

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS

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INTRODUCTION

PROVIDED FOR US

The importance of the GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT to the essential functioning of the Church of Jesus Christ cannot be over-estimated.

Without them, the Church lacks the spiritual equipment outlined in the first Epistle to the Corinthians Chapter 12, which is so necessary for an aggressive conflict with the powers of darkness; she is also deprived of that edifying enrichment derived from the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's presence and power in her midst.

The Bible is full of God's supernatural dealings with His people.

The experience of regeneration, whereby we become new creatures in Christ, is supernatural; Christians also readily admit that the devil is supernatural in his person, power, and activities; yet the same Christians are inclined to shrink from the thought of a supernatural baptism in

the Holy Spirit, with supernatural signs attending it, and the ensuing supernatural gifts.

PROMISED TO US

The Lord Jesus said: “He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also.” (John 14:12). He also promised: “Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” (Acts 1:8). But if we ignore the GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT we despise the heritage which is granted to us in Christ, and forget what the apostle Paul exhorted in 1 Corinthians 12, verse 1: “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.”

Should any advance the argument that the gifts were bestowed merely to usher in the present dispensation, and that they are “not for today,” let us quote the apostle Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, who said: “The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” (Acts 2:39).

Therefore, if a person is “called” to be a son of God, through faith in Christ Jesus, that person is also, in consequence, a prospective recipient of the GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

POSSESSED BY US

The following true story serves to illustrate the wisdom of “possessing our possessions.”

The celebrated preacher, Charles H. Spurgeon, was a very charitable man. He built almshouses for elderly people, and loved to visit them in their homes. On a certain day, in one of these cottages, he noticed on the wall a slip of paper in a frame, on which was some writing. Upon asking the old lady what it might be, she said that it served to remind her of an aged gentleman whom she had nursed many years before. He had been very appreciative of her work, and could not thank her enough for all she had done for him.

As he lay dying he wrote his name on the piece of paper, and handed it to her. So she had framed it, and whenever she looked at it, the old lady said it reminded her of the kindly old gentleman. Mr. Spurgeon requested that he might borrow the paper, and persuaded her to remove it from its frame. Hastening to the Bank, he asked if they knew anything about it. They told him they had been wondering to whom the old gentlemen’s money belonged. There were hundreds of pounds standing to his credit for the old lady, who had kept the cheque in the frame just to remind her of the one she

had nursed. She was living in poverty, although actually worth hundreds of pounds!

Thus can it be with the GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. It is not sufficient to regard God's promises in His Word merely as a token of His love toward us; we need to present them at the Bank of Heaven, and thus turn into the currency of spiritual experience the inheritance provided for us.

For the enlightenment of the reader we would state that the discussions on Spiritual Gifts given in this book were held in the lecture hall of the Hampstead Bible School, London, England, and were stenographically reported. This will account for the fact that some questions are repeated, and several thoughts reiterated in various ways.

To retain the freshness of the animated discussions which took place (some eager student pressing a further enquiry before a former question was fully answered), we have left the sequence of the matters discussed to a great extent as reported. This will account for some questions not following in order of importance.

It will be understood that the answers are in no sense final, and, if, at times, they may appear to be

dogmatic, it is owing to the rapidity with which they were given. If the answer to some questions is “No” when it would have seemed more correct to have replied “It would hardly seem so” we seek the forbearance of our readers and must clearly state that it is far from our purpose to appear dogmatic.

We trust that the reading of these discussions upon a subject of such importance will at least provoke thought, and should some of the interest displayed in the original discussions be re-created in the minds of the readers we shall feel abundantly justified in publishing the book.

PRELIMINARY

May we take the subject of Spiritual Gifts for our discussion?

Certainly; it is a most important subject.

We would like to know why this subject is not dealt with more frequently in the churches.

It is to be admitted that the subject of spiritual gifts has been greatly neglected, and we trust these discussions will stimulate prayerful interest in the theme. The widespread ignorance possibly accounts for the very few references made to the manifestations of the Spirit in the church at large.

But is there not a great deal said concerning them in the New Testament?

The matter is very thoroughly discussed in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, chapters 12 and 14, and references are made to spiritual gifts in Romans and

other Epistles. At the time when these Epistles were written the gifts of the Spirit were in general exercise among the churches, so that by reason of use they would be fully understood.

How many Gifts of the Spirit are there?

There are nine, namely:

The Word of Wisdom; the Word of knowledge; Faith; Gifts of healing; The Working of miracles; Prophecy; The Discerning of spirits; Divers kinds of tongues; Interpretation of tongues.

Are these Gifts found in the Old Testament as well as in the New?

The first seven gifts are actually manifested in the Old Testament but the last two, tongues and interpretation, were given for the Church age.

Why should two have been added to the seven?

When the children of Israel were gathered around the tabernacle, the Lord manifested Himself in the Pillar of Cloud, and the supernatural evidence was visible to all in the camp. Today His people are scattered throughout the world, and so the evidence of His supernatural presence must be a personal one, possessed by each member of the

Church wherever he may be.

Does it not say that tongues will cease? When will they cease?

They will terminate when we enter the presence of the Lord. At the moment, we see through a glass darkly, but in the resurrection we shall see face to face, so that our limited prophecies, and our tongues with interpretation, will no longer be required.

Has the Gift of Tongues ever ceased through the ages?

The supernatural stream has never ceased to flow, although there have been times when a spiritual dearth has made it appear that the springs of revelation and inspiration had completely dried up; but in the darkest ages Church history records instances of the supernatural, which lead us to believe that the supernatural manifestations of the Spirit have always been in evidence.

Is there any order in the nine gifts?

There are actually three groups, with three gifts in each group. The groups might be classified:

1. Gifts of Revelation.
2. Gifts of Power.

3. Gifts of Inspiration.

What are the respective Gifts in each group?

The gifts of revelation are the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge and the discerning of spirits.

The three gifts of power are faith, miracles and healings.

The gifts of inspiration are prophecy, divers kinds of tongues and interpretation of tongues.

Is there no revelation in prophecy?

We shall deal with this gift fully when we come to it but sufficient to say at the moment that in the simple gift of prophecy itself there is no revelation.

But is it not generally accepted that prophecy and prediction are the same?

Yes, this is generally accepted because the term prophecy is a general one as well as specific; but as previously stated, we shall deal with this subject later.

What are the gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4?

These are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers; which are ministry gifts, the Lord's gift of ministers which He gives to His Church, and these ministers require also the gifts of the Spirit.

So what is the difference between ministry gifts and the gifts of the Spirit?

The Lord Jesus gives spiritually endowed ministers for the building up of His Church, and the Holy Spirit gives His manifestations to these ministers for the work to which they are called.

Why does the Word say, "There are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit"?

The Apostle is pointing out that although the gifts are so different one from the other, their origin, or source, is the same.

So there are not nine Spirits of God, but One?

Just so. The gifts of the Spirit are various manifestations of the same Spirit. The Holy Spirit manifests Himself in nine different and distinctive ways.

What does it mean, “There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all”?

The gifts function differently in each individual. Take, for example, the working of miracles. In Elijah it was associated with the mantle he wore; in Moses, with the rod which had been changed into a serpent, and in Samson, the miraculous power was inseparable from his physique, so that he became supernaturally strong when the Spirit was upon him. However, in each instance, it was the manifestation of the same gift, although the operations were so diverse.

What does the verse mean, “The self same Spirit dividing to every man severally as He will”?

Here we have the prerogative of the Spirit to give what gifts He sees most suitable for each individual. It is for us to covet earnestly the best gifts of the Holy Spirit, and it is the prerogative of the Spirit to bestow these gifts as He will.

At the end of 1 Corinthians 12 we read that we are to covet earnestly the best gifts but the Apostle

would show us a more excellent way; what is the ‘more excellent way’?

It is to seek the love of God first, and to desire the gifts of the Spirit in order that we may serve God better. The answer is actually given in chapter 14 verse 1. “Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts... “. If we put spiritual gifts before the love of God we shall make a serious mistake; the first and most important thing is love, the love of God. Those who love God will normally desire spiritual gifts, since they are manifestations of His Spirit, given for His glory and the enrichment of His church.

Do you propose to deal with each gift separately, or in groups?

It would seem to be the simplest way to take the gifts one by one, and it is purposed to commence with the word of wisdom.

CHAPTER ONE

THE GIFT OF THE WORD OF WISDOM

Is the word of wisdom a very important gift?

Of the nine gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12, three are gifts of revelation; the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge and the discerning of spirits. The word of wisdom is the first of these three gifts of revelation, and indeed, first in the category of spiritual gifts, and can be regarded therefore, as the greatest of the gifts of the Spirit?

How has the word of wisdom been defined?

Some have suggested that it is a natural gift of wisdom, sanctified to the service of God. Since all wisdom comes from God, they say that the consecration of a natural gift becomes a spiritual manifestation.

Is this a good argument?

Decidedly not. The great weakness is that the same rule would have to apply to all the other gifts also. Thus

the speaking with tongues would be nothing more than the linguist's gift consecrated to God, and gifts of healing would be the sanctified service of the medical profession.

In what other way has the word of wisdom been defined?

It has been suggested that the word of wisdom is a deep insight into the scriptures, the ability to divide rightly the Word of Truth.

What objection is there to this argument?

If we allow that this is the true interpretation of the word of wisdom, then every Bible teacher could claim to have this first and greatest gift of the Holy Spirit. It would thus be exceedingly difficult to draw the line of demarcation between the Sunday School teacher, giving his or her interpretation of the school lesson, and some long-experienced Bible expositor giving a deep study on some important doctrine.

Has it ever been suggested that the word of wisdom is the ability to speak wisely?

Yes, it has been suggested often that the word of wisdom is the ability to speak wisely; to exercise tact, to say a word in season, or to assist those who are needing a word of counsel or admonition.

What objection is there to that explanation?

If this were considered the right interpretation of the word of wisdom, then the gift is more in evidence than we have supposed, for there are great numbers of God's people who are able to give a helpful word to others. In fact, we all ought to be able to assist people with their spiritual problems and difficulties.

Might it not be suggested that this gift of the word of wisdom has relation to conference matters, and that it is the ability to govern the affairs of large gatherings of God's people?

If so, one who is appointed to the position of leadership would need to possess the word of wisdom to know how to guide conferences well. This interpretation would seem to limit the greatest and most important of all manifestations of the Spirit; indeed, many men, not born again, possess remarkable ability in administrative matters.

How should one define the word of wisdom?

The word of wisdom might be defined as a supernatural revelation of the mind and purpose of God communicated by the Holy Spirit. It is God's wisdom imparted to man. It might be designated as the gift of the

word of God's wisdom. When the Lord specifically reveals His purpose to an individual, that person possesses a word of God's wisdom.

Quite apart from this supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit, however, the Lord is willing to guide believers in their daily affairs, and to give them wisdom, as required for any particular circumstance, in the same way as He is willing to heal the sick apart from the gifts of healing.

Then it is not any wisdom of men glorified?

No, the word of wisdom is the word of divine wisdom imparted to man, exactly as the gifts of healing are the manifestation of God's healing power to man, and not man's ability to heal by medicine and surgery. Note also that it is the word of wisdom and not the gift of wisdom.

Can the difference between the "Word" and the gift be made clearer?

Perhaps we can make this matter clearer with an illustration. Suppose that a man wishes to get into communication with his lawyer upon an important legal matter. He is in doubt as to how to act, and he needs to be guided by one who has professional knowledge, so he telephones to his lawyer and makes an enquiry. Now the lawyer, with all his experience of legal

matters, communicates the wise course his client should take. The lawyer does not give the man wisdom, but imparts to him a word of his wisdom – gives him an utterance to guide him, so the man is now free to use the information and wisdom thus imparted to him.

How can this illustration be applied to the word of wisdom?

Let us suggest, then, that the lawyer is, to the man in the illustration, what God is to us in actual fact. We are perplexed about a certain matter. In prayer we communicate with the Lord. God in His mercy may give us some guidance on that particular matter. When He gives us particular guidance upon any matter then He has given us His wisdom, or at least, a word of His wisdom. He has given us direction, and when we get direction from God we have a manifestation of this first and greatest gift of the Holy Spirit.

Can this be made still clearer?

When THE MIRACULOUS POWER OF GOD is in manifestation we see the WORKING OF MIRACLES in operation. When He gives us a manifestation of HIS HEALING VIRTUE then the GIFTS OF HEALING are in operation. When He gives us the ability to speak in another language, the GIFT OF

TONGUES is in operation. So, when He gives us the word of His wisdom, we have the first and greatest gift in operation – THE WORD OF WISDOM.

Are there any scriptural instances of the word of wisdom?

The word of wisdom was in operation when God gave the law to Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai. The children of Israel were theocratically governed. All their laws and commandments came from God. The Lord communicated His mind and purpose to Moses and so it was by the word of wisdom that God gave the whole of the law.

What else does the word of wisdom reveal?

The word of wisdom reveals God's purposes for the world at large, for it must not be forgotten that God rules in the kingdoms of men. When the Lord gives a revelation of His purpose, such as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the one to whom the revelation comes can be said to receive a word of wisdom. It is by this gift, therefore, that the Spirit of God reveals things to come respecting the world, nations, cities, or individuals.

When God revealed His laws to Moses concerning the government of Israel, could that be correctly termed the word of wisdom?

Certainly; but it should be clearly understood that no further revelation concerning laws and commandments or precepts, were ever given after Moses. The Scripture emphatically states that the law was given by Moses. It says the law, that is, the complete and full revelation of God concerning His mind for the Children of Israel, and not a part of the law. It further states that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ; so the fulness of grace and truth have come to us in Christ, and this grace and truth cannot be supplemented by any works of merit, or supposed revelation.

So no prophet, after Moses, received any further light from God concerning the law?

No further light ever came to any prophet after Moses concerning the law. In the same way, there can be no further revelation of additional truth today. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No one can, therefore, add to the grace that Jesus Christ has manifested, and no one can add to the truth that He gave.

So that anyone who purports to give revelation contrary to, or in advance of, the truth that Jesus has given to us, is a false prophet.

Yes, even as any prophet of the old dispensation, who spoke contrary to Moses, was a false prophet. Hence the great heresy of Mormonism is exposed, since it purports to be additional light to the revelation of the Bible.

Are there any further instances of the word of wisdom which can be brought forward as illustrations?

Yes, we can turn to the commencement of Genesis, and find that interesting character Enoch mentioned in chapter 4 who is stated in the Epistle of Jude to be a prophet speaking of the Lord coming to execute judgment upon all the ungodly. So that almost at the beginning of the world's history, we have a man prophesying of an event that will take place very nearly at the end of time. Enoch, then, had this first and greatest gift of the Spirit.

Can another instance be quoted of the exercise of this gift?

Joseph saw the future respecting his own life, and how his brethren would bow to him. After much

suffering, he was carried into Egypt and cast into prison, he interpreted the visions of the butler and the baker concerning their fate. Afterwards the butler spoke of Joseph to the king, at the time when Pharaoh was perplexed over his dreams, and, by the word of wisdom, Joseph was able to shew Pharaoh what would take place in Egypt for fourteen years ahead, and to save the nation from disaster. Thus Joseph exercised the word of wisdom.

Did Moses exercise the gift of the word of wisdom apart from laws?

Moses, before he had the special revelation of the mind of God on Mount Sinai, was first commissioned to deliver Israel when he was minding his father-in-law's sheep in the desert. Suddenly a bush caught fire and continued to burn, which caused Moses to turn aside and investigate. The bush burned without being consumed, and it was this that arrested the attention of the shepherd. On approaching the bush he heard the voice of God speaking to him from the midst of the fire. He was there and then commissioned to be the deliverer of the Children of Israel from Egypt. Moses at the burning bush, therefore, had the word of wisdom.

Could Jonah be said to have had the word of wisdom, if the commission to Moses is an instance of the gift?

We have an interesting instance of the word of wisdom in Jonah, the unwilling servant of the Lord, who went to Nineveh after he had endeavored to evade the divine commission. The word to go to Nineveh was a revelation of the purpose of God. It was not an impression, or wish, on the part of Jonah, but a direct word of the purpose and wisdom of God. It was, therefore, a manifestation of the first and greatest gift of the Spirit, and this manifestation led to the saving of the sinful city of Nineveh.

What would one say about the visions which Daniel had?

Daniel had some remarkable visions concerning the Babylonish Empire. He saw things to come, in symbols and figures, God giving him understanding of the times. The revelation and interpretations were manifestations of the gift of the word of wisdom.

Would this apply to the prophet Ezekiel also?

Ezekiel certainly had this gift when he was ministering among the captives by the river Chebar, while

Daniel served in the King's palace. He had revelations at the first concerning the people in Jerusalem, and predicted Zedekiah's captivity. He also had remarkable revelations concerning nations and cities, including a most mystical revelation of the prince and king of the city of Tyre. The Book of Ezekiel closes with a revelation of the coming millennial temple.

Are there any New Testament illustrations of the word of wisdom?

Yes. Turning to the New Testament we have the instance of Agabus, who was evidently renowned for his predictions. He spoke not only of the dearth that should take place, and for which provision was made to save the poor saints from unnecessary suffering, but he revealed to Paul the fact that he would be bound when he arrived finally at Jerusalem, after what proved to be his last missionary journey around the churches.

What was the wisdom that Jesus manifested at twelve years of age?

The Lord Jesus, being spiritually pure, would perceive things in the law of God, which others, blinded by sin and prejudice, would not see. Those who are pure can understand best the mind and revelation of God; so Jesus, at the age of twelve, perceived things in the Word

of God which astonished His seniors, and caused them to marvel at the things which He uttered.

This would not, therefore, be the word of wisdom, but the wisdom that belongs to all who are simple and pure enough to read the scriptures without prejudice or bias.

What is the difference between the word of wisdom and prophecy?

Now we need to appreciate the fact that terms can be used specifically and generally. When we use the term prophecy in a specific sense, we mean the gift of prophecy, which is the sixth manifestation of the Spirit. When we use the term generally, we mean any prophetic utterance including the gifts of revelation.

Can this be illustrated?

Quite easily. For instance, we use the term “tea” specifically and generally. If we were tea merchants the term “tea” would signify the dried leaves of the tea plant. When we visit a home for a social afternoon, tea might signify a cup of the hot beverage, or it might signify in Great Britain a whole meal. So we have a term which can signify a packet of dried leaves, a hot cup of appetizing beverage, or a whole meal.

How does this apply to prophecy?

The term “prophecy” can signify a gift of the Spirit, or it can signify any inspired utterance, or it can signify predictions.

How are we using the term “prophecy” in these studies?

We shall use the term “prophecy” to signify the prophetic gift of utterance, and the prophetic gift which is the sixth in the catalogue has no prediction in it. It is the simplest form of inspired utterance, which we shall deal with more specifically when we come to it. So when we use the phrase “word of wisdom” we mean predictions, which are so often called prophecy.

What we usually call “prophecies” in the Old Testament are really predictions.

The Old Testament predictions were manifestations of the word of wisdom, and the simple gift of prophecy was generally used to clothe these revelations.

Then “prophecy” used in a general sense includes the word of wisdom?

Yes, but prophecy used in a specific sense is the sixth gift of the Spirit.

How can one distinguish which gift one has?

We can distinguish the word of wisdom from the gift of prophecy, because the first is a prediction, and the other is the simplest form of inspired utterance.

But cannot a prediction be given in the simple gift of prophecy?

Yes, the same as sugar can be put into tea: but sugar is not tea. When sugar is added to the tea, the beverage is still designated “tea”, although tea, specifically speaking, is not sugar.

Prophecy, therefore, specifically speaking, is not prediction.

Prophecy is not the word of wisdom, and it is not the word of knowledge, and yet the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge may come into prophecy. When the word of wisdom, or the word of knowledge, is heard in a prophetic utterance, we call it prophecy, but it is not SPECIFICALLY prophecy.

Can this be illustrated further?

Yes. We recognize that sugar and milk are not tea, but sugar and milk can be put into tea, and when the two are added to the tea, the result is still called “tea.” So the word

of wisdom, which is prediction, and the word of knowledge, can both be manifested in the gift of prophecy. When they are manifested together we call them all prophecy, but specifically speaking, prophecy is the simplest form of inspired utterance, and not prediction.

Does prophecy ever mean foretelling?

Again we have to ask ourselves if we are using the term specifically or generally. The specific term “prophecy” designates the sixth gift of the Spirit, but, generally speaking, to prophesy is often used in the sense of “to predict,” but remember that is only a general use of the term. Prophecy is actually and specifically the sixth simple gift of the Spirit, so anyone who prophesies according to the gift of prophecy is giving a simple inspired utterance.

Is that the explanation of 1 Corinthians 14, verse 3 – “He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort?”

Yes. In this verse we have a scriptural definition of prophecy. Notice that there is NO REFERENCE TO REVELATION, and when a person prophesies in the ordinary simple form of prophecy, he does not give a revelation.

So all three gifts of revelation can be used and yet be designated “prophecy?”

Certainly. To come back to our illustration again, we have put various things into a cup of tea, without changing the designation of the beverage – it is still called “tea”. To be clearly understood, we must speak specifically in these studies. When we say “prophecy” we do not mean prediction; we refer to the simplest form of divine utterance. The word of wisdom alone is prediction.

Does it mean that when the ministry gift of the prophet is in operation then it is the word of wisdom?

Yes. The prophet is the man to whom God has revealed His mind. In former times the prophet was called the seer, and the seer was one who could see supernaturally, he could discern the mind of God, he had revelation of things to come, so the prophet or seer had the word of wisdom.

Does that mean that the prophecy of the Old Testament differed from that of the New Testament?

No. Prophecy in the Old Testament and prophecy in the New Testament are both the same as a simple gift. David prophesied when he uttered his psalms, but David

also predicted in some of his lovely psalms. He spoke about the Messiah – “The Lord said unto my Lord” – that was more than the gift of prophecy, it was the word of wisdom, but it co-mingled with the simplest form of inspired utterance which is prophecy.

Would one say that a prophet can have the word of knowledge also?

A prophet can have all the three gifts of revelation.

Can it possibly be that when one gives an interpretation of a tongue there may be a word of wisdom included in it?

Yes, it can be so, if the one who is interpreting possesses the word of wisdom. That is important.

How, we may ask, does the word of wisdom come to us?

It may come, as suggested, in a message in tongues and interpretation, but it cannot come, let it be clearly understood, unless the one who is interpreting has the word of wisdom. If he possesses nothing more than the interpretation of tongues, then nothing more will be manifested in the utterance of tongues but the simplest inspired utterance, which will be to edification, exhortation or comfort, for it should be stated that tongues

WITH interpretation are the equivalent of prophecy, the sixth gift of the Spirit.

So the word of wisdom might come in the simplest form of inspired prophecy, if the person who is prophesying possesses this greatest of all gifts.

Yes, but to return to the former question; the word of wisdom might come to one: –

- (1) **By an angel**, as Gideon received his commission when an angel suddenly appeared to him by the winepress.
- (2) **In a vision**, as Daniel who had most of his revelations in vision form.
- (3) **In dreams**, as in the case of Joseph, or,
- (4) **By an audible voice**, as when Moses went into the Tabernacle after it was first erected, and heard the voice of One speaking to him from the Mercy Seat.

Are there any other important points concerning the word of wisdom?

Well, in concluding our study of this first and most important gift of the Spirit, let us notice that the Bible

has been chiefly written by revelation of the purposes of God, and such revelations constitute this gift.

Can you summarize what has come through this gift?

Yes. Briefly, the whole law and precepts, as well as the detailed structure of the Tabernacle, were given to Moses in Mount Sinai by means of this gift. The whole range of Messianic prediction, and predictions also respecting nations, cities and individuals came to the prophets by the word of wisdom. The glorious new covenant truth with the order and rules of the church of Jesus Christ came through this first and greatest manifestation of the Spirit, as did the predictions of Agabus and the Revelation of John on the Isle of Patmos.

The gift of the word of wisdom is the very essence of theocratic government; it is the basis of all heavenly leadings, the foundation of divine commission. Through it Adam knew the extent of his privileges and the consequences of disobedience: Noah learned of the coming world judgment; Abraham of a promised land; Joseph of the coming devastating famine to Egypt: Moses heard of Israel's deliverance, and also the part he would play in the sacred drama; Joshua was directed respecting the conquest of Canaan, and Jeremiah lamented over the 70

years of Israel's captivity in Babylon which he understood through this gift.

There is nothing greater than the revelation of the mind and purpose of God. The word of wisdom transports one to the very council chamber of the Almighty and affords a participation, however infinitesimal, in the government of the universe. Since the Lord God will do nothing but He reveals His secret unto His servants the prophets, the smallest revelation of His purpose is more important than the greatest deliberations ever made in the councils of men, and such enlightenment becomes for us wisdom of the first magnitude. This therefore, is truly the word of God's wisdom, the first and greatest of the spiritual gifts, the most marvelous of all the manifestations of the Spirit of God.

Let us covet earnestly the best gifts.