Christians made provisions for the material welfare of those who constituted their congregations, Acts 6, 1 ff. But it is equally true that the apostles, the leaders of the churches, devoted themselves entirely to the spreading of the Word.

The miracle of the Lord's supper, which was truly a spiritual food, was miracle enough for the true believers who "continued steadfastly ... in the breaking of bread," Acts 2, 42. As Christ in dispensing bodily nourishment while feeding the five thousand had taken the loaves, they could now take the bread of the Lord's Supper through which was given in a supernatural way the body of Christ; as He gave thanks, they gave thanks; as He brake it; they brake it; as He gave it, they gave it. It was a food for thousands due to the blessing of Christ upon it and served as a strengthening nourishment to the faith of believers.

Of all the miracles performed by Jesus and the apostles the miracle of healing seems to stand out most prominently. The first three Gospels seem to vie with one another in their efforts to introduce Jesus, the divine Physician and the divine Healer of body and soul. John's Gospel and Acts are also sprinkled through with miracles of healing. Jesus never went into a long explanation of the symptoms of diseases and their proper treatment. He did not carry a first aid kit with Him or a doctor's bag. Yet He was the most perfect physician who ever existed. He served not the healthy or the would-be healthy, but the sick, Mark 2, 17. He does not explain that sickness is health; He calls it by its proper name and shows compassion toward the sick one. He draws no fine distinctions between sick people being healthy or healthy people being sick. "Jesus does not distinguish rigidly between sickness of the body and sickness of the soul; He takes them both as different expressions of the one supreme ailment. But He knows their sources. He knows it is easier to say, "Rise up and walk," than to say, "Thy sins ~~are~~ forgiven thee," Mark 2, 9. "⁴⁹ No sickness either of body or soul is too hard for Him. In a world filled with spiritual diseases He kept Himself ⁵⁰ "invariably vital, pure, and busy."

Christ won His followers in this way. Those who stood around Him as believers were individuals who through faith in Him had been healed. Through faith in Him they reaped the benefit of His saving power as it flowed in a life-giving stream from His cross. Once His followers had understood the meaning of the

49. Harnack, Mission and Expansion of Christianity, Vol. I p. 101.

50. Ibid. p. 102

statement of Isaiah 53, 5: "With His stripes we are healed" they went out to tell others: "By His stripes ye were healed", I Peter 2, 24. They brought back sheep that had gone astray to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. They became administrators of the means whereby Christ wished to perform the greatest miracle in the lives of men. They preached the Word, and administered the Sacraments to the saving health of those who had ears to hear. They were not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it was the power of God, the dynamical force of a merciful God and Saviour to begin and finish in the stubborn hearts of sinful men the faith that would lay hold on eternal life.

In every case, the spread of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments was the prime objective of the apostles. All other signs and wonders served to confirm the truth of the Gospel. Faith lay at the bottom of all miracles. But always the miracle of justifying faith had to precede the faith to do miracles in Jesus' name. It was the former only that saved. The latter was a means of bearing testimony to the former, serving as an outgrowth of it: "These signs shall follow them that believe," Mark 16, 17.

Miracles, very much like ecstatic speech must have their interpreter. The miracle alone has no convincing power. The unbelievers discredit justifying faith and as a result also all miracles coming as a result of that justifying faith. They scornfully cast aside anything of a supernatural character, or if it is so apparent that there is no denying it, they ascribe it to

the devil. As Kuyper puts it:

"to make the miracle effectual, the Holy Spirit must also open the eyes of them that witness to see the power of God therein. All our reading of miracles in the Bible is unprofitable unless the Holy Spirit opens our eyes, and then we shall see them, hear their testimony, experience their power, and glorify God for His mighty works."⁵¹

All true spiritual gifts are based on faith, and in that sense are all truly miraculous. The gifts of God's grace that we have considered thus far, in addition to having that close connection with miraculous faith are in themselves, in their very nature, miraculous. Speaking in foreign tongues, ecstatic speech, interpretation of ecstatic speech, prophecy, and performance of miracles are all certainly miracles in the true sense of the word as our discussions have brought out.

The gifts that we shall next consider have also as these preceding ones the miraculous foundation of faith. But the Holy Spirit uses this faith to develop natural endowments and gifts and to use them also for purposes of the extension of the kingdom of Christ.

We see the wisdom of God in this that He has given to mankind both miraculous and natural endowment. The miraculous gifts illustrate the point that God is not necessarily bound by nature. The natural endowments show that He is very anxious to have nature serve His specific ends.

⁵¹. Kuyper, Ibid. p. 69.

VII. THE NATURE OF THE CHARISMS OF KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

Where the devil's power is used to overturn and to confuse the natural order of things, the power of God, even though it transcends nature, is always at work to develop nature and to let it realize the good purposes, which from the beginning it was intended to accomplish through the inherent power placed there by God.

The first natural gift which we shall consider, which the Holy Spirit uses also for His purposes, is the charism of knowledge; and closely connected with it is the charism of wisdom. It is important that we take these two charisms first, because they are really the fountain from which all other natural gifts of men emerge, for these charisms help to develop greater efforts in teaching, charity endeavors, government, and discerning of spirits. These four last-mentioned gifts are also to be included in the category of natural gifts put to spiritual use, and will be considered in the order mentioned in chapters 8, 9, 10, and 11.

Knowledge, "gnoosis", and wisdom, "sophia", are two very closely related concepts. It is a question which of these to consider first in our treatment of the subject. In I Corinthians 12, 8 wisdom is placed before knowledge: "For to one is given through the Spirit word of wisdom, to another word of knowledge according to the same Spirit." Perhaps wisdom is placed first here because of its greater importance. But it seems that logically knowledge would precede wisdom, since the latter includes also the former.

If we take knowledge and wisdom to be two distinct concepts, we might define knowledge as the ability to apprehend truth, whereas wisdom is the practical application of truth apprehended. According to this definition we can conceive of a situation where a person has knowledge, but no wisdom, but we cannot imagine how it is possible for anyone to have wisdom and not to have knowledge. Therefore, we must first get clear on what true Scriptural "gnosis" is, before we can enter into a discussion of Scriptural "sophia".

A. The Nature of the Charism of Knowledge

The following only a part of the Scripture passages which treat the charism of knowledge:

John 17, 3

"This is eternal life, that they might know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

I Timothy 6, 20

"O Timothy, keep the trust, turning aside from profane speeches of vanity, and knowledge, falsely named, which some in professing have left the first principles of faith."

I Corinthians 8, 1.7; 9. 10.

"Concerning idol sacrifices we know that all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, charity edifies.. But not in all is knowledge. But some to the present time eat by custom idol sacrifice of the false god. And their conscience being weak is polluted... Take heed lest somehow you authority itself become a stumbling block to the weak ones. For if anyone see you who have knowledge concerning an idol reclining (at meat), will not his conscience, being weak, be built up toward the eating of that which is idol sacrifice."

I Corinthians 13, 8

"If there is knowledge, it shall come to naught."

I Corinthians 2, 12

"We received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God in order that we may know the things given to us by God."

Galatians 4, 9

"Now after having known God, but rather being known by God, how shall you turn again to weaknesses and the poor elements."

2 Corinthians 2, 14

"Thanks be to God, who causes us to triumph in Christ and makes evident through us in every place the sweet smell of His knowledge."

2 Corinthians 4, 6

"For God who says: 'A light shines from darkness', Himself shines in our hearts to make light of the knowledge of the glory of God in appearance of Christ."

2 Corinthians 10, 5

"Casting down imaginations, and every haughty thing which lifts itself up against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ."

Philippians 3, 8

"But therefore I count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, on account of whom I have lost all things and I consider them dung in order that I might gain Christ and be found in Him."

2 Corinthians 4, 7 ff.

"For we have this treasure in earthen vessels, in order that the excellency of the power may be from God and not from us; in everything we are afflicted, yet not distressed; being at a loss, but not completely at a loss; being pursued, but not overtaken; being cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing around the death of our Lord Jesus Christ in our body. For we who live are delivered into death through Jesus in order that also the life of Jesus might be evident in the mortal flesh."

I John 2, 3.5.

"And by this we know that we have known Him; if we keep His commandments...He who keeps His Word, the love of God is truly made perfect in this one. By this we know that we are in Him."

I John 5, 20

"We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding that we know the truth. And we are in the true One, in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

John 4, 14 f.

"I am the Good Shepherd, and I know mine, and mine know Me; as the Father knows Me, I also know the Father, and I lay down My life in behalf of the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Also these it is necessary that I lead away, and they hear My voice; and it shall be one fold, and one Shepherd."

John 13, 7

"Jesus answered and said unto Him, 'What I do, you do not know now, but you will know after this.'"

Ephesians 3, 19

"To know the love of Christ which surpasseth knowledge, in order that you may be full unto all the fullness of God."

Knowledge, according to its New Testament usage, may
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be divided into four categories:

1. Acquisition of information respecting a subject. Luke 24, 18.
2. Discernment, judgment, discretion, the power of discrimination. I Corinthians 13, 9.
3. Knowledge by experiment. John 13, 7.
4. Discovery, detection. Romans 3, 20

The gift of knowledge may include all of these four definitions or any combination of them. Usually however a man of knowledge has something of everyone of the above-mentioned points. He ought to have a good deal of information on at least several particular fields. He ought to be able to evaluate, weigh, and consider the information he has amassed. To make the knowledge that he has a living knowledge, he should have a certain amount of experience relating to it; and to keep the knowledge that he has from stagnating, he ought to be making discoveries and detections of things that he has not known before.

Men know progressively⁵³ and much depends on what the object of their knowing is. It is an important matter that we be able to discern what is desirable to be known, and what is best unknown. Throughout history there have been those who have advocated the knowledge of the "depths of Satan". By their desire for this knowledge, they are led into the bondage of evil, and of the evil One, who knows better than man himself many things of which man is often completely ignorant. To be able to discern between good and evil and to know how to follow after the good is the all-important question in a man's life.

Due to their condition of being confirmed in eternal bliss,⁵⁴ the holy angels have a knowledge far superior to man's knowledge. Yet we are told in I Peter 1, 12 that even they are desirous of looking into the salvation of God for mankind of which Scripture

53. The Greek word "epignosis" signifying "precise and exact recognition" indicates this progressive character of knowledge.

54. McClintock and Strong, Ibid. Vol. V, p. 136.

testifies. How much more ought not man make use of his faculties to understand and assimilate and integrate all that he can of God's revelation which so directly affects him.

To know too much about worldly matters may often prove harmful to an individual, and often is the equivalent of sinful knowledge. A knowledge of people is often⁵⁵ times desirable.

A knowledge of one's self is even much more important. But a knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ is certainly⁵⁶ indispensable. And once a man acquires this knowledge, he ought to know too, that he is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in Him, and creates faith in him. He ought to have an insight into all other doctrines of Scripture.

Knowledge is, however, by no means the equivalent of faith. It is based on faith. It is a part of faith, but it is not anywhere near the magnitude of faith. Sir Hamilton makes⁵⁷ the following comparison between faith and knowledge:

"Belief is a higher source of evidence than knowledge; belief is ultimate; knowledge only derivative; knowledge itself finally rests on belief; natural beliefs are the sole warrant for all our knowledge, so we have, and are warranted in having, beliefs beyond our knowledge; beliefs respecting the unconditioned, respecting that which is in itself unknowable."

We are compelled to surrender the proud "Intellege ut credas" of Abelard, and to content ourselves with the humble⁵⁸ "Crede ut intellegas" of Anselm.

55. "Natural knowledge is acquired by the senses, by sight, hearing, feeling, etc.; by reflection; by the proper use of our reasoning powers; by natural genius; dexterity improved by assiduity and cultivation into great skill..Spiritual knowledge is the gift of God, but may be improved by study, consideration etc. Ibid.p. 136.

But before we dip too deeply into philosophical definitions, we ought to get a clearer view of the true "gnoosis" of Scripture. The early Christians had to understand "gnoosis" in their battle against polytheism, but also over and against the heathen idea that there was a "gnoosis" which established a relationship between the so-called mystery religions and Christianity. Since the same terminology was used by these false teachers as was used by the true teachers of the word there had to be a careful distinction made in the treatment of the concept "gnoosis". Syncretistic tendencies had to be filtered away from the minds of Christians; pure grace of Scripture had to be portrayed to them in all its clarity to off-set these tendencies. With this in mind Paul beseeches Timothy to turn aside from profane speeches of vanity and disputings and knowledge falsely so named. Those who have doted on these things have left the elemental truths concerning God and man's relationship to Him. There is the danger that Timothy in his work may be affected by Gnosticism, and hence Paul gives due warning.

Likewise the Epistles of Jude, II Peter, and I John very clearly and effectively fight Gnostic error. A striving towards speculative wisdom as found in Gnosticism is denounced in I Corinthians. Tendencies toward fornication and idolatry were a direct result of Gnostic error, and are ably refuted by Paul in I Corinthians 6, 12 ff. and I Corinthians 8, 1.7.9.10 respectively. The fact that Gnostics leaned towards asceticism seems to be implied and refuted in I Corinthians 7. Paul answers Gnostic denial of a bodily resurrection with the convincing thoughts of

Paul in I Corinthians 6, 12 ff. and I Corinthians 8, 1.7.9. and 10 respectively. The fact that Gnostics leaned towards asceticism seems to be implied and refuted in I Corinthians 7. Paul answers Gnostic denial of a bodily resurrection with the convincing thoughts of I Corinthians 15. In urging Christians to hold fast to their Christian knowledge, he ironically uses the very same terminology, but his meaning is always clear.

The object of Christian knowledge is not vague speculation, but definite truth graciously given us by the Spirit of God, I Corinthians 2, 12, truth which keeps the spiritual one informed as to the things of God, and thus makes him a master over the natural man. Therefore "to know the things that are freely given us by God" actualizes itself in Spirit-filled conduct. ⁵⁹

That the Gnostic has no mysterious quality, which he enjoys is seen from I Corinthians 8, 1ff. where the practise of eating sacrifices to favor polytheistic heathenism, and its fatal consequences to weak persons is attacked by Paul. Here it is clear first, that the knowledge of the one God is not to be viewed in a theoretical speculative sense; secondly, that to love God is not a mystical relation to God, but a love that manifests itself in affection which one ought always to have for a weak brother; and thirdly, that to know the true God in contradistinction to idols is not a knowledge which man himself produces but which God produces. ⁶⁰

In a similar vein of thought Galatians 4, 9 brings out

59. Kittel, Ibid. Vol I., p. 708. Here we are already approaching a function which comes very close to the function of "sophia"

60. Kittel, Ibid.

that the knowledge of God, or rather the "being known of God" should keep one from turning "to weak and beggarly elements".

The uselessness of a knowledge unconnected at all with love is impressed upon us in I Corinthians 13. Knowledge, considered apart from everything else is clearly shown to be inadequate. Pious suppositions of Gnostic teachings are likewise refuted. Knowledge is not a direct connection with God. A direct relationship to God through demiurges, as Gnosticism would have it, is not to be found. Again, it is not man who establishes a connection with God. It is God who knows and recognizes man. Man knows only in part and his knowledge will remain incomplete until he is known of God in eternity, there to know, as he also is known. 61

The gift of the knowledge of Christ is described in 2 Corinthians 2, 14 as a fragrant savour, a sweet smell. It is described as a light which sheds its beams into the darkness of human hearts according to 2 Corinthians 4, 6. It appears from 2 Corinthians 10, 5 that there are many haughty imaginations of the human mind which seek to exalt themselves over and above the knowledge of Christ, and to off-set this tendency of the human, carnal mind, every thought must be brought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ.

In Philippians 3, 8 Paul speaks of the knowledge of Christ as an excellent acquisition as compared to the dung of trusting in

61. Ibid.

one's own flesh. Paul is firmly established in his confession of the knowledge that he has of Christ, a confession whose character is clearly seen from the corresponding resolve to apprehend in his daily life more completely the true knowledge of Christ. This true knowledge is described as a "being found in Christ", being drawn into the objective reality of salvation by means of faith, which is not inherent in man, but is definitely stated to be the work of God; a faith which looks ahead to the future.

To know God does not, therefore, necessitate a stepping out of an earthly-historical existence as Gnosticism and its derivative false-religions would have us believe, but it is the experiencing of "the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings" within one's historical life. "For we have this treasure in earthen vessels, in order that the excellency of the power may be from God and not from us; in everything afflicted, yet not distressed; being at a loss, but not completely at a loss; being pursued, but not overtaken; being cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing around the death of our Lord Jesus Christ in our body in order that also the life of Jesus might be apparent in our body. For we who live are delivered into death through Jesus, in order that the life of Jesus also might be evident in the mortal flesh," 2 Corinthians 4, 7ff. This passage gives us an idea of the experiences of a Christian's fellowship of suffering with Christ in our earthly lives. The "fellowship of the sufferings of Christ" is qualified by the coming salvation and significantly follows the statement of "the power of His resurrection" in another passage of Paul's, Philippians 3, 11. The power of that resurrection

overshadows any sufferings that Christians may have. The knowledge of the power of that resurrection of Christ eliminates every possibility of regarding man's suffering as inherently meritorious. The ungnostic character of the entire chapter of Philippians 3 is seen from the fact that Paul does not describe individual experiences, but dwells upon the character of being in Christ, being a Christian.

"Ginoskein" plays an even greater role in John's Gospel and John's epistles. It is remarkable how often the verb "to know" occurs in John's writings. It is not the customary meaning of acquiring information that this term expresses here. In a specific manner it speaks of the relation of God and Jesus as the one personal relationship in which the One is distinguishable through the Other in God's existence. This relationship of Father and Son is described as a reciprocal knowing. Even though two persons are definitely mentioned, there is yet one God. Because Father and the Son are life and have life, and because God is eternal, it is eternal life to know the Father and the Son. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent", John 17, 3.

According to Philip's request in John 14, 8, it would be enough to receive the shown Father. Jesus answers him: "He that hath seen Me, has seen the Father". The believer who sees Christ in faith also has seen the Father, and has knowledge of God through Christ.

"Ginooskein" as used therefore in John denotes apprehension of the highest manner of existence of a being.

One of the best criteria of the knowledge of God is love. God is love, and whoever is related to God shows Himself as a loving one. The relation between Father and Son is one of purest love. The relation between Jesus and His own is clearly one of love. To truly know God means to know His love. It is clear that with "ginooskein" no demanding or probing knowledge, no speculation is denoted, nor a mystical outlook on life so common among the deluded and deceived, but it is a knowing of God that finds its practical application in daily life as the manifestation of love. God's love to the world was manifested in the actual sending of His Son. Jesus' love was manifested in His actual obedience to the Father, and His service to the world. Since the knowledge of Jesus and God as love is so clearly revealed in Scripture, there should be in Christians the desire to get a deeper knowledge of that love to aid them the more in their actual life; for the keeping of His commandments has its origin in love. Both love and the keeping of His commandments are criteria for the determining of the knowledge that one has of Jesus and of God.

Thus it is that the spiritual gift of knowledge is most efficient if there is a close connection with God; a real, personal, experimental, sanctifying acquaintance with Him. True knowledge of God regards God as reconciled in Christ. By reconciliation is understood that all of the perfections of God unfold them-

selves as the basis for the soul's confidence. There is revealed to us the fact that God is righteously and holily merciful, pardoning sin at the expense of no other perfection, but in full harmony with all of His perfections. If spiritual insight into the harmonious doctrines of God respecting man's salvation is not included in our gift of knowledge, then all of our advances in any other knowledge are without profit. The knowledge of God and Christ may do without any other knowledge, but no other knowledge will do without this.

If men are given a good education whereby their mental capacities are given free hand toward development, they are receiving a powerful weapon for good or evil, depending upon what direction is given their mental abilities. If men on the other hand are given the principles of sound and true religious knowledge, their minds are given a right and safe exercise, and the sound knowledge they have acquired will serve as a stabilizing force in their lives and conduct.

According to Prof. Harnack, the knowledge of a Christian as described by Paul was conceived of as:

"absorption in the being of God as revealed in Christ, progress in the knowledge of His saving purpose, manifested in revelations and in history, of insight into the nature of sin or the power of demons (those, "spirits of the air") of the dominion of death, anticipation of eternal life. In a word, ;...a knowledge that soared up to God Himself above all thrones, dominions, and principalities, and that also penetrated the depths from which we are delivered-- a knowledge that traced human history from Adam to Christ, and that could at the same time, define both faith and love, both sin and grace." 67

65. McClintock and Strong, Ibid.

66. Ibid.

67. Harnack, Ibid. Vol. I, p. 235

B. The Nature of the Charism of Wisdom

There is much overlapping of the two charisms of knowledge and wisdom, as we have already noted. Wisdom is a corrolary or a complement of knowledge. It ought to follow instinctively from knowledge. In some individuals it makes itself more evident than in others. No one will deny that both Paul and John were possessed of an unusual degree of wisdom in portraying to others the knowledge of the truth, yet because of his extensive efforts in logically presenting God's plan of salvation to great numbers of people, Paul seems at times to evince a greater wisdom, that is, in the strict sense of the word "wisdom". It may have been that John had a deeper insight, a more perfect knowledge than Paul, but Paul certainly had the gift of applying his knowledge directly to hearers wherever he came. Learned as he was in worldly matters, he spurned that knowledge in order to make available for men a greater wisdom, an acceptance of the Savior. The acquisition of such wisdom is certainly a special gift of the Holy Spirit.

In the selection of passages below, some of the important features of Scriptural wisdom are portrayed to us:

Acts 6, 10

"And there stood up certain ones from the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of those of Cilicia, and of Asia, disputing with Stephen, and not were they strong to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake."

I Corinthians 12, 8

"For to one is given through the Spirit word of wisdom."

Ephesians 1, 17

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, might give to you Spirit of wisdom and of revelation by recognition of Him, that the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, you know what is the hope of His calling."

Colossians 1, 9

"On account of this also we, from the day on which we heard it, are not ceasing to pray in your behalf and to ask that you be filled as to the recognition of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."

2 Timothy 3, 15

"And that from a child you have known the Holy Scripture, which is able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

James 1, 5

"If anyone of you is bereft of wisdom, let him ask God who gives to all in a simple manner and let him not be reproachful, and it will be given him."

James 3, 13

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show from the good walk of life his works in humility of wisdom."

James 3, 15

"This is not the wisdom that comes from above, but is earthly, natural, devilish."

James 3, 17

"The wisdom from above first is pure, then peaceful, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and of good fruits, without variance, un hypocritical."

I Corinthians 1, 19-31

"For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of prudent ones I will reject. Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe?

Where is the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world, for since in the wisdom of God the world has not known God through wisdom, God thought it best through the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe. Since also Jews ask signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews an offense, to the Gentiles foolishness; but to them who are elect, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men; for ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: But God has chosen foolish things of the world in order that He might put to shame the wise; and the weak things of the world God has chosen that he might put to shame the strong. And the things without lineage of the world, and the despised God has chosen; the things that are not, in order to make of none effect the things that are, in order that no flesh shall boast before God. But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who is become the wisdom of God to you, and righteousness and holiness and redemption, in order that, as it is written, He who boasts, let him boast in the Lord."

I Corinthians 2, 13

"Which things also we speak not in words that can be taught of human wisdom, but in teachings of the Spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

Matthew 11, 25

"In that particular time, Jesus answered and said: Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I thank Thee, that Thou hast hidden these things from wise and prudent ones, and hast revealed them to babes."

It may be said that there are two kinds of wisdom. The one kind is that supreme intelligence which belongs alone to God. With this wisdom of God, Christ identifies Himself when He says in Luke 11, 49: "Therefore also said the Wisdom of God, 'I will send them prophets and apostles'". And in the parallel passage of Matthew 23, 34 the words that Jesus spoke

read: "Behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men, and scribes." Jesus is therefore Wisdom personified. When Christ makes His abode with a Christian, he has an immediate access to the supreme Wisdom that is Christ.

✓ The other kind of wisdom is that which belongs to men. This endowment of man may turn into two channels. It may go its own way, a way of darkness and delusion and speculation in worldly wisdom; or it may be truly wise and follow after the wisdom which accepts Him in whom are hidden all treasures of wisdom, Colossians 2, 3. In both cases natural endowments will be used, but in the latter case there will be superadded the spiritual gift of the Holy Spirit who illumines and glorifies the true Wisdom and convinces the believer of its excellent qualities.

There are many ways in which worldly wisdom manifests itself. The heathen world has always considered herself to be wonderfully wise. She has looked down upon Christianity as a foolish, ignorant, and unlettered system of religion, far inferior to the philosophies which she has devised for herself. Oftentimes those who believed on the true God were considered beneath the notice of the proud adherents to heathenism. This persistent attack of heathenism upon the Israel of God had much to do in building up Jewish stubbornness. Christianity was a stumbling block to them not only because of an inner degeneration into legalism, but also because of the outward impact, the cynical smile of those who claimed a superior wisdom than Christ manifested. We who

live in a Christian land often lose sight of the bitterness of the satires and the ostracism which early Christians had to face because of their stand.

First, there was an open conflict between heathenism and Christianity. But there could be no compromising of divine wisdom with worldly wisdom. Divine wisdom was so completely the victor that the heathen world began to evolve all sorts of syncretistic off-shoots. The new sects of Gnosticism, Manichaeism and Neo-Platonism in their turn tried to smother Christianity in the mortal embrace of their heathen philosophies. Under the guise of honoring Christianity they were really⁶⁸ injecting a most deadly poison to its very heart.

The wisdom that Christians have from Scripture does not stand helpless against such treacherous enemies. Rather do Christians have a sure means of setting up a bulwark of defense. And one such way of defense is by individuals who through the Holy Spirit receive the gift of wisdom.

Stephen was blessed in this way. Stephen no doubt often made practical use of his wisdom in his service as elder. This man, filled with the Spirit, knew His Savior so well, knew the background of the Old Testament prophecies so well, that when the most learned proponent of heathendom, Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and men of Cilicia and Asia disputed with him, They were not able to resist the wisdom by which he spoke. Their own preconceived ideas of wisdom, however, prevented them

68. Kuyper, Ibid., p. 253.

from accepting the simple, but profound wisdom that he offered them and led them to the unthinkable crime of black-mailing Stephen and thus bringing on his death. Those who adhere to the wisdom of God must often suffer innocently for so doing. In Stephen's case it is plain that he had special skills in acquainting others in divine things. In addition to knowledge, he had wisdom. Not always is this distinction between "gnosis" and "sophia" so clearly seen.

According to Paul's letter to the Ephesians, true wisdom is found in recognition, "epignosis", of Christ. Its purpose is the enlightening of the eyes of the heart and the provision of a knowledge of the hope of one's calling, Eph. 1, 17. Here there is practically no distinction apparent in the two concepts of wisdom and knowledge. Yet the fact that wisdom is found in knowing or recognizing Christ seems to indicate a difference between the two. Wisdom is in knowledge. It consists of applying a part or a phase of the knowledge that one has in one's practical life.

Paul tells the Colossian Christians that they have been richly furnished with wisdom. The whole range of their mental faculties, "sophia", and the special faculty of their intelligence, "sunesis", has been edified through the instruction and spiritual guidance of the apostles. As they have used their mental faculties to come to a recognition of God's will, they should now use these same faculties to carry out that will as far as it is in their power to do so. That is the argument of the Apostle Paul.

The practical application of the knowing of His will is the doing of His will. That is wisdom.

Certain individuals, however, have the distinct advantage of learning to know the will of God from childhood. Paul tells Timothy that he is such a fortunate person. From a child he has known the Holy Scriptures, and after he has once acquired this knowledge, he can also have the wisdom that follows closely upon such knowledge. He can be made wise through faith. Faith is knowledge, assent, trust; it is more than just knowledge; it is a saying "yes" to that knowledge, and assent; it is a continuing to say "yes" to that knowledge, a trust, which continues until eternal salvation. That is true wisdom. And so from childhood until eternity there is in a believer a growing knowledge of sin and grace, and a corresponding assent to that knowledge, which is the equivalent of wisdom, and which seeks to bring others to the same knowledge and assent by a witnessing of the wisdom which God has revealed.

Now if any one seems to come short of this wisdom, and we all do, we have the advice given us by James to ask God for it, and we have the assurance that God will give it in His own simple, straightforward manner if we approach God not in a reproachful way, but in the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom.

Let us suppose that God complies with our request and that we have the gift of wisdom, does this give us the right to be proud of ourselves? It is a common failing of a learned individual that with his increased wisdom he becomes proud. But it is not

wise for a wise man to become proud.

Since pride spoils wisdom, we find so much bitter envying and strife, boastfulness and lying against the truth, in the so-called wisdom of this world. That kind of wisdom is described by James as earthly, sensual, devilish, James 3, 13-14.

True wisdom is humble. To accept a Saviour requires first an acknowledgement of sin. That always requires a deep and genuine humility. Humility is not necessarily a characteristic of knowledge. "Knowledge puffeth up," I Corinthians 8, 1. A person may be proud and still have knowledge and increase his knowledge. But if a person has wisdom and is proud, his wisdom ceases to be true wisdom. "Who is wise and endued with knowledge among you? let him show from a good walk of life his works in humility of wisdom," James 3, 13. When Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven and prayed: "Father, I thank thee that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes", Matt. 11, 25, He implied that often those who have amassed a great deal of wisdom are too proud to see the simple but profound wisdom that He has for them, but which is kept hidden from them because of their pride. Babes, those who become as little children in their faith, get the full benefit of God's wisdom because they receive it in the humility that God requires. The Holy Spirit prepares the heart for the entrance of such wisdom by making and keeping it humble, and only after this has happened can He who searches the deep things of God bring

His divine illumination to bear upon the heart of man and confirm spiritual truth there by continually making a comparison of spiritual things with spiritual, I Cor. 2, 13. "To the Jew a stumbling block, to the Greek foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God." I Cor. 1, 23-24.

Perhaps the best summary and definition that we have of the concept "wisdom" is given us in James 3, 17: "The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and of good fruits, without variance, unhypocritical."

The first characteristic of wisdom which is predicated in this passage is its purity. Having come from a pure and sinless source, from heaven above, that is, from Him who fills the heavens, it has this quality of purifying everything with which it comes into contact. True wisdom can not compromise with sin. When wisdom of a heavenly nature enters the heart, sin must vanish.

The second characteristic of wisdom is its peacefulness. "All her ways are peace," Prov. 3, 7. That one has perfect peace, who knows the wisdom that comes from above. In sharp contrast to this peace which heavenly wisdom affords is the strife that is so prevalent there where earthly wisdom is supreme.

The third quality of wisdom is gentleness, mildness, fairness. Here we have something akin to the "sweet reasonableness"

of which Matthew Arnold spoke. The contrast is the unreasonableness of much that calls itself earthly wisdom.

The fourth quality of wisdom is its compliant nature, its obedient attitude, its readiness to be intreated. Many of the worldly wise have an unbending, stubborn nature.

Wisdom is fifthly described as being full of mercy and good-fruits. Wisdom loves the good and is a lover of men who follow the good. It does not curse and revile, but blesses and shows its blessing in the fruits of mercy that flow from it.

In the sixth place it is asserted that wisdom is without variance. It does not judge uncharitably the faults of others. It does not seek to stir up strife, but by following a single-minded course tends to keep trouble from breaking out.

Finally, wisdom is unhypositical. There is nothing false about it. It is genuine in contrast to all other wisdom.

The Apocryphal book of Wisdom has the following definition of wisdom (7, 25): "For it is a breath of the power of God, and that which flows out from the pure glory of the Creator of all." In this passage the divine character of wisdom is most beautifully expressed. It is this wisdom of the divine which when imparted to man gives him a stimulus to use all of his natural abilities and aptitudes in the service of God.

In summing up the thoughts we have presented on "sophia", we may define this term in a general way as "a comprehensive knowledge of things in their proper nature and relations, together with the power of combining them in the most useful manner".

69. Expositor's Greek New Testament, Vol IV, p. 456.

70. McClintock and Strong, Ibid., Vol. X, p. 1019.

Often one must examine the context closely, to ascertain just what is implied by "sophia". The line-up of usages given below will summarize quite well the possible meanings:

1. "It is used to express the understanding or knowledge of things both human and divine, chiefly in a practical and moral aspect....
2. "It is put for ingenuity, skill, dexterity...
3. "Wisdom is used for subtlety, craft, stratagem, whether good or evil....
4. "It stands for doctrine, learning, experience, sagacity.....
5. "It is put sometimes for the skill or arts of magicians, wizards, fortune-tellers etc...
6. "The wisdom or learning and philosophy current among the Greeks and Romans in the apostolic age, which stood in contrast with the simplicity of the Gospel and tended to draw away the minds of men from divine truth, is called "fleshly wisdom", "wisdom of this world", and "wisdom of men".
7. "In respect to divine things, wisdom, i.e. knowledge, insight, deep understanding, is represented everywhere as a divine gift, including the idea of practical application, and is thus distinguished from theoretical knowledge." 71

The arrangement of possible meanings for "sophia" given above is still too general for our final summary. For that reason we have listed below a summary which contains a part of what is said above and in part the results of our findings from Scripture in regard to this gift:

1. Christ is the personification of all true wisdom. In Him are hid all of its treasures.
2. The Holy Spirit through the inspired Scriptures provides the knowledge of Christ.
3. In this way Christ enters the heart of a believer and the believers contact with true wisdom becomes established.
4. Once Christ lives in a believer, the gifts of His wisdom will become active in the natural endowments of the person.
5. The believer then puts his knowledge of human and divine things to use in the field of morals.
6. The believer uses his ingenuity, skill, dexterity, to the best possible use in Christ's kingdom.
7. Subtlety, craft, stratagem is a gift necessary in Christ's kingdom to overcome the subtlety, craft, and stratagem of the Evil One.

8. Learning, experience, sagacity find their place of usefulness also in the affairs of God. They are used to refute the rationalistic elements of "fleshly wisdom".
9. The temptation to discover the "depths of Satan" by experiencing it is something that true wisdom has learned to shun.
10. Thus the gift of wisdom is a blessing of God which may touch any phase of the Christian life. Its basis is always Christ, the Wisdom of God.

VIII. THE NATURE OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF TEACHING

One of the most important functions derived from the gift of wisdom and knowledge is that of teaching. The New Testament writings make much of this gift of God. Jesus is first of all portrayed as the great Teacher; and when He ascends into heaven, he tells the apostles to go and make disciples of all nations. Congregations established everywhere are in need of teachers to make clear to young and old the doctrines of God as they appeared in Old Testament Scripture, and as they were being formulated by the Holy Spirit in their New Testament setting through the writings of the apostles and evangelists.

We have listed below some pertinent passages regarding the concept of teaching, "didachee", as found in the New Testament. A consideration of them should help us to understand the nature of the gift of teaching:

Matthew 7, 28

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these words, the crowd marveled at His teaching, for He taught them as having authority, and not as their scribes."

John 7, 16

"Jesus answered them therefore and said: My teaching is not Mine, but of Him who sent Me."

Matthew 16, 12

"Then they understood, that he did not say to keep away from the leaven of bread, but from the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Acts 2, 42

"And they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles."

Acts 5, 28

"We have given you the command not to teach in this name, and, behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you desire to bring upon us the blood of this man."

Acts 17, 19

"And taking him on the Areopagus, they said: "Are we able to know what this new teaching is which is spoken by you."

Romans 6, 17

"Thanks be to God, because you were servants of sin, but have become obedient from the heart unto that type of teaching which you have received."

Romans 16, 17

"I exhort you, brethren, to observe the divisions and the offenses which are done contrary to the teaching which you have learned and turn aside from them."

2 John 9 f.

"Every one who goes ahead and does not remain in the teaching of Christ does not have God. He who remains in the teaching, this one has the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into the house, and do not say greetings to him."

2 Timothy 4, 2

"Preach the Word, be ready in opportune times and inopportune times; reprove, rebuke, exhort, in all long-suffering and teaching."

Titus 1, 9

"Keeping his ground according to the faithful Word, in order that he may be able by sound teaching to exhort and rebuke those who say contrary things."

Hebrews 6, 2

"Not laying down again a foundation of repentance and dead works, and faith toward God, teaching of Baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment."

Hebrew 13, 9

"Do not be borne aside by varied and strange teachings."

Acts 13, 1

"There were at the church which was at Antioch prophets and teachers."

James 3, 1

"Do not be many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive a greater judgment."

I Corinthians 12, 28

"And God hath placed some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers.....

Ephesians 4, 11

"And he placed the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and the teachers, toward the cleansing of the saints into the work of serving, unto the edification of the body of Christ."

I Timothy 2, 7

"Unto which I was placed a preacher and apostle, I speak the truth, I do not lie, a teacher of Gentiles in faith and truth."

2 Timothy 1, 11

"Unto which I was placed a preacher and apostle and teacher."

Thayer gives the following meanings for the concept
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of teaching as it is found in the New Testament:

1. That which is taught, namely a doctrine or a teaching concerning something.
2. The act of teaching or instruction.

Doctrine or teaching may be of two kinds. It may concern Biblical or secular matters just as knowledge and wisdom may also be divided. The doctrines concerning divine

things are much more necessary for man than the teachings of this world. Rightly understood Biblical teaching does comprehend all of the sciences of this world, yet it is well to observe a distinction between the two for clarity's sake. The Holy Spirit is most concerned about the dispensing of doctrines that pertain to man's salvation and for that reason the special gift of teaching is given.

The act of teaching implies usually that one holds a discourse with others in order to instruct them. A man discharges the office of a teacher whenever through conversation or public didactic discourse he makes contributions to the knowledge of the one he teaches, imparts instruction, and instills doctrine by explaining and expounding matters which are as yet beyond the grasp of his auditor or auditors.

Thayer further states that the New Testament uses the name teacher in the following ways:

1. One who is gifted for teaching or one who thinks himself so: Heb. 5, 12; Ro. 2, 10
2. The teachers of the Jewish religion: Lk. 2, 46. (The Hebrew "Rav" became Rabbi.)
3. Those who by their great power as teachers drew great crowds about them: a. John the Baptist. b. Jesus. Luke 3, 12 and John 1, 38.
4. By preeminence the name is used of Jesus by Himself as the One who showed the way of salvation, Mt. 23, 8.
5. The apostles. I Tim. 2, 7.
6. Those who in religious assemblies of Christians undertook the work of teaching, with the special assistance of the Holy Spirit, I Cor. 12, 28.
7. The false teachers among the Christians. 2 Tim. 4, 3.

In the consideration of the spiritual gift of teaching that will now follow we are primarily concerned with the fourth,

fifth, and sixth class mentioned above. The other classes will be casually referred to. We cannot avoid making mention of Jesus as a Teacher since the impress of His teaching has left its clear marks throughout the entire New Testament Age.

Christianity came into existence during a time when teaching was considered to be a function of prestige in Jewish circles. The rabbis with their traditional research and instruction dominated the thinking of the whole Jewish race. They claimed for themselves a reverence which should exceed even the reverence due father and mother, for while the latter had brought a man into the world, the former claimed to be able to teach the wisdom which would bring one into the world to come. Thus it happened that Jesus could describe the rabbis of his day as those who felt themselves entitled to highest rank: "They love the uppermost places at feasts and the front seats in the synagogue, and the greetings in the market place and to be called of men 'rabbi,'" Matt. 23, 6 f. Their dress corresponded to their elevated opinions about themselves.⁷⁴

Into such a setting came Jesus, the most truly authoritative teacher that ever existed. His teaching stood out. It took the notice of all Palestine. There was something uniquely significant about it. Crowds marveled at His teaching, for He not only claimed the authority of a teacher, but His whole mien and bearing bore testimony to the fact that what He taught was true. He taught as one actually having authority, and not as the scribes who often seemed to doubt the correctness of their assertions.

⁷⁴. Matthew 23 gives a detailed summary of the character of Jewish rabbis.

In contrast to the Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus was very modest in the portrayal of His truth. He said to His followers: "My teaching is not Mine, but of Him who sent Me." As yet the Messianic dignity of Christ was not apparent. People about Him did not know Him for what He actually was, the Son of God. If the prominence of any of the teachers among the Scribes and Pharisees had not been clearly known, they would have done everything in their power to make it known as quickly as possible. Not so Jesus. He was content to be a teacher with no especially large or prominent audience. A small group of "disciples", "mattheetai", gathered about Him, and by frequent and gentle hints, by words fitly spoken, He unraveled for them some of the mysteries of His being.

When the Synoptic Gospels speak of the "didachee" of Jesus with or without recognition of the wonderful impression it made upon hearers they do not mean His doctrine alone, a sort of special Dogmatics or Ethics which He proclaimed, but an entire "didaskein" exemplified also in the action and conduct of the teacher, a making known of the divine will both as to its content and form. That there was no systematic arrangement of teaching with an especially arranged curriculum is very clear. The discourses of Jesus as they appear in the Gospel of John certainly show that there was nothing formal at all in the teaching of Jesus.

Likewise, when the teaching of the apostles is referred to, we are to suppose that it was a teaching which manifested itself in their whole conduct and manner of life. This factor led people

to accept it. "They continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine," Acts 2, 42. There was of course a definite presentation of teaching. No one questioned the fact that they were succeeding in their purpose of imparting knowledge and instilling Christian principles. There were those who resented deeply this action of the apostles. The rulers of the Jews forbade the disciples of Jesus to teach in His name, but in spite of this they filled Jerusalem with their teaching, Acts 5, 28. They felt it their God-given duty to continue the work in spite of the fact that some desired to slay them, Acts 5, 33. Thus while some of the Jews were won over by the teaching of the apostles, others were calloused against it and found it a stumbling block to their own perdition.

An interesting case of apostolic teaching is that of Paul's didactic discourse to the Greeks at Athens. Though this is really an instance of apostolic preaching, yet because of its thoroughly didactic nature, we can very well include it under the head of teaching. All good preaching is always of a didactic nature. The philosophers who were present when Paul began his didactic discourse were wondering what this "babbler" might say. They thought it possible that he might be guilty of a deed, which to the Greeks was a capital offense, of setting forth strange gods. Paul lost no time in demonstrating his aptness to teach. His address was very much to the point and very well suited to the audience of philosophers before him. To make his address more appealing he used illustrations and quotations familiar to the Greeks. Paul draws a sharp contrast between idolatry and the nature of

God. They have intimated that his teaching might be a new one, and Paul very adeptly answers this natural objection. He says simply that in the past God had left men in ignorance of it, and therefore it could not be a new teaching. He insists upon the need of repentance. Finally, he adds also the thought of resurrection by alluding to the final judgment. Paul may have discussed his teaching at Athens much more than is apparent from the account of Acts 17. What the ultimate results of his teachings were would be difficult to determine, but the great facts of his teaching are clear.

In Romans 6, 17 and 16, 17 Paul speaks of the teaching which was delivered to Roman Christians and which they learned. This accepted Christian teaching was to be obeyed, rather than that sin should be obeyed, or that they should turn aside from this teaching to embrace false teaching, the cause of divisions and offenses. Christian congregations were often torn assunder by their failure to keep the teaching of the apostles pure. Error often reared its ugly head. The teaching of Balaam, Rev. 2, 4; the teaching of the Nicolaitans, Rev. 2, 15; and the teaching of Jezebel, Rev. 2, 24 are warning examples. Such perversions of truth were not to be trifled with. They deprived the believer of the true God, 2 John 9 f. This was reason enough to steer clear of errorists and to avoid all unionistic practises. Paul's advice to Timothy over and against those who will not endure sound teaching is: "Preach the word, be instant in season, and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching."

The qualifications of a bishop that Paul lays down for Titus also very properly includes the ability "by sound teaching both to exhort and convince the gain-sayers".

In several cases in Hebrews, namely Hebrews 6, 2, and Hebrews 13, 9, there seem to be evidences of a more formal type of teaching. The teaching of Baptism mentioned together with the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment seem to imply that there was some definite course which teachers followed in the instruction given to Jewish converts. Similarly the admonition given in Hebrews 13, 9 that Christians should not be borne aside by varied and strange teachings seems to point to the beginnings of a system of apologetics and possibly even a foretaste of what we now term Comparative Symbolics.

The very thought of a more formal type of teaching leads us into a consideration of the duties of the "didaskoloi" in the early Christian congregations.

In James 3, 1 Kittel believes that the expression "didaskoloi", masters, had special reference to the Jewish teachers who gave exegesis on the Law. The whole connection in James seems to be more Jewish than Greek and the "wisdom" that is described in the same chapter seems to have a rabbinical character rather than leanings toward the Greek "sophia". ⁷⁵

In I Corinthians 12, 28 the "didaskoloi" stand after the "apostoloi" and "propheetai" in a listing of the spiritual workers who have special functions in a Christian congregation.

⁷⁵. Op. Cit. Vol 2, p. 160 f.

Ephesians 4, 11 places evangelists, "euaggelistas", and pastors, "poimenas" between prophets and teachers.⁷⁶

In Acts 13, 1 the teachers appear next to the "propheetai". The men mentioned in Acts 13, 1 Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul are probably all of Jewish blood, and lived by the teaching of the Law. It is not clear whether the men mentioned all were both prophets and teachers, or whether merely some, if any, had both offices while others had one of the two. It is held that prophets were spiritual ones "pneumatikoi" but that teachers were not so regarded. This conclusion is based on Jewish and early Christian usage.⁷⁷

When in Ephesians 4, 11 we find that the "didaskoloi" and "poimenes" are regarded as identical, this lies in the very nature of the case. The "poimeen", who is responsible for the life of the congregation, has also the office of teacher, and all the teaching that is conducted in the congregation is connected with his office. This is corroborated in Didache 15, 1 where the congregation is urged to appoint overseers, "episcopous kai diakonous axious tou Kurion" and that these must administer the public services of the prophets and teachers. Here the function of the "didaskalos" is considered a divine service. On this account it is self-understood also that the "didaskolos" does in the very first place that which he teaches.⁷⁸

One should guard against the idea that in I Corinthians 12, 28 f. and Ephesians 4, 11 an evaluation is being made of

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

the various functions of the church-workers according to the place that they are to occupy. The order is followed not to indicate rank, but purely for the sake of enumeration.⁷⁹

It is true, however, that the office of a "didaskalos" can function only after an "apostolos" and a "propheetees" have laid the ground for a Christian attitude and a Christian manner of life. In this respect the "didaskalos" is very similar to the "chakam" or "sophos" of late Jewdom, whose work was definitely within a congregation after its founding. The reason for adding evangelists and pastors in the Ephesians' list is that the apostles disappear from the life of the Church with the first Christian congregation and their work is left to evangelists, who then carry out the main mission work. Basically we have the same state of affairs as appears in the first Gospel, Matthew 4, 12 ff. 23 ff., where Jesus first as an Evangelist begins and awakens faith in the disciples before He stand before them as a Teacher. It is to be noted that in the early Christianity of Paul's time, they had not departed from the example of Jesus.⁸⁰

From I Corinithians 12, 28 and Ephesians 4, 1 we receive light also in regard to the passages of I Timothy 2, 7; and II Timothy 1, 11. In these two passages Paul calls himself a "keerux" and a "didakalos" and an "apostolos". Thus it appears that as an apostle, Paul had the double function of preaching and teaching. The term "apostolos" could very well include these

^{79.} Ibid.

^{80.} Ibid.

functions. An apostle is one who possesses a high consciousness of being sent and an equally strong inclination and readiness to serve as we have it exemplified to the highest degree in the Apostle Paul. Some have thought that the names by which Paul calls himself in I Timothy 2, 7 refer to the "Herrscheranspruch" of a Jewish Rabbi and the "Erkenntnisanspruch" of the Greek philosopher, and that therefore as a preacher he was a good Jew, and as a teacher he was a learned Greek. But that idea seems to remote. And there are better and sounder ways of demonstrating the magnitude of Paul's service. In I Timothy 2, 7, for example, he is called a "didaskalos ethnoon",
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a teacher of nations.

How individuals came to be recognized as teachers is not clear from New Testament writings. Prof. Harnack infers from James 3, 1: "Be not many teachers, knowing that we shall receive a greater condemnation", that to become a teacher was a matter of personal choice, based upon the individual's consciousness of possessing a charism of teaching. That a teacher was also one who received the Holy Spirit might be inferred from I Corinthians 12, 8 where the charisms of wisdom and knowledge are ascribed to the Holy Spirit's work and to be a teacher necessarily implies that one have one of these charisms. Whether he was a genuine teacher or not was a matter which had to be decided by the churches; at least so the account of Didache 13, 2 informs us. Yet, as Prof. Harnack correctly says, the churches "merely verified

the existence of a divine commission; they did not ~~rule~~ the slightest degree confer any office by their action." ⁸²

It was the rule of the early Christian churches to have the teachers ⁸³ permanently domiciled in the community in which they were working.

From the warning of James 3, 1, from the Saviour's admonition to His disciples not to be called "Rabbi", Matt. 23, 8, and from frequent warnings in the early writings, we may infer that this order of the ministry was subject to great abusess. Being grouped with the "honoured class" of apostles and prophets, they could claim support and were not obliged to be penniless. Because many functions were given to them which were not strictly a teaching of the Word, charismatic teaching insensibly passed over into the profane. This factor marked a turning point of Christian teachers as an institution. The Christian schools founded similar to the numerous contemporary schools of the Greek and Roman philosophers developed very readily in a sectarian direction. Perhaps it is for this reason that an elaborate charge to teachers is given in the Pseudo-Clementine Epist. de Virginitate I, 11. Whether authentic or not, it is worth quoting:

"They would be teachers and show off their learning... and they heed not what Scripture saith: "Be not many teachers, my brethren, and be not all prophets...Let us therefore dread that judgment which hangs over teachers. For indeed a severe judgment shall those teachers undergo who teach but do not practise, as also those who falsely take on themselves the name of Christ, and say they are speaking the truth, whereas they gad round and wander

82. Harnack, Ibid., Vol. I, p. 336.

83. Ibid. p. 339

84. Ibid. p. 354 ff.

rashly about and exalte themselves and glory in the mind of their flesh.. But if thou hast received the word of knowledge, or of teaching, or of prophecy, or of ministry, let God be praised.. therefore with that spiritual gift received from God, do thou serve thy brethren, the spiritual ones, even the prophets who detect that thy words are the words of God; and publish the gift thou hast received in the assembly of the church to edify thy brethren in Christ."

To be distinguished from the teachers of the apostolic age are the teachers of later centuries. It seems that in the Egyptian province in the Alexandrian community the order of teachers kept its prominence the longest. Yet we do not have here teachers in the sense of I Cor. 12, 28. The early Christian schooling in Alexandria in the third century is not a continuation of the first century Christian teachers. We have in Alexandria an infiltration of Greek ideas which brought on an intellectualizing of Christianity and faith, against which Jesus had warned, and Paul and the first Christian teachers had fought with all their
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might.

The gift of true teaching is therefore a most important phase of evangelistic work. Teaching is a branch of the commission which Christ gave to His disciples: "Go", said He, "and teach all nations", Matt. 28, 19; or as it is recorded by another evangelist: "Preach the Gospel to every creature," Mark 16, 15. In this way "disciples" were to be gained, as the word "matheeteusate" imports. It is one of the precious promises of the new covenant
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that all its subjects shall be "taught of the Lord", Isaiah, 54, 13.

But among those who know the Lord it is not necessary

85. Kittel, Ibid., Vol. II, p. 161 f.

86. McClintock and Strong, Ibid. Vol. X, p. 236.

that every man teach his neighbour, for all know Him from the least to the greatest. It is the purpose of Christian teaching to reach those especially who have not as yet received this teaching and have no full conception of the knowledge of God.

In summarizing our finds on the gift of teaching we may state that it is a derivative gift of the charisms of wisdom and knowledge; and the following points ought to be noted especially:

1. The gift of teaching is not an abstract thing, but it consists of two very definite things which must be taken together: a. The doctrine taught.
b. The act of teaching.
2. Jesus stands out as an ideal teacher. He taught as never man taught.
3. The gift of teaching is a work of the Holy Spirit.
4. The object of the gift of teaching is to instil into men a knowledge of divine things and the duties of man.
5. Apostles and prophets served not only as evangelists, but also as teachers.
6. There are many pitfalls in teaching which must be guarded against.
7. Yet if this gift is used properly, it becomes an outstanding factor in the work of the kingdom of God. We are told in the prophecy of Daniel 12, 3 that at the end of time, teachers shall shine as the brightness of the firmament.

IX. THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS OF CHARITABLE ENDEAVORS

The great variety of Christian ministrations of charity can not well be covered within the span of one short chapter. Gifts of service, divine healings, and charitable helps of all kinds come under this heading. Strictly speaking all spiritual gifts should be used in charitable endeavors. When a prophet discourses on a theological subject he should do that out of love for his hearers. When a teacher dispenses wisdom and knowledge for the benefit of others, he should do so because he has a burning desire to enlighten them. But what we really have in mind by charitable endeavors is the providing of material comforts and blessings for those who are sorely in want, or distressed through sickness and poverty. To those who are in such circumstances, true Christian charity finds opportunity actively to express itself in sympathy, liberality, and benevolence in general. It is wrong however to conceive of Christian charity as merely a natural benevolence and philanthropy. It is rather:

"a disposition wrought by the Holy Ghost, springing from the consciousness of reconciliation; a vital supernatural energy, uniting all powers of the soul with God, the essence of all love, and consecrating them to the service of his kingdom." 87

The most outstanding description of love in the New Testament is quoted here at the beginning of our discussion:

87. McClintock and Strong, *Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 218. The energy spoken of above is supernatural because the faith from which it flows is supernatural. The gift of Christian charity is not however supernatural, at least not in the same sense as prophecy or miracles are supernatural.

I Corinthians 13

"And yet I show you a more excellent way. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and I do not have love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophecy and I know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have faith so that mountains be removed, and I do not have love, I am nothing. And if I feed all of my possessions, and if I deliver my body in order that I be burned, and I do not have love, it profits me nothing. Love is long-suffering, love is kind, love does not boast, love does not puff up, does not behave indecently, does not seek her own things, is not provoked, considers not the evil, does not rejoice in injustice, but rejoices in the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never falls. If there is prophecy, it will be abolished, if tongues, they will cease, if knowledge, it shall be abolished. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect is come, that which is in part will be abolished. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought as a child, I considered as a child; when I became a man, I put away childish things; for we see through a glass in a riddle, but then face to face, now I know in part, but then I will be recognized as I am known, and now abideth faith, hope, love; but the greatest of these is love."

This description of love, it is claimed, is the most beautiful poetry that the New Testament contains, barring none. We might well expect that an elaboration of such a priceless virtue would be written in elevated language. This great gift which the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in the hearts of men transcends all others. It originates in God, it is demonstrated most clearly in Jesus work of redemption, and it is whipped into action by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. One writer describes Christian love in the following way:

"As faith lies at the bottom of all charisms and forms their common root, so also love is properly not a gift by itself, but the soul of all gifts, binding them together like the members of a body, making them work in and for each other and directing them to common good. It maintains the unity of the manifold divine powers, subordinates everything individual and personal to the general, and makes it subservient to the interests of the

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body of Christ".

Faith unites us with God, hope lifts us up to God, but
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love makes us conformable to God. Faith will be changed into
sight, hope into fruition, but love will ever continue to become
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more deep and true. Love manifests a unity with divine powers
which can make itself prominent and active in daily life. From
this angle especially, as a gift of God to men, we should like
to discuss the topic of love and the spiritual gifts that issue
from it.

Some of the practical ways in which love was evidenced in
91
the apostolic age are the following:

1. Almsgiving in general.
2. Support of teachers and officials.
3. Support of widows and orphans.
4. Support of the sick, the infirm and disabled.
5. The care of prisoners.
6. The care of poor people.
7. The care of slaves.
8. The care of those visited by great calamities.
9. The care of brethren on a journey-hospitality,
and of churches in poverty and peril.

Much of this work was no doubt carried on by the "diakonoi",
special officers of the church who in Acts 6 are spoken of as
helpers of the apostles, especially in the administration of
funds for charity. Otherwise too these men seem to have occupied
an important position in the government of the church, as it
appears from the list of requirements in I Timothy 3, 1-18.

We shall enter into a discussion now of the separate
points listed above in order to see how the gift of charity can
be operative in a Christian congregation.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.

90. Kuyper, Ibid., p. 541.

91. Harnack, Ibid., p. 153.

1. Almsgiving

Three of the passages that come to mind on the subject of almsgiving are:

Matthew 19, 21

"Jesus said to him: "If you wish to be perfect, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come follow Me."

Ephesians 4, 28

"He who steals, let him steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the things that are good, in order that he may have to give to him that needeth."

Acts 3, 2

"And a certain man, being lame from his mother's womb, was brought, whom they placed each day at the door of the temple to ask alms from those who went into the temple."

As Jesus had shown a decided interest in the poor and down-trodden, it followed that those who became Christians would be forward in this kind of work. They no longer had a visible Savior now, but they did have the poor with them on whom they could now confer their kindnesses. The more truly Christian they were, the more their treasure was in heaven. What they possessed they possessed as not possessing. It is clear that a great deal of alms was supplied the treasuries of the first congregations specifically for the benefit of the poor. Many early Christians followed the advice that the rich young ruler had refused to follow. Many who formerly were notorious sinners, were made Christians, their lives underwent a reconstruction process and they worked and labored and gave of their fruits for the poor. Peter and John, who had no alms to give, gave the lame man the power of earning his own living

and possibly even the power to help others in need. Later Cyprian pictured the giving of alms as a sight for God and
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the angels to behold:

"What gift is it which is set forth for praise in the sight of God! If when the Gentiles offer gifts, it seems a great and glorious thing to have proconsuls or emperors present, and if their better classes make greater preparations and display in order to please the authorities--how much more illustrious and splendid is the glory of having God and Christ as spectators of the gift."

Later the "agapee" became an institution which contributed
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to the welfare of the poor also.

2.3. The Support of Church Officers

Three passages where the support of church officers is alluded to are:

Luke 10, 7

"Eat and drink the things with them, for the laborer is worthy of his hire."

I Corinthians 9, 14

"Thus also the Lord has ordained for those who preach the Gospel to live of the Gospel."

Galatians 6, 6

"Let him that is taught in the Word, have things in common with him that teacheth in all good things."

The rule that the laborer is worthy of his hire applied not only to the prophets and apostles, but also to the teachers who were in permanent residence where the churches were found.

92. Cyprian, De Op. et Eleem. xxi-quoted from Harnack, Ibid. p. 154.

93. Harnack, Ibid. p. 156.

Insofar as the official duties of the permanent preachers and teachers of the Word made inroads upon their civil occupations, they were permitted to claim a livelihood. In the first centuries especially it occurred quite frequently that church officials did not abandon their civil calling. And if by their civil employment they gained their own livelihood they had no claim on church funds. In the course of time it became more and more difficult⁹⁴ to combine civil and ecclesiastical work.

The church work was a full time activity. Without a doubt many abuses crept in and Paul warns Christian overseers, bishops, and deacons not to be "lovers of money". At the same time he gives the admonition to the members of the congregation, not to neglect the support of those who are laboring among them in the Word.

3. The Care of Widows and Orphans

The care of widows and orphans is mentioned in the following passages:

James 3, 27

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to take care of ("episkeptesthai") orphans and widows in their affliction."

Acts 6, 1-3

"In those days when the disciples were multiplying there was a murmuring of the Greeks against the Hebrews, because their widows were overlooked in the daily service. But the twelve, calling together the multitude of disciples, said: "It is not agreeable that we neglect the Word of God to serve tables. But, brethren, choose seven men who are witnessing among you, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom ye shall establish for this need."

94. Ibid. p. 158

Widows and orphans are always invariably mentioned and classed with the poor, whenever poverty-stricken situations are alluded to in the early writings. Due largely to the social conditions existant at that time, it was extremely hard for widows and orphans to gain their livelihood. Therefore James urges Christians to pay attention to the needs of this class. The Church at Jerusalem evidently was making special provisions for widows as is apparent also from Acts 6, 1 ff. Hermas opens his catalogue of virtues with the words: "to serve widows and visit the forlorn and orphans" (Mand. viii, 10).⁹⁵ Lactatius adduces another special argument for the duty of supporting widows and orphans:⁹⁶

"God commands them to be cared for, in order that no one may be hindered from going to his death for righteousness' sake on the plea of regard for his dear children, but that he may promptly and boldly encounter death, knowing that his beloved ones are left in God's care and will never lack protection."

Here too, however, abuses crept in. "Scandal mongering, avarice, drunkenness, and arrogance had all to be dealt with in the case of widows who were being maintained by the church. It even happened that some widows put out to usury the funds they had thus received."⁹⁷ These factors give rhyme and reason to the remark of Paul in I Timothy 5: 5.6; "Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continues in beseechings and prayers night and day, but she that liveth luxuriously is dead while she lives." It is very apparent that Christian love in spite

95. Ibid. p. 159 f.

96. Ibid.

97. Ibid.

of these abuses could find much room for activity among widows and orphans, not only from a financial view-point, but also in helping towards the improvement of their social and moral standing.

4. The Support of The Sick

The support of the sick is referred to in this passage:

James 5, 14 f.

"Is there any one sick among you? Let him call the elders of the church, and let them pray for him anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him, and if he has done sin, it shall be forgiven him."

We have already touched upon the cure of the sick that was sometimes provided through the charisms of miracles. Where it was impossible to secure such aid, Christian charity had to intervene. The patient was supported by the consolation that the members of the church were praying for him. As the deacons, "diakonoi" were called upon to do charitable work toward widows and orphans, so they had a duty also toward the sick, and were expected to visit them and to provide charitable gifts for them. The fact that such visitation was common among the early Christians is apparent from the remark of Tertullian: "Who would be willing to let his wife go through street after street to other men's houses, and indeed to the poorest cottages, in order to visit the brethren," ad. Uxor, ii, 4. Next to the sick, those in affliction ("en thlipsei") and people sick in soul, the helpless and disabled and finally the poor in general were attended to.

Concrete examples of the activity of the church among the sick are quite numerous. It is said of the deacons in the Apostolic Constitutions:

"They are to be doers of good works, exercising a general supervision day and night, neither scorning the poor, nor respecting the person of the rich; they must ascertain who are in distress and not exclude them from a share in the church funds, compelling also the well-to-do to put money aside for good works." 99

It took Christian courage, it took more than that-- it took the special gift of liberality and love, the dynamic for which was provided by the Holy Spirit to cause this philanthropy. The Evil One, jealous of the prestige that this work won for Christianity, attempted his own imitations of it through the centuries. But the main work of this kind usually always found its origin in Christ-filled individuals who could not help but evince a love for unfortunates such as the sick and dying.

5. The Care for Prisoners

Care for prisoners is evidenced already in the care that the Apostle Paul received from his Christian friends during periods of imprisonment; also while Peter was imprisoned a group of Christians were gathered together, no doubt, to discuss what they could do for him; and the author to the Hebrews mentions a compassion that was shown him while he was in bonds, Hebrews 10,34.

It is remarkable in the first place how Christian prisoners could exhibit such an optimistic temperament even while languishing in prison because of the persecution of their faith. Thus Paul,

99. Ibid. p. 161. This is a quotation from A.C. Texte u. Unters 11.5.8.ff.

a prisoner of the Lord, turned his thoughts to a much nobler imprisonment, if we dare to call it that; the endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, Ephesians 4, 3. He speaks also of Him who had led captivity captive and had given gifts to men. One such gift was the gift of charity that would gladly visit people who were in prison, ministering both to their spiritual and bodily wants. Whether people were imprisoned because of their faith or because of debt or any other reason, they had to be reached, if at all possible, by Christian charity. Deacons especially were engaged in this, but ordinary Christians also took part. If distinguished teachers among the Christians were imprisoned, there was no difficulty usually in reaching them, and many were ready to move heaven and earth to get access to these prisoners. Stories are told of the special privileges sometimes granted Christians by gaolers, or mention is made of foods that were smuggled in. Everything was done, not only to alleviate the lot of the prisoner, but to secure his release if possible. This remained, however, not so much a work of the Church but rather a work of private generosity which certainly involved a great deal of heroism on the part of one who undertook this task. This was especially difficult later in view of the laws passed forbidding one to show kindness to prisoners. Eusebius relates a passage in which it is stated that those who attempted to show kindness to prisoners were to be treated with the same imprisonment as the others were suffering.¹⁰⁰

This legislation, however, did not entirely stop the

100. Ibid. p. 162 ff.

good work of love that Christians portrayed, for many continued persistently in this activity which shall on Judgment Day be rewarded with the words of the Savior: "I was in prison and ye visited Me," Matthew 25, 36.

5. The Care for the Poor.

Care for the poor was supervised again by the deacons and the funds of Christian treasuries were used both to feed and to bury the poor.

At the anointing of Jesus, Judas made the hypocritical statement which, however, gives us an insight into what was being done at that time: "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?" John 12, 5. But Jesus re-proved the selfishness of Judas and accepted the anointing as a preparation for His burial. It is significant that in later times it was just this item of an honorable burial that poor people were unable to afford, and it became then the task of Christians to supply funds enough to make a decent burial for poor people possible. Julian the Apostate raves about this in a letter to Arsacius: "This godlessness is mainly furthered by its philanthropy toward strangers and its careful attention to the bestowal of the dead. Tertullian also corroborates the fact that burial of the poor brethren took place at the expense of common funds. Great pain was felt at the prospect of having to forego the privilege of burial and therefore the Christian Church was fulfilling a duty which even their opponents felt to be a human obligation,

But here too again, abuses crept in. In many cases these interments were not restricted to those who were actually Christians and for this reason offense may have been given when Christians performed this charity even for those who did not confess the faith. Christians also exceeded their limits at times by countenancing oblations offered for the welfare of the souls of the departed,¹⁰¹ a foretaste of the practise of Roman Catholicism. In general, however, much good was done for the poor in times of distress. The fact that many a hungry person was fed through Christian charity aroused the jealousy and curiosity of the heathen. Julian the Apostate had to admit: "These godless Galilaeans feed not only their own poor, but ours; our poor lack our care".¹⁰² Tertullian says in defense of the Christian cause: "True charity disburses more money on the streets than your religion in the temples."¹⁰³ We believe that Paul inculcates charity toward the poor when he says: "Let us do good to all men, especially to those who belong to the household of faith," Gal. 6, 10. Many anxieties were quelled and Christianity was much enhanced through such activity of the Christian churches.

7. The Care of Slaves

Care for slaves is referred to in the following Scripture references:

I Corinthians 7, 20

"Let each, in the calling in which he is called, remain in this. If you are called as a slave, let it not be a care to you."

101. This material and quotations of p.121 are from Ibid. p. 165 f.

102. Ibid. p. 162

103. Ibid.

Ephesians 6, 9

"And you lords, do the same things to them, ceasing threatening, knowing that also their and your Lord is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with Him."

Colossians 3, 10-13

"Put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him, where there can no longer be Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free, but Christ is all things in all; put on therefore, as the holy and beloved elect of God, bowels of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, bearing with one another and forgiving one another."

Colossians 4, 1

"Lords, furnish unto your slaves, justice and equality, knowing that also you have a Lord in heaven."

I Timothy 6, 1 f.

"As many slaves as are under the yoke, let them deem their own masters worthy of all honor, in order that the name and teaching of God be not blasphemed. But those who have faithful masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren, But rather let them serve, because they are faithful and beloved, those who share the good work."

The frequent reference to slavery in the epistles shows that many Christians belonged to this class. Many of Paul's converts were of the lower laboring class. Onesimus is an outstanding example. Though Paul did not aim at any particular class in his work of spreading the Gospel, his admonitions necessarily showed concern for this down-trodden class. Masters were urged to exercise Christian charity in showing clemency; slaves in turn were urged also to be charitable toward their masters and even under adverse conditions to be faithful. Prof. Harnack makes the following remarks concerning primitive Christian slavery:

"It is a mistake to suppose that any 'slave question' occupied the early church. The primitive Christians looked on slavery with neither a more friendly nor a more hostile eye than they did upon the State and legal ties. They never dreamt of working for the abolition of the State, nor did it ever occur to them to abolish slavery for humane reasons--not even amongst themselves". 104

How could the gift of Christian charity then extend its influence also to slaves, if there was no hope that the government would make an effort to change existing conditions? It could
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do so in the following ways:

1. "Converted slaves, male or female, were considered in the full sense of the term as brothers and sisters, from the standpoint of religion." Masters are urged in I Tim. 6, 1 not to despise their slaves, "because they are brethren." That Christian masters frequently instructed their slaves in Christianity is plain from quite a few early writings, especially Arist., Apol. xv.: "Slaves, male and female, are instructed so that they become Christians, on account of the love felt for them by their masters; and when this takes place, they call them brethren without any distinction whatsoever."
2. "They shared the rights of church members to the fullest extent. Slaves could even become clergymen and, in fact bishops".... "The Roman presbyter or bishop, Pius, ythe brother of Hermas must have belonged to the class of slaves. Callistus, the Roman bishop was originally a slave."
3. "As personalities (in the moral sense) they were to be as highly esteemed as freemen. The sex of female slaves had to be respected, nor was their modesty outraged. The same virtues were expected from slaves as from free men, and their virtues earned the same honor." ... "Tertullian.... (de Idol., xvii.) shows that the same courage and loyalty was expected from Christian slaves and freedmen as from the highly born. The former were not to hand the wine or join in any formula when they attended their pagan lords at sacrifice; otherwise they were guilty of idolatry."
4. "Masters and mistresses were strictly charged to treat all of their slaves humanely." ... "Christian slaves for their part were not to regard themselves their equals." As early as I Tim. 6, 1 we have the evidence that Christianity must have been in many cases misunderstood by Christian slaves... "A long series of testimonies

104. Ibid. p. 167.

105. Ibid. p. 168 f.

from the Lyons epistle onwards witnesses to the fact that Christian masters had heathen slaves. Denunciations of their Christian masters by such slaves, and calumnies against Christian worship, cannot have been altogether uncommon."

5. "To set a slave free was looked upon, probably from the very beginning as a praiseworthy action.".. "From the epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp (iv) two inferences may be drawn: (1) that slaves were ransomed with money taken from the church collections, and (2) that no claim to this favour was admitted." There was danger that if this became common practise slaves would become puffed up and would lose their feelings of deference for their masters.

There were, no doubt, many deeds of Christian love ameliorating the condition of slaves, which have never been brought to light. If there were many abuses as a result of this social inequality, there were also many attempts to make the lives of the slaves more pleasant. Yet the greatest gift to a slave was not his release from temporal bondage, but from spiritual bondage; and this release Christian charity especially sought to supply.

8. The Care for People Visited by Great Calamities.

Care for people visited by great calamities was enjoined already by the Savior's example. On one occasion Jesus mentions two such great calamities and asks those who heard Him not to suppose that they are immune to a like misfortune. The Galilaean whose blood Pilate mingled with the sacrifices and the eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell were warning examples for others to repent, to believe and to bear fruits of love toward one another. The disciples sent out by Jesus to preach His love to man were constantly meeting with that greatest calamity of all, stark unbelief, and the persecution that it brought on, and they had to flee from one city to another because of it, Matt. 10, 32.

Jewish converts who became Christians had to "endure a great fight of affliction" and be "a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions," Hebrews 10, 32. When the calamity of famine befell the churches of Judaea, the Christians of Antioch proved themselves to be Christians not only in name but also in deed by sending relief by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, Acts 11, 30.

In the early Christian centuries the gift of liberality and charity was also found in times of calamity. When a plague raged in Alexandria, bishop Dionysius wrote (Euseb., H.E. vii, 22): ¹⁰⁶

"The most of our brethren did not spare themselves, so great was their brotherly affection. They held fast to each other, visited the sick without fear, ministered to them assiduously, and served them for the sake of Christ. Right gladly did they perish with them. Indeed, many did die, after caring for the sick and giving health to others, transplanting the death of others, as it were, into themselves. In this way the noblest of our brethren died, including some presbyters and deacons and people of the highest reputation... Quite the reverse was it with the heathen. They abandoned those who began to sicken, fled from their dearest friends, threw out the sick when half dead into the streets, and let the dead lie unburied."

The deep impression that this action of Christians must have made upon heathen is clear from the practical sympathy shown by ardent followers of Christ in the great plague which occurred during the reign of Maximus Daza (Eus., H.E., ix, 8): ¹⁰⁷

"Then did they show themselves to the heathen in the clearest light. For the Christians were the only people who amid such terrible illness showed their fellow-feeling and humanity by their actions. Day by day some would busy themselves with attending to the dead and burying them (for there were numbers to whom no one else paid any heed); others gathered in one spot all who were afflicted by hunger throughout the whole city and gave bread to them all.

106. Ibid. p. 169 f.

107. Ibid.

Thus the spiritualizing impulse of Christian charity drew one man to another in times of great need especially. The parable of the good Samaritan with its new definition of neighbor and its irresistible appeal to those who had an understanding of the new commandment of love bore fruit towards a growing feeling of moral obligation toward those in the grasp of dread calamities. It gave hope to the poor unfortunates who were stricken in this manner and pointed them to a way in which they could escape the greatest calamity of being without God. Christian charity brought God to them in a most obvious manner. Beholding the love of their fellow-men toward them was a stepping stone toward beholding the love of God toward them.

9. The Care of Brethren on a Journey--Hospitality

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all men", Gal. 6, 10. The one charitable endeavor of the church which in early times extended to the "all" in a general way, in particular, however, to the brethren of the faith was the care and hospitality shown people who were making journeys and needed lodging at night. There are quite a few New Testament references to this kind of charity:

Romans 12, 13

"Given to hospitality." (Literally: Pursuing stranger-love.)

I Peter 4, 9

"Be hospitable among one another without murmuring.

Hebrews 6, 10

"For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you showed in His name, having served the saints and continuing to serve."

Hebrews 13, 2

"Do not forget love to strangers; for on account of this certain ones have received angels unaware."

Romans 16, 1 f.

"I commend to you Phoebe, our sister who is a servant (deaconess) of the church which is in Cenchrea, that you receive her in the Lord as is worthy of saints and stand by her in what manner she needs you. For she is a protectress (succourer) of many and of me."

I Timothy 3, 2

"It is necessary that the bishop be blameless, a husband of one wife, watchful, sober, orderly, hospitable, apt to teach."

Titus 1, 8

✓ "But hospitable; lover of the good; wise; just; holy; temperate."

I Timothy 5, 10

"(A widow) being testified in good works, if she has nourished children, if she has received strangers, if she has assisted those in tribulations, if she has attended to every good work."

The list of passages cited just about tell the whole story of Christian hospitality. It should not be done merely casually; it should be pursued. It should not be done reluctantly, but with vigor. Great benefits are to be derived by exercising Christian charity in showing hospitality. God never forgets such charitable acts. There is the possibility of harboring "angels unaware". Paul pleads that the Roman congregation accept the consecrated Phoebe and show her a special kindness in view of the kindness that he himself has received at her hands. Both clergy and laity should have this qualification. It was indispensable to the clergy

who were to be ensamples of the flock. But, of course, it was impossible that the whole responsibility should devolve upon the clergy. Many Christian homes could as well be thrown open to receive travellers who could find no lodging quarters in those hectic days of the Roman Empire.

Thus we have noted several ways in which the gifts of charity were present within the Church especially in material ways. Who can estimate the numerous variety of manifestations of the Holy Spirit's love in spiritual matters? There is no gift that demonstrates better the organic wholeness of the Holy Spirit and His workings than this very gift of charity. Scripture has two good illustrations to bear this point out. Either the Church is recognized in the illustration of a plant, that is a vine sending its nourishment to the branches from the main stalk, or a great tree spreading out its branches and providing shelter for all the birds under heaven; or the Church is viewed in the illustration of the human body which has different members, all of which have mutual care and consideration for another. There are many special functions which each member is called upon to perform. The uncomely parts receive more abundant honor from the comely parts. Love is the uniting force. It joins and binds together the severed parts that belong together. It knits together all in most perfect union. It points all members working in the kingdom of God back to Christ who is the Head "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," Ephesians 4, 16.

X. THE NATURE OF THE GIFT OF GOVERNMENT

The idea of an organic whole presupposes the idea of an organization. The body could not function if its various members were not organized. Yet it is clear that in the organism of the body, no one particular members stands out to lord it over the others. Each has its proper function and abilities to perform its own function, and, insofar as each carries out its definite assignments in the best possible manner, will the organization as a whole prosper in the complete function.

Some of the passages which refer to the government of the Church of Christ are the following:

I Corinthians 12, 27-31

"You are the body of Christ and members individually. And those whom God has placed in the Church are first the apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, kind of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not powers, are they? All do not have gifts of healing, do they? All do not speak in tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? But be zealous for the best gifts.

I Corinthians 14, 40

"Let all things be done decently and in order."

Romans 12, 8

"He who presides, (let him do so) with diligence.

Acts 1, 23-26

"And they chose two, Joseph who is called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And after praying, they said: 'Thou Lord knowest the hearts of all, show which one Thou wilt appoint from these two to take the place of this service and apostleship, from which Judas has passed to journey unto his place. And they gave lots, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was counted with the eleven.'"

Acts 6, 2 ff.

"The twelve, having called together the multitude of disciples, said: 'It is not good that we leave the Word of God to serve tables, But choose brethren, seven men from your midst who are of good reputation, being full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we will set up for this need. But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the service of the Word.' And the counsel was pleasing before all the multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip and Prochorus and Nicanor and Timon and Parmenas and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch, whom they placed before the apostles, and after praying, they laid hands on them.

Acts 13, 2

"And as they ministered unto the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, 'Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work unto which I have called them.'

I Timothy 5, 17

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the Word and teaching."

Hebrews 13, 7, 17

"Remember those who have the rule (toon heegoumenoon) over you, who spoke to you the Word of God, whose faith imitate, beholding the end of their manner of life...Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they who will give account, that they may do this with joy and not grieving, for that is injurious to you."

We have already observed the functions of various Church officers in the discussion of previous gifts. To a greater or lesser extent we have noted the main part played by the "apostoloi", "propheetoi", "didaskaloi", and "diakonoi". In addition to these terms we list the following terms pertaining to the government of the Church in apostolic times:

1. "Kuberneesis"

"Kuberneesis", the Greek word for government, is derived from "kuberneetes", who was not only a steersman, but the captain

who was responsible to the owner of the ship. Therefore when "kuberneeseis" are spoken of as gifts to the church, the thought is especially of those who have duties of steering and guiding the congregation in a straight course. It ought to be noted, however, that this idea has been overstressed and is a favorite illustration in the writings of the Church Fathers. In their symbolical interpretations they even conceived of Noah's ark as a type of the Church, with God as the chief Captain and the bishops and elders as underlings. Still another overemphasis of this concept is in connection with the story of the "Stilling of the Storm". Jesus is viewed as the "kuberneetes" who guided them safely through the difficulties of storm. But this account does not picture Jesus as the captain or steersman of the ship. The point to be noted is simply that as God-man the forces of nature were obedient to Him. We have no Scriptural warrant to go farther than that in our interpretation. In their overemphasis of steering a ship, they have steered far away from the truth and have lost the true significance of the Scriptural "kuberneeseis", where the individual congregation is considered supreme and certainly has the right to select its own "kuberneetai", the Holy Spirit through His Word leading them, and helping them to make favorable decisions.

2. "Episcopos"

The real significance of the term "episkopos" is seen from its etymology: "epi" and "skopein", to have the oversight; and therefore an "episcopos" is properly an overseer. In I Peter 2, 25 Christians are pictured as returning to the Bishop of their souls,

namely, to Jesus. Later, the term was applied to those who had the oversight of a congregation, those who superintended the spiritual welfare of a local diocese. The qualifications of a bishop are given in I Timothy 3, 1-7. His personal conduct must be above reproach. His family life must be exemplary. He must possess no particular weaknesses by which the devil could draw him into like condemnation with himself. It is a sad fact of history that many who might have been faithful overseers, overlooked the prime qualifications of an overseer and served their own selfish interests rather than the spiritual interests of their flock.

3. "Presbyteros"

It is obvious from I Timothy 3, where Paul speaks of bishops and deacons and their qualifications, that the term "presbyteros" is similar to "episcopos". These were not two distinct offices at first, but were simply two different names for the same office. Later on only those who were ordained were termed bishops, and presbyters were regarded as religious workers within the diocese. But this development has no Scriptural basis at all.

4. "Proistamenos"

The meaning of "proistamenos" is simply one who superintends and who presides at religious meetings. The noun "prostatis" is used of Phoebe, Romans 15, 2, to describe her as a woman who stood before others and rendered them special Christian service. The Savior Himself is frequently termed an "epistatees", one who stood out from the rest: Luke 5, 5; 8, 24; 9, 33. 49; 17, 13.

The Savior had this special authority inherently, but men can only have this authority if they are chosen to serve in this capacity by the vote of the concurrent group of Christians. The bishops and elders who had such special appointment may be termed also "proistamenoi". They were to serve "en spoudee", with diligence, Romans 12, 8.

5. "Heegoumenoi"

"Heegoumenoi" is a very general term similar to "proistamenoi". It designates those who spoke the Word of God as being "leaders", as individuals, who had a special authority to conduct meetings and lead the discussions. It is significant that the verb "heegeomai" has the connotation of "thinking" and "leading". The latter was most probably derived from the former. The basic meaning of "heegeomai" seems to be that of possessing a deliberate and careful judgment. Those who had this gift would naturally become leaders of a group. In treating the subject matter of Holy Scripture, those who could expound Scripture in a deliberate and forceful way were naturally sought out to stand before the congregation in the capacity of a teacher and preacher of divine truth.

The point that ought to be emphasized in regard to the majority of the above mentioned terms is that Jesus in an informal way carried out the requirements of each one of these expressions. He is the great Apostle, who was sent into the world. He is a Prophet and a Teacher. He is a Servant of the Lord, who did even menial services in the presence of the disciples. He is the

108. Most of these deductions are based upon meanings given in Thayer ad. 100.

Chief Captain of our souls, piloting us to eternal salvation. The "oversight" that He exercised over His flock did not leave out of consideration the many sheep that were straying. He who could say: "Before Abraham was, I am" has the prerogatives far exceeding that of any elder of the Church. He is the "Succourer" of our souls and "leads" to and is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. What a great mistake that church government should degenerate to such an extent as to leave Jesus out of the picture.

Christ is the great Leader of the affairs of the Church. It must be remembered that His Church is at once visible and invisible. According to its spiritual and invisible being the Church is one in all the earth, one also with the Church in heaven. According to its visible form, however, it manifests itself in fragments, namely local churches which are not always one, neither are they holy; for they partake of the imperfections of all earthly life.¹⁰⁹

To direct the affairs of the visible local churches Christ gave special authority into the hands of the first apostles. The apostles in turn used the authority Christ had given them, not only to found churches but also to give them leaders and shepherds. That the apostles were conscious of having authority is evident from Paul's remark to the Corinthians: "As I have given order to the churches in Galatia, even so do ye", I Cor. 16, 1. The ordaining that the apostles did was invested with the direct authority from their Lord, so that the apostles were able to do

109. Kuyper, Ibid. p. 196.

things in church government necessary to the upbuilding of the Church then, which need no longer be done by us. For example, they could give ordinances regarding matters of marriage and incestuous persons through special revelation from the Holy Spirit. Church members today can not claim that their opinions on things not mentioned in Scripture have such an authority.

Yet Christ through His Holy Spirit still directs the government of the Church and opens doors for the spread of the Gospel among people who are willing to submit themselves to the fundamental law of His Word. The same Holy Spirit who directed the Apostles has means of directing Christians of another age. The question is not whether better men come in power to accomplish work in the kingdom of God, the question is whether the Holy Spirit rules amongst a group of Christians, and He does so only where the Word of God is regarded as the authority to follow. Even as the charisms of teaching and charity ministrations are based upon charisms of wisdom and knowledge, so the special gift of government of the Church implies an unusual insight and understanding of the means of grace. He who presides over a body whose chief aim it is to minister Word and Sacrament, must know what is contained in that Word and what the Sacraments stand for.

Much more could be said on the nature of the government of the Church. Two theories have been propounded by historians in regard to the matter of church government. The first is that of Neander, who maintains that in the original Church there were no ecclesiastical offices, but only spiritual gifts, and that when these died out, regularly appointed officers took the place

of those who possessed them. The other theory attempts to find an ecclesiastical office for each gift of the Spirit mentioned in the Corinthian passage, or at any rate argues that there must have been "propheetai", "didaskaloi" and so forth, existing as church officers in the Corinthian and Roman communities. Neither of these theories is a correct deduction. In dealing with spiritual gifts Paul is discussing a series of questions only partially connected with the Christian ministry. Every church officer would, we may presume, be considered to have charisms which would fit him for the fulfillment of such an office, but most, if not all Christians would also have charisms, though not of a miraculous nature. The two questions, therefore, are on different planes which partially intersect, and deductions from these chapters made in any direction as to the form of the Christian organization are invalid, although they show the spiritual endowments which those prominent in the community could possess.

Christ Himself instituted the office of the preaching of His Word to all nations. This fact already implied two offices: the one of working as a dispenser of the Word in the Home church, and the other as an apostle sent out to those who had no contacts with the Word. As we see from Titus 1, 5 the parish ministry is a divine institution. Through the apostles other important offices for church administration were instituted to lessen their burden and make possible a more thorough ministration of the Word. This work included the office of deacons and deaconesses.

Never was the idea entertained that the work of the Church was to be carried out by these officers alone. Every Christian was expected to do his share so that the organization as a whole might function more smoothly and efficiently. The ideal of church government has never been reached and never will be reached in this world. But through the grace of God individual gifts of governing are given to certain ones to awaken in the Church as a whole an insight into the possibilities of a church government totally dependent upon Christ. The best church government comes to that age which can best learn to trust completely in the Savior's guiding.

XI. THE NATURE OF THE GIFT OF DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

Whereas the gift of teaching requires the charism of knowledge, the gift of ministering to charitable needs of others the gift of wisdom, the gift of governing the Church charisms of knowledge and wisdom, the gift that we are now to discuss requires in addition to the charisms of wisdom and knowledge in their positive approach to Scripture, also an understanding of how Scripture is misunderstood, and an ability to refute such misunderstanding. I do not wish to imply that gifts of teaching and governing do not also necessitate an ability to refute false teaching, but certainly the gift of discerning of spirits implies a deeper knowledge of the truth and a greater ability to work in the field of theological apologetics than does any other of these derivative gifts of wisdom and knowledge.

The passages which concern this gift are these:

I Corinthians 12, 10

"To another (is given) the discerning of spirits."

I Corinthians 14, 29

"Let two or three prophets speak, and the others discern."

I John 4, 1-3. 6

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but keep testing the spirits if they be of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; but every spirit which does not confess that Jesus is God, also this one is the (spirit) of the anti-Christ, as to which you have heard that he comes, and now he is already in the world... We are of God; he who knows God, hears us. From this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of deceit.

I John 5, 1

"Every one who believes that Jesus Christ, is born of God;

and every one that loves also Him who has begotten, loves also Him who is begotten of Him.

2 John 7

"Because many deceivers are gone out into the world, who do not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; this is the deceiving one and the anti-Christ."

The book of Acts furnishes us also with some concrete examples of this gift of discerning spirits:

Acts 5, 3.9

"But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart, to lie against the Holy Spirit, and to withdraw a part of the price of the land?'....And Peter said to her: 'Why was it agreed by you to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?'"

Acts 8, 20-21

"But Peter said to him: 'Your silver remain with you unto perdition, because you have thought that this gift of God is possessed through material goods. There is neither part nor inheritance for you in this Word. For your heart is not straight before God.'"

Acts 13, 9 f.

"But Saul, who is also Paul, being filled with the Holy Ghost having looked intently on him, said: 'O Full of all deceit and all wickedness, son of the devil, enemy of all righteousness, you do not cease to distort the straight ways of the Lord.'"

✓ The gift of discerning spirits implied a high faculty of interpreting the way of truth set forth in Scripture, and an intuitive probing the heart and distinguishing the secret disposition of men to find out whether they were in agreement with the truth. It was a special gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostles Paul, Peter, and John were possessors of this spiritual faculty. According to I Corinthians 14, 9 it was possible, however, for Christians to have the same faculty. In the assembly meetings of Christians two or three prophets were to be given the

floor successively and the others were to discern. Not only should they listen to what was being said, but they should exercise their faculties of judgment and compare what was being said, with their background of Scripture. If what they heard was true, they should be edified by the discourse. If, however, they should notice false doctrine, protest should be made and the matter should be settled in the congregation in order to keep the doctrine of Scripture unmutilated.

The fact that many spirits had gone out in the world should put every one on his guard. They should not be satisfied with testing a prophet once and thereafter accepting everything that he had to say as Gospel truth. Not at all. Rather this process should continue throughout the church-life of congregations everywhere. According to the use of the present tense in I John 4, 1 there should be a continual testing of human spirits to see whether they were of God. So easily might synergism, enthusiasm and other false doctrines of the anti-Christ appear. The wicked doctrine of Balaam and of the Nicolaitans found its entrance into the church of Pergamos. Why could not this same falseness be seeking an entrance in other congregations as well? "The devil as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour, whom resist steadfast in the faith," I Peter 5, 8-9.

There seems to be something of the supernatural in the discerning powers that Peter manifested in his dealings with Ananias. Thus it appears at least from reading the simple account. If we had been there when this incident occurred, we

might have seen Peter taking his cue from a guilty look that Ananias could not conceal. Peter no doubt knew more about the background of Ananias than we can know. Yet if it was a supernatural discerning, we would have no objections to the account as it stands. Of course, the credit for that could not be given to Peter, but to the Holy Spirit who permitted him to be convinced of something that it was impossible for his natural eye and acumen to perceive. For Peter does not hesitate in his decision either when Ananias was before him or when Sapphira appeared. In both cases there is a clean-cut discerning of "the thoughts and intents of the heart" and we might add in this case too, "even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit", Hebrews 4, 12.

The wicked spirits of Ananias and Sapphira were cleaving too lustfully to an outward prestige with actually very little material sacrifice. The Holy Spirit knew the hypocrisy and through Peter's action soon put an end to it. Rather than let matters such as these become an offense to the church, the Holy Spirit revealed to Peter at the right moment the terrible truth that these two spirits were not the spirit of Christ, not the spirits of true Christian charity, but that they were in league with the Evil Spirit himself, and if permitted to continue would reek more havoc in the local congregation by their stinking offense and their hypocritical mien.

The wicked spirit that Simon Magus portrayed seems to have been more obvious. Yet Peter could not have spoken as boldly as he did, he could not have denounced this man for his wickedness so unflinchingly if he had not had a special revelation as to

the inner wickedness of this man. But though the denunciation is bitter, yet the man is not so overcome by the power of the Evil Spirit as to eliminate all chance for repentance. How was Peter able to know this fact except through the Holy Spirit? Why did he in the case of Ananias and Sapphira take a more drastic course of action? It was because the Holy Spirit was informing him as to what course was best for the man. Whether Simon Magus actually repented of this sin and became a converted Christian we are never told. An excellent opportunity was given to him, however, to see the wickedness of his way and to turn to Christ. As it was he had neither part nor inheritance in the Word due to his selfish, mercenary attitude. Peter describes his condition as being "in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity". These are extreme terms coined to impress upon Simon Magus the peril of continuing in his present state. We can only hope that the lesson was learned. It is a warning example to all.

Similarly, the account of Elymas, the sorcerer is a very revealing one. This man, spiritually blind himself was doing everything in his power to keep the deputy of his country, Sergius Paulus in spiritual blindness. Paul perceiving that the prudence of Sergius Paulus would be receptive to the Holy Spirit's message if this son of Belial were not intermeddling, attacks the enemy at the most crucial point, uncovers the subtlety and mischief of Elymas, and adds to his spiritual blindness a physical one; and then he succeeds in his attempt to bring the deputy to faith. It took the special gift of the discernment of a wicked spirit to remove the obstacle that was hindering a soul from

coming to Jesus. The punishment of blindness inflicted upon Elymas was also a blessing in disguise to bring him to his senses, spiritually speaking. Let us hope that he too learned that One greater than his former master had searched him and known him, and pronounced upon him this judgment for his good.

The gift of discernment was beneficial therefore in church meetings, on the street in daily life and everywhere where false doctrine stalked unchecked, or craft was seeking a foot-hold in a Christian community. It was an important gift, one that provided the special advantage of giving the discernor the offensive, through the penetrating power of the Holy Spirit.

Discernment of spirits was the last of the gifts we were to discuss. We have completed our stated objective of describing the nature of the various New Testament spiritual gifts mentioned in the accounts of Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and 14, and Ephesians 4. The next question that naturally arises is that of the relative importance of these gifts. To a certain extent this factor has been touched upon in the preceding material. We have not only viewed these gifts from a positive angle, but have also said something of the abuses that are possible in certain of these gifts. Thus the very description of the nature of Christian charisms, both positively, and in part negatively, has helped to give us an introduction into the importance of each one. We now hope to discuss this matter a little more in detail.

XII. THE IMPORTANCE THAT SCRIPTURE PLACES ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS

After noticing the very many outstanding qualities that appear in the working out of spiritual gifts, we now proceed to look for definite Scriptural testimony as to the importance of these gifts. Factors which will decide for us the importance of gifts involve the question: How well does this particular gift succeed in bringing Christ to others through the Word? Is the gift itself a direct means of bringing Christ into the lives of others or only an indirect one.

The speaking in foreign tongues on Pentecost was for the people who heard and marveled at this great wonder of God a direct means of hearing God's Word. But for us who read the account in Acts 2 it is an indirect testimony to the truth. Likewise ecstatic speech is for one who speaks, and in a measure also for the interpreter, a direct means of communing with God in worship; but for those who hear the interpretation of it, it is an indirect method of worship. Insofar as inspired prophetic discourse has been used to acquaint men of all ages of the purposes of God toward man's salvation, it is a very direct means of bringing us to Christ. Miracles have always more or less served an indirect value of confirming the faith that we already have in Christ, or awakening in those who do not have Christ a desire to believe on Him, who is all-powerful. Charisms of wisdom and knowledge and their derivative gifts can be of direct value only when the person who has one or more of these gifts is so permeated with Biblical truth that he must necessarily dispense of it to the benefit of others.

We shall now take cognizance first of individuals and secondly collective groups of Christians in Scripture who had these gifts.

A. Individual Use of Spiritual Gifts in Scripture

When the individual disciples returned to the Lord after experiencing the joy of actually performing great wonders, they were so overcome by this new power that was given them that there was a tendency to put the emphasis on the wrong features of these gifts. Even the spirits had been subject to them. In their exultation they were already beginning to lose sight of the main objective and the Savior had to correct them with the words: "In this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you," Luke 10, 20. The thing that they were to rejoice in was a more glorious fact that superseded by far the glory of expelling spirits. It was the truth of the insurmountable grace of God, the truth that their names were written in heaven. That was their starting point: the grace of God, not the graces. The former was the greater, the latter was the lesser. Once they understood the former, then only could the spiritual gifts which they possessed be of benefit to themselves and others.

In the Apostolic Period the Apostles themselves were the most prominent in the possession of spiritual gifts. John must have had charisms of love, profound knowledge and prophecy; Peter possessed abilities in church government and discipline, miracles and discerning of spirits; James superintended faithfully the congregation at Jerusalem. Most variously endowed in this respect was the Apostle Paul, eminent alike in knowing and setting forth divine mysteries; fitted both for the labors of a pioneer, and for preserving and confirming established order;

at home among visions and revelations; excelling all the Corinthians in the gift of tongues, I Cor. 14, 28; accredited among them by signs and wonders, 2 Cor. 12, 12. The things that Paul accomplished seem to prove the statement that the greatest movements in the history of the world proceed from individuals uncommonly gifted, in whom the scattered mental¹¹¹ energies of their age are harmoniously concentrated. It is not the case that the number or strength of charisms in any way establish merit for salvation. For that, living faith in Christ is sufficient. But the fact that the Holy Spirit used a man of such varied endowments to do a great work is significant. The same thing is repeated throughout history.

"The greatest of St. Paul's achievements, however, was this, that he connected Christian piety inseparably with the Person¹¹² of Jesus Christ." The use of his gifts toward this end is most significant. He was always repeating that those who accepted Jesus for their salvation were "in Christ", "through Christ", and "with Christ". He emphasized that the Spiritual Christ was also the Man Jesus and that it was this divine but at the same time human Person with whom believers were so intimately united. The Holy Spirit gave Paul the gift of prophecy, charisms of wisdom and knowledge to glorify Christ, to inform others of the "power of Christ", 2 Cor. 13, 9; "the riches of Christ", Eph. 3, 8; "the blessing of Christ", Rom. 15, 29; "the fulness of Christ", Eph. 4, 13; "the faith of Christ", Gal. 2, 16; "the hope of our Lord

111. McClintock and Strong, Ibid. p. 859. Gifts, Spiritual ad. loc.

112. Deissmann, St. Paul, A Study in Social and Religious History,

Jesus Christ", 1 Thess. 1, 3; "the love of Christ", 2 Cor. 5, 14; "the peace of Christ", Cor. 3, 15; "the meekness of Christ", 2 Cor. 10, 1; "the bowels of Christ", Phil. 1, 8; "the patience of Christ", 2 Thess. 3, 5; "the obedience of Christ", 2 Cor. 10, 5; "the truth of Christ", 1 Thess. 3, 5; "the circumcision of Christ", Col. 2, 11; "fear of Christ", Eph. 5, 21; "the sufferings of Christ", 2 Cor. 1, 5; and "the afflictions of Christ", Col. 1, 24.¹¹³

Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, Romans 1, 16. He did all things through Christ who strengthened Him, Phil. 1, 13. He set forth in no uncertain terms what must have been the most revolutionary thought of his day, the fact that among those who were in Christ there was to be no distinction of class, race, nation, sex, society. "He made the religion of Christ world-wide." "He found grace not in the wild transport of ecstasy, but in the peace resulting from Christ's proximity." He brought the multitude the Paraclete and the Mediator. He did not invent a Christology for intellectual people. What he did was to draw on the depths of his own mystical and spiritual experience of Christ to display before the inwardly poor and humble, the divine yet human Redeemer, in whose fellowship union with the divine is guaranteed the poorest and most helpless soul.¹¹⁴

The Holy Spirit, who opened Paul's spiritual eye-sight and made him a prepared vessel or receptacle for His divine gifts, was the direct cause for all of his success. The influence that

113. Ibid. p. 139 f.

114. Ibid. p. 229 ff.

the Holy Spirit exerted through Paul will be felt throughout the New Testament Age and even beyond that in eternity.

B. Congregational Use of Spiritual Gifts in Scripture

The fact that individual gifts should always be put to common use leads to a consideration of the attitude of congregations toward spiritual gifts, and the gifts which they as a group regarded as most important. We have an interesting case before us when we consider the congregation of Corinth. In the Corinthian epistle, the section from chapter 12-14 speaks of the spiritual gifts as we have already noted. This was a subject that had caused them many doubts and which was therefore submitted to the Apostle Paul for clarification by the Church at Corinth. They were eager to know the relative value and importance of gifts which they as an early church enjoyed, and especially were they awaiting a verdict in regard to the gifts of speaking with tongues and prophecy. Upon their request for his authoritative direction Paul includes in one section of his epistle the necessary information.

In the twelfth chapter of I Corinthians he already exhorts them to covet the best gifts. Paul is thereby admitting that there are a diversity of gifts and also a difference in value. He is also implying thereby that the choice of gifts may be partly in the hands of the individual. This is not inconsistent with the statement of I Corinthians 12, 11 that the gifts are to be distributed according to the will of the Spirit; for this is not an arbitrary will. Rather it would seem that gifts bestowed are

according to the peculiar traits and endowments of the individual, the Spirit in some cases simply aiding and supplementing these endowments.
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In the well-known thirteenth chapter Paul speaks of the necessity of Christian love in dealing with fellow-men. This he considers even better than the pursuit of the most desirable spiritual gifts, for the reasons mentioned in that chapter. But at the same time he does not exclude spiritual gifts entirely on that account. Both pursuits belong to the life of a Christian and may be followed out together. Yet, as it is evident that in this matter of "charismata", the law of Christian love has been overlooked, and rivalries and jealousies have arisen, Paul shows
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how this law is even more important than the best charismata.

In the fourteenth chapter Paul definitely urges a zeal for spiritual gifts, but again a zeal that is tempered by love. In verse 12 Paul calls it a zeal for spirits, and what he obviously means is a zeal for manifestations of the Holy Spirit. To the Corinthians it seemed as though different spiritual manifestations represented a variety of spirits. To an observer of the unseemly rivalries it would appear as if not one Spirit, but different spirits were the object of their zeal. The abundance and diversity of gifts, according to Paul's argument simply reveal the riches of divine grace. All flow from the same source and are wrought by the same Holy Spirit, and, therefore, should subserve the same

115. Vincent, Word Studies of the New Testament, Vol. III, p.269.

116. Ibid.

end, the edification of the body of Christ. The value of the gifts varied, not depending, as many of the Corinthians thought on their splendor and outward effect, but on their practical utility for building up the kingdom of God. Two gifts, ecstatic speech and prophecy had enfolded themselves most luxuriantly, among the intellectual, excitable Greeks of Corinth. They considered the former of greater importance than the latter. Paul corrects this tendency and shows how ecstatic speech is only of indirect importance in the spread of the Word, and then only when its complement, the interpretation of ecstatic speech is also used; whereas prophecy is a most necessary and useful tool to carry on the main work of the Church. Both were outstanding supernatural gifts of God, but the one was obviously not as efficient as a means of bringing Christ to people as the other. Paul kindly asks them to note this, and thereafter to give the gift of prophecy the priority. Prophecy stands head and shoulder over any of the spiritual gifts, supernatural or natural, because it is the most direct means of applying the Word of God to the hearts of the hearers.

In this Corinthian section Paul does not go into the importance of the various gifts any more than has been indicated. He shows their unity, their profit to all, the necessity of love in all, and the preference to be given prophecy over ecstatic speech. He emphasizes the fact that God is not a God of confusion,

117. McClintock and Strong, Ibid.

but a God of order and to promote order in a Christian congregation, the various spiritual gifts must be kept in their respective places. They are not to exceed their limits.

In his description of the body of Christ Paul without doubt intimates a great deal that he does not put in so many words. When he says that "those members of the body which seem more feeble are necessary," I Cor. 12, 22, he means to inculcate a more modest attitude toward all spiritual gifts. Those members of the church which are most humble, meek, peaceful and prayerful are often more necessary to the true welfare of the Church than those who are eminent for their talent and learning. "The church can better spare many a man, even in the ministry, who is learned, and eloquent, and popular, than some obscure and humble Christian,¹¹⁸ that is to the Church what the heart and the lungs are to life."

When Paul writes to the Corinthian congregation, he is dealing with the specific difficulties of that Church. But when he writes to the Roman congregation in regard to spiritual gifts, he lays down broad and statesmanlike positions which deal with circumstances which may arise in any community. He is writing with the former epistle in mind, and as was necessary, condemns certain disorders. He tells the Romans that strength to overcome their difficulties lies in the sober use of their Spirit-given powers and capacities in the interests of the entire community. Wise and prudent judgment would keep them from attempting offices for

118. Barnes, Commentary on I Corinthians, p. 257.

which they were not fitted or marring their gifts by exercising them in the wrong spirit. Paul speaks from his own experience, referring to the grace given him. ¹¹⁹ Paul was made an apostle by the same giving Lord who had bestowed upon others, too, widely varying gifts. Like himself, they, too, should be living sacrifices in the use of their spiritual gifts.

Paul starts with prophecy. He is not referring to the gift of a direct communication with God. He means here prophets who were expositors of the Word and will of God. These were more numerous than miraculously endowed prophets who could foretell the future. Every congregation at that time ^{had} one or more of these prophets who were expounders of Holy Writ.

Next to be considered is the "ministry", "diakonia". This is a gift of Christian service which any Christian may exercise as ability and opportunity make possible.

The next gift mentioned is teaching, instructing, making things plain to the beginners in doctrine, advancing knowledge and application of it as far as that was possible in other individuals.

Three particles follow in Paul's list of "charismata" in the Romans epistle: singleminded imparting or exhortation; diligent managing or governing; and finally joyful showing of mercy. ¹²⁰ And all of these qualities he sums together as works of love. These various lines of activity grace the church. Paul makes no statement as to which one is more important in this

119. International Critical Commentary, p. 358 f.

120. Lenski, Commentary on Romans, p. 768 ff.

account. That would injure his fundamental proposition that love rules over all. If he had stated definitely, that the gift of prophecy was much more important than the gift of ministering to the needy, that may have had its ill effects upon those who were capable only of the latter. It might have aroused a lot of unnecessary envy and jealousy. How much better it was that Paul simply lists these various lines of activity without any statement as to their rank. God alone knows the value of a cup of water given in His name. God alone can judge the importance of each individual gift. It is simply up to the Christians to see their potentialities and to use them to the utmost.

In his epistle to the Ephesians, chapter four, Paul recapitulates some of the same thoughts of Romans 12, and I Corinthians 12-14. Very skilfully he places a discussion of the spiritual gifts in the center of a discussion of the doctrines regarding the Church. The unity of the Church and the harmonious working of every part is his theme.

It is often said that seven congregations to whom letters are addressed in the second and third chapters of the Apocalypse are representative of the types of congregations that will be found throughout all ages. What then were the spiritual capacities or lacks of these congregations? Ephesus, the "desired", had lost her first love to the Saviour, and with it the impulse rightly to employ and harmoniously to blend the spiritual gifts that were hers. Smyrna was persecuted, yet in spite of material difficulties did retain spiritual blessings, and was bolstered by a strong undercurrent of spiritual life. Pergamos and Thyatira were

located amid the darkest depths of vice, and are in part drawn into the Scylla and Charibdeas of false doctrine, and in part they discern the false spirits and stand their ground by clinging to the grace of God. Of Sardis it is said that she is for the most part bereft of all spiritual gifts, but for a few individuals who still have a name that they live. He that has the seven-fold Spirit takes note of their true condition and warns them concerning it. Then, fortunately, the church at Philadelphia presents a marked contrast. This congregation is highly commended for holding to the truth and for making use of the spiritual powers given her to avoid temptations and thus to have a little strength and to do works pleasing to God.

Finally we have the church of a luke-warm character, which clings rather to material wealth than to the spiritual and is on the way to spiritual blindness, the congregation at Laodicea.

We like to think that at the time of the apostles the spiritual condition of the church was almost perfect. But such was not the case at all. They, too, had their difficulties; they, too, had misconceptions and abuses within the church to correct, and false doctrine from without to combat. It took all of their spiritual resources to make any progress at all. Yet it is very apparent that there was then a healthiness about the church that was not so apparent in later times. The blessing and success that the apostles did have was because of their close adherence to the teachings of Christ. The Holy Spirit led them so that they desired to make themselves and their talents subservient to the interests of the church, and not the church subservient to their own interests. The church, in turn, they held to be completely subservient to Christ.

In conclusion, the plain Scripture teaching on the importance of spiritual gifts includes the following points:

1. Spiritual gifts are not greater than the saving grace from which they spring.
2. Two abuses are common among Christians in their relation to spiritual gifts. These are the two extremes of: a. Ostentatious display of spiritual gifts for self-glorification, that is, an over-stressing of importance, and
b. Failure to make use to the full the potentialities that one possesses, that is, a minimizing of importance.

The safe course to follow is to give God the glory for everything, and in humble thankfulness to make full use of the blessings that he provides for us.

3. The gift of prophecy holds the highest place of importance because it is the most direct means of bringing the Word of God to people.
4. On the whole it is not a wise procedure to continually be ranking the gifts God gives in the order of their importance.
5. In His infinite omniscience God alone can gauge the importance of gifts that He gives to individuals, and the use to which they are put. It is His desire that all gifts should serve toward the edification of His Church.

XIII. THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS SINCE THE APOSTOLIC AGE

It is evident that in Apostolic times both supernatural and natural spiritual gifts were given and used. As we step now into the period of time succeeding the Apostolic Age the tremendous question looms up before us: What becomes of the miraculous spiritual gifts? Do they disappear entirely and if so when do they disappear and why?

Scholars generally agree that miracles were no longer prominent in places where Christianity was established soon after the Apostolic era. As to the question when these gifts disappear there are various conjectures. Olshausen¹²¹ makes the charismatic miracles a non-entity from the third century onward. This is confirmed by Harnack who says that miracles were most conspicuous during the first sixty years of Christianity, "but continued to exist all through the second century, although in diminished volume.

Irenaeus, the pupil of Polycarp, who in turn was the successor of the Apostle John, spoke of gifts that were still operative in his day around the latter half of the second century, but emphasizes that they were distinctly gratuitous. He even speaks of people who were raised from the dead and lived for some time yet contemporaneously with him.¹²² There is still some doubt whether these people had been raised by the Apostle John or by others who lived after that beloved disciple of the Lord. But it cannot be doubted that this points to a genuine miracle. Relief

121. Olshausen, Commentary Vol. III, p. 683.
122. Harnack, Ibid., Vol. I, p. 204.

from demon possession, cure of madness and epilepsy are matters in which it is often hard to draw the line of distinction between the natural and supernatural. No doubt there was much speculation in those early times as there is today yet in respect to these problems. Origen, who lived at the end of the second century and the beginning of the third, looks back on the age of Spirit and power as the heroic age of the Church which has past. Harnack quotes the following testimony of Origen as given by Eusebius iii,37:

"A great many wonderful works of the Holy Spirit were wrought in the primitive age through the pupils of the apostles, so that whole multitudes of people, on first hearing the Word, suddenly accepted with utmost readiness of faith in the Creator of the universe."

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Thus the age of miracles for Origen lay in earlier times.

Later Christian leaders bear similar testimony. Augustine in the fourth century asserted that miracles were then to be sought in works of nature, in the wonder of its recurring changes, and in the regular course of divine providence. Chrysostom spoke in a similar vein. There is, therefore, overwhelming testimony on the part of the early fathers that miracles in general declined and eventually ceased at the close of the second century and already before. This has led then to the acceptance of
124
the gradual cessation theory.

Many illustrations are used to try to demonstrate the purpose of the disappearance of miracles. Miraculous gifts are viewed sometimes as an efflorescence of the Apostolic Period, a blossom which had to fall away if the fruit was to thrive.

123. Ibid. p. 205.

124. McClintock and Strong, Ibid. p. 860

Or again the analogy is made of a wedding dress which a youthful bride puts aside after the festivities of the wedding are over with. Tautmann, speaking of the cessation of miracles, says:

"That gust of heavenly powers on the day of Pentecost could not, must not continue in the church. It could not -- because the earthly human nature is not able constantly to bear the bliss of ecstasy and such mighty streams of power from above, as is shown by the example of the three chosen disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration. It must not -- because the continuance of the blossom would have hindered the development of the fruit. The splendor of these higher powers would unavoidably have fixed the eye and the heart too much on externals, and the proper object and work of faith, the inward conquest of the world, would have been neglected." 125

It would be a great mistake, therefore, to consider the cessation of miracles as a fault of Christianity. It is rather a result of its victory over the world. As fast as the reigning power of heathenism was broken the miraculous charisms became more and more infrequent.

Unfortunately there arose throughout the course of time succeeding movements headed most frequently by false enthusiasts who regarded miraculous manifestations as an essential mark of the church, and who insisted that miraculous gifts be revived and generally used again as they were found in the days of the apostles. It is in most cases very easy to detect the falsity of these alleged claims. Of the miracles that were said to have appeared at later times, we may note the following points:

1. They did not serve to confirm faith in general, but ascetic life, magical virtue of the sacrament, the veneration of saints and relics, and other superstitious practises.

2. Church fathers confessedly lacked a highly cultivated sense of truth, and allowed a certain justification of falsehood ad maiorem Dei gloriam
3. or fraus pia under the misnomer of policy or accomodation.
3. Church fathers concede that extensive frauds in connection with relics were practised in their time.
4. The Nicene miracles met with doubt and contradiction among contemporaries.
5. Chrysostom and Augustine sometimes contradict themselves, paying homage at times to miracles and again at other times saying that they have ceased.

"Notwithstanding the success of visionaries and pretenders to miraculous powers, both in medieval and modern times, it cannot be denied that the current feeling in the general body of the Church has run strongly and steadily against such pretensions." 126

It might be well at this point to introduce two of the chief enthusiast movements that occurred in history, namely the Montanist movement and the Zwickau Prophets. Both of these were attempts to revive spiritual gifts, especially the gift of miraculous prophetic utterances, and both of them failed miserably in their objectives and have ably attested to the truth of Gamaliel's adage: "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought," Acts 5, 38.

Montanism arose as a reactionary movement to this laxity in doctrine and morals that was coming over the church at the end of the second century. It found its origin in Phrygia amid pagan surroundings. Montanus himself is said to have been a priest of Cybele before he came into contact with Christianity. That the devil truly attempted to use this cult as means to gain followers is apparent from the phenomenal spread of this

movement. It began in the sixth decade of the second century but by "200 A. D. the names of the new prophets were as well known to the Christians in Syria and Egypt, Rome, North Africa, and Gaul as in Phrygia and Asia." ¹²⁷

Qualben gives an excellent summary of the features of Montanism:

1. "They accepted all the books of the Bible, and held firmly to the rule of Faith. 128
2. "They placed extraordinary emphasis on the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially prophecy, making the possession of such gifts the test of the true Christian Church.
3. "They ushered in a new type of prophecy, which Eusebius says was 'contrary to the traditional and constant custom of the Church', closely akin to the ecstatic visions and wild frenzies of the priests of Cybele. 129
4. "The main import of the Montanist prophecy was the proclamation of the speedy return of the Lord. He was to establish the Millennial Kingdom, the New Jerusalem, in the village of Pepuza in Phrygia, whither the believers should betake themselves.
5. "In preparation for the coming of the Lord, the Montanists imposed upon themselves a fanatical asceticism and church discipline. Women were forbidden all ornamental clothing and virgins were veiled. Worldly science, art, and all worldly enjoyments were considered a snare laid by the enemy. Fasts were numerous and severe. Married life was considered a lower plane than the single state, and second marriage was under all circumstances forbidden as adultery. Second repentance was impossible, and therefore the lapsed could no longer be restored to fellowship of the Church. Tertullian, the ablest convert to Montanism, considered it the main duty of the new order of prophecy to restore a severe church discipline.
6. "They maintained that the direct endowment of the Spirit of God constituted the real qualification and appointment for the office of teacher and minister of the Church, and not the outward ordination and episcopal succession.

127. Harnack, Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 309.

128. We add that this must have been in the majority of cases a superficial acceptance of the canonical books and that this rule may be best applied to the Montanists of the West.

129. That this ecstatic speaking could not have been genuine is proved by the fact that it was used to support false doctrine.

- The supernatural element and the free motion of the Spirit were above the fixed, ecclesiastical order. Hence they denounced the clergy as psychical or carnal in contrast to their own spirituality.
7. "They ushered in an new spiritual aristocracy by maintaining, like the gnostics, a distinction between the psychic or carnal and pneumatic or spiritual Christians. To the latter belonged those who had accepted the higher teaching of the Spirit by the mouth of the Montanists, and these again constituted the real spiritual Church, which was one step in advance of the church of the apostles. Here the Montanists assumed a schismatic character.
 8. "They believed in a progressive divine revelation. This progression reached its climax not in Christ and his apostles, but in the age of the Holy Spirit which had commenced with Montanus. Hence the Montanists regarded their own dreamings and visions as more important than the written word of the Bible." 130

The proposition with which they started out they reject in the final analysis. Professing to be spiritual, they become extremely carnal, Denouncing apostolic succession, they originate their own type of succession more vicious than the former. Claiming to be the possessors of spiritual gifts, they are really the destroyers of these gifts. Such was the heresy of Montanism.

The same false doctrine of Montanism made its appearance again at the time of the Reformation. This time the Zwickau Prophets were the offenders. They too showed their false character by refusing to be obedient to the prophets. of Scripture. Luther had to set them right on this point.

Three of the so-called Zwickau prophets, Nicholas Storch, Thomas Marx, and Marcus Stübner appeared in the village of Zwickau, north of Wittenberg. They were forced to leave this village and appeared in Wittenberg on Dec. 27, 1521, and began to relate to the people there the visions and the revelations they claimed

to have had. But as in the case of the Montanists their visions and revelations could not have been the work of the Holy Spirit, because they were at the same time spreading false doctrine. They denounced infant Baptism as an institution of Satan. With fanatical zeal they stirred up the enthusiasm of the masses. They became the cause of much disorder not only in Wittenberg¹³¹ but in the neighboring towns as well.

Melanchton and sober-minded Lutherans could see no better way to handle the situation than to call upon the gifts of Luther to cope with the situation. Luther at this time was in the Wartburg Castle at Eisenach where he was translating Scripture. Recalled to Wittenburg, he who had just been in direct contact with the true prophetic message was called upon to deliver the truth to a mob of people incensed and excited by false prophets. Luther returned to Wittenberg in March, 1522, and after preaching for eight successive days was in control of the situation. He used the gift of prophecy to combat the damage done by false prophets. "He made no personal references; he blamed no individuals for the disorders; but he made it clear that the evangelical faith must be promoted and accepted without force or compulsion or revolution. 'The Word created heaven and earth and all things; the same Word will also create now', said Luther."¹³²

When these fanaticists approached Luther and demanded that he accept their "higher" spiritual authority, he checks his authority of Scripture with their groundless authority.

131. Ibid. p. 239 f.

132. Ibid.

Later in describing his discussions with them, he says:

"I have caught them even in open falsehoods, when they sought to escape by miserable, smooth words. I finally requested them to establish their doctrines by miracles, of which they boasted contrary to Scripture. They, however, declined, but boasted that I must some time believe them; whereupon I warned their God, not to work a miracle against the will of my God. Thus we separated." 133

After order had been restored, Luther returned to the monastery and continued his work of translating Scripture, to live down the reproaches of his enemies that he was the cause of disorder in the Church. 134

Another choice morsel from the writings of gifted Luther puts the capping climax to our discussion of abuses of spiritual gifts:

"Christ will not permit you to flutter back and forth, to seek or to dream a spirit, that one may say; I have it by communication of the Holy Ghost. Yea, by inspiration of the abominable devil you may have it.. Such communication Christ does not want, but binds men to the Word alone. He does not want to have the Holy Spirit separated from the Word. Therefore if you hear someone boast that he has something by inspiration or communication of the Holy Ghost, and it is without the Word of God, no matter what it may be, you just say it is the abominable devil. Christ does not want to bind you to anything else than to His mouth and Word; He will not permit you to flit about, but you should hear His Word, as He says: 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life'". (7, 2388) 135

We have touched upon the overemphasis of miraculous gifts in various ages of history. We will do well to traverse the ground we have covered once more to see another side of the

133. Ibid.

134. Ibid.

135. Translation from "Concordia Tract", No. 95 in an article by Dr. P.E.Kretzmann, "The Baptism, or the Gift of the Holy Spirit", p.13.

picture, the underemphasis of natural talents. Perverted mankind has such an aptitude for spoiling the pure blessings of God's grace. A fundamental mistake of the early Christian Church seems to have been their failure to continue to send out missionaries as the Lord had given them authority to do. There were still men in their midst who had talents possibly even approaching those of St. Paul. There was still the same Holy Spirit to lead and to guide them in their choice of men whom they might send out. But there was not the foresight among the leaders of the church to take such forward steps. There was still much territory that St. Paul had not covered. Deissmann
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tries to imagine some reason why Paul never entered Egypt. Africa stood wide open for them. The East needed the Gospel badly. But the failure to see what the risen and ascended Lord wished to accomplish through His Holy Spirit in them, caused the early Christians to be satisfied with their boundaries. They became engaged in a great deal of theological discussion which too often did not edify, but instead caused much disorder, and helped to sow the seeds of false doctrine.

Much of the heretical tendencies in the first three centuries and thereafter might have been avoided if a more vigorous mission program had been followed. The failure to make full use of their spiritual gifts caused the church much grief and trouble in succeeding centuries. It caused them in some cases the loss of

136. Deissmann, Ibid., p. 202.

their most priceless heritage, the Word of God. And with the loss of that, went the loss of spiritual gifts also. The Christian world began to turn its eye to material power and prestige, it contemplated an early marriage with the State, money and pomp and wealth looked more precious and appealing to church-men than the riches of God's Word, and truly spiritual gifts were relegated to the background as the visible church of Christ permitted itself to be transformed by the deception of synergism into a proud organization of the Anti-Christ.

But there were still the seven thousand who had not bowed their knees unto Baal. There were still evidences of "charismata" in their broader and narrower connotations. Preaching and teaching from the Word of God was never quite exterminated. Though monasticism was a mistaken trend in the church, yet vast scores of monks gave themselves over to the tasks of preserving the Sacred Scripture. An immense amount of research was done to preserve historical data pertaining to early Christian times. Translation work made Scripture available for people of various tongues. Charitable endeavors took a prominent place wherever the Christian religion was firmly entrenched. Gesta Christi, that is the "achievements of Christ", a book on humane progress wrought by Christianity written by C. L. Brace attempts to show what social changes Christianity effected, what sufferings it mitigated, what evils it removed, what abuses it reformed and what new bonds of sympathy and humanity it joined. Certainly the moral force of Christianity from its very beginnings

can hardly be questioned by an honest scholar.¹³⁷ The field of apologetics, the discerning of spirits has likewise been a tested and proved and active field throughout the course of history. Thus in the church collectively, spiritual gifts and blessings were very evident.

But to understand the practical working out of spiritual gifts in various ages better, we must note specific examples. We must look at the biographies of men whose natural talents the Holy Spirit provided and used to do some necessary portion of the work in his vineyard.

One such great gifted man of God was Athanasius, who was known as the "Father of Orthodoxy" and served as the Gibraltar of the church during the Arian controversy. He was "a man of strong faith, unbending will, penetrating insight, logical acumen, and persuasive eloquence. He stands as an immovable rock in the troubled waters of the Church of his age." The proverbial statement: "Athanasius contra mundum et mundus contra Athanasium" (Athanasius against the world, and the world against Athanasius) "illustrates the commanding position which he held in the controversies of his time". Due to his teachings, he had to spend twenty years of his life in exile. He died eight years before the final victory of orthodoxy over Arianism, but he had much to do with that ultimate triumph through his influence as a teacher and a writer. Like the Apostle Paul, he defended most admirably the truth of the

137. Op. cit. p. 469.

138. Concordia Cyclopedia, p. 44

deity of Christ. One of the arguments used by Athanasius in his
 139
 reply to the Arians was:

"As there are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit,
 so also the Father is the same, but is dilated into
 Son and Spirit." (Orationes contra Arianos IV, 25,
 M S G, 26: 480, 505.)

Certainly the Holy Spirit provided this man and his gifts for the
 Church at a time when a fundamental doctrine of the Scripture
 was being so vehemently attacked.

Perhaps not as staunch a character, but nevertheless a noted
 teacher and an ardent proponent of orthodoxy also during the
 Arian controversy was the Bishop of Milan, Ambrose. He is to be
 mentioned in particular because of his contribution toward church
 music and the famous Ambrosian Chant. This man's gifts were of
 140
 a more practical nature.

Outstanding for his sermons, and his flowing oratory,
 through which he later received the name "Goldenmouthed", was
 the patriarch of Constantinople, Chrysostom. The writings, the
 homilies, the treatises and letters of this man cover a wide
 range of theology. Certainly the influence that he exerted as a
 preacher was felt by his contemporaries and is still emulated
 today. Though he at times lapsed into error especially in regard
 to the Lord's Supper, yet in so far as he remained true to the
 Word of God, the Holy Spirit used his talents toward the glorifi-
 141
 cation of Christ and the spread of the Gospel.

139. Ayer, A Source Book for Ancient Church History, p. 180.
 140. Concordia Cyclopedia, p. 16.
 141. Ibid., p. 143.

The fourth century produced also another man of note, Augustine of Hippo, who for thirty years taught, preached, made decisions in various controversies, and who was recognized generally as the defender of the orthodox faith at his time. Though he did not as clearly as Luther expound the doctrine of sin and grace, yet he did fight the Pelagian heresy and depicted the grace of God in a beautiful way. ¹⁴² One of the most outstanding of the Church Fathers, Augustine is still read and appreciated for his great learning and penetrating mind. As we look back upon his place in history, we surely realize that the Holy Spirit had a place for this intellectual giant in His scheme of things also.

How incomplete would be our list of gifted men of God, if we were to omit mention of the Great Reformer. We have already noted his abilities to refute false doctrine, but in addition to this he had great gifts of expounding Scripture, setting forth in simple language the cardinal truths of Scripture. We note his boldness in resisting papal arrogance, his keen abilities as a debater, his love for church music, and his ability to write hymns. The whole man was a gift of God to the church to bring souls out of the darkness of popery into the clear Gospel light of truth. Krauth in his Conservative Reformation gives us an insight into the capacities of Luther. He quoted Köllner in his evaluation of Luther's writing of the Augsburg Confession as follows: "Not only were the doctrines of the Church presented clearly, but they were stated so thoroughly in Luther's

142. Ibid., p. 49.

style, might and spirit, that the era which he moved so profoundly, could not but recognize in them, alike a faithful image of the Truth, and a new point of support for it." ¹⁴³

Speaking of Luther's ability in the field of Catechetics, the following quotation shows a contribution that Luther supplied the Church:

"In this (the writing of the Catechisms) he showed far more Catechetical, Churchly Didactic tact, than all the authors, whose thread is that of a system, be this system what it may. There is in the Catechisms a genuine conservatism, a holding fast and development of that which already had its home as the Christian Confession in the heart of the people.. It shows the self-renunciation, with which Luther held aloof from the formularly manner of Dogmatics and Polemics; it reveals the art of saying much in little, yet with all its pregnant richness never becomes obscure, heavy, unfit for the people." ¹⁴⁴

And again Krauth quotes Köllner to illustrate the beauty of Luther's Catechism:

"Luther was a man of the people; like Paul he had the gift of speaking to the masses, as no one else could, so that the simplest understood him, and the heart and soul were alike touched. And this language of the heart, sustained by Luther's whole mode of thinking as a theologian, is the key-note of his Catechisms. They bear the true impress of his joyous assurance, of the earnest heartiness in which he was unique, and of all that true piety which here presents in conjunction the light and kindling which illumine the mind and revive the affections." ¹⁴⁵

Luther caught the Spirit of Christ. Through Christ he knew too, how to teach as one having authority. In the Word of God which he prized so highly, he found an inexhaustible store of spiritual wealth and he bent every effort to make it available for every one. Luther was one of the epistles of Paul, "known

143. Krauth, Conservative Reformation, p. 283.

144. Ibid. p. 284.

145. Ibid. p. 288

and read of all men"... "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God", 2 Cor. 3, 2-3. His spiritual gifts were used by the Holy Spirit to contribute an untold share in the upbuilding of the kingdom of God.

And so we could go on to mention many more heroes of faith in the New Testament Age whose spiritual gifts were a benefit to others. We have barely skimmed the surface. We have not even begun to penetrate the field of Christian Arts and Sciences and the many individuals whose outstanding talents in these fields of endeavor served either as direct or indirect means of leading people to Christ. The discussion of the importance of spiritual gifts in history is inexhaustible.

XIV. THE PRESENT DAY POSSIBILITIES OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

We are jumping from one inexhaustible subject to another. We have dwelt in part upon the repercussions of the spiritual gifts in certain ages and upon certain individuals throughout history. In part we shall now dwell upon the prospects of using spiritual gifts to advantage in our own day. But as already indicated this too, is an inexhaustible subject. We cannot hope to do full justice to it.

The evaluation of spiritual gifts for the present day first of all calls for a restatement of the conclusions arrived at in regard to each gift.

We have seen that the speaking with foreign tongues momentarily, without any previous knowledge of them is a gift which had a unique place of importance on Pentecost, but since then the Holy Spirit has deemed it unnecessary to give that gift.

Ecstatic speech had its place in the homes of some of the early converts and for example in the Corinthian congregation as a means of providing a form of worship for certain individuals, for whom this phenomena was a special proof of the blessedness of being in communion with the true God. Yet this gift is placed in a secondary position by the Holy Spirit Himself speaking through Paul.

Prophecy has been given a place of abiding importance. We have made a distinction between inspired prophetic discourse and ordinary preaching and teaching. While the latter is a means of information purely natural, the former implies supernatural ability to give advice possibly in a crisis of some kind or in any situation where natural opinion fails. We believe that the

divine call still goes out to prophets, who with the Spirit of God guiding them are to explain, expound, instruct, warn and serve their flocks with the spiritual food of God's Word. No miraculous gift that we have discussed has outranked prophecy. In some periods of history it has been more prominent than at others, but generally speaking, it has been of outstanding importance in directing the Church according to God's Word and will.

Miracles were important in early times because of their power of attraction, their proof of divine approval, their demonstration of the power of Jesus over pagan gods, and their witness to the charitable character of true religion. When people desire to have miracles performed just for the miracle's sake and to satisfy their own curiosity, the importance of the miracle drops to nil. The fact that miracles disappear after the second century detracts from their importance. Miracles have always had a place secondary to the proclamation of the Gospel.

It appears, therefore, that of all the miraculous gifts, only one remains to the present day, and that is prophecy. Speaking in foreign tongues, ecstatic speech, and the performance of miracles seem to take the back ground. There are still many among the Pentecostal sects who oppose this vigorously. They say that the same number of gifts are present now as were present at the time of the apostles. Though we have no passage in Scripture which definitely refutes this claim, yet the whole tenor of Scripture points to the fact that the Holy Spirit works through means to accomplish his purposes and history has corroborated this.

We concede that there is a possibility that the Holy Spirit could, if He chose, again shower the gift of miracles upon certain individuals of the church. Spiritual gifts of a miraculous nature are not entirely excluded from reappearing. The Holy Spirit distributes His gifts as He wills, Romans 12, 11, and if he should find it necessary to restore spiritual gifts to this one or that one, He will do so in the interests of the kingdom of grace. We are not responsible for the number or quality of the gifts that we possess. Our responsibility lies solely in the use of the gifts that we do have.

The natural gifts that men possess can all have an outstanding importance in the present day.

We value the ability of a person who has the gift of knowledge to be able to supply information on a given subject especially one regarding spiritual matters. Knowledge covers a wide field and is truly beneficial only then when it supplies the inquirer with the exact information desired.

The gift of wisdom has seemingly greater practical applications. It leads one to take prudent action in view of the knowledge that one has amassed. Wisdom implies always a good management and skillful application of principles to a given situation. The importance to the church consists in this that wisdom applies Scriptural teaching to practical life. The necessity of such a gift in church life is only too evident.

Presaching and teaching are natural means of inculcating Christian doctrine into the hearts and minds of people. Without

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this gift the church would lose its initiative and would slump back into spiritual atrophy. Both in regard to its prevalence and its constant demand this gift has superseded many an other.

Charity endeavors are important from a this-worldly point of view, but in the final analysis are important also in view of eternal consequences. The Savior lists them in His account of the final judgment. Anyone who fails in performing this gift simply shows that he has not understood the quintessence of religion. It is a gift that should naturally follow in a Christian life. Where it does not, Christianity is nothing but a name.

Government is an important gift of church activity. It is definitely important that the church always recognize its common allegiance to Christ as its head. God-given leaders who unquestioningly cling to Christ alone and are led by His Spirit are of utmost importance in the guidance of church affairs.

And finally, who is able to gauge the importance of the gift of discerning spirits? This is a gift that can save souls from hell by discerning insidious error and warning other Christians against its deceitful nature.

These are the gifts then, natural and supernatural, which the Holy Spirit has supplied for His church. The following rules, submitted by Dr. Arndt,¹⁴⁶ ought to guide us in our present day evaluation of these gifts:

1. "Charismatic powers were conferred for the upbuilding and edifying of the Church. If anyone uses miraculous

146. W. Arndt, "Only Christians of the Apostolic Age to possess Miraculous Powers?" C.T.M. Vol. I, p. 730 ff.

- powers from personal aggrandizement, they are not from God but from the devil. Cf. Acts 8, 18 ff.
2. "The charismatic gifts accompanied the pure Gospel. If anyone uses extraordinary powers to defend and spread false teaching, they are not from God. Cf. Deut. 18, 1-3; 2 Thess. 2, 9 ff.
 3. "There must exist a real need for miracles if they are to be performed. It would be tempting God if anyone undertook to do them without such necessity. Cf. Matt. 4, 7.
 4. "Signs shall follow them that believe," ~~Matt. 16, 17~~ ^{Mark 16, 17}. When they are genuine they merely accompany the pure Gospel. Putting them in the foreground making them the chief factor in one's ministry, is proof that the respective "prophet" is an errorist.

Gifts are given to Christians in our day as always not for ostentatious display but for the ability to humbly carry out their tasks in their particular fields of activity. The Holy Spirit in His wisdom has not supplied us with those kind of gifts which would lead us to be proud in our use of them. He has rather given natural endowments which he certainly expects will be used to the best advantage. As Christians all of us have experienced a new spiritual life. To enjoy this new life more fully we are all seeking to be further edified by the contacts we have with His Word. There we find the source for our spiritual growth and there we find the means of development for our spiritual gifts. Without these means of grace we are in a storm tossed vessel without an anchor. We are then on the dangerous path of the Enthusiasts, who will have nothing to do with the sure word of prophecy.

By holding closely to the precepts of God's inspired Word, a Christian will be sure to use all of his potentialities to the utmost, not as a means of gaining merit, but as an expression of new life. If he is possessed of a great variety of gifts, he should be especially welcome in the community. Alexander MacLaren

writing on the potentialities of gifts in a Christian community has these significant thoughts to say:

"In the christian ideal of humanity there is place for every variety of gifts. The flora of the Mountain of God yields an endless multiplicity of growths on its ascending slopes which pass through every climate... The average Christian life of today fails in two things: in being true to itself, and in tolerance of diversities. We are all so afraid of being ticketed as "eccentric", "odd", that we sometimes stifle the genuine impulses of the Spirit of Christ leading us to the development of familiar types of goodness, and the undertaking of unrecognized forms of service...we all tend to look very suspicious at any man who 'puts all others out' by being himself, and letting the life that he draws from the Lord dictate its own manner of expression. It would breathe a new life into all our Christian communities if we allowed full scope to the diversities of operation, and realized that in them all there was one Spirit. The world condemns originality, the Church should have learned to prize it. 'One after this fashion, and one after that' is the only wholesome law of development of the manifold Graces of Christian life." 147

The individual like the church of which he is a part is an organic whole. Smooth and steady operation of hearts, minds, and hands is necessary if the church as an organism is to function properly. There must be a harmonious blending of interests. There must be no unnatural outbursts of enthusiasm, nor an unnatural failure to function at all. It is God who supplies each member of His church with the steady flow of power that will enable one to do what it is one's duty to do. Fortunately, we have the Holy Spirit to direct us toward the proper use of our gifts. To Him through the merits of the Saviour much humble acknowledgement of power received is due.

147. A. Maclaren, Expositions of Holy Scripture (Romans) p.248.

All that I have said in this paper regarding spiritual gifts, their nature, their importance, and their present day possibilities, collectively and individually, may be summed up in a little Latin dictum, which in one sense is a clever play on words, and in another sense excellent theology: DIC 'HABEO'; SED 'AB EO' ("Say, 'I have'; but 'from Him'") "When we have learned this well, learned it so well that it sounds in all chambers of our hearts and echoes down through all the aisles of our lives, we shall have learned the great lesson of practical theology."¹⁴⁸

We close this treatise on "Spiritual Gifts of the New Testament" with a prayer of Luther:¹⁴⁹

"Lord God, dear Father, who through Thy Holy Spirit hast taught and enlightened the hearts of Thy believers, grant us through the same Spirit to have a right understanding at all times to rejoice in His comfort and power, through Thy Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen."

148. Warfield, B.B. "Spiritual Culture in the Theological Seminary", Princeton Theological Review, 1904, p. 87.

149. Concordia Tract, 95, p. 19.

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