

The Gift of Prophecy

by G.W. North

Prophecy is the highest gift, necessary for the Church's edification, and a means of ministering words of blessing, comfort, love, and guidance.

Scripture: Proverbs 9:1, Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17, Romans 12:6, 1 Corinthians 12:7, 1 Corinthians 14:1, 1 Corinthians 14:31, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21, 1 Peter 4:11

Topics: "The Gift of Prophecy", "Edification of the Church"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes the paramount importance of the gift of Prophecy in the Church, asserting that it is the highest of spiritual gifts as indicated by the Apostle Paul. He explains that Prophecy serves as the foundational stream from which other gifts like Wisdom and Knowledge flow, and that it is essential for the edification of the Church. North argues that all believers are encouraged to prophesy, making it a common and vital practice during gatherings for worship. He highlights that the purpose of Prophecy is to build up the Church through words of comfort, guidance, and instruction. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a recognition of the significance of Prophecy in the life of the Church.

Transcript

Following former procedure, we note the indisputable position held by Prophecy, for, as we observe, the gift heads this third and last section. Prophecy is spoken of in terms which seem unquestionably to set it above its fellows; 'follow after Love and desire spirituals, but rather that ye may prophesy', Paul says at the conclusion of the thirteenth chapter and the commencement of the fourteenth. Having already preceded the thirteenth chapter with the words 'covet earnestly the best (highest) gifts', the apostle seems to leave us with no alternative than to believe that Prophecy is the highest of 'the higher gifts', the best of the best.

Prophecy as naturally heads this section as do Wisdom and Faith their respective sections, and it holds this position for the same reasons and upon the same principle as they hold theirs. Quite certainly the apostle extols the virtues of this gift, deliberately taking up much space to set it in contrast with Tongues as being the major internal means of building up the Church. Being set in such a prominent position it appears to be greater than either Wisdom or Knowledge, which hold first and second place in the list.

This may be yet another testimony to the fact that to be last is not necessarily to be least, as well as bearing witness to the principle that the last shall be first. Or it may be just a plain indication that these nine are not set out in a strict order of merit at all, and that we ought not to look for some order of importance or value whereby to calculate the worth of one over another. That there is some plan behind

the order of mention is practically certain, but we will investigate the possibility of this later.

Prophecy -- the Mainstream

Prophecy is the basic gift of supernatural utterance in the mother tongue. It is the 'main stream' in which all the other oral gifts flow, for whether they be words of Wisdom or Knowledge or Interpretation, to be 'oracles of God' (1 Peter 4:11) all must be prophetic in substance, nature and manner of utterance. It would be as impossible for any man to have and function in the Word of Wisdom, apart from having the gift of Prophecy as it is impossible for a hand to exist without an arm. Although unlikely, it may be true that a member of the Body obviously operates in the Word of Wisdom, but is never known to give ordinary prophecies, but this in no way invalidates the fact that his gift only operates on the main stream of prophetic utterance. And if the function of Prophecy is edification, can it possibly be imagined that anything is more able to build up the Church than Wisdom spoken in love?

We are told in the book of Proverbs that 'Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars', a clear enough testimony to her powers of edification. And who would say that the book of Proverbs which is itself a compilation of Words of Wisdom is not wholly conceived and delivered as Prophetic utterance? Words of Wisdom or of Knowledge are special utterances within the main scheme of prophetic ministry and conferred upon selected members who as a general rule hold or are being prepared by God to hold leading offices in the churches.

In chapter 14 Paul says, 'ye all may prophesy one by one', plainly implying that all the members may have and use the gift of Prophecy. It appears from this that in the gatherings Prophecy should be quite common, in fact the basic form of utterance among the children of God when gathered together for worship or ministry. Seeing that the main purpose in gathering is edification, the Church needs more than occasional utterances of rare pearls of wisdom and treasures of knowledge, great and wonderful and invaluable as they are. Therefore, beside these, the Lord has placed in the Church a whole array of commoner, though not less spiritual words of blessing, comfort, love, help, guidance, instruction and such like; these are all absolutely necessary and must be ministered by the members one to another, either through the gift of Prophecy proper or in prophetic vein.

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