

The real prophet will not find it necessary to announce to others that he is a prophet; he will be known by his ministry. . . . A prophet of God will naturally minister in the gift of prophecy often, and it will very likely be conjoined to the gift of knowledge -- it is often hard to distinguish between the two -- declaring God's will and God's mind.

A true prophet of God will be a mature Christian, as his ministry is listed as one of the offices to be used to bring the Church to maturity (Eph. 4:8, 11-16). . . .

The ministry of the prophet must be even more carefully judged than that of the brethren in general who prophesy in the meeting. A man may be strongly used in the prophetic office, and yet may be completely wrong from time to time. His words must never be accepted because of his ministry, but tested by the Word and the Spirit; this does not mean at all that he is a false prophet, but that he is still not perfected and therefore liable to error. "We prophesy in part" (I Cor. 13:9 KJV).

The enemy has counterfeits of all the true gifts, and there are plenty of false prophets in the world. . . .

Prophecy isn't fortune-telling! Prophecy isn't looking into a crystal ball, or reading cards or supposedly predicting the future by any other method. As we have already said in detail in a previous chapter, God strictly forbids any attempt to pry into the future -- He has always forbidden it. If men attempt to do this, they will be fed information from the enemy for his own purposes, and if they persist, it will be to their destruction. As we have seen, it is true that the Scripture shows that through the utterances of His prophets God sometimes tells what is going to happen; however, this has nothing whatsoever to do with fortune-telling; God has simply shared His intentions with His faithful children. The true prophet was not trying to get information about the present or the future, but he was having fellowship with the Lord, when God chose to share the knowledge. True prophecy is forthtelling not foretelling.

Prophecy is not "inspired preaching." Preaching, which means "proclaiming the Gospel", should indeed be inspired by the Holy Spirit, but in preaching, the intellect, training, skill, background, and education are involved and inspired by the Holy Spirit. The sermon may be written down ahead of time, or given on the spot, but it comes from the inspired intellect. Prophecy, on the other hand, means that the person is bringing the words the Lord gives directly; it is from the spirit, not the intellect. A person can bring prophetic words that he does not even understand himself. In the course of an inspired sermon, the preacher may also prophesy, or manifest the gifts of wisdom and knowledge, but they are to be distinguished from preaching.

Prophecy is not witnessing. . . .

Paul, in his first letter to the Thessalonians, says: "Don't despise prophesying. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (I Thess. 5:20-21) Just because there is misuse of God's gifts, and the enemy has counterfeits, doesn't mean we should reject what God has for us